From Retention to Academic Success:
Using First-Year Seminars as a Catalyst for Success in the First Year of College

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Academic Success

How do we define academic success?

• Number of degrees awarded

• Students in good academic standing (above a specific grade point average)

• Milestones in specific majors or academic programs

• Persistence and/or retention
Academic Success

“‘Student success’ can be understood in its simplest form as getting students into and through college to a degree or certificate… ‘Student success is thus a generic label for a topic with many dimensions, ranging from student flow across the entire educational pipeline, to the quality and content of learning and skills achieved as a result of going to college, to positive educational experiences (such as student engagement or satisfaction.”

First-Year Student Success

How do we define First-Year Student Success?

• Students in good academic standing (above a specific grade point average)

• Milestones in specific majors or academic programs

• Persistence and/or retention to sophomore year
“We believe it is something more than merely earning enough credits to graduate. We subscribe to a much broader definition. We believe freshmen succeed when they make progress toward fulfilling their educational and personal goals.”

First-Year Student Success

“The narrowest definition of first-year student success is the (1) successful completion of courses taken in the first year and (2) continuing enrollment into the second year. However, most institutions would espouse a broader definition of first-year student success, including one or more of the following:”

First-Year Student Success

• Developing intellectual and academic competence
• Establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships
• Exploring identity development
• Deciding on a career

First-Year Student Success

- Maintaining health and wellness
- Considering faith and the spiritual dimensions of life
- Developing multicultural awareness
- Developing civic responsibility

Institutional Examples
Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework

Astin’s I – E – O Model

Educational Environment

Student Inputs

Student Learning Outcomes

First-Year Seminars and Student Success

• Do First-Year Seminars impact student success?

• If these course do affect first-year student success, how can we measure that?
  • Quantitatively through direct measurement of Learning Outcomes and survey data
  • Qualitatively through focus groups, student interviews, etc.
Examples of Learning Outcomes: AFYS 101

USC Aiken

Students will develop and use effective time management strategies.

Students will demonstrate and apply an understanding of the concept of Academic Integrity in the context of USC Aiken’s Values.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of one’s own learning styles, and develop and use a personal study strategy that makes the most of one’s learning style.
# Learning Outcomes

## AFYS 101 Rubric Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Excellent (3)</th>
<th>Satisfactory (2)</th>
<th>Needs Improvement (1)</th>
<th>Incomplete or Not Achieved (0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify Time Usage</td>
<td>Time is accounted for during an entire week; includes details about how time was spent on major activities during the week…</td>
<td>Lacks one or two elements in the “Excellent” category</td>
<td>Does not account for all the hours in a week; may lack detail; may not provide time usage in obvious ways…</td>
<td>Time usage not identified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


# Learning Outcomes

## Example of Collected Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LO Code</th>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Raw Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Valid Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TMGT</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 (TMGT) Identify Time Usage</td>
<td>Time log was used correctly</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 (TMGT) Identify Time Usage</td>
<td>Time log was used correctly</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 (TMGT) Identify Personal Priorities</td>
<td>Priority list was used correctly</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 (TMGT) Identify Personal Priorities</td>
<td>Priority list was used correctly</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (TMGT) Analyze Relationship Between Time Usage and Priorities</td>
<td>Priority list was used correctly</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (TMGT) Analyze Relationship Between Time Usage and Priorities</td>
<td>Reflection specifically addresses the relationship between personal priorities and time usage</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 (TMGT) Analyze Relationship Between Time Usage and Priorities</td>
<td>Identifies personal strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 (TMGT) Analyze Relationship Between Time Usage and Priorities</td>
<td>Identifies strategies and behaviors to encourage better time management</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First-Year Student Success: Next Steps

• Establish a definition of first-year student success

• Identify key indicators of student learning in First-Year Seminars and other first-year courses on your campus

• Focus on the students, their learning, and ultimately their success (not just retention)
Contact Information

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