eSOURCE FOR COLLEGE TRANSITIONS
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E-SOURCE 5.3

A Joy and a Shock: What Faculty Learn from Teaching a First-Year Seminar

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When a senior faculty member announced that teaching a first-year seminar had "restored [his] faith in teaching," I wanted to know more about how teaching the seminar affects faculty. I had heard similar comments from faculty about their experiences in the seminar soon after the College of Letters and Science at Montana State University, a research-intensive public land-grant university with more than 13,000 students, began offering the course in 1996. The course, CLS 101, focuses on helping students develop thinking and communication skills and is taught by faculty from a wide variety of disciplines. The course uses a discussion format, and faculty are encouraged to function as learners and facilitators rather than as experts. Faculty partner with student interns in teaching the seminar, and both groups attend a weekly staff meeting in which they discuss course readings and pedagogy. The seminar, which fills a general education requirement and is open to all students, has grown from seven sections per year in 1996 to 51 sections a year in 2007.

See JOY, p. 2

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER HIRES NEW DIRECTOR

Jennifer Keup

Jennifer Keup, director of the Student Affairs Information and Research Office at the University of California Los Angeles, has been named the new director of the National Resource Center.

Keup will begin work at the Center in April, replacing Mary Stuart Hunter who had been director since 1999 and recently assumed a newly created role as assistant vice provost for University 101 Programs and the National Resource Center.

Keup holds a doctorate in higher education and organizational change from UCLA and brings research and practical experience in student development and transition. Her background includes work with the Higher Education Research Institute where she managed all activities for the Your First College year (YFCY) survey and College Student Survey (CSS). Keup also has collaborated with the National Resource Center on invited conference presentations and publications projects, and she has served as a reviewer for the Journal of the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

As director, Keup will be responsible for all operational aspects of the Center, including long-range planning, supervision of program implementation, and program management.

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As course director, I met weekly with seminar instructors and heard about their experiences. Although there were predictable comments about the academic shortcomings of first-year students, there were also an astonishing number of positive, and sometimes enthusiastic, reports.

In 1998, I surveyed the 17 tenured faculty members who had taught the seminar to explore the influences of the seminar on faculty. The results of the survey, reported in the monograph *Exploring the Evidence* (Barefoot, Warnock, Dickinson, Richardson, & Roberts, 1998), were intriguing. Of the 14 faculty who responded, 10 said that teaching the seminar influenced the way they teach in other courses. The following year, I initiated three faculty focus groups in which 13 tenured faculty participated. Four of the participants were women and nine were men, seven were from the humanities and social sciences, and six from natural sciences and mathematics.

Faculty who participated in the focus groups stressed how different teaching the seminar is from their usual teaching assignments. The small class size (16 students per section), the cross-disciplinary reading list, and the expectation that faculty will teach through discussion rather than lecture added to the sense that teaching the seminar is out of the ordinary. Most faculty said they rarely, if ever, get to know first-year students, either because they don't teach beginning classes or because the first-year students are invisible in the large introductory classes, and most said they enjoy getting to know first-year students in the seminar.

A science professor said, "I had forgotten what it was like to be 18 and having to reset all your values apart from your parents' values and think for yourself and live without Mom and Dad and go to class and work. ... It's a tough transition, and I enjoy watching them grow and mature." Another described getting to know first-year students as both a "joy and a shock," capturing the experience of faculty who enjoy seeing their seminar students grow and mature but are astounded by beginning students' lack of academic skills.

Some faculty modified their teaching practices because the seminar course increased their empathy for first-year students and gave them a more realistic understanding of these students. For some faculty, an understanding of students' lack of maturity and skills prompted them to adopt specific teaching practices to help beginning students learn. Some recognized that beginning students need specific kinds of instruction and care, and some said they adapted their teaching in disciplinary courses in various ways—training teaching assistants to have empathy for first-year students, taking attendance, helping students learn how to read assigned texts, explaining things in simpler terms, and incorporating more or better discussion in their other classes.

A professor of humanities, who expressed frustration with entering students' "stunning" deficiencies in basic skills, described the effects that teaching the seminar had on his teaching in other classes:

> I think the greatest effect [the seminar] had on my teaching is making me aware that those first-semester, first-year students demand a particular kind of attention, and so in the [large introductory] survey class, I try to work with my teaching assistants and have them understand and help them remember what it was like to be a first-semester freshman and that sometimes things have to be explained.

Training teaching assistants to remember what it was like to be a beginning student and recognizing that first-year students need more explanation than more advanced students can go a long way toward helping first-year students succeed. The professor continues:

> [You] have to really pay attention to details that I often don't pay attention to—namely attendance. ... I have 200 students this term [in my introductory course] and I [take] attendance in my lectures. ... I have attendance rosters that students have to sign because I became utterly convinced as a result of the CLS experience that the students have to be in class. ... I can't presume that when they're not in class they're having some grand intellectual experience or pondering the great deep truths of the universe.

Another humanities professor responded that he also had a "laissez-faire" attitude toward attendance before teaching the seminar. He said he now takes attendance in his large introductory classes and adds, "I explain things in simpler terms. I use simpler words. I define simpler words on the board . . . because I realize again how limited . . . not just their vocabulary, but also their conception is."

In addition to explaining more during lectures, some professors realized that they needed to actively teach students how to read at a college

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The Big Picture

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Seven Properties of Effective First-Year Program Delivery

This article, the first of two parts, defines and identifies empirical support for seven recurrent features or principles of effective educational programming. The next issue of this column will illustrate and demonstrate how these principles may be put into practice.

Core Characteristics of Effective Program Delivery

1. Intentional (Purposeful). Effective programming is intentionally student-centered; it is deliberately designed to facilitate student success. Rather than being driven by procedural habits, institutional convenience, or the needs and preferences of faculty and staff, the program's delivery is consciously designed to promote positive student outcomes. The principle of intentionality is consistent with the call for a paradigm shift to "learning-centered management" originally articulated by Astin, Bowen, and Chambers (1979) and reiterated by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991).

2. Proactive. Effective programming takes early, preventative action to address students' educational needs and adjustment issues in an anticipatory fashion—before they become problems that require reactive intervention. Proactive delivery ensures that programmatic support is delivered early (e.g., during their first year)—at a time when students are most vulnerable to underachievement and attrition and when support is most likely to have the greatest long-term impact. Lee Noel, nationally recognized researcher and consultant on student retention argues that, "in retention, a minimal investment can put into place some practical approaches and interventions, frequently labeled 'front loading.' Our experience shows that even a modest investment in these critical entry-level services and programs can have a high payoff in terms of student retention" (1994, p. 6).

3. Intrusive. The institution that reaches out to students and delivers support to them initiates effective programming rather than passively waiting and hoping for students to seek it out on their own. Intrusive programs ensure that support reaches all (or the vast majority of) students who will benefit from it, not just those students who are assertive enough to seek it out. The success of underrepresented and first-generation students, in particular, is seriously undercut by institutional over-reliance on student-initiated involvement in campus-support programs (Rendon, 1994; Terenzini et al., 1994).

4. Diversified. Effective programming is tailored or customized to meet the distinctive needs of students from different subpopulations and the needs of students at different stages of their college experience. Diversified program delivery recognizes the reality that the undergraduate student body is comprised of different subgroups and subcultures whose needs may vary, depending on their background experiences prior to college and their level of experience with college. Diversified programming acknowledges students' unique characteristics (e.g., their age, gender, ethnicity, and income level) and addresses the developmental challenges they experience at different stages of the college experience (e.g., first year vs. final year). No single, formulaic response meets the needs of all students; an effective program is responsive to differences among learners and displays programmatic flexibility (Tierney, 2000).

5. Collaborative. Effective programming involves cooperative partnerships between and among different organizational units of the college, encouraging them to work interdependently in a coordinated, complementary, and cohesive fashion to support the student as a whole person. Following a review of the retention literature, Braxton and Mundy (2001-2002) reached the following conclusion:

See CUSEO, p. 4

CUSEO Cont. from p. 3

"The most meaningful and far-reaching institutional efforts call for collaboration within university divisions and departments. These relationships are imperative to effective retention programs and efforts" (p. 94). This conclusion is reinforced by the work of Kuh et al. (2005) who conducted on-campus studies of 20 colleges and universities that had significantly higher graduation rates than would be predicted by their students' entry characteristics. Among the overarching characteristics common to all of these institutions was a "collaborative spirit" and a "shared responsibility for educational quality and student success" (p. 157).

6. Centralized. Effective programming occupies a central place in the college's organizational structure or system, giving it the capacity to exert a pervasive and systemic effect on the students' total college experience (as well as a reformative and transformative effect on the college itself). Rather than being marginalized and relegated to tangential status as a peripheral "add-on," the program is woven integrally into the university's organizational blueprint and annual budgetary allotment. When situated centrally and deeply within the institution's structure, the program becomes institutionalized, thereby ensuring its stability and durability. As Laden, Milem, and Crowson (2000) note: "Many of the trappings of college and university efforts to retard departure tend to be just that—i.e., symbolic efforts to publicly legitimize through a demonstration of political correctness, with little that extends deeply into the structures and lifeways of the organization. They tend to be rather marginalized, inhabited by staff who must engage in ongoing battles to integrate more effectively their units and services in the core culture" (p. 241).

7. Empirical (Evidentiary). Effective programming is supported with and driven by assessment data (quantitative and qualitative, behavioral and perceptual) that are used to "sum up" and prove the program's overall impact or value and to "form" or "shape up" the program as part of an ongoing process of continuous quality improvement. A high-quality program is one that "facilitates maximum growth among its students and can document that growth through appropriate assessment procedures" (Astin, 1985, p. 77). One common characteristic of campuses with significantly higher graduation rates is that they "systematically collect information" and "continually revisit and rework policies and practices to improve" (Kuh et al., 2005, p. 156).

Conclusion

Effective programs depend not only on program content (the "what" of it) but also on the delivery process (the "how" of it). In the next issue of *E-Source*, this column will explore how the general principles of effective program delivery may be transformed into specific programmatic practices that promote student success.

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Transfer Transition: Combating Social Isolation Through Residential Options

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When students transfer to a new institution, they must adjust to different academic regulations, requirements, academic standards, and instructional delivery methods. These adjustments can be traumatic, leading to what Hills (1963) called "transfer shock" or a dip in the student's grade-point average the first semester after transferring. Transfer shock can be exacerbated by the social isolation some transfer students experience, especially if they transfer to an institution where they lack a peer support network. Social isolation can lead to poor academic performance and even cause attrition (Gehrke & Wong, 2007).

This deleterious social isolation is a particular problem for transfers at residential institutions. If the transfer student enters an upper-class residence hall, he or she is moving into a residential environment with an established web of social relationships and alliances. If the transfer student is placed in a residence hall primarily with entering first-year students, it might be easier to negotiate social alliances, but the transfer student may not be enrolled in the same level of courses as these students and may not share the same academic or developmental needs that the hall directors expect to encounter with their first-year residents. At Lynchburg College, a small residential campus in Virginia, the college successfully addressed many of the social needs of transfer students by designating a transfer residence hall/housing for new transfer students.

Zack Brown, Lee Casaburi, Erika Kauder, and Amanda Lewis study on the deck behind The Courts, Lynchburg College's housing for transfer students.

When Lynchburg College recently built new town house units for upper-class students, the older, apartment-style Crewes-Reynolds Courts became less popular. The Courts contain 10 units, each with single and double bedrooms, a common area, full kitchen, and bath. The Courts are located in an area close to upper-class student housing, near nursing and education department classrooms and offices, the fitness center, and a popular coffee shop. The Courts were re-marketed as a residence opportunity especially for transfers, and most transfers who did not have specific roommates in mind requested the transfer living option. Of the new residential transfer students, 44% were placed in The Courts, along with students from Lynchburg College's sister school in St. Lucia—a mix that proved beneficial since the students from St. Lucia are typically older than the average residential students and, like transfer students, are completing their last two undergraduate years.

In addition to providing a living space for transfers, residence hall programming directed at transfers, beginning with the first week of the fall semester, was also provided. The first night of orientation, there was a special meet-and-greet party for residential transfers. The third week of the semester, transfer students were invited to a deck party with the coordinator of transfer student success held at The Courts. Students had the opportunity to share their experiences and concerns in an informal setting.

See TRANSFER, p. 6

Amanda Lewis, Erika Kauder, and Emmitta Hicks hold a group study session in their room at The Courts.

TRANSFER Cont. from p. 6

Students also participated in individual residence life meetings where they were able to talk about transfer concerns.

From the beginning of the semester, advisors and administrators who work with transfers noticed that the residential transfers in The Courts formed a cohesive social group. Those transfers who also attended a study strategies course targeted at that population spoke positively of their living experience, saying it was highly beneficial to share their transfer experiences with other residents who were having the same experiences. No transfers surveyed about their transition made negative comments about the living experience; however, one student said she would have appreciated a choice of all-transfer living options including both suite-style and more traditional residence hall options. As a result of this comment, the college will consider having two transfer residential options in the coming year.

Creating a transfer-specific residential environment is a low-cost way to provide additional services for residential transfers by using existing resources imaginatively. The Lynchburg College experience demonstrates an effective way to combat the sense of social isolation that contributes to transfer shock and to increase transfer satisfaction without the commitment of additional resources.

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Addressing the Growing Impact of Debt on Student Success

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Nationally, 64% of students graduate with student loan debt and, of these, 39% graduate with "unmanageable levels of debt" as defined by King and Bannon (2002) in *The Burden of Borrowing*. The impact on students of color is high: 55% of African American student loan borrowers and 58% of Hispanic borrowers graduate with unmanageable levels of debt. The average credit card debt for undergraduate students is more than $2,000, and almost a quarter of undergraduate students report using credit cards for tuition and fees (Nellie Mae, 2005). The U.S. General Accounting Office has indicated that the fastest growing segment of society filing for bankruptcy is people under the age of 25. (Smillie, 2004).

There is also some indication that student debt has a negative impact on student success. "Several studies report a negative relation between borrowing and persistence into the next semester or into the next year" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 411). Yet, financial literacy is often not included as part of the educational programming for first-year students.

In response to the growing problem, the University of North Texas created the Student Money Management Center (SMMC) in 2005. The center (**www.unt.edu/moneymanagement**) helps students gain financial literacy skills through innovative programs, services, and collaborative partnerships with both internal and external departments and organizations. Staff members partner with students from their first day on campus through graduation to address personal financial and money management literacy needs and to plant the seeds for a secure financial future.

One of the center's initial priorities was to reach out to other departments and programs across campus. Money and financial obligations impact the lives of all college students, regardless of their degree program. With a majority of students using financial aid to offset their course work and living expenses, it was important for SMCC to establish a strong working relationship with other departments. The first partnership formed was with the student financial aid and scholarships office. Today, SMMC maintains partnerships with more than 30 campus offices and programs, including the first-year experience program, new student orientation, mentoring, the federal TRIO program, study abroad, student legal office, residence life, the counseling center, and the career center. The center also has created partnerships with each of the academic colleges and regularly visits classes throughout the university at the request of faculty. Through the partnerships, the departments assign a staff member to be the primary liaison with SMCC. This person serves as the initial contact for students who, after a consultation, may be referred from the center to other campus offices for answers to questions that are beyond the center's scope of expertise.

The center sponsors 80-100 workshops and clinics each academic year for all students. A range of personal financial topics are discussed, including budgeting, credit reports and credit scores, planning for future college expenses, affording a study abroad experience, and graduation preparation. Campus partners often serve as copresenters at the workshops. Additionally, the center provides confidential personalized money management counseling, debt aversion sessions, and assessment consultations to students.

Since the program began two years ago, the SMMC has worked with more than 7,000 students. SMMC is currently gathering evaluative data from each session to determine the long-range impact of this program.

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STUDENT MONEY MANAGEMENT CENTER—UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

The center developed the **Smart Start Money Series** specifically for students transitioning to the university as new students. Staff members offer these workshops in residence halls (where the majority of first-year students reside) and during non-traditional programming hours (evenings and weekends). Here is a sample of workshop topics:

BUYING A CAR

Buying a car is one of the most expensive and complex purchases students will make in their lives, so it's important to get it right. Students learn how to successfully plan and research the purchase of a car - whether new or used.

DON'T GO BROKE THIS SPRING BREAK

Leaving for spring break with money in your pockets is necessary to enjoying spring break plans, but returning to school with money in your pockets is more important. This workshop prepares students to plan for expenses while planning their spring break trips. Students explore costs while selecting the spring break trip that won't break the bank!

FINDING TIME FOR A LIFE

This workshop addresses the school-life-work balance for students. Topics discussed include setting priorities and goals, time management, and defining what it means to be successful during your college career.

GIVE YOURSELF SOME CREDIT

This workshop provides students with information on obtaining their first credit card, setting guidelines for using a credit card, and how to avoid common pitfalls and poor behaviors when using credit. Discussion will also include solutions and options for paying off an already maxed-out credit card.

MONEY MATTER$ IN COLLEGE

This workshop provides students with information on starting their college careers with sound financial knowledge and covers topics including credit cards and budgeting.

MOVIN' ON & MOVIN' OUT

This workshop provides students with information to make an informed decision whether to continue living in a residence hall or to move off campus. Pros and cons of both types of housing options are discussed. Budget planning forms will be distributed to help project costs and weigh decisions.

PLANNING FOR THE SUMMER BREAK

This workshop prepares students for the end of the semester and the summer break. Students explore costs and decisions involving taking classes, moving back home or out on their own, working during the summer, and balancing family needs with their own personal time.

College Success Strategies: How to Get From Here to There

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Zane State College, a two-year public technical college in the foothills of Appalachia, serves a largely underprepared and economically disadvantaged student population of 2,000. According to Kidwell (2005), the difficulty in transitioning into college is not a lack of student ability, but rather a matter of students not understanding their learning styles or how to learn. The one-quarter orientation course, IDS 101 College Success Strategies, is required for all new students. Besides providing students with an orientation to college services and a roadmap for navigating the system, we provide activities in which they discover their learning styles and acquire skills necessary for successful learning. Two notable activities that we use are (a) inquiry-based learning and (b) a visualization exercise designed to help students see themselves as successful college graduates.

Last year, Zane State began using inquiry-based learning in IDS 101, which involved having students develop the course description, objectives, and activities for the course. Donnangelo and Santa Rita (1982) demonstrated through campus studies at Bronx Community College that choice and variety in learning activities are instrumental in improving retention, GPA, and attendance. Our activity was designed to enhance relationship building and provide students with choice. It also made clear to the students that they are capable of determining what information and content is significant and important in their educational experience. Interestingly, the course description students developed mirrors one created by faculty and staff when IDS 101 was initially offered. The students also created the syllabus and determined specific learning activities for the course. Inquiry-based design emphasizes student autonomy and a variety of challenges, which the students encountered and eventually overcame with the completion of the course.

In their research, Chow and Law (2005) discuss the correlation between student motivation and inquiry-based learning, demonstrating that student motivation is closely aligned to the theory of self determination. With this ideology, emphasis is placed upon the combination of task and reinforcement. The task dimension refers to a student's intrinsic motivation, which the student brings to the institution, and the reinforcement dimension refers to extrinsic motivation, which the IDS course tries to reinforce.

In our 2007 summer class, we added a visualization exercise to our first session aimed at getting students to see themselves as successful. We brought in various caps and gowns (bachelor's, master's, and doctorate) and a camera and asked the students to picture their ultimate educational goals and their participation in the graduation ceremony. We then provided students an opportunity to have their photographs taken in a cap and gown of their choice. We then sent them copies of their photos for placement in a visible location as a daily reminder of the ultimate outcomes of their perseverance, persistence, and hard work.

First-year Zane State College student Carissa Kohl dresses up in master's cap and gown as part of a visualization exercise designed to ensure college success.

In creating this activity, we provided our students with a vision of the future—a future in which they create their destiny. The activity was designed as a concrete and tangible way to keep students motivated. We speculated that by affording them a visible reminder of their ultimate goal their level of motivation would remain high.

The progress of the students who participated in this particular course has been monitored, and long-term studies will be completed in the future. Anecdotally, students said the exercise was helpful. One student, Robert Shepherd III, said, "I did find it helpful to see myself in the cap and gown. It felt like I was seeing into the future and that my goal was not only in my head but a tangible thing, which makes it easier to reach." Another

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IDS 101 student, Barbara Wright, reflected on her experience: "Walking the halls of Zane State, I am reminded that, despite age or socioeconomic backgrounds, we all are equal in the possibilities to make a difference, be it personal studies or an education for a better career." The opportunity to have a picture taken wearing the cap and gown is for many a visual motivation towards achieving their goals.

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Please address all questions and submissions to:

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Using a Digital Voice Recorder to Give Feedback on Student Drafts

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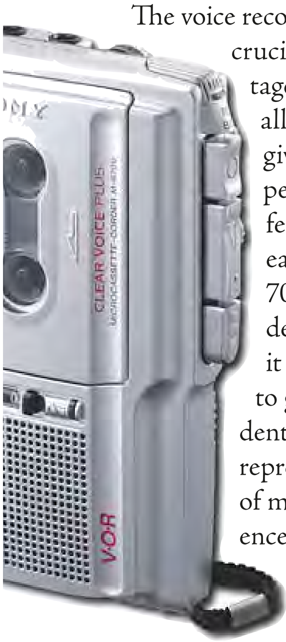
One of the perpetual issues many professors face is how to give useful feedback on student writing. Often, we place strong emphasis on drafting and peer workshops as a strategy for revision, but there are times when students need professorial feedback. During the first two terms of my yearlong Freshman Inquiry class at Portland State University, I had students turn in evidence of their peer workshop with their final drafts. In most cases, I could see that relatively little editing had taken place, and I spent far too much time commenting on final drafts that students never revisited. During the third term, I asked students to sign up for a 15-minute conference to discuss their drafts. But, soon, that exercise became frustratingly slow. So, recently, I began incorporating a digital voice recorder as a timesaving tool that allows me to give feedback that is more detailed.

The voice recorder has two crucial advantages: (a) It allows me to give thorough, personalized feedback to each of my 70-plus students, and (b) it allows me to give students a real-time representation of my experience of reading their work.



I record my experience as I read, including the moments of confusion and illumination. For example, if a student hasn't used page numbers, despite my haranguing, he or she will hear me stopping to ruffle through pages. The inconvenience to me becomes an inconvenience to the student, and, in the process, gives that student a live experience of the importance of a seemingly trivial detail. Likewise, the student who hears me trying to move back and forth between his or her text and bibliography begins to understand that providing citations is not simply an arbitrary rule, but a scholarly convention that creates a paper trail that other scholars can follow and build on.

Additionally, using a recorder allows me to offer more feedback in a much shorter time than it takes to write it. I can voice specific problems within a paragraph, instead of simply writing the quicker, but less useful "unclear" or "explain" in the margins to indicate a variety of problems that are not always apparent to the student. Also, the voice recorder has improved the productivity of my student conferences. Instead of hastily re-reading students' papers and trying to recreate my feedback and recall any specifics, I am now able to simply playback my feedback. I often see students nodding, as if my comments confirmed things they already knew or helped them understand new things. At the end of the playback, I ask students to respond to my feedback. Overall, they have more engaged and specific questions than they did during our previous conferences without the recorder. Many reported that the oral feedback was the most helpful part of their drafting process.

In the future, I plan to upgrade to a system that will allow me to upload my recordings to computer and e-mail them to students or load them directly onto their laptops so that they can take my comments with them after they leave my office.

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level. One faculty member said the following:

> One of the things I learned [from the seminar] was that their reading skills were not as good as I assumed they were. I had always known writing was going to be a problem, but I hadn't realized how much help I need to give to students to be able to understand what it is they are supposed to be getting out of a document. … I learned that I need to help them along a little bit more, and I think that has had some effect on the way I teach survey-level courses.

Others said that the seminar helped them use discussion more effectively in large classes. A science professor had this to say:

> I let my students say a lot more when I lecture. … In the sciences what we tend to do is drill them on facts and whatnot, and then we ask them to form hypotheses, and they haven't a clue how to do that, so we're not challenging their upper thinking skills. And so I've started doing that more, and the way I go about doing that is I ask them in class, how would you do this experiment or what experiment would you do next, and I think CLS 101 taught me to wait for them, their reply or their response, and I just sit there, and I just sit and say, well, I'm not saying anything till you do, and they start to speak.

One faculty member said he, too, gives students more time to answer. After teaching the seminar, he is not as quick to jump in and answer questions himself, and he has more tolerance for answers that are not "intellectually fit."

> I noticed that I'm a bit more tolerant. If a student didn't respond in a way that I thought was at least intellectually fit, then I was, I think, a little more curt . . . but I think I'm more tolerant [now] in allowing students more time to respond [and] not as likely to jump in and try to answer for them just because that was something that I had to do with the freshmen . . . be a little bit more focused on wait time and that's carried over to the other classes.

In all of these examples, faculty members found ways to address shortcomings they see in beginning students. The insights that faculty gained from this experience extend to their disciplinary courses and a wider student audience. When faculty improve teaching in other classes as a result of their experience in a first-year seminar, the seminars become a force not only for helping beginning students succeed, but for improving teaching across campus as well.

References

Barefoot, B. O., Warnock, C. L., Dickinson, M. P., Richardson, S. E., & Roberts, M. R. (Eds.). (1998). *Exploring the evidence: Reporting outcomes of first-year seminars, Volume II* (Monograph No. 25). Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

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The National Resource Center has as its mission to support and advance efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education.

The Center, a nonprofit organization, will use proceeds from the newsletter to defray publication costs, support research, and disseminate information.

What's Happening at the National Resource Center

Conferences

27th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience
February 15 – 19, 2008
San Francisco, California

Early registration deadline is January 14, 2008.

The Institute for First-Year Seminar Leadership
April 13 – 15, 2008
Charleston, South Carolina

This event, the first of its kind sponsored by the National Resource Center, is designed to support those involved in first-year seminars. Sessions have been designed for active learning through group work, problem solving, and case studies. Topics include a discussion of the history and status of first-year seminars, seeking funding, assessment, and focused teaching strategies. Participants will create a personalized action plan for use on their home campuses.

Summer Institute for Academic Deans and Department Chairs
July 20 – 22, 2008
Asheville, North Carolina

This Institute is designed to promote discussion of current challenges and provide successful strategies in the curriculum and co-curriculum. Participants will have the opportunity to share the trials and successes related to the role of academic deans and department chairs, engage with colleagues, and examine trends and best practices.

For more information on these and other National Resource Center events, please visit our web site **www.sc.edu/fye/events/**

Research

Center to Conduct National Survey on Student Success Centers

The National Resource Center is conducting a national survey of student success and learning centers. The survey will launch in spring 2008 and provide new and comprehensive information about the nature, organization, practices, and evaluation of student success and learning centers at U.S. colleges and universities. A summary of results will be online published in 2008.

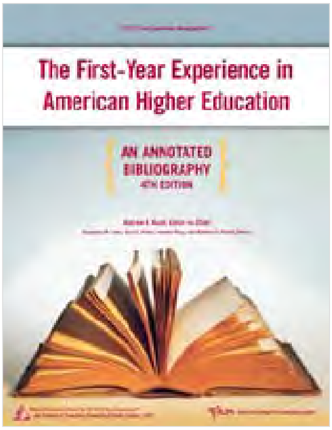
Listserv on Assessment to Be Relaunched

The National Resource Center will relaunch the First Year Assessment (FYA) listserv essay series on January 30. The FYA listserv is an online magazine that invites brief essays on assessment topics applicable to first-year programs and student development. The inaugural issue will include an essay by Andrew Wall of the University of Rochester on alternative representations of assessment data. To receive the FYA essay series, go to **http://www.sc.edu/fye/listservs/subscrib.html** and subscribe to the FYA listserv.

New Publications

Newly Revised Monograph Archives Research on First-Year Experience

A newly revised edition of The First-Year Experience in American Higher Education catalogues the last decade of evidence-based and reflective publications on the first year of college and on practices designed to support student learning and success. Published by the National Resource Center and the American College Personnel Association, this monograph includes introductory essays that describe the general shape of research on the first college year. Key words and a topical index help readers find relevant research on questions of interest.



Monograph No. 3
The First-Year Experience in American Higher Education: An Annotated Bibliography, 4th edition

Andrew K. Koch, Editor-in-Chief
Stephanie M. Foote, Sara E. Hinkle, Jennifer R. Keup, and Matthew D. Pistilli (2007). ISBN 978-1-889-27158-3. $40.00