



From Retention to Academic Success:

*Using First-Year Seminars as a Catalyst for
Success in the First Year of College*

Stephanie M. Foote


University of South Carolina Aiken

July 11, 2007



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).”


Ewell, P., & Wellman, J. (2007). *Enhancing student success in education: Summary report of the NPEC initiative and National Symposium on Postsecondary student success*. NPEC: Washington, DC.





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
- 



First-Year Student Success

“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.”

Upcraft, M. L., & Gardner, J. N. (1989). *The freshman year experience: Helping students survive and succeed in college*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.






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:”

Upcraft, M. L., Gardner, J. N., & Barefoot, B. O. (2005). *Challenging and supporting the first-year student: Handbook for improving the first year of college*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.





First-Year Student Success

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

Upcraft, M. L., Gardner, J. N., & Barefoot, B. O. (2005). *Challenging and supporting the first-year student: Handbook for improving the first year of college*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.





First-Year Student Success

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

Upcraft, M. L., Gardner, J. N., & Barefoot, B. O. (2005). *Challenging and supporting the first-year student: Handbook for improving the first year of college*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

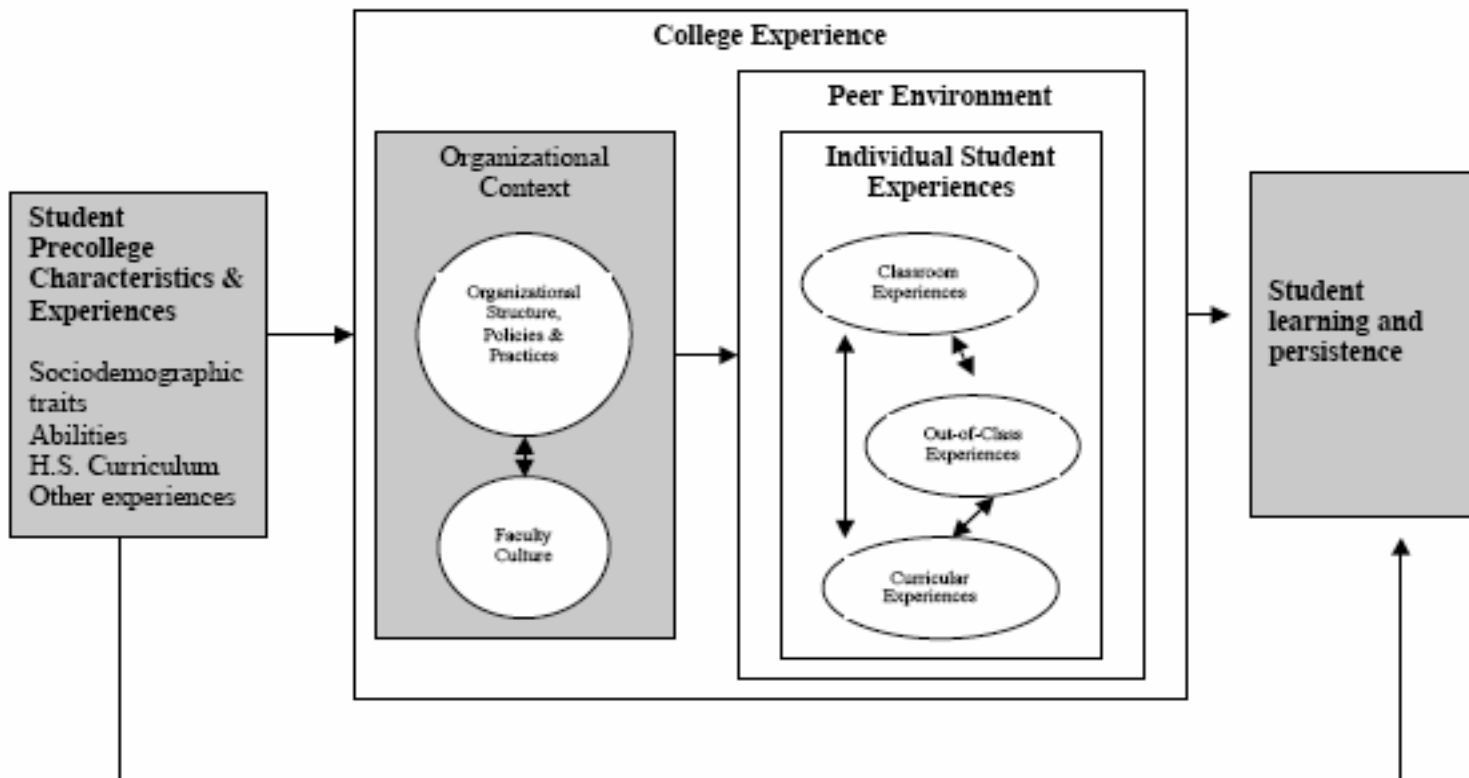




Institutional Examples



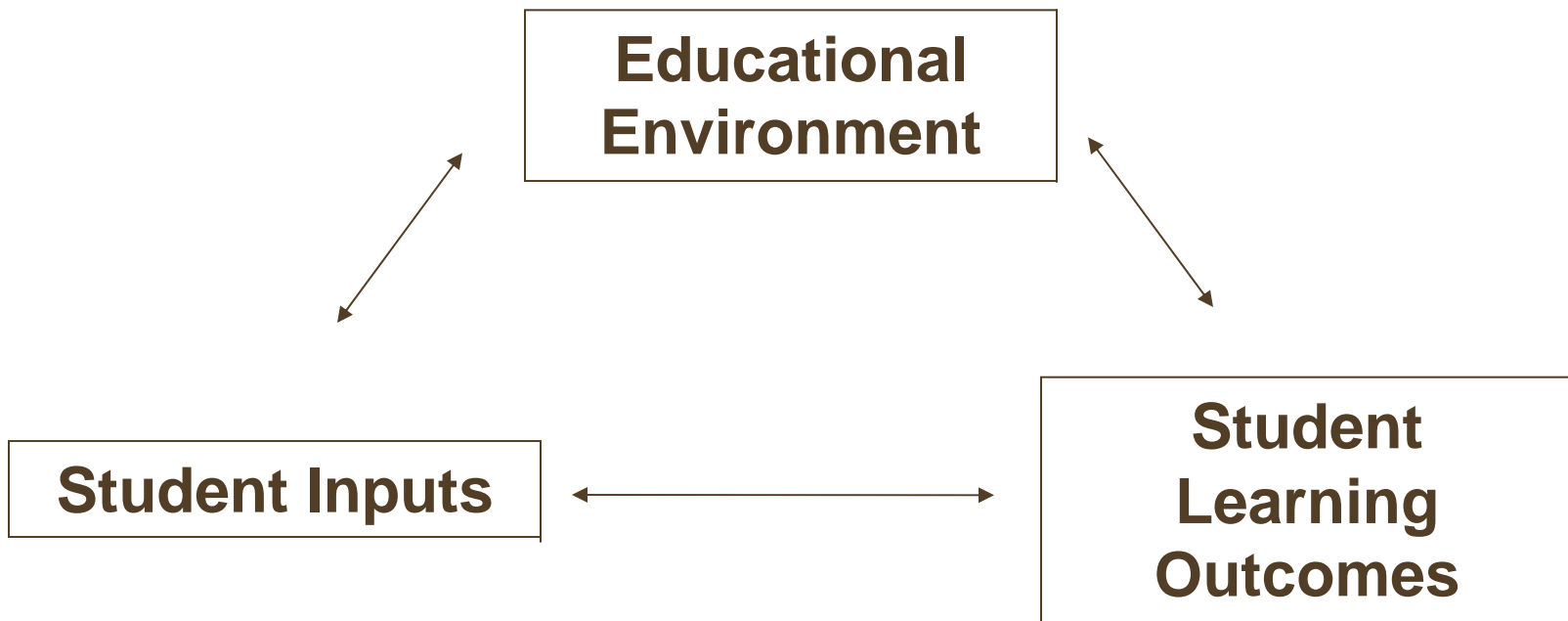
Conceptual Framework



Reason, R. D., Terezini, P. T., & R. J. Domingo (2006). First things first: Developing academic competence in the first year of college. *Research in Higher Education*, 47(2), 149-175.

Conceptual Framework


Astin's I – E – O Model



Astin, A.W, (1991). *Assessment for excellence: The philosophy and practice of assessment and evaluation in higher education*. Macmilian: New York.



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.
- 




Learning Outcomes

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

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




Learning Outcomes

Example of Collected Data

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



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

Stephanie M. Foote

*Director, Academic Success Center and
First-Year Experience*

University of South Carolina Aiken

stephanief@usca.edu

(803) 641-3321

