The Power of Impact: Designing Academic Interventions for 1st Year Students

Louisiana State University
Intro

Darrell C. Ray, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life
Adjunct Professor, College of Education

Bill Dabney, Graduate Assistant
Center for Academic Success
Overview of Session

- Discuss program components
- Marketing strategy
- Data
- Programs revisions now in place
- Questions and dialog
LSU Vital Stats

- 4-year Public research institution
- 28,000 Total enrollment
- 23,000 Undergraduates
- 4,800 First year students (fall 09)
- 1,308 Faculty
- 241 Faculty of first year students
- 3,801 Staff members
- 116 Student Life staff members
Program Model

- End of fall 2008, 737 first year students out of 5142 were on probation or warning.

- Response was to develop an academic intervention to assist students in spring 2009 semester.
Theoretical Framework

• Schlossberg (1984) transition theory
  the 4’s of transition:
  - Situation
  - Self
  - Support
  - Strategies

• Schlossberg (1989) theory of mattering
  and marginality
Program Design

• Initial 1.5 hour workshop covering
  - Learning styles
  - Meta-cognition
  - Time management & scheduling
  - Goal settings
  - Study cycle
  - Concept mapping
Program Design

- Subsequent workshops
  - Interpreting the LASSI (learning styles inventory)
  - Individual appointment with a staff member
  - Preparing for midterms
- Students were also encouraged to attend existing programs.
Marketing Plan

• 2009 Target audience students on probation after first semester:
  - Email to students on probation 24 hours after grades posted.
  - Blurb in January Family Association newsletter.
  - Individual email from some academic advisors
Data was collected at the conclusion of the program:

- **Quantitative**: Data from the Registrar’s Office compared Non-IMPACT (650) students to IMPACT students (86) concerning their change in GPA

- **Qualitative**: Data was collected through focus groups
IMPACT Quantitative Results

- Both IMPACT and Non-IMPACT students significantly improved their GPA from Fall to Spring Semester.
  - IMPACT: 1.30 (fall) to 1.86 (spring)
  - Non-IMPACT: 1.33 (fall) to 1.74 (spring)

- IMPACT students improved their GPA from a lower level (1.30) to a higher level (1.86) than non-IMPACT students.
IMPACT Quantitative Results

• Students who attended all workshops had the highest mean GPA (2.025) as compared to other students.

• Students who attended all workshops, participated in a learning strategies consultation and used CAS tutoring had the highest GPA (2.82).
IMPACT Quantitative Results

• Those who registered for IMPACT but did not attend any workshops had the lowest mean GPA (1.725).

• These students did however,
  - Use individual consultation
  - Use tutoring services
  - Use supplemental instruction
IMPACT Qualitative Results

• Four total focus groups were facilitated
  - Two non-IMAPCT
  - Two IMPACT

• Before participating in IMPACT, students described themselves as
  - hesitant
  - reluctant to try
  - nervous
  - uncomfortable
IMPACT Qualitative Results

• After meeting with the CAS and participating in IMPACT students reported their hesitation turned to confidence.
• IMPACT students reported they would have preferred for other students to have worked with to learn study strategies.
• Students reported that IMPACT helped them most in the areas of:
  - Time management
  - Learning how to study
IMPACT Qualitative Results

• Non-IMPACT students reported that
  - No one wants to go (to the CAS) and admit that they are struggling

• Many students were unaware of IMPACT and what the Center for Academic Success does on campus
  - I think the CAS is in the basement, but I am not sure.
2010 Revised Format

• 2.5 hour one time session.
  - Opening & Welcome - overview of techniques & learning strategies
  - Break out sessions -
    • How I learn
    • Ace My Tests
    • Manage My Stress
    • Time Management
2010 Revised Format

- 2010 program was marketed to all students to remove stigma of attending
- One meeting instead of multiple sessions
- Self guided online workshops
- All probation students who did not participate will be asked to meet with an FYE staff member
2010 Revised Format

- On line component
  - Attendees placed in small groups to participate in online sessions with a staff member.
  - They will participate in a four week online module going more in depth on the workshops with a short quiz after each one.
Revised Marketing

• Students on probation received emails from their colleges encouraging them to participate.
• All communications from colleges and departments were prepared by us.
• Information was sent to all student organization presidents and advisors.
• Posters across campus and in labs.
Final Thoughts

- Still lower participation than hoped for, but making progress.
- Seeking authority to mandate participation of students on probation or warning.
- All efforts are open to and include transfer students, but feel they may need a more individualized program.
Contact

• Feel free to contact us if you have questions or would like more information.

fye@lsu.edu or cas@lsu.edu

Thank you!