

Round Two: Tailoring the Required Seminar to Students Repeating

FD-47: 1:30pm Sunday, February 8th

Student Characteristics

Characteristics of first –year seminar (FYS) repeaters:

Stereo-types:

- Athletes
- Registered with disability services
- Mental health concerns
- Outside-academic obligations
- Academically at-risk

Realities at Washburn University this Spring:

- Academic probation (89%)
- Financial aid “warning” semester (100%)
- Motivation issues
- Predominantly male (88%)
- Off-campus work (24.5hrs)

What are the specific needs of your “repeater” population?

- Intense discussion of Financial Aid (especially Satisfactory Academic Progress)
- A motivating force—our students are not motivated to do well—just to “get by”
- Early intervention (and tutoring) in other courses
- An introduction to student health services and counseling services on campus
- Time-management and prioritization!

FYS Needs

What typical FYS content areas are least beneficial for this group?

- Campus tours
- Student life/student organization orientation
- Campus connections
- Course registration

What FYS content is absolutely vital to cover in a course with “repeater” students?

- Locus of control discussions (internal v. external)
- Career exploration (plan toward degree too)
- How to ask for help and find information
- Re-establishing goals
- Time-management/prioritization
- Biological/psychological benefits of healthy sleep patterns
- INTRUSIVE advising—weekly meetings, coaching sessions, etc.
- Financial aid/financial literacy information

Isolation v. Integration

What content areas are important to include in FYS for new students/spring admits?

Need the “fluffy” stuff:

- Campus orientation
- Connections to campus (student orgs intro, etc)
- Class introductions—ice breakers to make friends
- Campus tour, introduction to campus services
- Details of academic advising, general education, and course registration

Upbeat classroom:

- Recreate the excitement most students get through Weeks of Welcome/New Student Orientation
- Ready to absorb knowledge

What are the impacts of an integrated classroom where new students and “repeaters” learn together?

New Students:

Advice of seasoned students

- Repeaters share tips for campus adjustment
- Repeaters share “what not to do” advice

Downtrodden classroom atmosphere

- Repeaters bring their potentially poor study habits with them as advice
- Repeaters bring a potentially bad attitude toward the FYS instructors/course

Repeaters:

Sacrifice time on important skills needed for “repeaters” to teach the “fluffy” campus orientation items they do not need

Cannot have the “get on the bus” frank conversations with these students without risking the upbeat classroom atmosphere for the new students

Potentially risking the “look to your left and right—one of you won’t graduate” mentality for new students

Cannot spend time on intrusive advising for these students in a large seminar

Discussion Conclusion

If possible, a separate seminar course for “repeater” students is always best. You cover the subjects and have the more serious conversations these “repeaters” need, without sacrificing the experience of the new students.

Also always consider bringing in multiple people to support the students. “Repeaters” are more likely to be critical of the experience and individuals who find it difficult to connect to faculty; the more people around the more likely the students will get the support they need.

Questions for the presenters? Contact...

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