

Reaching “At-Risk” First-Year Students through the FYE Course

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FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE COURSES AND “AT-RISK” STUDENTS

- Research shows that students who enter college needing developmental English and/or math and Latino and African American students have lower-than-average retention rates.
- Our SJSU campus data is consistent with these broader trends.

THE SJSU STUDY

- We examined whether enrollment in a first-year experience (FYE) course improved retention among these at-risk populations.
- MUSE (Metropolitan University Scholars’ Experience) seminars are interdisciplinary GE courses which combine a theme and transition/success skills. Enrollment is capped at 18 students.
- Sample: From first-time freshmen who entered between 2003 and 2007, 4290 completed a MUSE seminar and 7533 did not enroll in any special FYE course.
- The seminars are open to all entering students. However, students needing developmental courses and students of color were slightly less likely to enroll.

FYE & REMEDIATION STATUS: 1-YEAR RETENTION RATES			
All students			
2007	MUSE 83.8%	Control 77.3%	+6.5%***
5 years	MUSE 81.7%	Control 77.5%	+4.2%***
No remediation required			
2007	MUSE 84.8%	Control 82.5%	+2.3%
5 years	MUSE 85.1%	Control 82.0%	+3.1%**
Remediation required			
2007	MUSE 83.0%	Control 75.2%	+7.8%***
5 years	MUSE 80.9%	Control 76.7%	+4.9%***
**statistically significant - p<.01			
***statistically significant - p<.001			

FYE AND ETHNICITY: 1-YEAR RETENTION RATES			
African-American students			
2007	MUSE 77.1%	Control 66.7%	+10.4%
5 years	MUSE 78.0%	Control 70.3%	+ 7.7%*
Latino/Latina students			
2007	MUSE 76.2%	Control 71.6%	+ 4.6%
5 years	MUSE 78.7%	Control 71.7%	+ 7.0%**
Asian students			
2007	MUSE 92.8%	Control 85.3%	+ 7.5%**
5 years	MUSE 87.0%	Control 83.9%	+ 3.9%*
White students			
2007	MUSE 84.1%	Control 81.2%	+ 2.9%
5 years	MUSE 82.4%	Control 79.3%	+ 3.1%*
*statistically significant - p<.05			
**statistically significant - p<.01			

COMPARISON FINDINGS

- For most comparisons, 2-year retention rate differences between FYE/no FYE students were as great as or greater than 1-year retention rate differences.
- For most comparisons, there were no gender differences.

SUMMARY

- While the FYE seminar benefited all groups of students, it was especially helpful for students needing developmental courses and for African American and Latino students.
- The benefits for “at-risk” students improved over time – they were highest for the most recent cohorts.

