Community, Access, and Thriving: Theory-based approaches to supporting first-year transitions

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ACPA-College Student Educators International would like to acknowledge that the land we are meeting on today has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst a number of Indigenous peoples, specifically the Apache, Caddo, Comanche, Kiowa and Wichita nations.

Additionally, Texas is home to the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas, the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, the Lipan Apache Tribe, and the Texas Band of Yaqui Indians.

ACPA-College Student Educators International honors and respects the diverse Indigenous peoples connected to this territory on which we gather.
INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

#ACPA18 provides an opportunity to discuss concepts that span a variety of audiences and contexts in higher, post-secondary, and tertiary education. As such, we ask that session participants consider:

- Recognizing individual gender pronoun use
- Utilizing contemporary and relevant language around social identities
- Utilizing language that recognizes varying abilities and is not ableist
- Utilizing language inclusive of diverse global contexts
- Utilizing this space for developmental and educational support of attendees who may be unfamiliar with inclusive language practices
Looking back . . .

• Think of one of your own transitions
  – How did you become a member of your new community?
  – What were the steps along the way?
  – What were the challenges? Barriers?
  – What were the key factors in making a successful transition?
Goals for this Session

• Introduce a new way of thinking about transitions
• Engage in a dialogue around how this perspective can be applied in various FYE contexts
Toward a Definition of Transition

- A transition is “a point or period in which a student encounters an event or non-event that may impact his or her progression toward educational and personal goals.” (Goodman, Schlossberg, & Anderson, 2006)
- A student in transition refers to any student entering an academic community with unfamiliar rules, people, tools, roles, and expectations for behavior and identity.
Programs for First-Year Students

- Common reading
- Convocation
- Developmental or remedial education
- Early alert systems
- Experiential learning
- First-year academic advising
- First-year gateway courses
- First-year seminars
- General education
- Leadership programs
- Learning communities
- Mentoring by campus professionals
- Peer education
- Placement testing
- Pre-term orientation
- Residential programs or initiatives
- Service-learning
- Student success center
- Study abroad
- Summer bridge
- Undergraduate research
- Writing-intensive coursework
- Others?
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<tr>
<th>Program/Initiative</th>
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Notes: n = 525.

Source: NSFYE 2017
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<th>Less Common FYE Programs/Initiatives</th>
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## Aims of First-Year Programs

Campuswide institutional objectives for the first year:

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Source: NSFYE 2017
Challenge in Perception of Supporting Students in Transition: “Moving the cliff”

Is this how our efforts to support students in transition are perceived?
THEORETICAL GROUNDING

Learning, Community, and Thriving
What does it mean to learn?
What does it mean to *teach*?
An Alternative Paradigm

Learning as *participating* in a *community of practice*
Legitimate Peripheral Participation

- **Learning** = moving toward full participation in a "community of practice"

- Learning occurs through:
  a) Acting or participating,
  b) In legitimate/authentic practices,
  c) With more experienced members of the community,
  d) In ways that facilitate meaning and understanding

Lave & Wenger, 1991
The FYE through the lens of participation

• Goal: Participate with students in the academic and social practices of the campus community
  – Knowledge & Skills
  – Tools & Resources
  – Attitudes/Values/Purposes
  – Relationships
Aims of First-Year Programs

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"The curriculum is not simply a set of courses [or learning outcomes], it is a description of **learning experiences organized as frameworks for learning**. In other words, it is primarily about what students do." (Tagg, 2007)
A new paradigm for the FYE

(a) **Membership** – *Participate* with a community of learners

(b) **Meaning** – *Connect* participation to shared purpose

(c) **Identity** – *Become* a learner
Guiding Q’s

– What should we require students to do?
– **With whom** should they be participating?
– What types of **environments** will best facilitate the process of becoming?
– What will this require of campus-wide stakeholders?
How can first-year programs encourage Legitimate Peripheral Participation?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION
Common Features of First-Year Programs

• Desire to create community
• Communicate values of the institution
• Break students down into smaller groups
  – Orientation clusters, small FYS sections, common reading discussion groups
• Timing
  – First six weeks, the first semester, the full first year
Common Features of First-Year Programs

- **Information**
  - Rules, policies, procedures of larger community

- **Relationships**
  - Peer-to-peer, meaningful faculty and staff interaction, role of peer leadership

- **Meaning-making activities**
  - Discussions, reflection

- **Engagement**
  - Value and importance is communicated through these programs
How do these programs encourage LPP?

**First-Year Seminar**
- Course comprised of various skill-based "units" (e.g. note-taking, test-prep, reading comprehension)
- Campus resource "day" where students learn about a large number of key resources
- Pass-fail grading
- Small class
- Social events with faculty member

**Orientation**
- Orientation schedule framed around presentations from key offices on campus
- Students scheduled to complete course registration in large computer labs with instruction forms and advisors on stand-by
- Orientation leaders give tours and presentations
- Lunch time with faculty member
How do these programs encourage LPP?

First-Year Seminar
- Course structured around interdisciplinary problem-solving
- Students access campus resources in order to complete coursework (e.g. library research)
- Graded, credit-bearing course
- Small class
- Meet w/ faculty member to review/revise major writing assignment

Orientation
- Schedule developed around conversations about successfully entering college, representatives from key offices engage in conversations about how they support student success
- Students engage in small-group advising around major or meta-major
- Orientation leaders facilitate small-group conversations about transition to college
- Meet w/ faculty member to discuss topics such as academic expectations and major selection
Example: Kennesaw State - Owl Expedition

- Camp-based
- Small groups: ~10 people
- Peer leaders – extend beyond orientation
- Discussions about traditions and
- Faculty host discussions about academic expectations
Example: Fort Lewis College

- Small Groups: ~30
- Orientation leader guides small groups throughout process
- Sessions built broader topics rather than functional area services
- Faculty and staff engage in purposeful conversations with groups about student success
- Built-in reflection activities
- Concludes with convocation
Example: **UNIV 104 @ Washington State Univ.**

- Small class sizes
- Integration with common read
- Focus on *becoming a learner*
- "structured opportunities (and academic credit) for doing the work that every student must do to make a successful transition to college"
Example: **Signature Courses @ UT-Austin**
Participation as a Pathway to Thriving

Meaningful participation leads to . . .

– Academic engagement
– Healthy interpersonal relationships
– Psychological well-being
  (belonging & community)

*Overall sense of thriving
(Schreiner, 2012)
FYE as a Pathway to Thriving

- Knowledge
- Skill
- Relationships
- Values & Purpose

Full Participation

- Membership
- Ownership
- Relationship
- Partnership

Sense of Community

- Academic engagement
- Interpersonal relationships
- Psychological well-being

Thriving
Thank You!

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YOUNGDAL@mailbox.sc.edu
SESSION EVALUATION

Thank you for learning with us!

In order to provide feedback, please find this session in the ACPA18 Guidebook application and once there, click on the “ACPA18 Program Session Evaluation” and complete.

Please take a few minutes right now to complete the this evaluation.

Your feedback is valuable to help ensure our curriculum is meeting the needs of attendees as well as helping presenters in their development.
APPLICATION FOR PRACTICE

Situating Learning in First-Year Programs
What are some shared features of first-year programs?
Key Questions for LPP in FYE

• What should we require/invite first-year students to do?
• With whom should they be participating?
• What type of environments will best facilitate this learning?
• Macro-level questions:
  – How are campus-wide actors all working together to achieve this?
  – What level of coordination is necessary?
  – What level of differentiation is necessary?
Participation and Discussion

• Divide room into smaller groups based on interest/first-year programs
• Discuss the implications of LPP in designing a first-year initiative
Questions and Conclusion
Spot the Fake
(Approximations that don't count)

• Being auto-registered for courses
• Taking a campus tour
• Reading the common read book
• Attending First-Year Convocation
• Registering for a first-year seminar course
• Joining a club
• Undergraduate Research
Orientation

• Common Features:
  – Campus resources, services, and facilities
  – Academic advising
  – Registration
  – Involvement and community building
  – Faculty and staff Interaction
First-Year Seminars

• **Common components**
  – Core academic skills
  – Campus resources
  – Expectations
  – Faculty Interaction