

Getting a Good Start: Rethinking the First Year of University

Aarhus University

Thursday, 1 November 2018

Vincent Tinto

Distinguished University Professor

Syracuse University

vtinto@syr.edu

Premise:

Success in the first-year is the foundation upon which success in the University is built.

Conceptual Frame:

First year is a year of transition during which new students seek to adjust to the academic and social demands of the university.

Conceptual Frame:

First year is a year of transition during which new students seek to adjust to the academic and social demands of the university.

The first year is a year of becoming during which students need to acquire the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind required for success in that year and the years that follow.

Conceptual Frame:

First year is a year of transition during which new students seek to adjust to the academic and social demands of the university.

The first year is a year of becoming during which students need to acquire the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind required for success in that year and the years that follow.

Student engagement and academic and social integration are essential to an effective first-year program.

Building an Effective First Year of University

Strategies: Different types of first year actions

Building an Effective First Year of University

Strategies:

- ✓ Extended Orientation

Building an Effective First Year of University

Strategies:

- ✓ Extended Orientation
- ✓ First Year Seminars

Building an Effective First Year of University

Strategies:

- ✓ Extended Orientation
- ✓ First Year Seminars
- ✓ Required Advising / Counseling

Building an Effective First Year of University

Strategies:

- ✓ Extended Orientation
- ✓ First Year Seminars
- ✓ Required Advising / Counseling
- ✓ Redesigned “Gateway” courses

Building an Effective First Year of University

Strategies:

- ✓ Extended Orientation
- ✓ First Year Seminars
- ✓ Required Advising / Counseling
- ✓ Redesigned “Gateway” courses
- ✓ Cooperative / Problem-Based / Project-Based courses

Building an Effective First Year of University

Strategies:

- ✓ Extended Orientation
- ✓ First Year Seminars
- ✓ Required Advising / Counseling
- ✓ Redesigned “Gateway” courses
- ✓ Cooperative / Problem-Based / Project-Based courses
- ✓ Cohort / Learning Community Programs

Building an Effective First Year of University

Strategies:

- ✓ Extended Orientation
- ✓ First Year Seminars
- ✓ Required Advising / Counseling
- ✓ Redesigned “Gateway” courses
- ✓ Cooperative / Problem-Based / Project-Based courses
- ✓ Cohort / Learning Community Programs
- ✓ Academic and Social Support Programs

Building an Effective First Year of University

Strategies:

- ✓ Extended Orientation
- ✓ First Year Seminars
- ✓ Required Advising / Counseling
- ✓ Redesigned “Gateway” courses
- ✓ Cooperative / Problem-Based / Project-Based courses
- ✓ Cohort / Learning Community Programs
- ✓ Academic and Social Support Programs
- ✓ Peer Mentoring

Building an Effective First Year of University

Strategies:

- ✓ Extended Orientation
- ✓ First Year Seminars
- ✓ Required Advising / Counseling
- ✓ Redesigned “Gateway” courses
- ✓ Cooperative / Problem-Based / Project-Based courses
- ✓ Cohort / Learning Community Programs
- ✓ Academic and Social Support Programs
- ✓ Peer Mentoring
- ✓ **Distinct First Year College within the University**

Designing the First Year of University:

Principle of Backward Curriculum Design:

“If you don’t know where you are going, its hard to get there.”

Designing the First Year of University:

1. Determine the goals for the first year.
2. Define those goals in ways that can be measured.
3. Determine the modes of assessment needed to determine if the goals are met.
4. Beginning with the first day of the year, determine what needs to occur to achieve the goals of the first year (e.g. what should be taught, how should it be it should taught, how should it be organized inside and outside of class to engage students and promote academic and social integration).

Designing the First Year of University:

1. Form groups of five – sit with people with whom you typically do not work.
2. Assign a time keeper and a note taker who will report what the group did.
3. Take a minute or two to write down for your thoughts about a first year.
4. Share your thoughts and work to reach some agreement about the essential elements of a redesigned first year of university.
5. Report your conclusions.

Resources: Designing the First Year of University

- Re-Imagining the First Year of College @ <http://www.aascu.org/RFY/>
- Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education @ <https://www.jingi.org/>
- National Resource Center for the First Year Experience @ <http://www.sc.edu/fye/>