Teaching Unprepared Students:

Strategies for Promoting Success and Retention in Higher Education

Kathleen F. Gabriel, Ed.D.

Broward College’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

Today’s Agenda

9:00 to 10:30 AM
- Overview of Unprepared Students
- Philosophical Foundations
- Community of Learners-Sharing a Mission
- Learner-Centered Teaching & Interactive Lectures
- Break 10:30-10:45

10:45 to 12 noon
- Increasing Attendance with Active Learning
- Science of Learning—Engaging Students
- Mental Toughness & Expectations

What do you think? True or False

___ 1. ACT testing results showed that 49% of high school graduates do not have the reading skills needed for college success.

___ 2. At 4-year colleges, 15% of first-time students require at least 1 year of remedial courses.

___ 3. Once admitted to college, 55% of the students who have to take at least one remedial class will go on to obtain a degree or certificate within 8 years of enrollment.
What do you see in the classroom?
Write-Pair-Share

Name  Date
Answer or thoughts here.....

What do you see in the classroom?

Identifying Guidelines...

- Reading & Vocabulary Quiz
- Writing Sample
- Prior Knowledge-Chart

ALSO--
“Invite” to disclose; interview students

Seven Risk Factors That Threaten Persistence & Graduation from College

1. Being Academically underprepared for college-level work
2. Not entering college directly after high school
3. Attending college part-time
4. Being a single parent
5. Being financially independent (relying on own income)
6. Caring for children at home
7. Working more than 30 hours per week
8. Being a first-generation college student*

Philosophical Foundations

- It is never too late
- Commitment and time are required
- Struggle (possibly pain) is involved
- Responsibility for goals & dreams goes to...*
- “Never do for the students what they can do for themselves”

Chapter 1

As educators, we have an obligation to all of our students...we must use a myriad of actions that will provide...real opportunities for success. If we don’t, then we are simply setting these students up for failure and,...only pretending that we are providing opportunities (p. 4).

Faculty (that is YOU) Make the Difference!
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**Community of Learners: Sharing A Mission:**

First week of class…

Reach Out

Begin with a detail and explicit syllabus

**SYLLABUS:**

- Course Objectives = LEARNING OUTCOMES
- Defining Roles & Expectations
- Clarifying how students will be graded

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Develop analytic skills
- Develop problem-solving skills
- Improve speaking skills
- Develop leadership skills

**Learning Intentions & Success Criteria**

**tell students where we are going,**

**help students learn how to monitor their progress**

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**TEACHING GOALS INVENTORY**

On-line Teaching Goals Inventory

http://fm.iowa.uiowa.edu/

Angelo and Cross, 1993, p. 20-23

**Essential Beginnings:**

- Setting the Scene
- **YOUR** enthusiasm
- Your interest the students

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**2nd Principle for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education…**

1) **Encourages Faculty-Student Contact**

2) **Encourages Cooperation Among Students**

*By Chickering, A., & Gamson, Z. (1987)*  

“Speed Dating”

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**Metacognitive Get Acquainted Activity***

1. What do you believe is important to understand and learn in________________? 
2. What do you believe to be critical characteristics of successful students in________________? 
3. How will you study and prepare for exams in________________? 


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**Four major reasons for academic Difficulty:**

1) Poor Management of Time  
2) Continue to organize (and study) the same way as they did in high school  
3) Selection of courses  
4) They studied alone…

*Author, Richard J. Light (pgs. 36-49)*

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**Bloom’s Taxonomy**

![Bloom's Taxonomy Diagram]

Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001  
Learner-Centered Teaching & The Interactive Lecture

The Subject Matter

Keep a constant eye on both ends of the bridge.

High Expectations

- All participate
- Put expectations on your syllabus
- “Respect”--how we will treat each other
- Responsibility & Preparation for Class

Actions of individual faculty members improve the chances of success…

“regardless of individuals’ prior academic history…

When professors treated the students as academically capable and held them to high standards” in an environment of respect and integration, students-- all students, even those who were admitted as underachieving or unprepared students—achieve an increased level of performance.” Blose (1999).

Ask for a Commitment!

Bain (2004) notes This is a practice among the “Best Teachers”!

Engagement = Academic Discourse

THE GOAL:
Developing in your class or in the program, a “Community of Learners”

Ground Rules for Groups:

- Random-Selection of groups--you should always pick, or design how groups will be selected
- Keep groups small--three to four people is best--(never more than four).
- TIME ALL ACTIVITIES--have a timer and/or a bell--keep to the time--even if all groups aren’t done.
- Individual accountability is a must.
Setting up student groups

Strategies to accomplish this task

**NAME PLATES**

**#1 color**

Reflection Questions

- What's the difference, if any, between studying and learning?

- For which task would you work harder?
  A. Make an A on the test
  B. Teach the material to the class

The Lecture

Video Clip from *Declining By Degrees*

20 Minute Limit

Interactive

Mega Cognitive Moments

Step 1: Questions are passed out to the groups
Step 2: Each Group decides if they know the answer; discusses the answer
Step 3: On the answer sheet, write “YES” or “NO”
Step 4: Professors collects the sheets; addresses the “no” questions at the next class.

Mega Cognitive Moments

E. Hester, January, 1998, *The Teaching Professor*

NOTE: Students receive participation points for the activity
Increasing Attendance

- Learn your students’ names
- Help students learn their classmates’ names
- Require a respectful classroom atmosphere
- Reward Student Engagement with a point (grade value)

- Ask students what they will do … have them take the …

“Semester Performance Prognosis Inventory”

This exercise is in the appendix

(From Dr. Saundra Y. McGuire, Director of Academic Success—Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA)

Expert Teachers know...

- Kinds of difficulties that students are likely to face
- How to tap into their students’ existing knowledge in order to make new information meaningful
- How to assess their student’s progress


Other Formative Assessment Techniques

- The One Minute Paper
- Memory Matrix

Other Self-Reflective Assessments

- Documented Problem Solving
- Assignment or Exam Wrappers

Another Principle of Good Practices in Undergraduate Education:

- Encourages Active Learning

“Engagement” has compensatory effects for at-risk students

( Including low income, first generation, and students of color attending Predominately White Institutions.)

Connecting the Dots… Kuh et al.

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Exam Wrapper

- Questions you need to answer about your test preparation….
  1) Approximately how much time did you spend preparing for this exam?
  2) What did I do to prepare for the test?—percentage of time …
     - Reading textbook for first time ________
     - Re-reading section(s) ______________
     - Review class notes/handouts_________
     - Reviewing material from course web __________

3) Now that you looked at your score…estimate the % you lost due to… (must add up to 100)
   - Trouble with understanding the concept? ________
   - Not know where to find information in the text?_______
   - Not much experience with essay type exams ________
   - Didn’t spend enough time pre-reading or re-reading sections ________
   - Didn’t spend enough time on writing and editing my answers__________

4) NAME three things you plan to do differently in preparing for the next exam?

5) What can I (Dr. Gabe) do to help support your learning and your preparation for the next exam?


Many students have never been exposed to . . .different ways to approach studying or even to the idea that there are different ways to study……We can help students learn about different strategies and when to use them. (p. 124)

The Science of Learning

- Two Channels for processing:
  - Visuospatial
  - Visual-auditory
- Synergetic Effect

When both are used, comprehension and retention are improved.

Inadequate Vocabulary

“Inadequate vocabulary hampers the reading comprehension of many students.”

--John C. Bean, p. 136

Chapter 8: “Helping Students Read Difficult Texts”


Write the vocabulary on a 3 x 5 card. . .

- acquiesce

Think of an image that connects the definition to the word and draw a picture. . .

Ak’we es’

verb

to submit or comply silently or without protest

Practice at retrieval

SELF-TEST

or with a partner

Bar Graph

A format for visually displaying the information in a qualitative frequency distribution

Representations

- Diagrams
- Sequences
- Matrices
- Hierarchies

Grades and Feedback

“ The more scores you have, the more accurately the final grade will reflect student learning” (Wankat, p. 89).

Kathleen Gabriel, Ed.D.
The Power of Feedback
Hattie & Timperley (2007)

Revisions

Tutoring Systems Salvage Poor Performers

If there is no struggle, there is no progress.

Mental Toughness
(The 4 Cs)

- Commitment
- Challenge
- Control
- Confidence

Keep Your Eye On The Prize

Two of the pains in life are...
the pain of discipline,
and
the pain of regret

Choose which one you want.

“Today decides tomorrow.”

Think-Pair-Share
(write-pair-share)

As you design, plan, and prepare for your courses, what actions can you incorporate?

What other actions or steps have you used? Please Share.

Thank you for having me and for participating in today’s workshop.