

USING INVOLVEMENT THEORY TO CONSTRUCT A FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR  
COURSE FOR COLLEGE FRESHMEN

A CREATIVE PROJECT  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN PARTIAL FULLFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

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## ABSTRACT

Title: Using Involvement Theory to Construct a First-Year Seminar Course for Freshmen

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The purpose of this creative project was to develop a First-Year Experience (FYE) course for matriculating college students that included many developmental components including life skills, diversity immersion, and a mandatory student involvement component. This project was done to create a structure within FYE settings that emphasizes outside involvement as a complement to the academia components.

This course was designed as a complement to the overall first-year experience that freshmen students will have. While FYE programs already exist, this class was made to further get the student involved with his or her school outside of the classroom. Many FYE programs have involvement components that encompass work, volunteering or other clubs – but none that were studied made it a mandatory component. By engaging in outside involvement outside of the classroom, students become more affiliated with his or her college surroundings and may have a better collegiate experience than a student who is not engaged with involvement. With the design of this class, students will become more involved with their university or college at both the social and academic level.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

For incoming college freshmen, adapting to the college lifestyle is not always a process that can be performed autonomously. In order to find a balance between academics and a social life in the collegiate setting, a course or seminar designed to guide these students is needed. The First-Year Experience Course, present at over 95% of colleges in the United States, helps to ensure the transition from high school to college is not a difficult one (Jamelske, 2009).

First-Year Experience courses have drawn both praise and criticism. Studies performed at various universities have shown positive attributes, such as retention and increased GPAs, while others have shown dissimilar results, such as decreased GPAs and persistence rates (Schrader & Brown, 2008). An attribute that is not a mandatory component of many FYE courses is the inclusion of a student involvement component, a component which would require the student to be actively engaged in the college atmosphere outside of the classroom.

#### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this creative project was to develop a First-Year Experience course that included many developmental pieces including: life skills, diversity immersion, and a mandatory student involvement component. This project was done to create a structure within a First-Year Experience setting that would emphasize outside involvement as a complement to the academia piece.

### **Significance of Class**

This course was designed as a complement to the overall first-year experience that freshmen students will have. While FYE programs already exist, this class was made to further get the student involved with his or her school outside of the classroom. Many FYE programs have involvement components that encompass work, volunteering or other clubs – but none that were studied made it a mandatory component. By engaging in outside involvement outside of the classroom, students become more affiliated with his or her college surroundings and may have a better collegiate experience than a student who is not engaged with involvement. With the design of this class, students will become more involved with their university or college at both the social and academic level.

### **Scope and Limitations**

A campus-wide mandatory course for all matriculating freshman may cause great financial strain on a university. The pros of having this course include a higher retention rate and increased grade point averages per student enrolled in the class, but the cons may include greater expenditures depending on the size of the incoming freshman. A majority of the schools researched during the course of this study did not account for financial costs.

The success of the designed First-Year Experience course is yet to be determined. Research has shown that student involvement is a strong part of the development of the college student, but has only been minutely studied in First-Year Experience classes. Thusly, it cannot be said as to whether or not an involvement component for a First-Year Experience class will be effective.

### **Definitions and Further Clarifications**

As shown in the beginning of this creative project, whenever the phrase FYE is used, it stands for First-Year Experience. It refers to either the First-Year Experience program or the course that is being created for the project. A large portion of this paper also discussed an involvement component. An involvement component is defined as having a student getting involved with an organization or other student activity outside of the classroom.

### **Organization of the Paper**

This creative project was organized into four chapters. The second chapter is made of a review of the literature with a focus on existing FYE programs and the effectiveness of these programs. Chapter two also contains a review of student involvement theory. Chapter three discussed how the project was created and how it could possibly be implemented for future purposes. Chapter four contains the course structure, syllabus, timelines and all other components of the creation of a First-Year Experience course.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Summary of the Project**

A first-year experience (FYE) course is a program designed for matriculating college freshmen, and is currently implemented in various formats in many four-year institutions in the United States (Jamelske, 2009). While each university may approach a FYE program in their own unique way, it is a general goal of these programs to acclimate incoming students to the college lifestyle, both in terms of social skills and academic endeavors. Common skills learned in the class may include time management skills, institutional awareness, appropriate interpersonal behavior, and other areas of relevance as it pertains to their immediate college future (Schrader & Brown, 2008).

An FYE course generally has regular class meeting times with a specific instructor (or perhaps a team of instructors), and is almost always a one-credit class and graded (Jamelske, 2009). Many FYE classes usually include activities and resources designed to enhance the aforementioned characteristics. However, one strong variation amongst FYE programs lies within the pedagogy and structure of the class. While first-year experience programs are different in pedagogy from university to university, many programs site the same end-goal for a typical FYE class: increased student performance, integration of students into the university community academically and socially, and persistence to graduation – or high retention among typical four-year coursework

(Goodman & Pascarella, 2006).

### **Relevance of First-Year Experience Courses**

In explaining the relevance of a FYE course, Kidwell (2005) offered the following:

The vast majority of first-year students enter college as dualists. For them, knowledge is a matter of truth, answers are right or wrong, and positions are good and bad. Professors know the truth . . . learning is simply a matter of absorbing as much of the professor's knowledge as possible . . . like empty vessels, students attend class to be filled with the elixir of knowledge, which they store within themselves until it is time to return that knowledge in an exam or essay. (p. 254)

In order to fully engage and motivate an incoming freshman student, an understanding of the characteristics of these students and their developmental experiences can guide a first-year experience program to determine the facilitation of the program. Research has indicated that many students currently enrolled in universities are ill-prepared to meet the challenges of post-secondary education (Schrader & Brown, 2008). In the fall of 2000, it was reported that 76% of postsecondary institutions offered remediation courses in basic skill areas, such as writing, reading, and math. This information suggests students are unprepared for college academics (Wirt, Choy, Rooney, et al., 2004).

While individual universities and colleges have set goals for the students in academic programs or courses, one goal for any university is clear: retention. According to Rausch and Hamilton (2006), of the 2.2 million students currently in U.S. universities, between 25 and 30% don't return to their original institution for the second year. Whether this means a student has transferred or has dropped out of college, it still means the same

for the university losing the student: decreased retention rate.

The University of South Carolina, often credited as the first university to institute a FYE program, found that first-year seminar students were more likely to return for their sophomore year than non-participants (Jamelske, 2009). However, a similar study showed that 64% of students return to school within six years (Porter & Swing, 2006). Even though this figure may initially be intriguing to higher education institutions, it needs to be noted that students returning back into the college classroom experience a longer time to degree or are less likely to earn a bachelor's degree. Retention rates have a role in the first-year experience, as they serve as a primary goal of FYE seminars and classes. Again, at the University of South Carolina, positive persistent rates were shown in 11 out of the 16 years studied in a longitudinal study (Fidler, 1991).

However, among the seemingly high success rates of FYE enrollment in relation to retention, the research is limited due to the disaggregation of many components. The largest reason why the research may be lacking is due to the varying pedagogy present at different universities. As suggested by Porter and Swing (2006), it is unclear as to what component of the classes contributes the most. Among some of the highlighted areas of study that could be more important in an FYE setting were determined to be: an emphasis on study skills, explanations of campus policies and procedures, or encouragement for students to become involved.

Other variables that hinder retention or persistence rates are those that FYE classes may not take into account, such as off-campus endeavors. Astin (1984) found that those having outside of the classroom experiences, like off-campus full-time jobs, have weaker persistence and retention rates. Outside of what a FYE maybe be able to provide,

students' adjustment to college during the first few weeks of school greatly impacts their decision to stay or leave (Lang, 2007).

### **Effectiveness of FYE Courses**

Extensive research on the effectiveness of FYE courses at various universities has yielded underwhelming results. Schrader and Brown (2008) researched a study of a FYE course at a large Northeastern university in the fall of 2002. The researchers' aim was to find significant differences between groups of matriculating freshmen enrolled in the FYE course and those that did not enroll in a course. A self-evaluation with Likert-type items that pertained to academics and life skills was given to students based on three theoretical dimensions: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors (Schrader & Lawless, 2004). The test was administered to 604 students enrolled in the optional FYE class, while the comparison group of non-FYE students was 234.

This class has the traditional characteristics of many of the FYE courses seen at other universities: it is offered as an elective one-credit course and is taught by university faculty and staff knowledgeable of relevant content area (Schrader & Brown, 2008). Additionally, much like a typical FYE course, the program was designed to enhance a student's time management, communication, social interaction, and study skills – as well as develop critical thinking skills. Programmatic consistency was seen in the instructional manual, but the teaching style was not consistent. Each class was held to 18 students or fewer. In every crucial part of the structural framework, the FYE classes at this Northeastern university are like the typical classes present in many universities and colleges today.

The items tested for each student, using the Knowledge, Attitudes' and Behavior

model (Schrader & Lawless, 2004), is comprised of many different components that directly affect matriculating freshmen. Items for Knowledge included campus resources, academic skills, health and wellness, and decision-making knowledge. For the Attitudes component, the skills mentioned were utilizing tools for collegiate success and attitude towards interactions. Lastly, the Behavior items included academic behaviors, decision-making behaviors, conscientious behavior, and proactive behavior. As previously stated, the evaluations of the above items were administered to both FYE students and non-FYE students (all freshmen). A pre-class and post-class evaluation was administered.

Even with the wide-varied and diverse response group, the researchers discovered very little. “The data from this investigation do not support the conclusion that the FYE program is valuable in terms of its programmatic objectives . . . therefore, one cannot conclude that the FYE program is effective” (Schrader & Brown, 2008, p. 330).

However, there were a few items from the Knowledge, Assessment, and Behavior model that did show significant differences amongst the students who took the pre-class evaluation and post-class evaluation. In the Knowledge of resources section, students enrolled in the FYE class showed a significant increase, whereas students without FYE instruction did not show similar gains. However, among the goals of the FYE program (such as enhancing academic and social skills), these evaluations did not show vast differentiation and thusly proved not to be a significant agent of change in accordance to the program’s goals.

Though the researchers found the investigation ineffective by means of their Knowledge, Assessment, and Behavior model (Schrader & Lawless, 2004), they concluded that additional research could be performed on a more academic level. A call

for additional studies among the matriculation rates of students coming into college and the student's previous academic environment are needed. Additionally, a structure suiting the student on an individual level may be needed.

At the University of Buffalo, a similar FYE program existed: the course is one-credit hour, with a maximum of 24 students per class, and is taught in collaboration by faculty and staff (Lang, 2007). The topics in this FYE program included learning in the classroom, learning beyond the classroom, personal wellness, alcohol/drugs, values and cultural exploration. The intended goals for this FYE course were almost identical in nature to that of the aforementioned study of the Northeastern university.

For this study, Lang (2007) compared two groups of students: those enrolled in the FYE class (named UB 101), and those who did not take the class. The study took place over the course of a few years, from 1998 to 2000. To evenly distribute the groups as much as possible, the UB 101 group was matched with a sampling of non-UB 101 students. The matches were based on similarities between sex, race, high school ACT score, high school GPA, and intended major.

Much like with the first study, this study yielded similar results. The group of students who passed UB 101 in the fall of 1998 had a mean semester GPA of 2.777, while the students who did not take the course had a mean GPA of 2.657 in the first semester (Lang, 2007). However, the following year the statistics nearly were opposite. Out of the students who completed UB 101 in fall of 1998, the mean semester average GPA in fall of 1999 had dropped to 2.648. Interestingly, the students not taking UB 101, or the non-completer, raised their mean average GPA to 2.715. Additionally, the non-completers on average were taking more credits than the students who completed the UB

101 course. Academically, students taking the UB 101 course did not perform as well as the non-completers.

Though academically the results did not yield positive regards for students enrolled in the FYE course, Lang (2007) did discover a promising trend. Although the GPA was lower for UB 101 completers overall, the persistence rate was significantly higher compared to their non-completer peers. The study did not pursue students' outside-the-classroom interactions or involvements, but the high persistence rate could very well be attributed to skills or involvement strategies learned in the UB 101 class.

However, a pilot study of a First-Year Seminar at the University of Maine at Farmington showed that “retention of students was not significantly associated with first-year transition experience for any period” (Barton & Donahue, 2009, p. 267). Additionally, the academic performance amongst these students seemed to combat the academic trend of the UB 101 study. In the pilot study at Maine at Farmington, the researchers examined both academic performances before entering college and during the first year for the first-year students enrolled in the seminar.

From the study sample, the research showed that student enrolled in the seminar earned a higher GPA than those not enrolled in the course. They compared students with similar GPA and SAT scores in high school, and tracked their academic process throughout the first semester of their freshman year. Even though this study did not yield a high retention rate, it did show an increase in GPA for students enrolled. Additionally, a large majority of the students in the class reported they worked harder, were engaged more in campus activities, and discussed grades more with faculty, (Barton & Donahue, 2009).

In 1997, a study with similar findings was conducted at a medium-sized university in the Midwest (Jamelske, 2009). In this study, “the findings suggest no positive FYE effect on retention, but on average FYE students earned higher GPA’s than non-FYE students” (p. 373). All of the components of the previous FYE studies mentioned held true for this particular course as well, except in the case of the instructors. At this particular institution, FYE instructors faced barriers in meeting the goals of the program, as there were no specific rules or procedures to hold instructors accountable. Some of the FYE participants’ responses to the post-class survey of the course included, “my mentor never attended class . . . I was jealous that my class never did any academic/social activities outside of class like my friend’s FYE class” (p. 381).

All of the above studies showed characteristics of similar FYE programs. Each program was similar in structure and had a student-first focus. However, the researched FYE programs also had a common characteristic that was not included in their studies: involvement. While the FYE classes talked about student leadership and learning outside of the classroom, none of the classes made outside involvement a mandatory component.

### **Student Involvement and the First-Year Experience**

Astin’s (1984) Theory of Involvement proposed that students learn more when they engage actively within both the academic and the social aspects of the collegiate experience – specifically outside of the classroom. On the converse end of the spectrum, Astin described that uninvolved students typically neglect studies, spend little time on campus, abstain from extracurricular activities, and often have infrequent contact with other students or faculty. In this seemingly important characteristic of student development, it was absent from every FYE course in the above research studies.

A notion Astin (1984) described in his research of involvement is that of the individualization of the student. This approach assumes that no single approach to subject matter, teaching, or resource allocation is adequate for all students. Rather than an all-encompassing approach to teaching and having every student immersed in the same experience, this call to action represents individualization of instruction and emphasizes the importance of independent study. Another aspect that the studied FYE classes failed to capture in their construct was that: “the theory of student involvement encourages educators to focus less on what they do and more on what the student does” (p. 522). Many of the devices that comprised the FYE courses were attempts at honing the academic and social skills of the student (Schrader & Brown, 2008).

Universities and colleges have also developed FYE programs in hopes to boost retention and persistence rates. Again, however, calls for student involvement are not a mandatory part of the FYE experience. In a study performed by Berger and Milem (1999), the two researchers discovered the following: “Early peer involvement appears to strengthen perceptions of institutional and social support and ultimately persistence. In contrast, early noninvolvement has a number of negative effects throughout the model” (p. 658). This not only holds true for this research project, but fully supports the notion of persistence of students and further behavioral involvement components in the relationship between persistence and involvement (Tinto, 1975).

With many of the aforementioned FYE research statistics showing inconsistent persistence rates, a mandatory involvement component to the FYE course may increase persistence rates. Other endeavors, according to Astin (1984), that affected positive retention and persistence rates include: involvement with fraternities or sororities, ROTC,

honors programs, and on-campus employment. Again, none of the above are components to the FYE programs, so a comparison cannot be drawn as to the actual effectiveness of these out-of-class endeavors.

FYE programs also aim to bridge the gap between student and faculty. In some cases, certified teachers taught the course (Schrader & Brown, 2008), but in other cases, academic mentors/instructors were almost invisible to the student (Jamelske, 2009). “Frequent interaction with faculty is more strongly related to satisfaction with college than any other type of involvement or, indeed, any other student or institutional characteristic” (Astin, 1984, p. 525). Students have the chance to interact with faculty members during the FYE course, but no specific meeting times or mandatory meetings were ever put into place during any course after reviewing the FYE courses (Jamelske, 2009; Lang, 2007; Schrader & Brown, 2008). Students who meet with mentors infrequently (such as once per week) are less likely to persist than those who meet with mentors on a more consistent and often basis (Astin, 1984). “This is the case because the classroom is, for many students, the one place, perhaps only place, where they meet each other and the faculty. If involvement does not occur there, it is unlikely to occur elsewhere,” (Tinto, 2007, p. 4).

### **Summary**

The FYE program is implemented for a reason: to help the matriculating freshman student. However, the programs need to attempt to mold the FYE course around the specific characteristics of each student. Additionally, mandatory involvement needs to be another characteristic of the FYE infrastructure. Whether it is increased interaction with staff and faculty members or becoming involved with student organization, the

involvement has proven positive persistence and growth as a college student. “The greater the student’s involvement in college, the greater will be the amount of student learning and personal development” (Astin, 1984, p. 529).

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this creative project was to develop a First-Year Experience course that included many developmental pieces including: life skills, diversity immersion, and a mandatory student involvement component. This project was done to create a structure within a First-Year Experience setting that would emphasize outside involvement as a complement to the academia piece.

#### **Methodology**

The first step of the project was to conduct a literature review. The purpose of the literature review was to gain information of various First-Year Experience programs that exist within the United States. In order to find out the efficiency of first-year programming, research was needed to find both the advantages and disadvantages of the programs. The information that was gathered was used to determine how involvement should be used in the first-year programming setting and whether or not it should be a mandatory component. The next step of the project was to compare the programs and their efficiency. The programs that were studied were from the University of South Carolina, Western Michigan University, and Colorado College. Each director/affiliate of First-Year Experience programming was contacted in an effort to learn more about the program. Two out of the three schools responded to the inquiry. The University of South

Carolina was chosen specifically because it was the first school to launch an FYE program. Western Michigan University was chosen because their FYE program had just established a mandatory enrollment component for all incoming freshmen. Lastly, Colorado College was chosen because the course is split into “blocks,” so students are learning different subject matter throughout the year as opposed to one overlying subject. Additionally, these schools were chosen based on their wide differences in geographic location as well as size and type of school.

Additionally, information was used from the Introduction to Staff Personnel course at Ball State University. The Introduction to Staff Personnel course at Ball State University is a course that all potential Resident Assistants must complete. It is also offered as an elective to those who minor in Leadership Studies. This class currently has many discussion and training components as it relates to topics first-year students might encounter, such as confrontation, diversity, and life in a residence hall. All of the information was used to formulate a structure and guideline for the creation of a new First-Year Experience course.

### **Design of Program**

This First-Year Experience course was designed to get matriculating freshman adapted to college and develop life skills designed to influence their lives post college. A major component of this class lies within the involvement structure, which mandates students getting involved outside of the classroom. In order to create this class, a look at the design of similar classes and teaching styles was needed.

The course will be a mandatory one-credit hour course that will meet once a week during the fall semester of the student’s first year. When signing up for classes, first-year

students will have the option to choose the time and day of their class. The class meeting times and amount of classes will depend on the amount of students enrolled for the Fall semester.

Each class will consist of 20-30 students, taught by a Student Affairs educator. The course will involve components typical of other classes: a syllabus, attendance requirements, multiple research papers, class lectures and discussion. Additionally, an outside-of-the-class involvement component is a mandatory part of completing the course.

The involvement component of the course can be assessed through various levels. Beginning with the third week of the course, a student must become involved with an aspect of their collegiate culture. The involvement component is nearly unlimited. Any participating registered student organization will serve as an involvement component. Any student job on campus will serve as an involvement component. If the student has questions about his or her involvement, it is at the discretion of the instructors to determine whether or not the particular involvement qualifies as standard for the course.

Partnerships within the fields of the student affairs department are required for the course. Because of the involvement component, students will need to be acclimated with these departments. Various speakers from these departments will be a part of the class as well. A short list of some the partnerships needed: Greek Life, Excellence in Leadership programming, Housing and Residence Life, Student Voluntary Services, International Student Center programming, Disabled Student Services, etc. The involvement component with the various organizations will depend on what programs are available at the institution where the FYE course is implemented.

In order to have partnerships with these offices, collaboration will need to be established before the class begins. After the instructors and student mentors are chosen for the class during the previous Spring semester, there will be an overall meeting with the various departments that work within the Student Affairs department at the selected university. It is up to the discretion of the director of each program of whether or not they choose to be involved with the FYE course. If the department opts to take part in the program, they will work in collaboration with the director in charge of the FYE class to set up a schedule of when they will present in classes. Due to the nature of the number of classes that the department may need to present their materials, any staff, faculty, or graduate assistants associated with the department may serve as guest speakers/presenters.

The reason for collaboration between departments is to acquaint students with involvement opportunities on campus. The departments will present involvement opportunities to each class as well as describing the main function of their department. Each department involved will be asked to briefly explain the function of their department and discuss how students can help by getting involved. Additionally, they will allow time for a question and answer session.

For each FYE class, one professor or instructor and one student mentor will serve as the primary instructors. The student peer instructor will be selected from an application process the previous semester facilitated by the director of the FYE program. There will be one student peer instructor for each FYE class. In order to apply, a student peer instructor must be classified as a sophomore, junior, or senior student. The student must have at least a 2.5 grade point average. Students involved with other student

organizations are preferred. Every student peer instructor will receive minimal monetary compensation.

The primary instructor will be chosen through application process from the previous semester. The only credential required of each instructor is previous teaching experience or experience with diverse student populations within the division of Student Affairs. The application process will take place the previous Spring before the FYE class begins. Those interested will submit an application to the FYE department. The director will meet with the applicants to determine who would make the most ideal instructor in a first-year student setting. Each instructor will receive monetary compensation for the semester of teaching.

The book readings, articles, and any other materials are at the discretion of the current FYE director. For this project, the required textbook for every student in the class will be *Your College Experience: Strategies for Success*, written by John Gardener. Selected readings in this book will help with conversation and discussion in the class.

In the meeting with the other departments in the spring prior to the FYE class, department heads will have the opportunity to share articles or training session components that they would feel enhance the understandings of misconceptions of first-year experiences. It is up to the discretion of the FYE director to include these components in the class or not. For this project, training sessions and articles were taken from various texts, with case studies taken from the book *Case Studies for First-Year Experience Students*, by John Riesen.

The syllabus for the course will be standard for every FYE class. Students will be required to engage in discussion, write papers, and complete weekly journals that either

reflects on their in-class experiences or their experiences on their mandatory outside involvement component. Each week of the semester will have a different theme. For example, the first class will focus purely on introductions and includes an introductory component to begin to acclimate freshman students to the course. The first class will serve as a precursor to the rest of the semester in that it will detail the expectations and standards of the class.

Each class period, students will have to turn in a two-page paper that will serve as a reflection component of an item that was discussed in the previous week's class. This paper will be graded by the main instructor of the course. Each class will have an organized structure that involves splitting the class into blocks. Each block will be outlined in the lesson plan and will be comprised of something different each class. For example, a block of 30 minutes may be used in a class to have students present a paper or a project.

Assignments of the class include the following: the aforementioned weekly journals, research papers, case study/partner presentations, reflection papers, an outside involvement component complemented by a reflection component, and a final exam. Grading will be performed by the professor or instructor and the student mentor. Reflection and research papers will be determined by each class period's content matter.

More structure is provided in the syllabus. Though each class is required to cover certain topics, the approach will vary depending on the type of instructor of each class. These discrepancies will be acknowledged during the training of the student mentor and the instructor. Additionally, evaluations will be randomly sent to students via email throughout the semester gauging their experiences as it pertains to having their instructor

and mentor.

### **Summary**

The First-Year Experience course will be comprised of many different components. The collaboration with multiple departments serves as the starting point for students fitting in to their involvement pieces. Reading materials, the structure and schedule of the class, and grading scale are all located on the syllabus for both the teacher and the student.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DESIGNING A FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE COURSE

#### **Project Summary**

The intent of this creative project was intended to develop a first-year experience class that has a strong focus on experiences outside of the classroom. The structure of the project is based on research of previous FYE courses. With the implementation of a newly created class structure that encompasses both involvement opportunities and other learned life skills, the goal of the program was designed to help students transition into their first year of college. The structure of the class is similar to many other college courses, but has a more student-based structure that allows for multiple conversations and discussion with students in the classroom.

The project contains the following items:

- A syllabus of the FYE course (Page 27).
- Lesson plans for the 15 week structure of the class (Page 34).

# **First Year Experience Course**

## **Course Syllabus Spring 20XX**

Class Time, Location, Room Number

### **Facilitator/Co-Facilitator**

Name, Positions

### **Contact Information**

Department: Office, Rm# Email: name@school.edu

Department Phone Number

Department website: www.school.edu/department

**Office hours (by appointment): Time, Dates available**

### **Required Texts**

Your College Experience: Strategies for Success (8<sup>th</sup> Edition) – John Gardner  
Case Studies for First-Year Experience Students – John Riesen

### **Course Description**

This course is intended to get you acquainted with the college culture and learn valuable life skills that will not only affect your life in college, but also develop skills that will help you after you graduate. To accomplish our goals, there will be a heavy emphasis on participation in the classroom through presentations and discussions. Additionally, each student will pursue an out-of-the-class endeavor, whether it is through a registered student organization or employment on campus. This experience is intended to further enhance your collegiate experience outside of the classroom.

### **Course Objectives**

1. To provide overview of the transition a student makes going into a college setting, both academically and socially.
2. To provide students with opportunity to identify resources to aid college career.
3. To encourage students to develop a sense of autonomy with classwork and outside experiences.
4. To encourage students to develop collegial relationships with peers and mentors.

## **Materials Needed**

- Required texts
- Notebook

## **Policies and Procedures**

### 1. Student Disability Services Statement

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. The Office of Disabled Student Development office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disabled Student Development can be contacted at (phone number) or xxx@college.edu.

### 2. Attendance policy

Students are expected to attend every class session. More than two absences will affect a student's grade. A pattern of tardiness may also result in an absence under this policy. If you are unable to attend class, it is your responsibility to communicate with your professor as soon as possible. Issues of a personal matter that may require you to miss class are to be discussed with the professor on a one-to-one basis.

### 3. Grading

Grades will be determined as a collaborative effort by the class instructor and the mentor. Each student will be administered based on the University's marking system:

- "A" represents work of excellent quality and is recorded for students who do outstanding work.
- "B" represents work of good quality and is recorded for those who do work which is clearly above the average.
- "C" represents work of average quality and is recorded for students who do average work.
- "D" represents work which is below average, but above failure.
- "F" represents work that is not of an acceptable quality.
- A plus or minus may be appended to the above scale, with the exception of "A+," "F+," and "F-" A plus or minus indicator after the grade indicates quality earned slightly above or below the grading scale.

#### 4. Assignments

##### Reflection Journals

Reflection journals will vary in topic each week and are meant to demonstrate your best understanding or knowledge of the discussed topic for that class period. Each reflection must be at least two-pages in length with a 12-pt Times New Roman font. Reflections will be written based on experiences in class and through the readings of Your College Experience. Every reading assigned will be from this book, unless otherwise noted in the syllabus as a reading from the case study book.

##### Case Studies

Case Studies will periodically be used throughout the class. You will be assigned to a partner to present these case studies to the class. The case studies will be assigned to you and come directly from the reading. You and a partner are expected to create a 15-minute presentation that explains the scenario in your case study. Each student will be required to read the assigned case studies prior to class. You may use the questions at the end of each case study to guide you in your presentations. An overhead/projection unit will be provided if you choose to use media.

##### Involvement Journal

As a major component to this class, you are required to join an outside organization or have an on-campus job. Any campus organization may count as part of this requirement. If you are unsure as to whether or not an organization counts, please see your facilitator. As involvement journals begin, you are required to reflect on your experience every other week. You will turn in your two-page reflection, which is meant to portray your experiences up to that point.

##### Diversity Presentation

You will work directly with other members in your class to create a 20-minute presentation based on one aspect of diversity. You will learn about what topic you will present on later on in the semester.

##### Final Involvement Presentation

You will have 15-minutes to present on your involvement component for your final project. You are expected to show your growth and development based on your organization. Create a brochure to hand out to each student that includes reasons why someone should join or should not join, how it has or hasn't benefited your collegiate experience, and things you would change if you could do it all over again. You may use media as an aid and will have an overhead/projection unit available for assistance.

## 5. Assignments/Course Outline

### **Week 1: Introduction**

- Introductions.
- Discuss class goals and outcomes.
- Your purpose for attending college activity (pg. 2 of Your College Experience).
- Explain course expectations and assignments.

### **Week 2: Learning Style**

- ASSIGNMENTS DUE: Read pages 1-11, 31-44.  
Reflection journal: “What’s your purpose in college? What is motivating you?”
- Open discussion: What are your best learning styles?
- Take VARK assessment – discuss within groups.
- Outside Speaker: Disabled Student Services – What learning looks like for others: common learning disabilities.
- Campus Resources.

### **Week 3: Engagement with Learning**

- ASSIGNMENTS DUE: Read pages 71-80.  
Reflection journal: “Struggles you may have with learning. What are steps you will take to enhance your learning abilities? Where do you need to go for help?”
- Benefits of engagement.
- Guest Speakers: Student and Leadership Programming director or affiliate, Greek Life director or affiliate, student voluntary services director/affiliate to talk about involvement.
- Question and Answer session with guest speakers.
- Discuss outside involvement component of course.

### **Week 4: Majors and Careers: Making the Right Choice**

- ASSIGNMENTS DUE: Reflection journal: “What involvement opportunities are you interested in? How will they impact your college experience?”  
Read Case Studies 2 and 3.
- Partner Presentations: Case Studies 2 and 3.
- Speaker: Career Center Director or affiliate of Career Center.
- Brief discussion of update on involvement.

### **Week 5: Conflict: Causes and Resolutions**

- ASSIGNMENTS DUE: Reflection journal : “What does conflict look like to you? What scenarios have you been involved with involving conflict?”  
Read Case Studies 23, 26, and 33.
- What are common conflicts you are involved in?
- Partner Presentations: Case studies 23, 26, 33.
- Guest Speakers: Resident Assistant and Residence Hall Director.
- Introduction to values.

### **Week 6: Developing Values**

- ASSIGNMENTS DUE: Reflection journal: “What values do you hold close to yourself? What helps you guide your life?” Read pages 144-154.
- Read Case Studies: 13, 17, and 30.
- Involvement Journal Due.
- Partner Presentations: Case Studies 13, 17, and 30.
- Self-Assessment Quiz, page 144.
- What defines your values?
- Values Card Activity.
- Discuss Diversity Group Presentation Assignment.

### **Week 7: Diversity Pt. 1 – Understanding Where We Come From**

- ASSIGNMENTS DUE: Reflection journal: “What is Diversity and what does it mean to you?” Read pages 155 – 166.
- Discuss what diversity means.
- Four-Corners Activity.
- Privilege Activity.
- Meet with groups and discuss Diversity Topics.

### **Week 8: Diversity Pt. 2 – Multiculturalism**

- ASSIGNMENTS DUE: Prepare for Diversity Group Presentation
- Involvement Journal Due.
- Guest Speaker: Director of Multicultural Center or affiliate.
- Group Presentations.

### **Week 9: Strategies for Tests, Paper, Research**

- ASSIGNMENTS DUE: Reflection journal “What strategies do you use for tests and papers? What resources do you use?” Read pages 111-140.
- Read Case Studies: 12, 7, 25.
- Partner Presentations: Case Studies 12, 7 and 25.
- Trip to Library; Have Librarian (or Library Administration affiliate) explain how to use research resources.

### **Week 10: Time Management**

- ASSIGNMENTS DUE: Reflection journal: “How do you manage your time? What has been effective? What deters your time management?” Read pages 15-28.
- Partner Presentations: Case studies 35 and 40
- Involvement Journal Due.
- Read Case Studies 35 and 40.
- Time Management Activity.
- Discussion: What needs to improve, how can we improve it?

### **Week 11: Managing Your Money**

- ASSIGNMENTS DUE: Reflection journal: “How do you manage your money? Do you use a Credit/Debit Card? How has it helped/hindered you?”
- Read Case Studies: 1 and 20.
- Partner Presentations: Case studies 1 and 20.
- Discussion about building credit.
- Representative from Admissions office or Bursars Office to speak about scholarships and how to fill out FASFA forms.
- Discuss Involvement Presentations

### **Week 12: Staying Healthy**

- ASSIGNMENTS DUE: Reflection journal: “How do you stay healthy in college? Physically and mentally?” Involvement Journal Due. Read Case Studies: 16 and 32.
- Discussion: How can we save money? What has worked for you so far?
  - Partner Presentations: Case Studies 16 and 32.
  - Guest Speaker: Sexual Health Educator.
  - Guest Speaker: Dietician.
  - Discuss Involvement Presentations

### **Week 13: Involvement Presentations, Pt. 1**

- Beginning of Involvement Presentations.

### **Week 14: Involvement Presentations, Pt. 2**

- ASSINGMENTS DUE: Final Involvement Journal.
- Individual Final Presentations.

**Week 15: Involvement Presentations, Pt. 2**

- Individual Final Presentations.
- Class Evaluation.
- Final Thoughts.

## LESSON PLANS

### Lesson 1 – Introduction

#### Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify their goals for the upcoming semester and determine their reasons why they decided to attend college.
- Identify classmates and develop a sense of camaraderie within the classroom.
- Understand the syllabus and assignments for the upcoming semester.

#### Resources:

- Page 2 of Your College Experience.

#### Lesson Outline:

1. Introduce Facilitator and Student Mentor to class. Have students go around and say their name, major (or potential major), where they are from, and what hall they are living in. Perform two ice breakers (Discretion of facilitator) to have class get acquainted with one another. **30 minutes**
2. Discuss class goals and outcomes. Explain why this class is important for freshman students. As a class, develop a list of outcomes and goals you would like to establish as a class. Help them understand why goals and outcomes are important. **20 minutes**
3. Have students perform Purpose for College activity on page 2 of Your College Experience. Students will perform activity on their own and then share with an individual near them when they are done. If they do not have the book yet, provide copies of activity for them. Discuss as whole class. **30 minutes**
4. Hand out syllabus. Explain course expectations and assignments. Discuss the involvement component of the class. Explain expectations for reflection papers,

partnered case studies, and talk briefly about final project, the presentation on involvement. Explain point system and attendance policy. **30 minutes**

## **Lesson 2 – Learning Style**

### Offices/Speakers:

Director/Affiliate of Disabled Student Services

### Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify where they can go on a college campus to seek help academically.
- Identify what their best learning style is and how they can utilize this in an academic setting.
- Understand the various types of learning disabilities and what that looks like for individual students.

### Resources:

- The VARK assessment: Pages 37-38 of Your College Experience.
- Any handouts from the speaker.

### Lesson Outline:

1. Collect homework. Open discussion: What is your purpose in college? Why are you here? Perform another icebreaker to refresh names. **30 minutes**
2. Have students take VARK assessment (pp. 37-38) After completion, have them score their own assessment and then break into groups of four to discuss what they've found. A representative from each group will explain what the group found after discussing. **30 Minutes**

3. Outside Speaker: Director of Disabled Student Services (or other affiliate of office). Discuss what learning disabilities are present on a college campus and how to get help if needed. Question and Answer session after the first 20 minutes of discussion. **30 Minutes**
4. Discuss campus resources – have Student Mentor talk about his/her experiences with campus resources and how he/she has received help in the past. **15 minutes**
5. Discuss homework and answer any questions about class so far. **5 minutes**

*\*Speakers will develop own content if necessary and determine content and direction of lesson.*

Assignments due:

- Reflection journal: “What’s your purpose in college? What is motivating you?”

### **Lesson 3 – Engagement with Learning**

#### Offices/Speakers:

Student and Leadership Programming Director/Affiliate, Greek Life Director/Affiliate, Student Voluntary Services Director/Affiliate, and a Student Leader (preferably a student who serves as president of a prominent organization, such as Residence Hall Association or Student Government Association).

#### Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify involvement opportunities outside of the classroom.
- Identify how to get involved with activities of interest.

#### Lesson Outline:

1. Collect homework. Open discussion: What the best ways you learn? What resources do you plan on using? **20 minutes**
2. Guest Speakers:
  - a. Student and Leadership Programming Director/affiliate
  - b. Greek Life Director/affiliate
  - c. Student Voluntary Services director/affiliate
  - d. Student Leader (Preferably a student who serves as president of prominent organization, such as RHA or SGA)

Each speaker will serve on a panel and take about 10 minutes to explain what they do and why it is useful for college students. Question and Answer session will follow. **60 minutes**

3. Explain campus involvement component of course. Every other week a reflective journal will need to be turned in reflecting on their experiences up to that point. A final presentation will be made at the end of the class which explains and presents information to the class based on their experiences and interactions with the organization or on-campus job they currently have. **20 Minutes**
  
4. Explain Case Studies. Partner students up with one another and explain that each partnered group will have to present that case study to the class the next week. Determine which partnered groups will go first and determine schedule for rest of semester. Those partnered groups who have case studies 2 and 3 will be presenting next week. Students may present in any way they choose. Each group has 15 minutes. **10 minutes**

*\*Speakers will develop own content if necessary and determine content and direction of lesson.*

Assignments due:

- Reflection journal: “Struggles you may have with learning. What are steps you will take to enhance your learning abilities? Where do you need to go for help?”

## Lesson 4 – Majors and Careers: Making the Right Choice

### Offices/Speakers:

Career Center Director/Affiliate

### Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify importance of seeking resources to help with their major/potential interest in a major.
- Learn about the opportunities of working on a college campus.
- Identify campus affiliates that can help them with their academic path.

### Lesson Outline:

1. Open discussion: What involvements/organizations/jobs are you looking at being a part of outside of class? How come? **15 minutes**
2. Case Studies groups 1 and 2: Presenting case studies 2 and 3 **30 minutes**
3. Guest Speaker: Career Center Director or affiliate of Career Center. Speaker will discuss benefits of on campus jobs and will talk about resources to help students find their fit for their choice of college major. **45 minutes**
4. Talk about factors affecting career choices (Pg. 54 of Your College Experience) – Open discussion of what is most important. **15 Minutes**
5. Talk about involvement journal due next week **5 minutes**

*\*Speakers will develop own content if necessary and determine content and direction of lesson.*

Assignments due:

- Reflection journal: “What involvement opportunities are you interested in? How will they impact your college experience?”

## **Lesson 5 – Conflict: Cause and Resolutions**

### Offices/Speakers:

Residence Hall Director and Resident Assistant

### Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify conflict scenarios in their life and ways to handle these situations.
- Identify university officials and students who can help with conflict scenarios.

### Lesson Outline:

1. Case Studies presentations groups 3, 4 and 5: Case studies 23, 26, 33. **45 Minutes**
2. Open discussion: What are common conflicts you are involved in? What does this look like for you and how do you handle them? **15 Minutes**
3. Guest Speakers: Residence Hall Director and Resident Assistant(s). Director and assistants will discuss what common conflict issues arise in the hall and how they help alleviate concerns/help students approach issues of conflict. **30 Minutes**
4. Brief discussion about values and the activities that we will be doing next week. It is a high risk activity, but it is for their own developmental value. Collect involvement journals. **20 minutes**

*\*Speakers will develop own content if necessary and determine content and direction of lesson.*

Assignments due:

- Reflection journal: “What does conflict look like to you? What scenarios have you been involved with involving conflict?”
- Involvement Journal Due

## Lesson 6 – Developing Values

### Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Discuss their core values with classmates in a respectful manner.
- Identify issues involving diversity and values of other students.
- Identify what core values each student holds for themselves.

### Resources:

- Values Card Activity (Instructions in outline)

### Lesson Outline:

1. Case Study Partnered Presentations – groups 6, 7 and 8: Case studies 13, 17, 30. **45 Minutes**
2. Self-Assessment Activity: Page 144. Have students complete on their own. **5 minutes**
3. Values Card Activity:
  - Have students take out sheets of paper and fold them into eighths to eventually tear up in playing-card sized sheets. They will need 30 sheets overall.
  - Have them write down the things they value the most in life. Each card must contain one item. Examples “my family,” “my education,” “my friends,” “my car,” etc.
  - Explain to them that they need to eliminate 5 cards. Let them decide. Say to them “Pretend that you will never see this thing, item, person again” when they discard. After they only have 25 left, continue this process. When they

discard a card, have them tear it up and create a pile. When there are only 5 cards left per student, have them discard four. At the end of the activity, have an open discussion of why they chose their number one value. **40 minutes**

4. Diversity Group Presentation Assignments: Break up class into four separate groups. Explain to groups that in two weeks, they will be presenting on four aspects of diversity. Assign topics to group: Race/Ethnicity, Sexuality, Religion, and Socioeconomic Status. Each group will have 20 minutes to present. Have students brainstorm together. Explain next week will be a fully-immersed diversity class with high-risk activities. **20 Minutes.**

Assignments due:

- Reflection journal: “What values do you hold close to yourself? What helps you guide your life?”

## **Lesson 7 – Diversity Pt. 1 – Understanding Where We Come From**

### Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify the different areas of diversity that affect their lives and the lives of students around them.
- Identify their beliefs in accordance to living with students with different beliefs.
- Identify privilege amongst students.

### Resources:

- Four-Corners Activity (Appendix A)
- Privilege Activity (Appendix B)

### Lesson Outline:

1. Open discussion: What is diversity? How do students perceive diversity? **5 minutes**
2. Four Corners Activity (Appendix A): **60 Minutes**
3. Privilege Activity: **40 Minutes**
4. Give students time to meet with their diversity groups for next week. **5 minutes**

Assignments due:

- Reflection journal: “What is Diversity and what does it mean to you?”

## **Lesson 8 – Diversity Pt. 2 – Multiculturalism**

### Offices/Speakers:

Director/Affiliate of Multicultural Center

### Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Understand where to go to learn more about issues surrounding diversity.
- Identify multiple aspects of diversity through group presentations.

### Lesson Outline:

1. Guest Speaker: Director Of Multicultural Center or affiliate. Will talk about common issues and ways to get involved. **30 minutes**
2. Group Presentations. **80 Minutes**

*\*Speakers will develop own content if necessary and determine content and direction of lesson.*

### Assignments due:

- Involvement Journal Due

## Lesson 9 – Strategies for Test, Papers, and Research

### Offices/Speakers:

Librarian/Library Administrative Affiliate

### Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify how to use library services on campus.
- Identify resources to guide them with papers and research.

### Resources:

- Travel to library

### Lesson Outline:

1. Partnered Case Study Presentations – Groups 9, 10, 11: Case studies 12, 7, 25.  
**45 minutes**
2. Trip to library – Librarian presentation (or close affiliate): **55 minutes**
3. Talk about “Activity Log” for next week. Have them write down every activity they do and group it into a category. For example “Studying,” “Watching TV,” “Eating,” “Sleeping,” etc. They will use this information next week. **10 minutes**

*\*Speakers will develop own content if necessary and determine content and direction of lesson.*

Assignments due:

- Reflection journal: “What strategies do you use for tests and papers? What resources do you use?”

## Lesson 10 – Time Management

### Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify areas of struggle in accordance to time management.
- Develop sufficient time management strategies.

### Resources:

- Personal Time Survey (Appendix C)

### Lesson Outline:

1. Open discussion: What does time management look like for you? What helps/hinders? **15 minutes**
2. Case Study Presentations, groups 12 and 13: Case studies 35 and 40. **30 minutes**
3. Time Management Activity:
  - Using log from previous week, have people pair up based on opposite trends. For example, if someone has spent a majority of their week studying, have them partner with someone who has spent a majority of their week doing leisurely activities.
  - Have students discuss: What are most important tasks? What could I change about my day? Do I procrastinate?
  - Have students come up with a time management strategy for their partner. Present to class. **40 minutes**
4. Hand out sheet on next page, have students complete, and then discuss briefly at end of the class. **25 Minutes**

Assignments due:

- Reflection journal: “How do you manage your time? What has been effective? What deters your time management?”
- Involvement Journal.

## **Week 11 – Managing Your Money**

### Offices/Speakers:

Admissions Office or Office of Bursars Director/Affiliate, and speaker from university-affiliated bank or credit union.

### Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify the various methods they can receive help financially.
- Identify ways to become financially responsible and build credit.

### Lesson Outline:

1. Case Study Partner Presentations, groups 14 and 15: Case studies 1 and 20. **30 minutes**
2. Scholarships and Financial Aid presentation, Speaker from Scholarships and Financial Aid Office, allowing time for questions: **30 minutes**
3. Speaker from university-affiliated bank or credit union – Managing your personal funds and establishing credit, allowing time for questions: **30 minutes**
4. Open discussion: How can we save money? What strategies have you used? How can we alleviate stresses about financial situations? **15-20 minutes**

*\*Speakers will develop own content if necessary and determine content and direction of lesson.*

Assignments due:

- Reflection journal: “How do you manage your money? Do you use a Credit/Debit Card? How has it helped/hindered you?”

## Lesson 12 – Staying Healthy

### Offices/Speakers:

Dietician from Health/Recreational Services or equivalent, Sexual Health Educator

### Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify resources for them to promote physical, mental, and sexual health.
- Learn about common health issues college students typically face.

### Lesson Outline:

1. Case study group presentations, groups 16 and 17: Case studies 16 and 32 **30 minutes**
2. Guest Speaker: Sexual Health Educator: **30 minutes**
3. Guest Speaker: Dietician (or campus affiliate of recreation center): **30 minutes**
4. Discuss healthy living. What do you do to take healthy measures? **10 minutes**
5. Discuss Final Project and Paper. Reiterate what they need to present on and how they need to present it. Determine which students (10) will go next week and which (10) will present during the next week and which (10) will present during the last week. **15 minutes.**

*\*Speakers will develop own content if necessary and determine content and direction of lesson.*

Assignments due:

- Reflection journal: “How do you stay healthy in college? Physically and mentally?”
- Involvement Journal.

## **Lesson 13 – Involvement Presentations (Part 1)**

### Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Learn about others' involvement experiences.

### Lesson Outline:

1. Begin Involvement Presentations. **110 minutes.**

## **Lesson 14 – Involvement Presentations (Part 2)**

### Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Learn about others' involvement experiences.

### Lesson Outline:

1. Continue Presentations. **110 minutes.**

## **Lesson 15 – Involvement Presentations (Part 3)**

### Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Learn about others' involvement experiences.

### Lesson Outline:

1. Continue Presentations. **110 minutes.**
2. Class Evaluations and Final Thoughts.

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APPENDIX A

FOUR-CORNERS ACTIVITY

(Activity adapted and modified from original source:  
[http://www.bonner.org/resources/modules/modules\\_pdf/BonCurFourCorners.pdf](http://www.bonner.org/resources/modules/modules_pdf/BonCurFourCorners.pdf))

1. Spread all desk/tables/chairs to outside of room. You will use each corner of the room for this exercise.
2. Establish one corner as “Strongly Agree,” another as “Agree”, another as “Disagree” and finally the last one as “Strongly Disagree.” The instructor will then read a statement from a list.
3. The students must decide where they stand on the issue and then pursue the corner that defines them. Once students have decided a corner, they are encouraged to explain their stance. However, it is not mandatory.
4. This activity is meant to last 60 minutes, so the facilitator must use his/her own best discretion to decide which statements should be used and how much dialogue should be created after each statement. Use from the statements below:

“America is the most diverse country in the world.”

“Anyone can be racist.”

“My class background is most important in defining who I am.”

“There is a lot we can do about racism.”

“A person should be able to love/marry a person of any gender or race legally.”

“People decide whether or not they are homosexual.”

“Illegal aliens are not entitled to health care.”

“Our campus appreciates diverse student groups.”

“There is more talk about appreciating diversity than action.”

“Abortion should be legal.”

“We should incorporate religion into our government.”

“I believe in a higher power.”

“Men have more rights than women.”

“It’s the president’s fault for the major problems in our country.”

“Democrats are better leaders than Republicans.”

APPENDIX B  
PRIVILEGE ACTIVITY

(Activity adapted and modified from original source: <http://bit.ly/GUwEac>)

1. Have students create one line standing next to each other, with each student facing one wall.
2. Read the statements below for the activity. After reading each one aloud, a student must comply with the request.
3. At the end of the activity, have students look around to see where each other come from. Have a discussion about the differences between individuals.

Read aloud following statements:

If you are a white male take one step forward.

If there have been times in your life when you skipped a meal because there was no food in the house take one step backward.

If you have visible or invisible disabilities take one step backward.

If you attended (grade) school with people you felt were like yourself take one step forward.

If you grew up in an urban setting take one step backward.

If your family had health insurance take one step forward.

If your work holidays coincide with religious holidays that you celebrate take one step forward.

If you feel good about how your identified culture is portrayed by the media take one step forward.

If you have been the victim of physical violence based on your gender, ethnicity, age or sexual orientation take one step backward.

If you have ever felt passed over for an employment position based on your gender, ethnicity, age or sexual orientation take one step backward.

If you were born in the United States take one step forward.

If English is your first language take one step forward.

If you have been divorced or impacted by divorce take one step backward.

If you came from a supportive family environment take one step forward.

If you have completed high school take one step forward.

If you were able to complete college take one step forward.

If you are a citizen of the United States take one step forward.

If you took out loans for your education take one step backward.

If you attended private school take one step forward.

If you have ever felt unsafe walking alone at night take one step backward.

APPENDIX C

PERSONAL TIME SURVEY ACTIVITY

(Adapted and modified from:  
<http://raven.ipfw.edu/engr101/PDF/PersonalTimeSurvey.pdf>)

## PERSONAL TIME SURVEY

Understanding how you are currently spending your time is the first step in effectively utilizing this non-renewable resource.

Step 1: List the amount of time per week for each activity (arrive at a daily average and multiply by 7; account for weekend differences):

- a. Class time (# of hours in class each week) \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Job/Work \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Socializing (hanging out, IM'ing, dating, etc) \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Commuting/transportation time \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Athletics/Exercise \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Extracurricular Activities \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Family Responsibilities  
(cleaning, cooking, shopping, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Sleeping \_\_\_\_\_
- i. Eating \_\_\_\_\_
- j. Personal Hygiene (bathing, hair, make-up, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
- k. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: Add together a.-k. for a SUBTOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 3: Now subtract your subtotal from 168 for a TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 4: Divide your total by 7. This is the average number of hours per day you have left for studying or free time \_\_\_\_\_

If the number in your TOTAL line is negative, you have committed more time than there is in a week. **YOU ARE IN TROUBLE.** If you have time left over, ask yourself what choices there are for your time. Do you have time for more sleep? Volunteering? Friends?