First Year Experience

- Established in 1996 – calendar and curricular change
- Initially supported by a Mellon grant; later a regular line in the college budget
- 2000: half-time director’s position was changed to full time (now Dean of the First Year and Advising)
First Year Experience

- Recognized as an exemplary national model by the Templeton Foundation (1999)

- Recognized as a “program that really works” by *U.S. News & World Report* in 2003
First Year Experience

- One of thirteen “Institutions of Excellence in the First College Year” by the National Policy Center in the First Year of College
  
  http://www.brevard.edu/fyc/

- Featured in Achieving and Sustaining Institutional Excellence for the First Year of College (Jossey-Bass, 2005)
First Year Experience

Program Elements

- Foundations Essay
- Summer Common Reading
- Orientation
- Peer leaders
- First Year Forums
- Advising
- First Year Seminars

http://www.kzoo.edu/fye/
First Year Experience

First Year Seminars

- Introduced in 1990
- Required for all first year students (Fall)
- Emphasize writing, communication, critical thinking, and collaboration
- Each seminar has one “library session”
First Year Experience

Dean of the First Year and Advising

- Dedicated to the project
- Faculty Guidelines
- Sample Assignment
- Can get the faculty to do things we can’t!
In the Beginning: 1996-2000

**Pros:**
- Information Literacy session a requirement for each Seminar
- Sessions met in the library

**Cons:**
- Too Much Information!
- “Talking Heads” for 75 minutes
- Power Point slides!
- No Active Learning component
- No Feedback mechanism
Revision: 2001

- Faculty collaboration in developing Survivor
- Threw out lecture format
- Used “problem-based learning” model
- Created Survivor assignment
- Assignment uses topics from Seminar
- Continued to use library classroom
- Gave it a snappy name!
Survivor Assignment

- Students receive assignment one week before “Survivor in the Library” session
- Students collaborate, work in groups
- For assignment, students must find:
  - One book
  - One print article
  - One full text article
  - One website
Survivor Format

- Students come to class with “problems to solve”
- Discover that they don’t know how to find everything
- Instructors see what their students know and don’t know
Survivor Timetable

First 15 minutes:
Students report on their findings
  - What they found
  - What they COULDN’T find, and why
  - Where and how they searched
Survivor Timetable

Next 25 minutes:
Instruction / Address problems
- Finding Books
- Finding Articles
- Scholarly Journals vs. Popular Magazines
- Evaluating Websites
Survivor Timetable

- Next 10 minutes:
  - Find another item
  - Student groups search for a print article
  - Use FirstSearch database to find a citation
  - Make sure K Library owns the periodical
  - Retrieve the periodical from the stacks
  - *During renovation: can’t retrieve periodical – find the catalog record instead*
Survivor Timetable

- Next 10 minutes:
  Group reports on finding item in class
    - Most “get it”
    - Some still have trouble, questions
Survivor Timetable

- Next 5 minutes: Written reflection
  - What did you learn that was most helpful?
  - Do you have any other questions?
    - Librarians email answers to instructors to share with students
    - Students less self-conscious about asking
    - Great feedback
Survivor Timetable

- Last 10 minutes: Reference area tour
  - Reference Desk – student assistants
  - Reference Librarian Offices
  - Reference Collection
  - Research Rescue program
How is it Working?

- Students more attentive
- More questions, better questions
- More likely to retain information by *doing* (active learning)
- Positive feedback from students
- Positive feedback from Instructors
Some issues

- Instructors don’t want to give up class time
  - Dean of First Year: IT’S REQUIRED FOR THE PROGRAM
- Instructors don’t follow assignment guidelines
  - We ask them to email assignment to us ahead of time
- Can only teach one session at a time
  - Every FYS meets at the same time
  - Only instruction one room
- Some instructors don’t participate in session
Why it works

- Dedicated Dean
- Part of larger First Year program
- Faculty support
- Consistent assignment
- Problem-based learning
- Point-of-need instruction
Questions? Comments?

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