Creating a Learning College Culture with Student-Based Data

Retaining Students in Higher Education: A Framework for Improvement
Vail, Colorado
June 15-17, 2005

- The Learning College Concept
  - Basic Questions
- Student-Based Data:
  - Student characteristics, the first-year experience & educational outcomes
- Leveraging the Knowledge
  - Student integration, faculty recruitment, professional development, quality assurance, institutional culture, organizational change
- Decision Support Systems
  - The Freshman Integration & Tracking System
The Learning College Concept: Basic Questions

- **Question 1**: Will the new policy, practice, process or structure improve or enhance student learning?
  - Placing learning first
- **Question 2**: How Do We Know?
  - Creating a culture of evidence

Student-Based Data

- What do we Measure?
  - Theoretical Frameworks
- Types of Information
  - Student characteristics
  - Student experiences
  - Outcome profiles
  - Learning pathways
TINTO’S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Initial Commitments
- Goal Commitment
- Institutional Commitment

Academic Sphere
- Academic Integration
- Intellectual Development
- Peer Interaction
- Faculty Interaction

Social Sphere
- Social Integration

Integration
- Grades

Contingent Commitments
- Goal Commitment 2
- Institutional Commitment 2

Background Characteristics

THE RESEARCH PROGRAM:
Longitudinal, Repeated Measures Design

Entry to College
- H.S. Grades
- Basic Skills
- Entry Questionnaire

Mid Term
- Mid-Term Grades
- Mid-Term Questionnaire

End of Term
- Final Grades, Enrolment
-
Student-Based Data: Focus on The First-Year Experience

- Student Profiles
  - Entry diversity: magnitude, dimensions
- First-Year Experience
  - Academic and social integration
- Outcome Profiles
  - Etiology of first-year outcomes
- Learning Pathways
  - Identifying barriers to learning
  - Identifying intervention strategies

THE FACE OF STUDENT DIVERSITY
LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS AT ENTRY: DIVERSITY

• Needs
  – Financial, learning skills, child care, career guidance etc.

• Abilities
  – Literacy, numeracy, computer skills

• Attitudes
  – Confidence, preference for f-t work, value of PSE

• Behaviours
  – Study habits
  – Class attendance habits
  – Homework completion habits
  – P-T work commitments
CAREER UNCERTAINTY

Distribution of Career Uncertainty by Cohort: Humber

FID System 4.1 (n = 25,000)

CAREER UNCERTAINTY BY AGE

Career Uncertainty at Entry by Age: Humber College, '98-'03

FID System 4.1 (n = 20,000)
RESEARCH ON THE FIRST YEAR:
Student Characteristics, Experiences, Attitudes and Outcomes

Findings From Two Decades of Research

Outcomes Typology for the First-Year of College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registration Status</th>
<th>Grade Performance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persist</td>
<td>Fail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leave</td>
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<td>Successful Persister</td>
<td>Failed Persister</td>
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<tr>
<td>Successful Leaver</td>
<td>Failed Leaver</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Outcome Group Profiles at College Entry

Student Experience by Outcome Group
Mid-Term Attitudes by Outcome Group

Successful Leavers  Failed Leavers  Successful Persisters  FailedPersisters

âœ” Decrease in Confidence  âœ” Skills Need
âœ” Service Receptivity  âœ” Increase in Career Uncertainty
âœ” Increase in Prefer Job  âœ” Financial Concern
âœ” Decrease in Ed Commitment  âœ” Decrease in Inst Commitment

Entry to Mid-Term Change Profiles by Outcome Group
Fall 1998-2001 Cohorts
Leveraging the Knowledge

- Promote Student Involvement/Engagement
- Staff Recruitment: Student Diversity
- New Staff Orientation, Pro Development
- Quality Assurance:
  - Barriers to Learning at the Program Level
- Institutional Culture
  - Learner/Learning centred
  - Evidence-based decision making
- Organizational Change
  - Placing learning first
New Staff Recruitment Criteria: Type of Student Diversity

- Human Resources Initiative
  - Look of advertisements for new staff
  - Location of staff recruitment advertisements in newspapers
New Staff Orientation & Professional Development

- **Student Profiles**
  - Needs, attitudes, values, behaviors
- **Factors Influencing Student Engagement**
  - e.g. Instructional methods
Academics and Working While Studying

Intensity of Academic Behaviour by Hours Working

Influences on Student Engagement

• Instructional Method
  – “Sage on the stage vs guide on the side”
• Collaborative/Cooperative Learning
  – Questionnaire Item:
  “Most of my classes have encouraged student participation or involvement”
Quality Assurance: Barriers to Learning at the Program Level

Influence of Career Uncertainty

CAREER UNCERTAINTY & PROGRAM PERCEPTION

Mid-Term Perception of Program by Entry Career Uncertainty
CAREER UNCERTAINTY & COLLEGE ACADEMIC BEHAVIOUR

College Academic Behaviour by Entry Career Uncertainty

Institutional Culture & Organizational Change

Placing Learning First & Creating a Culture of Evidence
DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEMS:
The Freshman Integration & Tracking System

- Measures Individual Student Characteristics
- Creates Individualized Learning Opportunities
- Targets Learning Support Services to Specific Learners
- Describes Student First-Year Experience
- Identifies Barriers to Learning
- An Information System for Decision Making
- Creates an Outcomes-Focused Culture

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For information on our student success and retention software, the Freshman Integration and Tracking System, visit: http://fit-system.Humber.ca