

# Learning to Learn: Twelve Hours and One Credit

LeighAnn N. Fry, M.Ed.

Assistant Director of Transfer Admissions/Instructor PSU 008

Penn State – York

[lnm5048@psu.edu](mailto:lnm5048@psu.edu)



PennState

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# Research Support

- “First year seminars produce consistent evidence of positive and statistically significant advantages to students who take the courses”  
(Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005)
- FYS classrooms include active and interactive learning; these strengthen academic success with strong implications for retention  
(Myer and Land, 2005)



# Research Support

Factors proven to improve student retention are related to student:

- Academic Goals (individualized)
- Academic based skills
- Academic self confidence
- All can be addressed in a FYS

(Hanover Research 2011)

# Research Support

- Specific format is unimportant - effectiveness is NOT dependent on whether it is a “thematic” seminar or a seminar that focuses on study skills and student transition

(Friedman and Marsh, 2009)

- Studies consistently find that FYS participation promotes persistence into the second year and beyond

(Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005)



# What is PSU008?

- “Successful Transition to College” –  
(offered the week before classes)

Or

- “First year Seminar” -  
(offered in the Spring)



# Why?

- Effort to support recruitment
- Intended to improve retention
- Designed to enhance student awareness of higher expectations
- Introduce students to the process of learning
- Focus on their control of the brain and memory
- Increase awareness of their own self efficacy
- Stress the importance of time management and responsibility



# When?

## Two Versions - Version #1 (August)

- Successful Transition to College - “What you need to KNOW and what you need to DO about being a successful student” (brochure/post cards)
- Course Schedule: “Facilitate student adjustment to the high expectations, demanding workload, increased academic liberties, and other aspects of the transition to college life.”



# When?

## Version #2 (Spring)

- First Year Seminar: “This class lasts just 8 weeks, is finished before Spring Break, includes an inexpensive book (about \$10), and is almost guaranteed to help you with the remainder of your college career. It includes information on how your brain learns, how to maximize your brain power, increase your concentration, and how to prioritize, focus, and manage your time. ”



# How?

## Version 1 - August: 1 faculty + 1 student

- The week before classes begin
- Four days/three hours a day (Mon – Thurs)
- Class size of 25
- A LARGE room and a computer lab

## Version 2 - Spring semester: 1 faculty

- First 8 weeks of the semester (1-credit)
- Twice a week
- Ends the week prior to Spring break
- Geared for 25 students

# More on How..

- Use a 50+ page “Learning guide” (it’s cheap!)
- Includes a number of surveys and inventories (i.e., “all about me”)
- Supplement with handouts and/or videos
- End of each class: “Make a numbered list of the three .....
- “Break into pairs (or groups) and develop...”
- “At the board, develop a map of ....”



# Who and When?

- Version 1- the week before the semester begins: Almost any first semester student; even bright students from good schools sometimes have poor “habits”
- Version 2 – Spring semester; especially geared to students who received a low GPA first semester or just want to “do better”; but, anyone who wants to improve their CUM GPA will learn something



# Course Content

## Twelve Units

1. You've Got What it Takes (Study "Smarter")
2. What it means to "LEARN" (brain change)
3. Time Management (a predictor!)
4. Concentration (you CAN control it)
5. Memory (you have a good one)
6. Learning Styles (check yours...)



# Content Con't.

7. Active and Multisensory Learning (Engage!)
8. Listening (and THINK!)
9. Note Taking (notes do matter)
10. Text Book Use (yes, read it)
11. Motivation and Attitude (you control these)
12. Test Taking (no, not cramming)



# Teaching Strategies

- The Role of the Student Teaching Assistants
  - Peer Mentors and Role Models
  - “I was where you are....”
  - “Here’s what happened to me..”
  - Emphasis and Reiteration of Big Ideas
  - Videos (Introduction and Review Questions)
  - Energy and encouragement

# Youtube Videos

- Beliefs That Make You Fail... Or Succeed
- Cognitive Principles for Optimizing Learning
- Time Management
- Procrastination
- Memory
- Note taking
- SQ4R – Textbooks (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Rite & Review)



# Samples

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RH95h36NChI>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xeHh5DnClw>

# Reflection (Video # 1)

- List/explain the “Beliefs that Make You Stupid”
  - A. Learning is fast
  - B. Knowledge is composed of isolated facts
  - C. Being good at a subject is a matter of inborn talent
  - D. I’m really good at multitasking
- Why should you prepare for assignments to take longer than you expect?
- What is Metacognition? Explain its importance in being successful in college as a freshman.



# Reflection (Video # 2)

- List the Principles for Achieving Deep Processing
  - Elaboration
  - Distinctiveness
  - Personal
  - Appropriate to retrieval and application
- How does automaticity it apply to the high school college transition?
- What is overlearning? Is it bad?
- What is elaboration? How does elaboration help optimize learning?
- What role does automaticity and overlearning play in optimizing learning?



# DATA

- During three consecutive Fall semesters (2012, 2013, and 2014), 24.8% of the new students completed PSU008 (189 of 762)
- In 2015, we had 73 students in three of four day sessions
- In 2016, we had 97 students in four of four day sessions



## First Sem – PSU008

- Fall 2012 GPA = 3.01
- Fall 2013 GPA = 2.91
- Fall 2014 GPA = 2.98
- All Fall Sems PSU008 = 2.97

## 2012 – 2014 GPAs

**Non PSU008  
GPA:  
Fall 2014 =  
2.67**

## Cum GPA PSU008

- Cum GPA 2104 = 2.97
- Cum GPA 2014 = 2.87
- Cum GPA 2014 = 2.98
- Cum GPA 2014 = 2.94

# Therefore, ask....

- What does the campus need?
- Why?
- How are you going to address that need?
- Cost?
- Faculty /staff/students
- Space is important (large room + lab)
- Run a pilot course (“Just Do It” !)
- Collect some data



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END



# References

- Friedman and Marsh, 2009. What type of First Year Seminar is most effective?
- Gardner, J. 1990. Guidelines for evaluating the freshman year experience.
- Hanover Research, 2011. Improving student Retention and Graduation Rates.
- Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005. How college affects students.
- Meyer and Land, 2005. Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge.

