A Course for Student Success: Strategies for Designing and Delivering Effective Career Classes

NCDA Global Conference 2014
Emily Fiore, BS
Vanessa Freeman, MA
Kathy Ledwith, MS/EdS
Janet Lenz, PhD
Robert Reardon, PhD
Overview of Career Courses

NACE 2013-2014: Career Services Benchmark Survey for Colleges and Universities

• How many career service offices offer a career course for credit?
  – 32.7% (240 of 734 total respondents)

• At what type of institutions are career courses most likely to be found?
  – Medium-large public associates degree institutions (50-53%); research universities with high-v. high research levels (47-51%)
Considerations for Developing a Career Course

- Initial Assessment
- Potential Stakeholders & Resources
- Course Schedule
- Funding and Budget
- Course Structure
- Theory & Assessment
- Career Center Connections
- Course Materials & Text
- Course Evaluation
Career Course Effectiveness

Reardon & Fiore (2014) reviewed 88 studies, 1976-2014

Output Measures (64 Studies)

- Career Decision-Making Skills
- Career Decidedness
- Career Thoughts
- Vocational Identity

Results of Output Studies

- 58 (91%) Studies Reported Positive Gains
- 6 (9%) Studies Reported No Gains
Career Course Accountability

Outcome Measures (25 Studies)

- Persistence (College Retention)
- Graduation Rate
- Cumulative GPA
- Job Satisfaction/Satisfaction with Field of Study

Results of Outcome Studies

- 23 (92%) Studies Reported Positive Gains
- 2 (8%) Studies Reported No Gains
Goal Instability and Career Course Performance (Bertoch, Reardon, Lenz, & Peterson, 2013)

- **Goal instability**: A weak sense of goals and values, lower levels of self-esteem, little social and community connectedness, and lower career decidedness.
- GIS scores for students in a career course were correlated with CTI scores, satisfaction with choice, and degree of stress to make a career decision.
- Goal instability was related to negative career thoughts, dissatisfaction with career choice, career tension, and inversely related to classroom performance.
- GIS predicted total course points earned, amount of extra credit, and course grade; it was the principal predictor of course performance.
- Goal instability predicts readiness to pursue career exploration in a classroom environment.
Career Course and Graduation Rate
(Reardon, Melvin, McCain, Peterson, & Bowman, 2015).

- Archival data from 1,091 students entering 1994-2002
- Two groups were matched, course and university cohorts
- Course cohort a more diverse group & lower GPA/SAT
- Course cohort graduation rate higher after 6 years
- SAT scores and HS GPA did not predict graduation
- Career course along with GPA, changes in major, and withdrawals predicted graduation rate
Selected Career Course Textbooks

• 12 textbooks (includes both undergraduate and graduate level texts)
• 7 books on implementing a course
• 3 books that serve as guides for students
• Prices range from $10 to $160
Florida State Career Class: SDS 3340

10 keys to building a successful course

1. Finding the “right” academic home
2. Offering variable credit option
3. Building a partnership with Career Center staff
4. Using the Career Center as a “lab”
5. Developing instructor training & evaluation materials
6. Incorporating instructional design elements
7. Using theory to guide content and interventions
8. Using team instruction
9. Broad coverage of career development topics
10. Ongoing research to document course effectiveness
# Tech Report (Why Students at FSU Enroll in a Career Course)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Knowledge</th>
<th>Occupational and Education Information</th>
<th>Career Planning Information</th>
<th>Job Hunting Skills</th>
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<tr>
<td>23%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Relationships and Careers</th>
<th>The Global Economy</th>
<th>Work and Family Balance</th>
<th>Decision Making Skills</th>
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<td>3%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Based on responses from student data sheets
FSU Career Class Student Data (Fall 2013)

• Study Demographics:
  – 108 participants

<table>
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<th>Gender &amp; Class Standing</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
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<tr>
<td>• 61% Males</td>
<td>• 51% Caucasian</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 38% Females</td>
<td>• 30% African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 23% Freshmen</td>
<td>• 9% Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 30% Sophomores</td>
<td>• 3% Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 17% Juniors</td>
<td>• &gt; 1% American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 30% Seniors</td>
<td>• &gt; 1% Hawaiian Native/ Other Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 6% Other</td>
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</table>
Students were more decided and satisfied with their choice
Students had less negative thinking and were more goal oriented
Students’ external conflict not impacted by the course

<table>
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<th>Measure</th>
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<th>Post-Mean</th>
<th>df</th>
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n= 108; p < .01
Discussion & Questions

For more information and presentation materials:

FSU Tech Center Website
http://www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/