SHOCK & Awe: Mentoring Transfer Students Through the First Year

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Who Are We?

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Transfer Experience Workshops

Pre-Advising and Information

SLS 3140 Academic Success Strategies for Transfer Students
Shock and Awe!

- What is “transfer shock?”
- Shocking factors for transfer students and colleges/universities
- Meet transfer students (case study)
- A mentoring model for coaching transfer students
Transfer Students at Our Institutions

• Half of all college students begin at a community college. Low-income students are three times more likely to do so than high-income students.

• Students who begin at a community college are less likely to earn a baccalaureate degree.

• Only 33% percent of community college students transfer to a four-year institution within six years.

Jack Kent Cook Foundation, 2019
Allen, Smith & Muehleck (2013)
Shocking Factors for Colleges and Universities

- Public institutions enroll four times as many community college transfer students as private institutions; transfer students also make up a larger percentage of public enrollment.

- Transfer students who perform well at the community college tend to perform well when they transfer in all areas except for business and STEM.

- Community college students who transfer to selective four-year schools perform as well as – or even better than – their peers who come directly from high school.

- Transfer students who transfer into fine arts, humanities, and social sciences experience “transfer ecstasy.” Overall, when transfer students persist beyond the first semester, their grades improve.

Cejda (1997)
Jack Kent Cook Foundation (2019)
Allen, Smith & Muehleck (2013)
Transfer Shock

First-semester transfer students are overwhelmed with the pace of the four-year college life, are stymied and confused by unexpected bureaucratic hurdles, and feel varying levels of alienation and isolation when the norms, values, and expectations of the new institution are so different. This usually results in a slight to significant GPA drop in the first semester.

Hills (1965)
Shocking Factors for Transfer Students

- Larger campus with large class sizes
- Increased credit hour expectations (from 12 to 15)
- Unforgiving first semester schedules
- New procedures and advising systems
- Confusing institutional polices
- Faculty more focused on research than on student development
- Transfer credits that don’t or won’t transfer
- Higher tuition costs
- Limited/exhausted financial ability
- Feeling anonymous or “like a freshman.”

Chin-Newman & Shaw (2013)
Hartman, Bjerregaard & Lord, 2009
Shocking Factors for Transfer Students

- From the nurturing of a community college environment to the pressured independence of a four-year institution.
- Colleges and universities holding outdated assumptions of the needs of transfer students.
- Students’ “over-” and “under-” estimating of their own abilities to navigate the high-pressure environment.
- Transfer credit and tuition surprises.
- Drastic changes in demographics or sharp regional differences.

Berger & Malaney (2001)
Carlan & Byxbe (2000)
Hartman, Bjerrgaard & Lord (2009)
Grites (2013)
Meet Daniela!

- 28 year-old, Black woman
- Single mom with four children (6-months to 11 years old)
- No help or support from family
- Teenage parent who earned her high school diploma in an alternative teenage parent program
- Earned AA from two-year after 9 years of part-time/full-time enrollment
- Criminology major, 2nd semester
- 1.10 GPA (academic probation)

- She comes to coaching because she is “freaking out” before her mid-term exams.
- She says she doesn't know how to study or manage her time. Because she is the only caregiver for her kids, she struggles with work-life balance.
- She also struggles with writing papers and essay questions.
- She thinks maybe her family is right about her. Now she is even doubting her career choices and coming to FSU.
How Can You Help?

• **What more do you need to know** about this student in order to have a better sense of her and her journey?
  • If more information is needed, what questions will you ask the student?
  • What information can you get from other sources?

• **What are the various shock factors** impacting this student’s success?

• **What advice would you give?** What referrals would you/could you make?

• **What would be the appropriate follow-up protocol** for this student?
What is the direct and indirect impact of these forces on your students’ success?

How Shocking!

Identity

Culture

Social

Academics

How many other “shocks” can you identify?
Mentoring Transfer Students

- Preparing: Exploration, Self-assessment, Discovery
- Enabling: Support, Challenge, and Vision
- Negotiating: Details, Definitions, Accountability
- Closing: Evaluation, Vision, Completion

Mentoring Transfer Students

Tools and knowledge that would allow a student to negotiate the transfer process

Connecting academic, career, and life goals to each other AND to major choices

- Building Transfer Capital
- Increasing Self-Efficacy
- Making Connections
- Facilitating Learning

Focusing on self-direction, critical-thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, and coping

Socratic questioning, listening, reflecting

Allen, Smith & Muehleck (2013)
Zachary (2011)
Helping Students Avoid Transfer Shock

Get Them Involved (Strategically)
Connect Them with Faculty
Keep Them Major and Career-Focused
Encourage Self-Care
Connect Them with Your Other Transfer Students
Navigate Them Through Campus Resources

Adolfson (2019)
Questions?
Thank You!

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Contact Us!

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Selected Sources


