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

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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

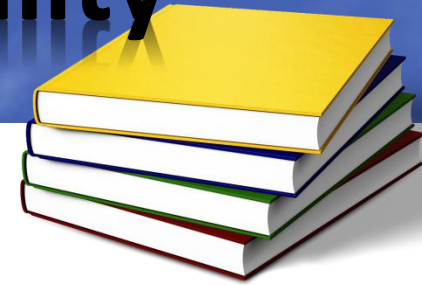**Reardon & Fiore (2014) reviewed 88 studies, 1976-2014**

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).
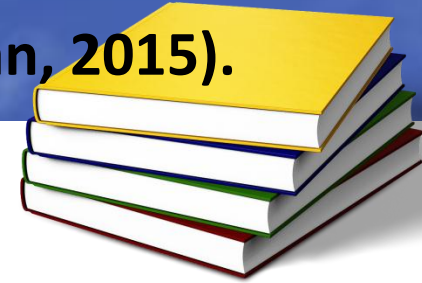
- Archival data from 1,091 students entering 1994-2002

- 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)

Self-Knowledge	Occupational and Education Information	Career Planning Information	Job Hunting Skills
23%	17%	20%	16%

Relationships and Careers	The Global Economy	Work and Family Balance	Decision Making Skills
3%	14%	4%	5%

Based on responses from student data sheets

FSU Career Class Student Data (Fall 2013)

- Study Demographics:
  - 108 participants

Gender & Class Standing
• 61% Males
• 38% Females
• 23% Freshmen
• 30% Sophomores
• 17% Juniors
• 30% Seniors

Ethnicity
• 51% Caucasian
• 30% African American
• 9% Latino
• 3% Asian
• > 1% American Indian/Alaska Native
• > 1% Hawaiian Native/ Other Pacific Islander
• 6% Other

FSU Career Class Student Data (Fall 2013)

Measure	Pre-Mean	Post-Mean	df	F	p
Satisfaction	2.72	1.77	1	20.424	.000*
OAQ	2.41	2.08	1	29.870	.000*
GIS	43.54	47.23	1	19.470	.000*
DMC	10.92	8.25	1	10.968	.001*
CA	14.07	11.44	1	17.012	.000*
EC	**4.57**	**4.05**	**1**	**2.553**	**.113**

n= 108; $p < .01$

- 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

Discussion & Questions

For more information and presentation materials:

FSU Tech Center Website

http://www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/