

**NISTS 2023**

# BE A CONNECTOR FOR TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS

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*Educational Poster*

## **2845 - Developing a Resource-Inclusive Environment with Classroom Assignments for Cohort Transfer Students**

Transition Programs and Supports, Diversity and Inclusion

Transfer students are often challenged with a lack of resource knowledge within their new environment, how to access those resources, how to use them in their academic careers, and how to use them in their professional career development. This poster addresses the need to connect students with useful resources and opportunities for skillset development in the classroom. Examples of how to fulfill those needs through classroom assignments will be discussed in this presentation.

**LaToya McDonald**, Graduate Research Assistant, Graduate Teacher on Record

**Matthew Boyer**, Research Associate Professor  
Clemson University

### Background

Traditional students are typically exposed to pivotal resources in their first-year classes such as freshman studies, as well as throughout their first-year coursework as professors address their needs. By their second or third year, students are expected to know of these resources since professors may assume they have acclimated into their environment as an upperclassman.

Transfer students don't have the same exposure to those resources, yet they are also expected as upperclassman to be aware of them and use them in their academic career.

This study presents targeted research skill development, innovation, and real-world application approaches in the classroom.

### Purpose

The purpose of this study is to develop methods that can be applied to multidiscipline and multi-classification course assignments beneficial to transfer students.

### Study Aims

- 1) Recognize classroom disparities for transfer students at 4-year institutions.
- 2) Describe methods used to develop a student background inclusive curriculum and assignments.

### Methods

**Study:** Structure Cohort Observational  
**Teaching Method:** Student-centered  
**Instructor:** Graduate, PhD Candidate

Surveys were provided to students for open ended feedback. This feedback in addition to instructor observations was used to develop an interactive curriculum for a more transfer inclusive environment.

### SPECTRA STUDENTS CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN THE CLASSROOM



### Sample Characteristics

- **Classifications of students:** Sophomores, Juniors, Seniors
- **Student Disciplines:** Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Engineering, Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, Computer Information Systems .
- **Classroom sizes:** 7-10 students

### Results

Recognized Disparity	Classroom applications	General examples used in this study
Real World Applications	Students were provided relatable examples with each task.	Research questions included local and global applications
Campus Academic Resources	Assignments developed to include campus research.	Students were required to use campus resources such as the career center to complete assignments.
Career Readiness/Knowledge	Assignments developed to include research in student's career of choice.	Students were required to research internship opportunities.
Research and Critical Thinking Skills	Assignments developed to increase creative thinking.	Students were given the opportunity to answer semi-challenging open-ended questions for intellectual discussions.
Professional Writing	Assignments developed with rubrics and structure for professional development.	Students were taught writing applications like rhetorical writing and given tasks such as peer review and literature reviews.
Networking (Peer, Academic, Professional)	Assignments developed to include feedback and direct interaction.	Students had teams within the classroom and were given assignments that required interaction with professors and professionals in their field to answer career building questions.
Peer Communication	Assignments that build teamwork and feedback.	Students were given tasks that included peer review with both positive and constructive criticism.

### Two main areas of focus with three sub applications for environment development:

#### Focus 1: Areas to Acknowledge

- Acknowledgement of advantages & disadvantages due to transfer status
- Acknowledgement of discipline and classification diversity.
- Acknowledgement of the lack of knowledge pertaining to resources and culture of 4-year institution for transfer students.

#### Focus 2: Instructor Areas of Effort

- Instructor knowledge of useful campus resources.
- Instructor knowledge of potential transfer and traditional student gaps.
- Instructor knowledge of creative instructional assignments to bridge gaps

### Discussion

The disparities of transfer students should be acknowledged by the instructor in order to properly address them and build on the success of transfer students at their four-year institution. Most transfer students are equipped with the knowledge required to succeed at a four-year institution, however field knowledge may not be sufficient in aiding the student in their transition. One of the primary disparities that transfer student have is the lack of knowledge to resources and understanding of the culture of their new campus.

This study involved a graduate student developing the curriculum for a cohort of transfer students. This allowed room for innovation and flexibility in the development of the curriculum to better assist transfer students in a controlled environment. Through this unique set up, observations and feedback was provided from the transfer students. This offered a unique experience for both the graduate student and the transfer students. This also offered a controlled environment to develop a transfer student focused curriculum based on observed disparities.

By first acknowledging the disparities one can understand the classroom needs for students in general. The assignments based on the disparities don't limit traditional students in any way. They build on the foundation of the traditional students while developing a foundation for transfer-students making it an inclusive environment for students with diverse backgrounds. Assignments were created as building blocks without limiting the challenging aspect that encourages student academic development.

As instructors once there is acknowledgment of the transfer student gaps, assignments can be easily adjusted to address these gaps by focusing on four key points:

- ❖ Critical Thinking Skills
- ❖ Networking
- ❖ Resources Knowledge
- ❖ Communication

Through disparity acknowledgement and focusing on bridging gaps, instructors can develop curriculums that will meet the needs of transfer students in an environment that combines traditional students.

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