

NISTS 2023

BE A CONNECTOR FOR TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS

Virtual • February 1-3 | Portland, OR • February 22-24

The following presentation was given at the 21st Annual Conference for the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students. Please cite responsibly and direct questions to the original presenter(s).

Educational Session

2779 - Retaining Transfer Students: Macro and Micro Approaches

Transition Programs and Supports, Leadership and Strategic Planning

This session will briefly review the historical neglect of transfer students and offer strategies for reconciling discrepancies between how institutions provide transitional experiences for first time-in-college students and transfer students. A specific transitional effort – the Transfer Seminar – will be described in detail, specifically via already existing courses. Participants will be able to determine how this approach could be adapted and will be shown the success outcomes of higher retention and graduation rates using this approach.

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Retaining Transfer Students: Macro and Micro Approaches

NISTS Annual Conference (Virtual Version)

February 1, 2022

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Rationale

- Historically **overlooked** (and neglected)
- **Not defined** clearly (sometimes)
- Too **diverse** a population that can result in too **many assumptions** made
- **Less time** with them
- **Beginning to matter** (e.g., FTIC enrollments going down)

- **It's the right thing to do**

What We Know (about FTIC students)

- Tinto's research (1987, 2006, 2010) on **academic and social integration** indicates that both dimensions need to be in place in order to facilitate students' decisions to remain at the institution.
- Astin's (1975, 1977, 1984, 1993) theory of **student involvement (engagement)** reinforces the notion that student success is linked to the (positive) campus environment, **especially through peer group interaction**.
- ...and using Schlossberg's (1995, p. 27) transition theory, **the transfer experience** can be an "event, or non-event, that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles"
See also McGill & Lazarowicz, (2012)

So...

Why didn't higher education researchers and administrators, demographers, legislators, etc. apply these same principles to the **transfer student** population?

They didn't count!

IPEDES: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (Federal):

The retention rate measures the percentage of **first-year students** who persisted a year later at the same institution. However, these are institutional level data. (Hagedorn, et al., 2012)

Excluded: TRANSFERS, part-time students, non-degree students, other than fall term admits.

IPEDES data have traditionally been used to gauge “**student success**.”

So, who determines “**student success**” (our primary goal)?

The answer is...

It depends on who is defining “student success” ...

Institutions? (All those attended?)

Legislators?

Faculty?

Parents?

Academic Advisors?

Outside Funding Agencies?

Accreditors?

Employers? (Which transcript(s)?)

Students?????

IMHO: If there is **no uniform definition of “student success”** among all institutional stakeholders, then these entities could be working counterproductively.

Since retention (and graduation) rates are more easily defined and measured, they have become the most widely accepted metrics.

However, some things are changing...

IPEDS has begun to report (2015-16) graduation rates in 4 cohorts (not **1**):

- full-time, first-time
- part-time, first-time
- full-time, non-first-time
- part-time, non-first time.

Yet, the accepted calculation of retention rates has remained the same.

IHEP Report (Arnold, et al., 2019) - accreditors

College Transparency Act (S.839; H.R. 1766, introduced 18 March 2021; passed by H.R. Feb 4, 2022)

Remedies

Define your transfer **population**

Expedite credit transfer **processes**; stranded credits

Examine transfer **policies and** all transfer transitional **processes** (pre-admission through exit)

Recognize that this population is probably **the most diverse** on your campus, so **refrain** from over-generalization

Develop a **Culture of Transfer**

Seek Transfer Efficacy (Hayes Buenafior, 2020)

Initiate some form of Transfer Seminar **course** (NISTS blog, 2021)

Evolution of Stockton's Transfer Seminar concept

- **Fall 2002:** Contemporary American Education was offered as a freshman seminar (not successful)
- **Fall 2003:** Planned for student-athletes (not needed)
- **DUH!!!** – Why not apply the **freshman seminar concept** to transfer students?

Transfer students
are also
first-time students
at their new institutions.

Some Likely Differences

- Campus geography
- Vocabulary
- Academic policies and procedures
- Academic standards; faculty expectations
- Peer groups ()
- Advising structures
- Computer systems
- Course scheduling procedures
- Culture and traditions
- Residence Life
- Campus Resources

GSS 2642 Contemporary American Education

- **Content** includes organization, administration, financing, curriculum, assessment in both K-12 and higher education (+ accreditation)
- As a **General Social Science** course, we examine issues from **social, economic, and political** perspectives
- Also a **Writing Across the Curriculum (W2)** course
- **No required texts/tests**, rather Blackboard posts and/or emails from Chronicle, IHE, Academic Impressions, NYT, Press of Atlantic City, NJSBA, whatever they find

GSS 2642 Contemporary American Education

Seminar elements (all writing assignments) include:

Library activity Campus Resources **office visit**

Attend 3 different types of **co-curricular events**

Preceptorial (**advising**) comparison

Other writing assignments include:

Educational **autobiography**

Learning preferences

Group research project

Individual Research project

Reflective (**final**) **paper**

Examples of courses taught as **Transfer Seminars** since 2003

- **Contemporary American Education**
- Marketing Principles
- Legal/Social/Ethical Environment of Business
- Health Psychology
- Intro to Criminal Justice
- The Global Community
- Financial Accounting
- Cognitive Psychology
- Intro to Health Sciences

More Titles

- Memoirs of Mental Illness
- World Perspectives on Health
- Research Design and Methods in Criminal Justice
- Writing in the Movies
- Perspectives on Women
- Leadership Strategy and Change
- Developmental Psychology: Childhood and Adolescence
- History's Mysteries
- Yosemite: Nature and Culture
- Unlocking Creativity
- Business and the Arts

Why this transitional approach is my preference

“Everyone’s entitled to my opinion.”

❖ No () Peer Group

❖ Classroom Format

❖ Promotes Engagement

❖ Course examples supported by research:

Criminal Justice (Lord, et al., 2012)

Psychology (Eyer and Johnson, 2011)

Education (Grites and Farina, 2012; Grites, 2021a)

Seminar Anecdotes

- **“I felt intimidated in my other classes.”**
- **“I would never have attended anything if it had not been for this class.”**
- **“Our group** stopped being just classmates and started to become friends.”
- **“I thought I was just going to sit in class, learn, and leave** just as I did at my community college. I never thought I would actually become involved in school.”
- “I really liked the seminar because **I learned about Stockton from inside a classroom.**”

More Anecdotes

- “When I went to register for classes at Orientation a nice girl sat next to me and we ended up adding this course. On the first day of class **it was a relief to walk in and see a familiar face.**”
- “Meeting new people is a struggle when you’re commuting 40 minutes each way twice a week...**this transfer seminar class was one place where I did meet people**...I’m hoping to move on campus with Justine whom I met in your class.
- “This was my **favorite semester in my entire life**. I never thought I could enjoy school the way I did this fall.”

And a disappointment 😞 ...

“I’m writing to let you know I dropped the class this morning. I didn’t realize the course included co-curricular participation until I checked the syllabus. I am a commuter student, with a 3-hour drive to and fro, and I won’t have as much time to put in and I don’t want to do a half job.”

Trans Sem Retention Rates

				Continued 2nd Semester			Continued 2nd Semester Rates			Continued 3rd Semester			3rd Semester Retention Rates		
	Took Transfer Seminar	Did not Take Transfer Seminar	Total Transfers	Took Transfer Seminar	Did not Take Transfer Seminar	Total Transfers	Took Transfer Seminar	Did not Take Transfer Seminar	Total Transfers	Took Transfer Seminar	Did not Take Transfer Seminar	Total Transfers	Took Transfer Seminar	Did not Take Transfer Seminar	Total Transfers
Spring 2012	61	370	431	56	319	375	92%	86%	87%	54	299	353	89%	81%	82%
Fall 2012	108	954	1062	101	869	970	94%	91%	91%	96	792	888	89%	83%	84%
Spring 2013	78	359	437	76	322	398	97%	90%	91%	70	292	362	90%	81%	83%
Fall 2013	200	836	1036	186	737	923	93%	88%	89%	171	669	840	86%	80%	81%
Spring 2014	128	259	387	118	220	338	92%	85%	87%	108	204	312	84%	79%	81%
Fall 2014	155	909	1064	146	842	988	94%	93%	93%	141	753	894	91%	83%	84%
Spring 2015	57	347	404	53	271	324	93%	78%	80%	53	259	312	93%	75%	77%
Fall 2015	115	917	1032	111	847	958	97%	92%	93%	106	777	883	92%	85%	86%
Spring 2016	110	285	395	103	241	344	94%	85%	87%	99	223	322	90%	78%	82%
Fall 2016	131	840	971	122	763	885	93%	91%	91%	119	713	832	91%	85%	86%
Spring 2017	105	300	405	97	262	359	92%	87%	89%	92	238	330	88%	79%	81%
Fall 2017	144	844	988	133	764	897	92%	91%	91%	125	685	810	87%	81%	82%
Spring 2018	85	303	388	75	260	335	88%	86%	86%	72	237	309	85%	78%	80%
Fall 2018	178	839	1017	170	746	916	96%	89%	90%	160	696	856	90%	83%	84%
Spring 2019	70	345	415	59	300	359	84%	87%	87%	58	276	334	83%	80%	80%
Fall 2019	52	1067	1119	47	937	984	90%	88%	88%	48	851	899	92%	80%	80%
Spring 2020	61	362	423	52	308	360	85%	85%	85%	50	282	332	82%	78%	78%
Fall 2020	74	830	904	70	737	807	95%	89%	89%	61	651	712	82%	78%	79%
Spring 2021	26	339	365	21	243	264	81%	72%	72%	19	233	252	73%	69%	69%
Fall 2021	67	876	943	62	763	825	93%	87%	87%	57	689	746	85%	79%	79%
Spring 2022	18	297	315	15	242	257	83%	81%	82%						

**Trans Sem
Graduation Rates**

				Graduated Within 4 Years			4 Year Graduation Rate			Graduated in 6 Years			6 Year Graduation Rate			Graduated in 8 Years			8 Year Graduation Rate		
	Took Transfer Seminar	Did not Take Transfer Seminar	Total Transfers	Took Transfer Seminar	Did not Take Transfer Seminar	Total Transfers	Took Transfer Seminar	Did not Take Transfer Seminar	Total Transfers	Took Transfer Seminar	Did not Take Transfer Seminar	Total Transfers	Took Transfer Seminar	Did not Take Transfer Seminar	Total Transfers	Took Transfer Seminar	Did not Take Transfer Seminar	Total Transfers	Took Transfer Seminar	Did not Take Transfer Seminar	Total Transfers
Spring 2012	61	370	431	42	227	269	69%	61%	62%	50	263	313	82%	71%	73%	50	265	315	82%	72%	73%
Fall 2012	108	954	1062	89	688	777	82%	72%	73%	90	730	820	83%	77%	77%	90	740	830	83%	78%	78%
Spring 2013	78	359	437	60	237	297	77%	66%	68%	65	267	332	83%	74%	76%	65	270	335	83%	75%	77%
Fall 2013	200	836	1036	158	560	718	79%	67%	69%	162	593	755	81%	71%	73%	164	604	768	82%	72%	74%
Spring 2014	128	259	387	87	151	238	68%	58%	61%	99	172	271	77%	66%	70%	99	178	277	77%	69%	72%
Fall 2014	155	909	1064	128	638	766	83%	70%	72%	134	683	817	86%	75%	77%	135	691	826	87%	76%	78%
Spring 2015	57	347	404	45	205	250	79%	59%	62%	48	242	290	84%	70%	72%	49	247	296	86%	71%	73%
Fall 2015	115	917	1032	103	660	763	90%	72%	74%	104	693	797	90%	76%	77%				-	-	-
Spring 2016	110	285	395	83	153	236	75%	54%	60%	92	183	275	84%	64%	70%				-	-	-
Fall 2016	131	840	971	103	592	695	79%	70%	72%	109	636	745	83%	76%	77%				-	-	-
Spring 2017	105	300	405	71	170	241	68%	57%	60%	83	207	290	79%	69%	72%				-	-	-
Fall 2017	144	844	988	102	584	686	71%	69%	69%				-	-	-				-	-	-
Spring 2018	85	303	388	58	173	231	68%	57%	60%				-	-	-				-	-	-
Fall 2018	178	839	1017	139	587	726	78%	70%	71%				-	-	-				-	-	-
Spring 2019	70	345	415	46	210	256	66%	61%	62%				-	-	-				-	-	-
Fall 2019	52	1067	1119				-	-	-				-	-	-				-	-	-
Spring 2020	61	362	423				-	-	-				-	-	-				-	-	-
Fall 2020	74	830	904				-	-	-				-	-	-				-	-	-
Spring 2021	26	339	365				-	-	-				-	-	-				-	-	-
Fall 2021	67	876	943				-	-	-				-	-	-				-	-	-
Spring 2022	18	297	315				-	-	-				-	-	-				-	-	-

Takeaways

- ❖ Politically and economically **FREE**
- ❖ **Any course** can be designated as such
- ❖ One faculty **pre-requisite** = **commitment**
- ❖ It's **fun**
- ❖ It **works**

- ❖ It's been **my best effort**

Thank you!

Q & A

“Everyone’s entitled to my opinion.”

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Resources

- National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition www.sc.edu/fye
- NACADA The Global Community for Academic Advising – Advising Community on Transfer Students <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Community/Advising-Communities/Advising-Transfer-Students.aspx>
- American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers – Transfer and Articulation <https://www.aacrao.org/resources/transfer-articulation>
- Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education – Transfer Student Programs and Services https://www.cas.edu/store_product.asp?prodid=76
- National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students <https://www.nists.org/>
- National Transfer Student Week Oct 16–20, 2023 <https://www.nists.org/national-transfer-student-week>
- Student Achievement Measure (SAM) <https://www.studentachievementmeasure.org/>
- College Scorecard <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>

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Resources Continued

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