First-Year Seminar Instructor Guide

2019-2020

Office of Student Success
Wichita State University

www.wichita.edu/FYS

Introduction

First-Year Seminar is a unique, three-credit hour course designed specifically for new students and part of our General Education program. Seminar topics cover a broad range of issues and will include elements that engage students in our community of learners and teach successful student and life skills.

History of First-Year Seminar at WSU

First Year Seminar (FYS) courses were designed to help new students make a successful transition to campus, both academically and personally. The courses aim to foster a sense of belonging, and promote engagement in the curricular and co-curricular life of the university. They provide a required common experience that engages students in meaningful relationships with their peers, faculty, and the campus community. Seminars are meant to engage students in intellectual discourse in small classes taught by faculty, who have a deep subject matter knowledge and a passion for a topic.

A proposal to create a required FYS for all incoming freshmen at WSU, originated in the General Education committee in 2014-15 and was accepted as a pilot project in December 2015 by the Faculty Senate. A total of 19 different courses were developed by 22 different instructors during the pilot, with 45 sections being offered between Fall 2016 and Spring 2019. Assessment of the pilot indicated some success with retention as well as positive qualitative evaluations. Fall to Fall persistence rates for students in the 2016 FYS cohort were 5% higher than non-FYS students, and were 7% higher in comparison from their 2nd to 3rd year at the university.   The General Faculty voted to require FYS for all first-time-in-college students starting in the Fall 2021.

Understanding first-year students

To begin understanding first-year students, we must first break it down to their most basic level of needs. We use Maslow's hierarchy of needs to demonstrate this below. In order for students to be successful they need to have the lower levels met, so helping to get students connected to resources will be crucial to their success.

Lowest Level: Food, water, sleep
Second Level: Security of body, employment resources, family, health, property
Third Level: friendship, family, sexual intimacy
Fourth Level: Self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect for and by others
Top Level: Creativity, morality, spontaneity, problem solving

Think about what your concerns were going into your first year of college. What were you nervous or confused about? Students are worried about where they are going to eat, who they will eat with, how they will pay for their meal, where will they be living, who their friends will be, where they will

park, and the list goes on. Other concerns new students have can relate to choosing a major or career path, finding a job, getting involved, etc.

For the most part, students entering college today are born after 2000. To help gain an understanding of these student's world view we will use the [Mindset List](#). Since these students have been alive:

- They are the first class born in the new millennium, escaping the dreaded label of "Millennial."
- Outer space has never been without human habitation.
- They have always been able to refer to Wikipedia.
- When filling out forms, they are not surprised to find more than two gender categories to choose from.
- The Prius has always been on the road in the US.
- They never used a spit-bowl in a dentist's office.
- *Horton* has always heard a *Who* on stage in *Suessical* the musical.
- Robert Downey Jr. has always been the sober *Iron Man.*
- Mass market books have always been available exclusively as Ebooks.
- Films have always been distributed on the internet.
- Thumbprints have always provided login security – and are harder to lose – that a password.
- Donny and Marie who?
- Afghanistan has always been the frustrating quagmire that keeps on giving.
- Presidential candidates winning the popular vote and then losing the election are not unusual.
- They have grown up afraid that a shooting could happen at their school, too.

Transition is defined by Goodman et al. (2006) as "any event, or non-event, that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles." We see a student's entire first year as a transition to college and the First-Year Seminar courses are designed to assist them in this process. Within their first year, students should have had the opportunity to experience the following:

- Gain perspective and sense of purpose between the demands and opportunities of college life
- Develop cognitive, behavioral, and communication skills to assimilate to campus
- Opportunities for interaction with faculty
- Foster development of a peer group, creating an atmosphere of comfortableness and reduced anxiety
- Acclimate students to the facilities, services, and members of the campus community

The term "first-year experience," as advocated by the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina, describes a comprehensive and intentional approach to the first college year. It comprises both curricular and co-curricular initiatives. It is the sum of all experiences students have in their first year at college. The "first-year experience" is far more than a single event or program, successful programs reflect institutional mission, student demographics, and campus culture.

High-Impact Educational Practices

A list of commonly used programs and educational initiatives for use on college campuses has been developed and is referenced throughout student development theory and research. The initiatives on this list are referred to as High-Impact Practices and are considered beneficial for students from many backgrounds.

First-Year Seminars and Experiences

Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members' own research.

Common Intellectual Experiences

The older idea of a "core" curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community (see below). These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and co-curricular options for students.

Learning Communities

The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with "big questions" that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/ or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link "liberal arts" and "professional courses"; others feature service learning.

Writing-Intensive Courses

These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice "across the curriculum" has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry.

Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.

Undergraduate Research

Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students' early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.

Diversity/Global Learning

Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore "difficult differences" such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

In these programs, field-based "experiential learning" with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

Internships

Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

Capstone Courses and Projects

Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applied what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "best work," or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.

Source: Ensuring Quality & Taking High-Impact Practices to Scale by George D. Kuh and Ken O'Donnell, with Case Studies by Sally Reed. (Washington, DC: AAC&U, 2013). For information and more resources and research from LEAP, see www.aacu.org/leap

Course Objectives

Overarching Goals:

1. Exploration of engaging academic, interdisciplinary content.
2. Exposure to and development of student success and professional skills.
3. Development of positive relationships with peers, faculty and staff members.

All of these goals will be achieved through a variety of methods, with activities and assignments likely contributing to more than one goal.

General Education Basic Skills Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. *Employ* higher-order thinking that moves beyond rote memorization and factual acquisition to more advanced higher levels of thinking (e.g., thinking critically and creatively).
2. *Articulate* and *defend* their positions through dialogue, discussion, or presentations, and writing.
3. *Employ* analytical reasoning and problem solving techniques
4. *Identify* appropriate library and other resources to facilitate research and *accurately provide* citations.

If a course is to be designated as containing diversity content, an additional outcome should be added to reflect learning in this area.

5. *Illustrate/Demonstrate* an appreciation for diversity as it applies to the course content

Student Success Learning Outcomes included in FYS

1. *Understand* the expectations of higher education and how they differ from secondary education
2. *Learn strategically* by developing skills and habits that promote deep learning and long-term retention of knowledge.
3. *Develop* more effective life and study skills in areas including time management, note taking, test taking and personal finance.
4. *Capitalize* on university resources and extracurricular experiences designed to promote their success.

Disciplinary Learning Outcomes

These outcomes are developed by the faculty based on the unique disciplinary content of the course.

To ensure relevant, sustainable and dynamic course design, the learning outcomes and common course requirements provide a degree of consistency across sections while also allowing instructors to customize their section. The broad nature of these outcomes signifies that no one approach may be appropriate for all sections or all students. The content, topics and methods used to achieve the outcomes should be tailored to the needs of the students in a given section and to the strengths and expertise of the instructor.

Example Matrix illustrating how coursework is aligned with the Learning Outcomes:

	Gen Ed Outcome 1	Gen Ed Outcome 2	Student Success Outcome 1	Student Success Outcome 2	Student Success Outcome 3	Student Success Outcome 4	Disciplinary outcome 1	Disciplinary outcome 2
Journal entries	x		x					x
Quizes	x						x	
Homework	x				x			x
Group activities				x				
Class presentation		x					x	
Small group discussions		x					x	
Out of class activity						x		
Attendance and participation				x				

Components for FYS

Course content should be roughly divided as follows: 70% on interdisciplinary content, 25% on Student Success content, and 5% on the Common Read. Student success content can often be thematically presented to align with interdisciplinary content.

Required Components:
1. Disciplinary / interdisciplinary content
2. Information Literacy Module
   - For example: face-to-face sessions, online tutorials, videos, and/or resource guides.
3. A*t least three* of the following student success components:[1]
   - financial literacy
   - goal setting
   - degree planning
   - career planning
   - time management
   - stress management/mental health tips
   - study skills / test taking tips / note taking tips.
4. Participation in the Common Read and Convocation
   - All FYS students will participate in the Common Read. This may tie directly to the course disciplinary content, or may serve as a supplemental reading. FYS students should participate in Academic Convocation. The event will be streamed online and available for students who can't attend the event due to their class schedule.

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[1]Instructors can readily draw on expert resources across campus to provide content in these student success topics. Resources include: Library personnel, the Office of Student Success, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Counseling and Prevention Center, the Career Development Center, and the Office of Student Money Management.

5. A beyond-the-classroom learning opportunity
   - As part of WSU's commitment to applied and experiential learning, all courses should include a beyond-the-classroom experience. Examples include, but are not limited to: campus lecture/speaker's series, cultural performances, service learning, community service, leadership programs or workshops, a diversity event, a campus club/organization event, a residence hall program, an Outdoor Recreation program. Inviting students to write a reflection paper or journal entry on their experience(s) or engage in small group discussion based on their beyond-the-classroom opportunity can further develop their writing and speaking skills.

6. Writing Assessment
   - All courses must be designed to include two writing samples (pre/post) that can be assessed through the AAC&U writing rubric. The assessment is managed through the Office for Student Success, with aggregate results provided to the Gen Ed committee in an annual report.

Optional Components:
1. Peer Coach
   - A Peer Coach is an undergraduate student who is hired, trained and paid by Student Success and assigned to your course.
   - Each instructor who has a Peer Coach is required to meet with their coach at the beginning of the semester and monthly or as needed or requested by either the instructor or the coach. The expectation for both parties is to schedule a meeting at a specific time, outside of office/student hours.
   - Consult the section on Peer Coaches for information on what they are trained and expected to do in your course.

2. Diversity Content
   - Include in your assignments or activities ways for students to consider different viewpoints other than their own.
   - Consult the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to learn about resources and events that could enhance classroom content or experiences.
   - Explain this component clearly in your syllabus and send it to review to be tagged as a course with diversity content.

3. Service-Learning
   - Consider including a service-learning opportunity in your course. This will look very different for every course and allows the possibility of applied learning opportunities early.
   - Service-Learning is different from community service. Consult Student Involvement to learn about options that may fit your course content and enhance the students' experience.

Assignments

Assignments need to allow students to demonstrate evidence of achieving the learning outcomes for the course. This will be accomplished through a mix of homework assignments, papers, projects and presentations.

Recommended Assignments:

Attendance and Participation - can include beyond-the-classroom learning opportunity	10-20%
Homework (e.g., projects, quizzes, daily assignments)	10-20%
Papers/Essays — formal and/or informal writing	15%-25%
Dialogue /Group Discussions/Presentation(s)	10%-20%
Final/Culminating Project — The final should challenge students to reflect upon and synthesize the major course goals. Methodologies could include portfolios, take-home projects or papers, presentations, videos, etc.	10-20%

Note: students should complete assignments and receive grades regularly throughout the semester so that they can track their success in the course.

Information Literacy

As part of the Gen Ed requirements, all FYS courses should help students "develop fundamentals of information literacy and library research." Below are some suggestions for how to incorporate the University Libraries into your FYS.

- Collaborate with the liaison librarian for your course before you finalize your syllabus and Blackboard shell to discuss options for including information literacy throughout the course. The liaison librarian for your FYS course is the subject librarian for your discipline. See libraries.wichita.edu/subjectlibrarians for a list.
- Ask the librarian about engaging activities to reinforce information literacy concepts.
- Embed the liaison librarian in your Blackboard shell so that s/he can add content about information literacy and library research skills that will be helpful to students.
- Consider having the librarian give at least two library instruction sessions.
    - One for an introduction to the library and information literacy or a session focusing on an aspect of information literacy of your choice.
    - The second time just before an assignment requiring citations is due so that the librarian can assist students in constructing their citations in whichever style you specify. Improperly formatted citations were the most frequently mentioned information literacy problem in the library's survey of the fall 2016 FYS professors.

- Consider bringing your class to the library's instruction room, Ablah 217 for at least one of the library instruction sessions. It has about 25 computers for hands-on activities.
- Have students work through at least part of the information literacy tutorials before the librarian gives the introductory library instruction session to the class.
- Instruct students to have questions that occurred to them while working through the tutorials to ask the librarian at the beginning of the introductory library instruction session.
- In addition to whatever engaging activity you and the librarian include in the library instruction session, have students do an assignment due the next week that requires demonstration of some skill the librarian covered.
- Encourage students to seek out the liaison librarian at the reference desk or schedule one-on-one appointments.

Library Request for Your Assistance in Assessing FYS General Outcome

Would you please help the library assess the FYS General Education Outcome "Develop fundamentals of information literacy and library research?"

- The library would like to do short online pre- and post-tests as the assessment.
- The library would appreciate it if you would please have your students complete the pre-test at the very beginning of the semester.
- Then the library would appreciate it if you would have them complete the post-test about 3 weeks before the end of classes.
- The Coordinator of Library Instructional Services will email you the links to the pre- and post-tests at the appropriate times during a semester.
- It would be great if you would be willing to give your students incentive to complete the two tests – for example, by giving points for completing them or by giving extra credit. The more tests completed, the more valuable the results of the pre- and post-tests.

Student Success Content

One of the benefits for students enrolled in First-Year Seminars is the focus on developing student's study skills. This course will teach students various strategies and resources to achieve academic success in college. Student Success has many resources and tools for faculty to incorporate study skill development into their curricula. Most of these resources can be accessed online by going to www.wichita.edu/StudySkills.

For faculty and staff wishing to bring in guest speakers to cover study skills the following options are available:

- **Presentations by a Success Coach or other staff member from Student Success** are available on time management, note taking, test taking, textbook reading, general study skills, etc. by request.
- **Presentations by your Peer Coach** (or a Peer Coach assigned to another FYS course) who are also trained to present on the same topics or work one-on-one with student as needed.
- **Existing class assignments or activities provided by Student Success** to include in your course.

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We strongly recommend incorporating these skills into the delivery of your course content. **Be sure to be clear about the purpose behind each activity when introducing the assignment to students.** For example, explain to students the focus for the day's class will be on note taking. Next, give a brief presentation on how to take notes and have students practice taking notes during a lecture/presentation/video that is related back to your class theme. At the conclusion of the lecture, review the activity and have students reflect on what note taking style works best for them.

If you need any assistance incorporating study skills with your class theme please consult Student Success and we would be happy to help.

Common Read

WSU Reads, Wichita State's common read program, has selected *Designing Your Life, How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life* by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans as the book for 2019-20 academic year. This book is distributed to all new students during orientation over the summer and in the spring and is used across campus in a variety of ways. All First-Year Seminars will use this book as well as all English composition courses. For more information on the WSU Reads program, the book selection process, or the book selected for upcoming years visit www.wichita.edu/WSUreads.

Opportunities to incorporate the WSU Reads book into the classroom
- Tied into course content where relevant
- Writing sample – if the topic is really a stretch to relate it back to the theme of your course, have students write a paper about a theme or chapter of the book and use that as either their pre- or post-writing sample for the course
- Note taking and test taking skills – have students practice taking notes about the book or create a test on a specific chapter of the book to give students practice preparing for a test
- Group work and discussion – simply have students work together to develop a presentation on a section or theme within the book to develop their group work and public speaking skills

In addition, there will be many opportunities outside of class for students to engage with the book. Instructors can choose to assign students extra credit for attending events related to the book such as: Academic Convocation, Dine & Dialogue, and Coffee & Conversation.

Fall 2019 Events:
Academic Convocation: Thurs, Sept. 12, 9:30 a.m. in Wilner Auditorium
Coffee and Conversation: TBA
Dine and Dialogue: TBA

Spring 2020 Events:
Academic Convocation (available online) – search "Academic Convocation Wichita State University" on WSU's YouTube channel.
Dine and Dialogue: TBA
Coffee and Conversation, TBA

Written Assessment

FYS instructors are required to submit two writing samples from their classes to be evaluated by an external reviewer based on the AACU Written Communication rubric to assess General education outcome #3. This will be an aggregate assessment and will not be tied directly back to your course.

The first paper should be assigned within the first two weeks of the semester to gauge students' writing at the beginning of the course, and then again towards the end to assess how much their writing has improved during the course. Papers can be submitted either in hard copy, digitally through email, or via Blackboard. The writing prompt must be included when you submit your papers so the reviewers know what the students were asked to write about to be able to evaluate the context of and purpose for writing.

One suggestion for a pre/post writing assignment is a self-reflective journal entry on students' personal goals and why they have decided to come to college, wrapping up with reflections on what they have learned throughout the semester. This could also serve as a qualitative course evaluation and provide you with useful feedback for future modifications.

Peer Coaches

All First-Year Seminar Instructors have the option to be paired up with an undergraduate Peer Coach. Most instructors request a Peer Coach for their class. The role of a Peer Coach is to help students develop into independent learners by supporting them in their transition to college, developing time management and study skills, and connecting them with campus resources. Peer Success Coaches are responsible for the following:

- Facilitating workshops on study skills, time management, test-preparation, etc.
- Preparing handouts, learning aids, etc. for classes and workshops
- Helping students strengthen academic background, understand class materials, comprehend the textbook, organize assignments and notes, and improve general learning and study skills
- Being knowledgeable of campus resources and referring students when appropriate
- Having an awareness of relevant campus events and important deadlines (last day to withdraw with "W", etc.)
- Meeting one-on-one with students to determine any underlying issues and developing a plan for success

Similar to TAs, Peer Success Coaches can lead classroom activities and discussions and should be seen as leaders in the classroom. They **should not** have access to grades or be used for grading assignments as this will interfere with the trust and relationships they are building with the students outside of the classroom.

Campus Engagement

Student Success outcomes #1 and #3 relate to building connections across campus. We want to ensure that students are connecting and engaging with other students, faculty and staff around campus, as well as developing an affinity for Wichita State University. The best opportunity for students to become engaged on campus is by getting involved with student organizations and attending events. Between Student Involvement, Student Activities Council, Student Success: First-Year Programs and many more departments, there is always something happening on campus for

students to get involved in. We suggest that you attend events together as a class and talk about what that experience was like for them the next time you meet. Incentivize students to attend campus events by giving out extra credit points for those who attend and write a reflection about their experience.

There are numerous benefits to involvement on campus:
- More likely to stay at WSU and graduate
- Build network of friends and professionals
- Attend conferences/workshops
- Gain new skills

Events to consider:

Back to School Bash: TBA
Shocker Resource Fair: TBA
Clash of the Colleges: Fri, Aug. 23, 4 p.m., Cessna Stadium
Volunteer Fair: TBA
Syllabus Party: TBA
Involvement Fair: TBA
Wellness Fair: TBA
Academic Convocation: Thurs, Sept. 12, 9:30 a.m., Wilner Auditorium
Family Weekend: TBA
Wu's Big Event: TBA
Shocktoberfest: TBA

Check the following websites and departments for more events:
- www.wichita.edu/involvement
- www.wichita.edu/odi
- www.wichita.edu/firstyear
- www.wichita.edu/calendar

Diversity Content

Some options for how to incorporate diversity content into the classroom include:

- Bringing a representative from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion into the classroom to facilitate a discussion on a specific topic
- Encourage students to participate in one of the trainings hosted by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion such as Safe Zone, Gender Diversity, etc.
- Incentivize student's participation with in events focused on diversity, especially discussion based programs such as the Brown Bag Series hosted by ODI, by giving extra credit points

Service Learning

Community Engagement is the "application of institutional resources to address and solve challenges facing communities, through collaboration with these communities."

Community Engaged Pedagogy is a method of experiential learning that emphasizes action, reflection, & real world engagement that supports students in their development of real-world skills.

Service-Learning at Wichita State University is an experiential learning method that integrates community service with instruction and reflection to increase student civic-mindedness and build community capacity.

Benefits of Service Learning for Faculty

- Student centered
- Measurable outcomes
- Identification with the community
- Scholarship support
- Engagement with multiple systems
- Faculty development
- Grant opportunities
- Curriculum improvement

Benefits of Service Learning for Students

- Building relational and communication skills with multiple systems
- Identify development: awareness of self and diverse individuals and populations
- Developing research skills: inquiry/interviewing, listening, storytelling, empathy, recognition of impact
- Cognition benefits: lessen resistance to change, build tolerance of ambiguity, curiosity, experience with project management, moved to action, critical and creative thinking
- Empowerment interest in Higher Ed

Benefits of Service Learning for the community

- Engagement with University and students
- Experiencing re-energizing
- Support for goals
- Shared leadership
- Strengths-based approach
- Processing and experiencing challenge and growth
- Reflection and feedback opportunities
- Teaching through experiences
- Outreach and appreciation for special knowledge

Community-Based Partnerships

- United Way 211 Website (http://www.unitedwayplains.org/ & www.211kansas.org)
- Lord's Diner, Food Bank, Boys & Girls Club
- Community Service Board (www.wichita.edu/csb) transportation issues, campus events, info & help
- Community Engagement Institute (www.communityengagementinstitute.org)
- IMPACT Center application for opportunities
- Campus Connect (Galaxy Digital)

What do I grade?

- Grade the reflections
- Grade the principles related to your class
- Adding points for increased depth in reflection
- Assignments in and out of class
- You can utilize community partner feedback for portion of grading
- Rubrics
- Student Individual &/or Group Presentations (related to content, style, use of technology)
- Self and Peer Assessment
- Portfolios
- Project newsletter
- Social Media activity/documentation
- Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram

Questions regarding Service Learning can be directed to:

Student Involvement at 978-3022 or getinvolved@wichita.edu.

Financial Literacy

Students who drop out after their first year of college often cite financial issues as their primary reason for leaving (Inceptia, 2012). There are many campus and community resources available to help educate students about financial literacy. Below is a list of partners to utilize for classroom presentations or for handouts and additional information.

Office of Student Money Management:

115 Neff Hall, 316-978-3254
OSMM@wichita.edu
www.wichita.edu/OSMM

My College Money Plan

www.mycollegemoneyplan.org

Office of Financial Aid

203 Jardine Hall, 316-978-3430 or 855-978-1787
finaid@wichita.edu
www.wichita.edu/financialaid

Commerce Bank

RSC 1st floor, 316-978-3850
https://commercebank.com/shockercard

Meritrust Credit Union

316-683-1199
www.meritrustcu.org

Tips from FYS Instructors to new instructors:

Some of these are obviously good practices for all classes, but the impact is high when carrying out these strategies for a class full of first semester freshman.

- Explain the learning value of each activity. Take a few minutes to regularly communicate to the class why the course includes the modules that it does: student success components, extracurricular components, service learning, etc. It can be obvious to us (who designed the course) why these elements are included and how they advance the FYS goals, but it may be less obvious to the students. A few quick sentences when introducing a class visitor from OSMM or the Career Center regarding the goal of helping students succeed outside the classroom and beyond college is likely all that is needed.

- Explain concepts and norms that we might assume that they already know. Its ok for those who know to get a reminder, but it might be the first time a student hears about key concepts or norms as a college student. [Ex: if you skip class, your professor is likely to assume it is a deliberate choice, not that you were sick. Communicate with your professor.]

- Work collaboratively with the Peer Coaches. They are in the course to build connections with the students. They can help serve as a liaison between the faculty member and students. They provide insights for faculty into what students might be struggling with or thinking about with regard to the content and structure of the course. They can serve as an additional voice to drive home the key points the faculty member wants to convey (additional 'words of wisdom', and from a peer sometimes have more impact). Keep the success coach in the loop and find ways they can enhance the students' experiences in the course.

- Carefully consider the level of knowledge the students might bring to the class. If your course is designed to appeal broadly, you may not have any majors in the course, and in

fact might be teaching to students from multiple colleges. This requires a different approach than courses that are designed to draw in students from more specific majors.

- Have them create some evaluation materials like a quiz and use it. It may help them read the materials in a different way.
- Do several activities so the students team up or mingle. Building community contributes to the goal of retaining these students at WSU.
- Work on peer-review activities. This can provide opportunities for mentoring and well as learning from each other.
- Encourage discussion outside the class (Blackboard forum, Facebook group, etc.)
- Encourage them to get out of their comfort zone as a learning tool and give them support in doing this. This might take many forms (role playing, giving a speech, interviewing someone on/off campus, discussing controversial topics, attending talks or performances, etc.).
- Invite a guest to talk about x topic.
- Have some kind of personal meeting(s) with them. They have met with advisors, but likely have not had any personal meetings with a faculty member on campus. Help them recognize that faculty members are people who want to see them succeed.
- Send reminders a couple days before each deadline, and encourage them to learn how to keep calendars and take responsibility for their assignments because not all faculty will provide reminders.
- Put everything on Blackboard for easy and timely location. Explain the format you want for each assignment and put it on Blackboard.
- Give them all the good feedback you can. You are helping them transition effectively to the college environment and they need to know what they expectations are and how they can improve their work.
- Submit mid semester evaluations and use SEAS (Student Early Alert System). They need to be told explicitly if they are performing well or if adjustments are needed to achieve the grade they want in the class.