

Using the Lens of Undergraduate Studies 10 to Understand First Year Students

By James W.G. Barnes, M.A., Associate Director, Calvin E. Bright Success Center (jbarnes@ucmerced.edu)
Jennifer Anaya, UCM Junior, Economics Major, Lead Peer Instructor for Undergraduate Studies 10 (janaya4@ucmerced.edu)

What is Undergraduate Studies 10?



Class member Teja Reaver-McKee participates in a demonstration of a time management experiment with Instructor Lesly Juergenson (above photo).



Lead Peer Instructor Adariana Garcia, demonstrates use of a time management calendar tool (left photo). A small group discussion engages students in setting a seven-day behavior change challenge (right photo).

☛ Typical 50-minute class schedule (course meets once per week)

Activity	Time	Learning Purpose
Quiz	5 minutes	Encourages reading for understanding Focuses attention in the first minutes of class
Instructor Lesson	20-30 minutes	Examples and exercises that apply course concepts to academic expectations and personal development
Peer Instructor Lesson (small group activity, discussion or reflection)	20-25 minutes	Small group settings lead by peers where lessons create discussions that challenge and support students on their transition journeys
Reflective Weekly Writing Assignment	Outside class-Due each week at the start of class	Personal reflection and application of class concepts in the context of their personal, social and academic lives

☛ This course has provided information and support for your development in the following skills:

	Strongly Agree/ Agree Spring 2013	Strongly Agree/ Agree Fall 2013
Accepting personal responsibility	100%	94%
Discovering self motivation	90%	91%
Mastering self management (time management)	91%	90%
Gaining self awareness	92%	92%
Believing in myself	92%	89%



Students engage in active learning in a team writing competition (left and right photos).

☛ How helpful have the following activities been to your learning in this course?

	Very Helpful/ Helpful Spring 2013	Very Helpful/ Helpful Fall 2013
Small group discussions	89%	88%
Feedback from instructors	90%	88%
Textbook readings	84%	83%
In-class activities	88%	83%
Weekly writing assignments	76%	76%
Large group discussions	78%	75%

Data

Student Responses

- ☛ Behaviors you have adopted resulting from your learning in this course:
 - ☛ Confidence! I have become more confident in myself thanks to the readings.
 - ☛ Being optimistic and motivated to complete tasks and saying no when I have too much on my plate.
 - ☛ I am aware of how much time I spend on things and realize my roles as student, daughter, and friend.
 - ☛ I know how to catch myself when I am going off course.
 - ☛ Instead of giving up, now I fight. Instead of saying “I have to,” I now say “I choose to.” Instead of fearing to reach out for help, now I run for help.
 - ☛ I am becoming a “Creator”--process problems better, critique myself and support myself.
 - ☛ I am developing good study habits and believing in myself.
- ☛ Areas that you want to continue to work on in the coming semester:
 - ☛ **Time Management:** I don't want to fall back to not using my time wisely. I want to study without feeling rushed and spend time on important things. It is something I will need for the future as well.
 - ☛ **Inner Language:** I need to keep working on shutting up my inner critic.
 - ☛ **Emotional Intelligence:** I panic a lot. I want to be able to control my negative stress.
 - ☛ **Confidence:** I want to work on gaining confidence within myself.
 - ☛ **Using Resources:** Talking with professors, networking and exploring careers are my goals.

- ☛ Data collection methods:
 - ☛ Course evaluation was revised to reflect learning outcomes with quantitative and qualitative elements.
 - ☛ Student responses were evaluated for frequency and communication of learning outcomes.
 - ☛ Over 400 students participated from 12 sections with collection at the end of spring 2013 and fall 2013 semesters.

Conclusions

- ☛ **Time management** is the area in which students state they have made the most significant progress. It is also the most frequently mentioned goal for improvement.
- ☛ **Active and intimate learning environments** where students are asked to reflect, discuss and apply knowledge have the deepest impact on student learning.
- ☛ Students see their **personal development** intertwined with their academic success.
- ☛ Students engage more deeply in their learning when they adopt a mindset that places the **ownership of outcomes** on themselves.
- ☛ Applications for faculty, staff and peer educators:
 - ☛ Use active learning methods for teaching and training
 - ☛ Allow for frequent opportunities for reflection on learning and personal development
 - ☛ Design learning and training experiences that use small groups or pairs
 - ☛ Develop learning, program, or project outcomes that speak to students' personal development in the areas of confidence, responsibility and emotional management
 - ☛ Use experienced peers as guides to foster self discovery, problem solving, and applications of job or academic content



In small groups, students use a scheduling tool to develop personalized seven-day academic plans.

Thank you to Federico Anaya and Jennifer Anaya for data tabulation and the many faculty and staff instructors and student peer instructors that made this data collection possible. Presentation and materials created by James W.G. Barnes, March 12, 2014. Use with permission only. Copyright 2014 University of California Regents.

