The Summer Institute: An Innovative Approach to Interpersonal Learning for Distance Education Students

Molly Duggan, Ph.D.
Alan Schwitzer, Ph.D.
Outline of Today’s Presentation

• Human Services Program at ODU
• Student Characteristics
• Rationale for a Summer Institute
• Description of the Summer Institute
• Choosing & Adapting Classes
• Timelines
• Student Impressions
• Lessons Learned
• Conclusion
Program Overview

• Two components
  – Main campus
  – TELETECHNET (distance learning)
    • Interactive television/satellite broadcast accompanied by
      – Printed materials
      – Audio/video materials
      – Telephone communications
      – E-mail
      – Blackboard
Program Overview

Student count (Fall 2003)

- HS Main Campus Majors ........ 255
- HS TTN Majors .................... 332

TOTAL .... 587

- HS Main Campus Minors ........ 82
- HS TTN Minors .................... 15

TOTAL ... 97
Current Results / Findings
HS STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Age Distribution Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25 years</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30 years</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 years</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41+ years</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TTN: N = 146
MC: N = 27
Current Results / Findings
HS Student Demographics

Student-Reported Marital Status

- Married
- Single

Percentage

TTN
N = 146

MC
N = 27
Current Results / Findings
HS Student Demographics

Children

- No Children at Home: TTN=148
- 1 or More Children at Home: MC=47
Why offer a Summer Institute?

- **Student needs**
  - Curriculum design that considers age, maturity, & development
  - Flexible scheduling
  - Create rapport
  - Opportunities for personal development
  - Interpersonal skills for the profession

- **Faculty needs**
  - Face-to-face faculty-student interaction
  - Flexible scheduling
  - Desire to offer more experiential activities
  - Provide a main campus experience to those who may not otherwise have such an opportunity
What is the Summer Institute?

- Series of compressed classes in a one-week format
- Class starts Monday afternoon and ends Saturday morning (45 class hours)
- May take 1, 2, or 3 classes
- Complete reading & prep work in advance
Choosing & Adapting Classes

• Classes requiring interpersonal skills & opportunities to work in a group setting
  – Interpersonal Skills
  – Human Services Methods
  – Psychoeducational Groups
  – Diversity Issues in Human Services (new offering)
Choosing & Adapting classes

• Combine key lectures with
  – Group discussions
  – Exercises
  – Demonstrations & practice
  – Movie & television clips

• Concentrate on how skills taught are essential human services job skills
Timeline

- September
  - Choose courses and instructors
    - Interpersonal Skills: July 12-17, 2004
    - Human Services Methods: July 19-24
    - Psychoeducational Groups: July 26-31
    - Diversity Issues in Human Services: Aug 2-7
  - Lay groundwork with Housing and Registrar
  - Reserve classrooms
  - Create student committee
Timeline

• October
  – Create flyer
  – Design website
    • Online registration form and lots of links (i.e., course syllabi and planners, housing, restaurants, what to bring)
    • http://www.odu.edu/hscinstitute
  – Publicize in fall On-Air
    HS TTN Informational Session
Timeline

- November
  - Distribute flyer to Site Directors
  - Make announcements in distance learning classes

**NOTE**: Students start registering and requesting information as soon as the form appears on-line

- Respond via e-mail to each registrant, keeping copious files
Timeline

• January
  – Send another round of brochures to sites
  – Continue responding to registrations and questions

• February
  – Committee posts updated local information on website
Timeline

- March
  - Publicize in On-Air HS TTN Informational Session
  - Send addresses of registrants interested in housing to Housing liaison who will then send housing information packets to each student
  - Update website with information on social activities
Timeline

• April
  – First week – send list of registrants, ss #s, & classes to Registrar for early registration
  – Mid month – open registration to ALL HS students, not just distance learning students
  – Send registrants e-mail regarding how to purchase books

• May and June
  – Handle problems as they arise 😊
Timeline

• July
  – Teach!
  – Run focus groups on Summer Institute

• August
  – Collate data from focus groups

• September
  – Start it all again, integrating information gained from focus groups!
Student Impressions: Learning

- “Fast,” “Easy to arrange,” “Convenient”
- “Able to focus on just one class at a time”
- Value the applied assignments over abstract papers
- Discussing material in class immediately after reading it makes the information “easier to absorb”
Student Impressions: Learning

- Enjoy “getting to know other students” in person
- Surprised to find faculty were “easy-going” and “relaxed”
- Institute “made the learning more personal”
Student Impressions: Adjustment

• Personal-emotional adjustments
  – “Fear of the city”
  – “Fear of leaving my family”
  – Need to arrange the family’s schedule and deal with childcare, elder care, & transportation issues
Student Impressions: Adjustment

• Institutional adjustments
  – Wanted more information to help them settle into the campus experience
    • Parking
    • Campus maps & tours
  – Critical of the dorm experience
  – Need for more meal options
  – Roommate conflicts
Student Impression: Development

- Self-reports that the Institute experience helped them
  - Become “more self-determined” and “more self-motivated”
  - Develop “increased self-awareness”
  - “Learn how to retain knowledge better”
  - “Improve my [sic] interactions with other people”
Student Impression: Development

• Self-reports that the Institute experience helped them
  – Begin internalizing “how to be less stressed”

• Student stories
What other courses would you like to see offered in this one-week intensive format?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Classes</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Guidance</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addictions</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro to HSC</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology classes</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Intervention &amp; Advocacy</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lessons Learned

• Create a series of e-mails for cut-and-paste (& keep copies)
  – E-Mail #1
    • Thanks student for applying
    • Walks student through the process
    • Reminds student of need to complete all pre-reqs
    • Copy sent to student’s site director
    • Sent within a week of receiving application
Lessons Learned

- **E-mail #2**
  - “What do I do if this class conflicts with another class?”
  - Sent in early April when students are registering for remaining summer courses

- **E-mail #3**
  - How to purchase books from main campus bookstore
  - How to withdraw from class
  - Listing of social activities & how to register to attend them
  - Sent in late April
Lessons Learned

• Schedule rooms FAR IN ADVANCE
• Provide a list of what to bring
• Remind students of the difference between dorm living and hotel living
Lessons Learned

• Provide social activities each week
• Arrange for parking
• Arrange access to computer labs & library
What next?

• Expand the Institute’s class offerings
• Explore other possible times for an Institute
• Continue to run focus groups for student input