



Promoting Success among First-Generation Students in Economics: Challenges and Strategies

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ABOUT US

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ABOUT US

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ABOUT OUR CLASSES

- We teach at public 4-year and 2-year institutions.
- We teach in various formats: face-to-face, hyflex, lecture capture, and fully online (synchronous & asynchronous).
- We have adapted how we teach in each institution based on lessons learned from the other.



FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS (FGS)

- Defined as the first in one's family (including parents and older siblings) to enroll in college
- FGS represented 22% of college students in 1992
- FGS represent approximately 56% of college students today
- FGS face certain challenges to a greater extent than non-FGS



KEY FGS CHALLENGES

- **Time constraints:** FGS work more and are more likely to have dependents
- **Difficulty with math, statistics, and financial literacy**
- **Language barriers**
- **Lack of peer support**

HOWEVER... FGS have a greater interest in business and economics careers.



OUR OBJECTIVES

- **Help FGS overcome challenges which can lead to greater enrollment in economics courses and generate more majors.**
- **Create an effective pathway for FGS to achieve a professional career and reduce income gaps.**



SURVEY DATA

- **We administered a short survey to principles students at three 4-year universities and two 2-year colleges.**
- **Data collected from May to October 2023 shortly after the first exam.**
- **We did not collect any performance data.**



TABLE 1: FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

SCHOOL	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL ENROLLED	% FEMALE	% UNDERGRAD NON-WHITE	% FGS FROM SAMPLE
College of Southern Nevada	2 year public*	33,942	56%	74%	52%
Santa Barbara City College	2 year public	13,781	56%	56%	25%
Florida Atlantic University	4 year public	32,120	58%	61%	29%
University of South Florida	4 year public	49,867	57%	41%	16%
University of Nevada Las Vegas	4 year public	30,660	57%	69%	42%

TABLE 2: KEY DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

CHARACTERISTIC	TOTAL %	FGS %	NON-FGS %
Works Full Time	20.1%	30.0%	16.8%
Works Part Time	45.8%	43.0%	46.7%
Previous Economics	46.0%	46.5%	45.9%
Math Concern	38.9%	41.8%	37.9%
Graphing Concern	50.2%	53.7%	49.0%
High Level of Interest	50.1%	59.3%	47.1%
Business Major	81.5%	82.1%	81.3%

BEST PRACTICES TO SUPPORT FGS

- **Take a compassionate and inclusive approach**
- **Unveil the hidden curriculum**
- **Address psychological factors**
- **Craft a course structure with flexibility**
- **Provide transparent assignments and evaluation**
- **Leverage economics concepts through culturally-responsive teaching**



COMPASSION AND INCLUSIVITY

- **Review assignment design and policies to identify hidden biases**
- **Encourage open feedback and discussions with students about their comfort level with content**
- **Regularly check in with students to assess their well-being and academic progress.**



COMMUNICATING ABOUT GRADING AND GRADES

- One can leverage most LMSs to easily send several students individual emails at once.
- Using Canvas Gradebook
- Using Canvas New Analytics

LC3: LearningCurve... Out of 100	LC4: LearningCurve... Out of 100	LC5: LearningCurve... Out of 100
0		-
0		-
0		-
100		-
100		100
0		100
100		-
100		-
0		-
100		-
100		-
100	100	-

Sort by >
SpeedGrader
Message Students Who
Curve Grades
Set Default Grade
All grades posted
Hide grades
Enter Grades as >
Grade Posting Policy

Message students who...

for LC4: LearningCurve - Ch. 4: Markets and C

Haven't submitted yet

Haven't submitted yet
Haven't been graded
Scored less than
Scored more than

Subject:

No submission for LC4: LearningCurve - Ch.

Message:

Message Students Who

Score Range

Missing

Late

Range 70 to 79 %

BCC All Sections 67 Students

Subject Enter subject of message here...

Message

UNVEIL THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

- Refers to the unwritten expectations and practices in higher education (college jargon) that may be unfamiliar to FGS (Chatelain, 2018)
- Create a comprehensive syllabus
- Offer convenient office hours
- Provide resources and guidance



COMMUNICATING ABOUT GRADING AND GRADES

Understanding Your Grade

Throughout the semester you will complete five different types of graded assignments; homework, participation in discussions, quizzes, exams, and general education writing assignments. Your course grade is a weighted average of the different assignment types according to the following grading scheme.

Course Grading Scheme

<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Percentage of Final Grade</u>
Homework	5%
Quizzes	5%
Participation	10%
GenEd Assignments	20%
Within Semester Exams	35%
Final Exam	25%

Canvas will automatically recalculate your grade according to the course grading policies (see syllabus to review the grading policies in detail). The grade displayed in Canvas is your current up-to-date grade in the course, it will continuously update with each new posted grade. Watch the video below to see how weighted averages work and understand your Canvas grade for this course.

Understanding Weighted Averages

The screenshot shows the Canvas LMS interface for a course. The main content area is titled 'Grades for Test Student'. It displays a table of assignments with columns for 'Name', 'Score', and 'Total of'. The table lists various assignments such as 'Homework', 'Quizzes', 'Participation', 'GenEd Assignments', 'Within Semester Exams', and 'Final Exam'. A large play button is overlaid on the center of the screenshot. The video player controls at the bottom show a duration of 0:00 / 5:47.



ADDRESS PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

- **Imposter syndrome occurs when one attributes success to external factors than one's own abilities (Davis, 2012)**
- **Provide regular feedback and positive reinforcement**
- **Promote self-reflection**
- **Highlight success stories**
- **Seeking help as a sign of initiative**



Warm, Wise Feedback that Supports High Standards + Effort + Ability + Specific Action

Feedback is critical to your students' continuous growth. But how you deliver your feedback makes a difference. To support students' continued development and mitigate effects of social and psychological threats, follow the Wise feedback model (Cohen & Steele, 2002) that also supports growth mindset (Dweck, 2007). Support effort + ability + action.

What not to say:			What to say:
			
Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset/Effort	Communicate High Standards + Effort + Ability	Communicate High Standards + Effort + Ability + Specific Action
"Not everyone is good at math. Just do your best."	"When you learn how to do a new kind of problem, it grows your math brain."	"This concept can be particularly challenging for many students. I believe that you <u>can</u> be successful in math. When you learn how to do something new, it not only grows your brain, but it builds on your existing abilities."	"This concept can be particularly challenging for many students. I believe that you can be successful in math. When you learn something your brain grows as you practice. At the beginning of the problem, there's a missing sign. Go back and include this sign and see how that changes the final value."
"Don't worry, you'll get it if you keep trying."* *If students are using the wrong strategies their efforts might not work. Plus, they may feel particularly inept if their efforts are fruitless.	"That feeling of math being hard is the feeling of your brain growing."	"Math can seem hard, and this course is challenging. I believe you can do it. Let's look at each step and make some connections that will give you more confidence."	"Math was really hard for me in the beginning, too. This course is designed to challenge students because I believe you can do it. I noticed that on step two, you forgot the denominator. Let's walk through each step together and make some connections that will build on your work."

COMMUNICATING FEEDBACK

- Tailor comments to individual students

Exam 3 - UPLOAD
Due: Apr 1 at 10pm - ECO4105.001S21

26/26 Graded 73.62 / 100 (74%) 7/26

Robert

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Submitted: Apr 1 at 9:56pm
Student Viewed Document: May 6 at 5:15pm
Submitted Files: (click to load)
Test 3 APT.pdf

Assessment
Grade out of 100
75

Assignment Comments
Hello Robert, great job with the consistent work between the last two exams and certainly an improvement over exam 1. Remember exam 4 and the make up exam are close together and you need to do well on both. Make sure you take the time over spring break to go back to lecture 1-6 material and prepare for the make-up. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns as we head into the last few weeks of the semester.
Dr. Erika Martinez, Apr 12 at 12:20pm

Add a Comment

Questions (2-c) $x_d = 150 - \frac{3}{80}P$

Question 2
 $E_d = \frac{dp}{dx} = \frac{3}{80} \cdot \frac{P}{150 - \frac{3}{80}P} = \frac{3P}{80(150 - \frac{3}{80}P)} = \frac{3P}{150(80) - 3P}$

Question 3 & 4
 $P = 1000$
 $= \frac{1000}{3999} = 0.25 < 1$

FLEXIBLE COURSE STRUCTURE

FGS often encounter external demands that hinder studying.

- **Reinforce the relevance of each activity and assignment**
- **Discuss the skills and knowledge to be acquired**
- **Provide frequent updates and reminders**
- **Consider scaffolding and other practices that break assignments into smaller steps with frequent review**
- **Allow for makeups, extensions, and/or dropped scores**

PROVIDE TRANSPARENT ASSIGNMENTS

- **FGS benefit from enhanced clarity in assignments and evaluation practices (Winkelmes, 2016).**
- **Provide detailed criteria on assignments and illustrate expected quality and depth of work**
- **Empower students to self-assess and improve their work**
- **Offer consistent framework for grading**



CULTURALLY-RESPONSIVE TEACHING

- **Recognizing and embracing the experiences of FGS to create an engaging and inclusive learning environment**
- **Economics deals with real-world issues and practice decision-making, allowing teachers to tie concepts better.**
- **“Call-in” FGS to class discussion without “calling them out”**



ECONOMIC EXAMPLES FOR FGS

- **Opportunity cost: financial tradeoffs between working and investing in education**
- **Externalities: educational attainment and its spillover effects**
- **Public policies: discussing issues of social & economic equity**
- **Human capital: college education as an investment affecting career options and the rate of return**
- **Income inequality and economic mobility: tying FGS' aspirations with economic mobility and socioeconomic status**
- **Financial literacy: budgeting, savings, debt, investment**

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENT

Assignments Details

A Case Study on the Rental Housing Market

Rubric Case Study

In recent months, much has been made of the difficulty that renters have in finding an affordable house or apartment to rent. While the rise in rents has been particularly dramatic of late, the question of how to help renters live affordably is nothing new. Starting in the post-World War II era, major cities like New York City began imposing restrictions on how much landlords could raise their rents. The hope was that people from across the income spectrum would be able to populate these cities. However, this so-named “rent control” has led to a new set of problems in housing markets.

This is a multipart assignment consisting of a pre-writing assignment, rough draft, and final paper. You will examine and evaluate the rental housing market, outlining the merits and weaknesses of rent control as well as suggest an alternative, from an economic point of view. As you progress through the course you will incorporate more and more economic language into your analysis, in the end forming a complete economic discussion.

STUDENT ATTRITION AND DIVERSITY

- **FGS are associated with higher rates of attrition.**
- **Causes include lack of student support, anxiety, social isolation, financial constraints, lack of academic readiness, and lack of connections on campus.**
- **Economics courses offer ways to increase inclusiveness through representation and broad perspectives.**



CONCLUSION AND TAKEAWAYS

- **FGS represent a large proportion of college students, especially in urban areas.**
- **Economics plays a potentially valuable role to connect the goals and aspirations of FGS who disproportionately favor business majors.**
- **Attracting FGS to economics can build majors, diversity in economics, and reduce income inequality.**



THANK YOU



Erika Martinez



Eric Chiang