

60-Second SoTL

Episode 48 – What is a first-year experience?

(piano music)

0:03

Jessie L. Moore:

Welcome to 60-Second SoTL! This week's episode is part of a short series by students in Elon University's Masters of Higher Education program. The students are exploring first-year experiences as meaningful or high-impact learning experiences. Listen for the other podcast episodes in their series wherever you subscribe to 60-Second SoTL.

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(Piano Music)

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Stephanie Matte:

What are First Year Experiences and why are they a High Impact Practice? That's the focus of this week's 60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning. I'm Stephanie Matte.

In "The First-Year Experience: Are We Making It Any Better?" Betsy Barefoot highlights research-based objectives of the first-year experience that have been found through many studies through the 1990s and early 2000s. This piece serves as foundational scholarship reminding practitioners of the first-year experiences original objectives and goals to inform present-day curriculum and co-curricular activities.

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These research-based objectives include: increasing student-to-student interaction, increasing student-to-faculty interaction- especially outside of the classroom, increasing student involvement on campus, connecting curricular and co-curricular activities, increasing academic expectations, and promoting higher levels of academic engagement.

1:10

In a more recent piece "HIPs at Ten" George Kuh, Ken O'Donnell, and Carol Geary Schneider acknowledge the ten-year anniversary of the High Impact Practices and define each of the 10 HIPs. Kuh, O'Donnell, and Schneider described first year seminars and experiences to emphasize critical inquiry, writing, information and media literacy, and collaborative learning among other skills that will develop a students' overall intellectual and practical abilities.

Based on both of these articles, the first-year experience is understood to be an intentional combination of curricular and co-curricular programming and learning that promotes student satisfaction, well-being, sense of belonging, and retention while enhancing a student's learning within the first year of college. Examples of first year experiences can include but are not limited to: first-year seminar courses, orientation, learning communities- which could be a living learning community, peer mentorship, academic advising, summer bridge programs, or residential communities.

To learn more about both of these studies, see the full citation in our show notes.

2:06

(piano music)

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Jessie L. Moore:

Join us next week for another snapshot of recent scholarship of teaching and learning on **60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning**. Learn more about the Center at www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org.

2:22

(Piano Music)