Access to Higher Education: An Elective Course for an Online Certificate Program

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University of Southern California
Lesson Plans: Access to Higher Education, Modules 1-4

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INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS AND OUTCOMES

After completing the first part of class, students should be able to define “access”, know who it effects, and have a basic understanding of why this topic is important for those involved with the college application process. After the first module, the students should also be familiar with the financial aspects associated with access. This would include financial barriers associated with access, how to pay for college (how to navigate the FAFSA, basic budgeting skills, etc.).

LESSON CONTENT

In this lesson, students will explore their personal definitions of access, as well as gain a more complete definition of access, who it primarily affects, and why this is an important issue in our society today. Students will view a film on access for first generation college students and will be asked to consider how the issues pertaining to college access for this student group can be generalized to other students with limited access to higher education.

Students will also be given a basic comprehension of issues pertaining to student finance. Students will be learn to navigate the FAFSA through experience, and will be instructed on how to create a basic budget, in hopes that they will later be able to instruct their own students how to best handle their finances while in college.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

1. Introduction to Access (110 minutes)
   a. Students should have previously had an online discussion via Blackboard Discussion Thread about their personal definitions of access. The professor will spend the first part of class going over the highlights of this discussion before giving our definition of access. (5 minutes)
   b. After access has been defined, the student groups struggling the most with access will be outlined, paying particular attention to the underlying effects associated with low socio-economic status (5 minutes)
   c. Reasons why the topic of access is important to learn about. It is important to note that “access” is not the same thing as Affirmative Action policies. (5 minutes)
   d. Students will watch a stream of the film, “First Generation: The Documentary” (95 minutes).

2. Financial Considerations of Access (50 minutes)
   a. There will be a short summary of why it is important to acknowledge the importance of finance in gaining access to higher education, and how fiscal consideration can have huge impact on where students choose to attend college, and how much debt they accrue during the process (10 minutes).
   b. Students will be presented with a very basic overview of the financial aid process. This will include
a brief synopsis of the FAFSA, and a description of the various ways that students generally support themselves while in college (student loans, work-study, scholarships, grants, etc.). This will be a very brief overview based on the assumption that students will have previously received some instruction on the financial aid process in alternative portions of the certificate program (30 minutes).

c. Next students will go over some quick budgeting skills: how to best allocate funds, general amounts students can expect to pay to attend California State Universities, as well as typical prices of books, food, personal items, etc. (10 minutes)

ASSIGNMENTS

Pre-assignment: Discussion via Discussion Board about student’s definitions of access, who access to higher education affects most, and why they feel it is important to discuss access.

Assignments to be completed before the start of the next week’s class:

1) Students will fill out the FAFSA form online so that they have a better understanding of what is expected of students filing for financial aid. Students may submit their proof of completion via Blackboard or by email attachment.

2) Students will create a semester-long budget for a student attending a state college. The student is a freshman economics major working part-time and earning $10,000 per year. Budgets will be submitted via Blackboard. Professors will provide feedback concerning the feasibility of the budget, and any areas that the student may have overlooked. Budgets will be graded on the amount of consideration given bearing in mind the student’s personal and academic needs.

3) Students will be expected to have a discussion via a Blackboard Discussion Thread concerning their reactions to the documentary “First Generation: The Documentary”. Students should include their initial reactions to the film, and how they might apply what the documentary has outlined to other student groups struggling with access.

MATERIALS AND AIDS


INSTRUCTORS: Monteigne Staats and Christa Steiner

COURSE TITLE: Access to Higher Education

MODULE: 2

TOPIC: Political Considerations: Ensuring Diversity and Equity in Higher Education

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS AND OUTCOMES

At the completion of this module, students should be able to:

- Define diversity and equity;
- Explain the concepts of equity and diversity; and
- Apply the models of diversity and equity in higher education to a case study.

This lesson builds off the previous module on the financial considerations of access to higher education. Students must reflect on the previous module and apply their knowledge of financial considerations in the context of this lesson.

LESSON CONTENT

1. Introduce concepts of diversity and equity in higher education
2. Overview of how diversity affects access to higher education (the types of diversity)
3. Overview of equitable practices in higher education (what equity looks like regarding access)
4. Students will briefly explore several legal issues affecting access to higher education, including the Dream Act, emancipated youth, AB-540, undocumented, wards of the court, affirmative action

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

1. Students will brainstorm in pairs to create definitions of diversity and equity as they relate to access to higher education.
2.

ASSIGNMENTS

Readings (to be completed prior to class):


Discussion Thread (to be completed after class):

“Reflecting on the lesson on diversity and equity in higher education, do you think colleges and universities should allow affirmative action admissions decisions based on socioeconomic status? You must defend your position, providing evidence that supports your opinion. A minimum of three references must be included in your critique, two of which may come from the assigned readings.”

MATERIALS AND AIDS

Assigned readings;

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INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS AND OUTCOMES

LESSON CONTENT

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

ASSIGNMENTS

MATERIALS AND AIDS
INSTRUCTORS: Monteigne Staats and Christa Steiner

COURSE TITLE: Access to Higher Education

MODULE: 4

TOPIC: Programmatic Considerations of Access

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS AND OUTCOMES

After completing this section of the course, students should be able to understand their role in aiding students gaining access to college. They will have a better understanding of how advocacy and certain interactions can support college access and will take with them some ideas about how they personally can promote access in their careers or daily lives. Students will build on the other modules in order to have a holistic view of access. They will be exploring how the programmatic elements associated with access influence the educational considerations (retention, recruitment, and graduation). The students will understand that having knowledge of these considerations will positively affect their roles as mentors.

LESSON CONTENT

Students will gain perspectives from both underrepresented students attending higher education institutions and adult mentors who help guide these students. Emphasis will be placed on the importance of helping students understand their roles as adult influences. This module will highlight how orienting students who have no one in their family either able or willing to provide the support necessary to attend college promotes college access. It will also display the importance of community building in creating social support networks, and various programmatic elements that students can implement when nurturing their own students.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

1. Orientation (55 minutes)
   a. Webinar Panel Discussion with students representing some underrepresented students who have gained access to higher education and have been successful. The student panel will give valuable insight to students about what aided them in their process of goal formulation and attainment. They will also talk about successful strategies of individuals and programs that encouraged their access to college education. (55 minutes)

2. Community Building (40 minutes)
   a. A short presentation on the effects of social capital on student retention and success will be offered via web. Information will be based on the research of (30 minutes)
   b. Short break to set up for the next panel discussion (10 minutes)

3. Special Resources and Services (55 minutes)
   a. Webinar Panel Discussion with Diane Yoon and Hugo Tapia of the USC I AM Program- the two will give an overview of the I AM program and how it promotes access. They will then answer any questions that students have about access and programming to help students gain success in higher education (50 minutes)
b. Explain the assignments that will be due next week. Make sure that students know where to access the articles (5 minutes).

**ASSIGNMENTS**

Assignments to be completed before the start of the next week’s class:

1) Read the two articles assigned for the week.
2) Students will write a 2-3 page paper on the importance of adult influence in supporting access to higher education. Students must use at least two resources, at least one of which must be one of the two articles assigned as reading for this class.
3) Students will be expected to have a discussion via a Blackboard Discussion Thread about the panel with Diane Yoon and Hugo Tapia. Students should include their reactions to the discussion (was it helpful or not? And why?), and propose how they might incorporate components of their mentorship programs to aid their own students.

**MATERIALS AND AIDS**


References


http://www.coenet.us/ecm/AM/Template.cfm?Section=What_is_TRIO

http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html

http://www.pathwaystocollege.net/Default.aspx

http://collegetools.berkeley.edu/
