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Revisiting Your Inner Child: Increasing FYS Students' Engagement and Sense of Belonging

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Revisiting Your Inner Child: Increasing FYS Students' Engagement and Sense of Belonging

Melikabella Shenouda (she/her), Part-Time Instructor, UNLV College of Liberal Arts

Teaching Practice & Needs Addressed

- ★ **COLA 100LA** - First-Year Seminar (FYS) course, as part of freshmen's first-year experience (FYE)
- ★ Unique curriculum, incorporating **campus field trips, music, and art**
- ★ Immersion in an **engaging class environment**, featuring guest lectures and activities facilitated by experienced upperclassmen, with insight on navigating college involvement and success
- ★ Cognizant of students' pressures in balancing their newfound autonomy; instead, **embrace simplicity** and happiness often associated with childhood

How Others Can Adopt This Practice

- ★ **Contact underutilized UNLV resources** to plan field trips, workshops/presentations, and aim to support their previously scheduled programming
 - Campus Community Garden, unlv.edu/facilities/community-garden
 - Involvement Center, involvementcenter.unlv.edu
 - Makerspace & Multimedia Production, library.unlv.edu/spaces/makerspace
 - Service Learning & Leadership (SLL), unlv.edu/sll
 - SORCE Room, unlv.edu/sia/student-orgs/sorce
 - The Intersection, unlv.edu/intersection
 - Women's Research Institute of Nevada (WRIN), unlv.edu/wrin
- ★ **Peer Mentor / TA = Chaperone**; Assign a portion of students to your class Peer Mentor or Teaching Assistant, if applicable, to avoid leaving folks behind during field trips
- ★ Ask if centers have a newsletter; join their mailing list to receive event and program details, then **resource share** with your students

Evidence it Benefits Students

- ★ Post-pandemic, students have exhibited apprehension to creating relationships; however, lasting **friendships were forged** by the end of the term and students self-reported a **feeling of belonging**, as compared to the beginning of the semester
- ★ **98% consistently attended** every class period; chronic absenteeism was thwarted
- ★ "Revisiting your inner child" activities encourage **self-expression and identity exploration**
- ★ Curriculum **increases: campus/building familiarity**, confidence in and likelihood of using relevant resources, future involvement, and academic persistence and achievement

Examples of Engagement

- ★ **Makerspace Orientation & Tour**: Met at the Lied Library; became certified to safely operate 3D printers, sewing machines, podcast recording rooms, etc; students were invited to use the Makerspace in their final creative reflection projects.
- ★ **SORCE Room Tour**: Met at SU 305 to learn about resources designated for campus organizations; created a hypothetical campus club in groups and used SORCE art supplies to make/present marketing ideas.
- ★ **The Intersection Tour**: Met at SU 121 to become familiarized with the space and learn about multicultural resources.
- ★ **"Songs of Myself"**: Answered specific statements (e.g., If my life were a TV show, then my theme song would be...) and chose to contribute to a **collective class playlist** (note: may use Spotify, YouTube, etc) that we listened to throughout the semester.
- ★ Students also decorated their own personal album cover art, did a Think-Pair-Share, and connected with one another over genres and designs. Caveat: Screen songs for explicit language and content.



COLA 100LA-1007
FALL 2022 COURSE SCHEDULE

Key	MON/WED + class days at 11:30 am-12:45 pm in CEB 208	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	MON/WED + class days at 11:30 am-12:45 pm in CEB 208	Otherwise noted required events	Assignments due Fridays by 11:59 pm	No class	
AUGUST / SEPTEMBER					
Week 1	HOLIDAY 28 Syllabus, Name Tags, Google Yourself Activity	TUESDAY 29	WEDNESDAY 30 Peer Mentor Presentation, SMART Goals	THURSDAY 1	FRIDAY 2 DUE: Syllabus Quiz, Peer Mentor Consent Form
Week 2	HOLIDAY 5 NO CLASS Labor Day	TUESDAY 6	WEDNESDAY 7 Academic Success Center & SAC, Scavenger Hunt, (Makerspace & Lied Library) (from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm)	THURSDAY 8	FRIDAY 9 DUE: LEADership Lunch 10:00, Schedule first 15 meeting
Week 3	HOLIDAY 12 COLA Student Engagement Presentation, Club Creation Activity	TUESDAY 13	WEDNESDAY 14 LEADership Lunch at 11:45 am in SU 211, (Makerspace & Lied Library) (from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm)	THURSDAY 15	FRIDAY 16 DUE: Essay Reflection
Week 4	HOLIDAY 19 Personal Strengths & Career Values	TUESDAY 20	WEDNESDAY 21 Makerspace & Podcast Production Tour (located at Lied Library, 1st floor)	THURSDAY 22	FRIDAY 23 DUE: Career Research Paper Brainstorming

- ★ **Zine-Making Workshop**: Local artist, UNLV professor, and WRIN program manager, Jean Marie Munson, led a zine-making workshop outside in the academic mall to encourage nature sketching and mindfulness, in preparation for the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday.
- ★ **Calendar-Style Syllabus**: Formatting class content into a **calendar schedule** rather than a list helps students stay organized by crossing off each day and visualizing how much time they are allotted to prepare for upcoming assignments. May utilize Google Sheets, Canva, or pre-made templates via other platforms.
- ★ **LEADership Lunch**: Attended pre-existing event (i.e., Political Engagement as Leadership) put on by the SLL Leadership Education and Development Team; debriefed with students the following class period.

Resources & Where to Find Them

- ★ **Utilize online services** to assist with course content creation
 - COLA 100LA in Canvas Course Commons
 - LinkedIn Learning, it.unlv.edu/institutional-memberships/linkedinlearning
 - Open Educational Resources, oercommons.org/
 - OpenStax, openstax.org/
 - Open Textbook Library, open.umn.edu/opentextbooks
- ★ **Browse free digital tools** to host check-ins and increase engagement within hybrid, in person, web-live, and even web-based asynchronous class environments
 - Canva - visual design, canva.com
 - Flip - video discussion smartphone app integrated into Canvas, flip.com
 - Kahoot - live responses, kahoot.com
 - Padlet - activity board, padlet.com
 - PollEverywhere - live responses, polleverywhere.com
- ★ **Contact Melikabella**, UNLV College of Liberal Arts Part-Time Instructor, at melikabella.shenouda@unlv.edu

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