

# Freshman Seminar II : Inter-disciplinary Education for Freshman

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## Introduction

Freshman Seminar II is a course offered during the fall semester of the freshman year to train students in basic skills in establishing and maintaining a good human relationship, as well as learning the process of team work and collaboration in various situations. A method employed here is the mixing of students from seven departments to introduce each specialty and to work together towards the target which has been decided among themselves with the professor in charge. This action and idea will be transferred and developed in the following program, Integrated Learning Seminar, equivalent to Freshman Seminar III is introduced in the early part of the sophomore year.

## Contents of Freshman Seminar II.

### (1) Assignment to teachers and students.

Departments will decide who will be in charge of seminar classes but the majority of teachers will engage in one of classes. Students will be assigned depending on the number of teachers from each department, but there will be not more than 10 students per teacher. Normally, each teacher will take seven to eight students. A number of students from a larger department may be assigned in a same group. (larger departments and the number of students in parenthesis are Physical therapy (80), Health and Sports (60), Nursing (80), and Social Welfare (100)). Final decision will be made by the department considering the ratio of males to females and distribution of departmental students.

### (2) Purpose of study.

The target of action is the following:

1. Developing the ability to study in university through finding a theme, actual work and report preparation; a) Understanding presentations by other professionals, b) Understanding professional articles, c) Summarizing professional articles, d) Exchange of summarized information of other group and within own group, e) Completion of report preparation including other professional opinions, f) Listening and evaluating the reports from other groups and pointing out the problems, if any.
2. Building ability to form human relations through this seminar activity; a) Noticing the differences and similarities of one's opinion and other's, and recognizing background and proposition, b) Cooperative planning and collaborative action from the beginning choosing a target to the end, which is finishing up the report.

### (3) Syllabus.

Fourteen class hours are provided and begin with a lecture from the president and deans at the first class hour. The second and third hours are devoted to the instruction and meeting. In the fourth to ninth hours, students work on the subject of study and the results are presented using Power Point in the tenth class hour. Poster preparation and following presentation are carried out in the eleventh hour. Presentation in the department which students belongs to and in campus-wide by selected groups are

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performed in the twelfth and thirteenth hours, respectively. The final hour is spent final preparation of the report, evaluation of the class and concluding remarks. Selected group receives the honor of lunch with the president.

(4) Choice of themes.

At the beginning, selection of theme is open to the teacher and students, allowing them to choose topics within health and welfare. In first year, students choose relevant topics but in the second year some of them choose topics not directly related with Health and Welfare. Then, from the third year, all themes to be chosen are limited to health, welfare and medicine. This can be achieved by exposing students to activities in one of health and welfare fields..

(5) Evaluation of the poster and oral presentation.

An evaluation card to measure (1) propriety of theme, (2) reliability of method results, discussion and conclusion of study, (3) creativity, and (4) uniqueness is prepared and scored by the president and professors in charge of development of education system. They check every poster and talk with the students. Every freshman student is given a right to vote for the best, independently from their professors.

### Results and Discussion

Eighty percent of students felt that they were successful in friendship establishment and personal interaction which was one of the aims of this course. Some difficulty was noticed, due to the number of students. Eighty percent majority is under the focus of attention because each group is a mixture of students from different departments in comparison with Freshman Seminar I which consist the students from the same department. The committee for Faculty Development (FD) also recognizes the importance of the introductory part of course with heterogeneous combinations of students. In some

cases, the use of sports positively influenced for human relations.

Understanding of the specialty of one's own department and of other departments by students presents a good evaluation in over all, but many professors scored current Freshman Seminar II "unsatisfactory". This is an important part that should be re-examined..

The students' response to questions of "how much did you understand of other departmental students by listening and questioning" and "how much of your opinion did you express", were "satisfactory" and "more or less", respectively. Professors also presented a similar evaluation, namely, good manners in carefully listening to the others, and thus understanding different opinions should be presented. Expression of one's own opinion and idea would follow after this seminar.

The selection of study topics and involvement of professors produce fruitful results, especially when powered by student drive and a teacher help system. This course obviously contributed to an increase of independence among students. Students also realized these points and gave a positive evaluation of the course. Problems that remain for the future after completion of 6 years experience with this Freshman Seminar are the following: how the interaction of Freshman Seminar I and II in the freshman year and Integrated Learning Seminar in senior year should be operated; how our courses on collaboration in health, welfare and medicine should be organized, especially in sophomore and junior years; how we rise the content of this course without losing personal interaction and collaborative work between various areas of health, welfare and medicine.