Many Thousands Failed: A Wakeup Call to History Educators

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About the Non-Profit Organization
The Issue
Deplorable rates of failure in college “gateway courses” are limiting possibilities – especially for historically underrepresented and underserved students.
Defining our Terms – Gateway Courses

• Foundation-Level
• High-Risk
• High-Enrollment
• “Killer Courses”
Let’s Look at Some Data
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Andrew K. Koch, May 2017

The story of African Americans in introductory US history courses is the story of the course itself. More precisely, it is the story of all students, particularly those from historically underrepresented backgrounds, who enroll in the course. And it, too, is not a pretty story. This may seem hyperbolic, but it is supported by evidence.

Over the past three years, 19 colleges and universities have worked with the nonprofit organization in which I serve—the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education—to produce a study of introductory US history courses. This analysis was conducted with the help of my colleague, Brent M. Drake, the chief data officer at Purdue University and a research fellow at the Gardner Institute, who...
The Data – U.S. Survey Courses

- 32 institutions
- Average DFWI Rate = 25.5%
- Range of 5.66% - 48.89%
First-Year Students Are Most at Risk
The Data – U.S. Survey Courses

Average DFWI Rate by Classification

- Freshmen DFWI Rate: 29.01%
- Sophomore DFWI Rate: 21.16%
- Junior DFWI Rate: 16.65%
- Senior DFWI Rate: 13.80%

DFWI Rate
Average
Gender, Income & First-Generation Status Matter
The Data – U.S. Survey Courses (Gender)

Average DFWI Rate by Gender

- Male: 27.18%
- Female: 22.67%
- Unspecified: 31.26%

DFWI Rate: 
- Male: 27.18%
- Female: 22.67%
- Unspecified: 31.26%

Average: 24.78%
Race Matters
DFWI Rates & Demographic Subpopulations
Gateway Course Performance is a DIRECT Predictor of Retention
Lessons Learned

Average DFWI Rate by Retention Status

- Retained: 19.27%
- Student Chose to Leave: 42.87%
- Institution Required Student to Leave: 85.54%
- Graduated: 6.21%
- Unknown: 28.45%

DFWI Rate vs. Average
Lessons Learned

Average DFWI Rate by Retention Status

- Retained: 19.27%
- Student Chose to Leave: 42.87%
- Institution Required Student to Leave: 85.54%
- Graduated: 6.21%
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DFWI Rate vs. Average
Summary – Gateway Course Outcomes

• Are Stumbling Blocks for All Students
• Especially
  • First-Year
  • Low-Income
  • First-Generation
  • Males
  • Racial Minorities
Think / Pair / Share

1. What Role Do YOU Play In These Outcomes?

2. What Can YOU Do to Alter Them?
Questions / Discussion
Contact

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