Orienting Students Both Near and Far to Campus Life

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Orientation Classes

• One of the responsibilities of the Student Services Team
• Taught by experienced ELP instructor/advisors
• 2 semester-long classes: one for students at lower proficiency levels, one for higher
• Cover a variety of topics, such as academic honesty and integrity, choosing the right major, understanding GPA, accessing library services, accessing health care, coping with stress...
Why do we do it this way?

- Howard & Jones (2000) found that first-year university students who participated in a semester-long seminar/orientation class had enhanced perception of being prepared for the university experience and knowledge of campus resources, which are similar goals for the orientation classes. (College Student Journal, 34, 509-515.)
DAS 158 Orientation class

• Prior to Spring 2020, was F2F with some content posted online in Canvas LMS
• 100% online DAS 158 Orientation class (for intermediate to advanced)
• Students participating from 6 different countries plus 2 different locations in Kansas
• Content is asynchronous on the Canvas LMS with weekly synchronous meetings
Approaching student engagement on 3 levels:

• The course designer level
• The whole class level
• The individual student level
• Focus on how I select and create content
  – Consider the needs of both near and far students
  – Adopt a more personal, informal approach
  – Include more personal photos and video content: video assignment instructions, shorter video lessons, video interviews instead of lectures
The Whole Class Level

• Focus on ways to create a community of learners
  – Include both synchronous (live on Zoom) and asynchronous activities
  – Discussion boards with video submissions, live (synchronous) discussions, requiring students to enable video during
Example of a synchronous activity: Wellness check...

- During the live Zoom class meeting, call on each student to answer:
- “Tell us about something that is making you feel __________ today.”
  - 1. Happy
  - 2. Surprised
  - 3. Worried
The Individual Student Level

• Focus on what each student needs
  – Require one-on-one appointments with students, on Zoom, telephone
  – Review the student’s records and look for trouble spots
  – Maintain contact with student’s other ELP instructors and academic program advisors