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Review-From Educational Experiment to Standard Bearer: University 101 at the University of South Carolina

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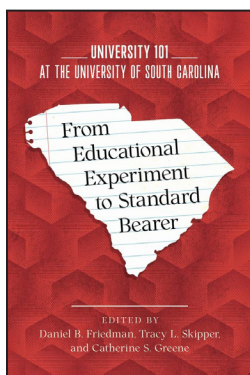
heightened levels of specificity and accuracy that are not easily achieved in handmade objects.

“Actuation” collects projects that update themselves, change their appearance, or move. While data visualizations are traditionally snapshots of a specific dataset from a specific moment, these projects react to the element of time. This makes them particularly effective for projects where numbers are not fixed, like demographics, physical activity data, and the location of airplanes in the sky.

The final section focuses on projects that represent and interact with the environment. It argues that data physicalizations can do what 2D data visualizations cannot. These visualizations take data that is about tangible things and present them in as flat abstractions. Data physicalization brings data back into the physical world and fosters a closer relationship to the viewer, mimicking the relationships people already have with their physical environments.

Making with Data collects a huge variety of projects that visualize disparate topics. These projects were designed by an overwhelmingly white audience of practitioners; only a few are led by practitioners who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color. Those included here stand out for the care put into visualizing data that would affect their communities. *Wage Data*, by Ekene Ijeoma, presents an eerily beautiful sculpture visualizing wage inequality and the costs of housing in New York City. But if the point of this book is to help us change our relationship to data, data work, and data stories, what would that look like if it centered Black data practitioners? Or projects led collectively by communities that are often excluded from the data that is collected about them? How might these types of visualizations question the cis-heteronormativity often baked into datasets? What would a queer/trans data physicalization look like? Bringing a data feminist lens to this work is not enough if that lens is not also intersectional and centering the very experiences and knowledges located in communities that are otherwise not listened to. Perhaps this is too much to ask for from one volume. The fact that these questions surface is a testament to this book’s compelling argument: data physicalizations can change how we approach and understand data, and we must push further. — *Claudia Berger, Sarah Lawrence College*

From Educational Experiment to Standard Bearer: University 101 at the University of South Carolina. Daniel B. Friedman, Tracy L. Skipper & Catherine S. Greene, eds. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2022. 272 pp. Paperback, \$32.99, (978-1-64336-366-0)



In 2022, the University of South Carolina observed the fiftieth anniversary of its innovative “University 101” experiment and the course’s legacy as the leading model of the “first-year experience” movement in higher education. Simply stated, University 101 is an extended orientation seminar designed to facilitate new students’ transition to college and campus life at the flagship. In this commemorative edited volume, eleven contributors affiliated with South Carolina collectively document the history, evolution, and impact of the institution’s renowned University 101 Programs (now a multifaceted enterprise that oversees and fosters every aspect of the campus’s first-year experience) on generations of the Gamecocks and

first-year students around the world.

The book begins and ends by documenting University 101’s history. The first chapter recounts how the seminar emerged as an institutional response to student protests against the Vietnam War and Kent State shootings, which were partly fueled by feelings of alienation at

a large, impersonal institution. The tenth chapter offers sketches of the “major figures” who have directed or significantly influenced the initiative over time. Intervening chapters provide anatomies of the course and auxiliary programs (such as instructor development or peer leadership); identify characteristics of effective first-year programs; describe the institutional, national, and global impact of South Carolina’s model; highlight the centrality of University 101’s campus partnerships; and present best practices of the extended orientation seminar.

University 101’s achievements and longevity are the result of several interdependent factors, including an enduring focus on student success, educational innovation, extensive and ongoing instructor development, stable executive leadership of the program, and collaborative campus partnerships. While all these elements are essential, assessment is paramount. Daniel B. Friedman and John N. Gardner (current and former University 101 Programs executive directors, respectively) acknowledge that “without a doubt, the most significant contributor to the long-term success of University 101 has been ongoing assessment efforts and how we use what we learn from the assessment” (191).

Throughout the volume, contributors demonstrate how various assessment measures ensured the fledgling initiative’s survival and have maintained the dynamic program’s relevancy for half a century. A couple of years into the course’s existence, for instance, South Carolina’s new president was skeptical about University 101’s value until he was presented with data demonstrating that the course improved student retention. Furthermore, student feedback convinced the institution to revise the course’s grading policy from a pass/fail evaluation to a letter grade so that subsequent participants would take the first-year seminar as earnestly as their other classes.

These are just two examples of many that underscore the pivotal role assessment has played in ensuring that University 101 remains an institutional fixture with a curriculum that is ultimately responsive to and aligned with the needs of its audience. Any institution that decides to implement an extended orientation seminar for their first-year students should consider strategically embedding a variety of robust assessment measures comparable to South Carolina’s for the best results. As Friedman emphasizes, “Assessment is the engine driving a successful first-year seminar. Without assessment, we would know little about whether programs work or what areas need to be improved” (86).

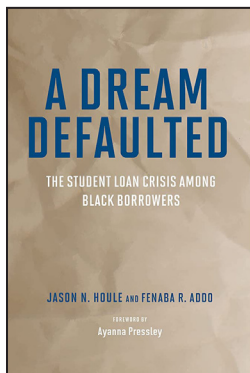
Aside from the contributors’ enthusiasm for the subject, the most useful element of this work is the firm grounding of the conclusions in evidence. Throughout the volume, authors incorporate both quantitative and qualitative research to support their claims. In particular, Carrie Van Haren and Sandy Greene’s inclusion of tables and figures demonstrating the course’s positive impact (such as differences in retention rates, graduation rates, and first-year GPA between students who enroll in University 101 versus those who do not) and past University 101 student stories in their chapter regarding student transition and success provides a complementary synthesis between the two approaches while demonstrating that South Carolina’s first-year experience is informed by every applicable research method.

Above all, this monograph makes a compelling case for the efficacy of *intentional* orientation seminars and first-year programs at institutions of higher education. In addition to thoroughly documenting the South Carolina model, the book offers multiple resources as appendices that are worth consulting. These materials include a sample syllabus, assignment examples, and four case studies of first-year programs inspired by University 101. The case studies comprise a small private historically black college, a midsize public college, a private

Turkish university, and a large private research university. Together, they provide tangible examples of how diverse institutions have tailored the South Carolina model to the needs of their respective student populations. From cover to cover, this volume equips higher education professionals with the tools and guidance to implement and maintain an extended orientation seminar that reflects the unique needs and evolving circumstances of their campus community.

From Educational Experiment to Standard Bearer: University 101 at the University of South Carolina is a worthy addition to the literature for scholars of higher education and an exceptional resource for student affairs practitioners and campus administrators. Academic librarians, particularly those who work closely with first-year students, will find this book insightful and a source of adaptable approaches they can employ in introducing their library and its resources to freshmen and transfer students. This volume is especially invaluable for institutions interested in establishing an extended orientation seminar or revamping an existing program. Whether intended to support the research needs of a higher education graduate program or to provide student affairs colleagues with the latest professional literature in their field, academic libraries of all types and sizes should consider adding this title to their collections. — *A. Blake Denton, University of Southern Mississippi*

Jason N. Houle and Fenaba R. Addo. *A Dream Defaulted: The Student Loan Crisis among Black Borrowers*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2022. 208p. Paper, \$39 ISBN: 978-1-68253-756-5.



To discuss student loan debt and racial injustice may seem to be disparate conversations, yet these two crises in our society are so ubiquitous that they feel like the water we swim in. We all feel the water is noxious and poisoning us. In *A Dream Defaulted: The Student Loan Crisis among Black Borrowers*, Houle and Addo patiently and thoroughly connect the quantitative data with the lived experiences of nearly fifty individuals who are both student loan borrowers and Black in order to show “that student debt is a new mechanism by which racial, social, and economic inequalities are reproduced across generations,” as well as how that mechanism operates systemically.

This work supports emerging data trends within the current student loan crisis and describes systemic failures that are creating educational debt-for-life, focusing on impacts on the most vulnerable demographic involving communities of color and Black borrowers. The authors begin with the concept of the “educational gospel,” which encourages the belief that education can help overcome all problems, provide access to opportunities, and permit social mobility. This concept has a notable stronghold within Black and marginalized communities as a pathway to advance within American society. The authors highlight the much-overlooked concept of race within American education culture from multiple angles, including the priority for education among various communities alongside the systemic underfunding of institutions serving majority minority populations.

For Black students working to attain a secure future, college education comes with the higher hidden costs of trying to understand and navigate complex systems involving educational loans and myriad repayment plans. The introduction of the “predatory inclusion” concept helps to explain race-based debt load disparities and is key to understanding debt load disparities at graduation, during attempts to repay, and that too often result in default