

Orientation Activity for Advising 101 on Class Discussion

The student English placement essay is a persuasive letter to Massachusetts state legislators in which you propose a course of action for Massachusetts school officials and law enforcement officials faced with evidence that underage persons have sent nude or suggestive photos of themselves or others via cell phone or other online medium (also known as sexting).

The writing prompt provides some evidence students can draw on to formulate an answer, and students can obviously bring in their own supporting evidence or ideas. Advising 101 takes place in the same room, immediately after the 45 minute placement writing test. At the conclusion of the placement test, students will be given a 3.5 x 5 index card and asked to write one or two brief thoughts of their argument, and told that these will be used later. The faculty advisor will begin the discussion of the Advising 101 curriculum and discuss broadly the catalog, the core, and the FYS. At this point, we introduce the activity, which may go something like this. (Lots of room here for faculty individuality.) Student orientation leaders (OL) break up the students into some groups – maybe the faculty advisor takes a group as well. The OL gets the students to talk and formulate their position and argument, using the student's note-cards as a starting point. We'll need to have some differences of opinion, so maybe the OL's are assigned a particular perspective and get students to provide support for that perspective, or maybe the OL's get the position from the students, etc.

After a few minutes of student to OL discussion, the OL either speaks on behalf of the group's position or if a new student is willing to speak, the OL encourages a student to speak for the group. We have a bit of a discussion on the topic of laws addressing minors sexting. The faculty advisor leads a very short meta-discussion – explaining how college level learning is about formulating answers and supporting them and defending them through written and spoken communication. We explain that this sort of activity is typical of seminars and many other college classes. We discuss how the activity typifies a process of adjusting belief and understanding in the light of new information, highlighted by the attached slide.

Share with students that this afternoon, those not needing to test will get the opportunity to experience a real college classroom experience with BSC faculty.

After this break in the presentation of Advising 101, we proceed with the remainder of the material designed to introduce students to other places where important information can be located.