

## High-Impact Practices: Why They Work, and Who Benefits

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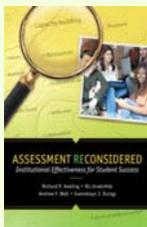
## A Challenge in Higher Education Today

“Helping our extraordinarily diverse students reap the full benefits – economic, civic and personal – of their studies in college”

-- Carol Geary Schneider,  
President AAC&U

## Emphasis on Assessment and Accountability

- The use of assessment data should emerge out of a desire to **know more about** and **improve** the quality and effectiveness of higher education.
- *External demands for accountability & internal commitments to enhancing student learning* amplify the need for **comprehensive** assessment practices emphasizing student success.



## The NSSE Project

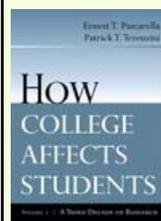
- Assessment tool provides institutions with data about student engagement in educational practices that research correlates with student learning & success
- NSSE results are immediately actionable - institutions can use information to pinpoint strengths & identify areas for improvement
- Results useful for research, to guide educational practice

## What is Student Engagement? Why does it Matter?

Student engagement is the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities... it's the single best predictor of learning and personal development.



## What Really Matters in College: Student Engagement



Because individual effort and involvement are the critical determinants of impact, institutions should focus on the ways they can shape their academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings to encourage student engagement.

Pascarella & Terenzini, *How College Affects Students*, 2005, p. 602



### Effects of Participating in High Impact Practices on Deep/Integrative Learning and Gains

	First-Year Students		Seniors	
	Learning Communities	Service Learning	Study Abroad	Senior Capstone
Deep Learning	+++	+++	++	++
General Education	++	++	+	++
Personal/Social Development	++	+++	++	++
Practical Competence	++	++		++

+ p<.001; ++ p<.001, Unstd B >.10; +++ p<.001, Unstd B >.30



### Conclusion:

High-impact practices appear to engage participants at levels that elevate their performance across multiple engagement and desired-outcomes measures

### High Impact Activities

- All associated with desirable learning and personal development outcomes.
- Some features have more impact.
- Not all students take part.

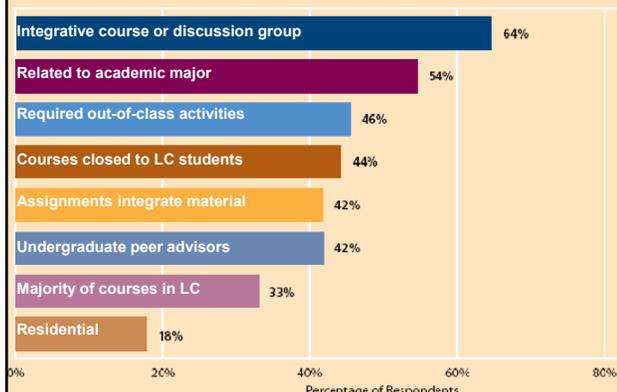


### Learning Communities (LCs)

- Formal program where groups of students (FY) take two or more classes together
- NSSE explored different program features of LC's ...



### Learning Community Program Characteristics



### Learning Communities

- Formal program where groups of students (FY) take two or more classes together
- NSSE explored different program features of LC's ...
- LC programs that integrate material across courses are associated with higher student engagement and learning

### Learning Community (LC) Characteristics and Gains

- ❖ Students who frequently **integrate material** from LC classes benefitted more in terms of gains, **deep approaches to learning**, and an enriched social life.
- ❖ **Required out-of-class activities** were related to gains in self-understanding, **deep learning**, and an enriched social life.
- ❖ An **undergraduate peer advisor** is associated with reports of more supportive campus environment and an enriched social life.
- ❖ **Living-learning communities** linked to the quality of social life, but not other outcomes.

### Learning Communities

- Adult learners and first generation college students were less likely to participate in a LC.
- Students who live on campus, full-time students, and members of Greek organizations were more likely.

**Check-in:**  
**What does this suggest for practice??**

**Designing LCs?**

**Persuading faculty to work in LCs?**

### Service Learning

- Community-based project as part of a regular course
- More likely to be present at smaller and private institutions
- Positively associated with deep learning and personal development



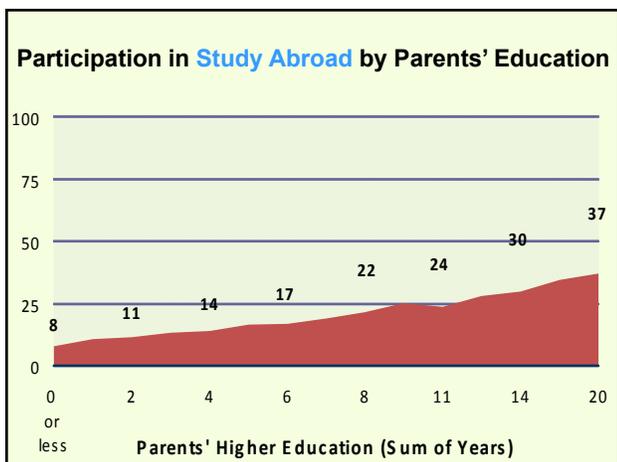
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### Study Abroad

- More likely at Bac A&S, private colleges.
- A life changing experience, but also relates to immediate learning outcomes upon return to home campus.
- Living with host nationals related to more integrative and reflective learning, and personal and social gains.
- The length of time spent abroad did not make a difference.



**Check-in:**  
**What does this suggest  
 for practice??**

**What about first-  
 generation students and  
 study abroad?**

### Study Abroad: Implication for Practice

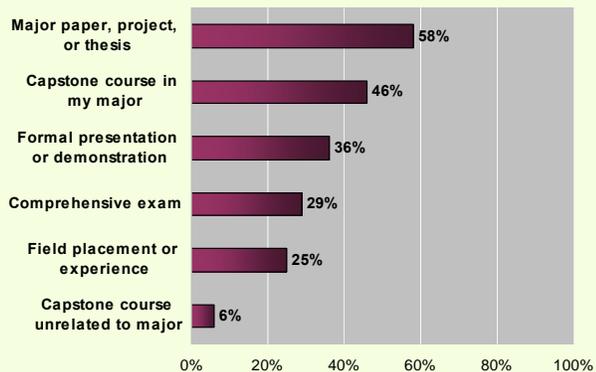
- Amount of time abroad not as important as whether student has such an experience.
- Value in increasing short-term cross-cultural or "study away", "May term" opportunities for students who cannot be away from their home institution for extended period of time

### Culminating Senior Activities

- Capstone course, senior project/thesis, comp exam, etc.
- A third (32%) of seniors reported having completed such an experience, and another 29% said they planned to do so before graduating.
- Bac A&S, private, and engineering



### Participation in Selected Culminating Activities



### Culminating Senior Activities

- Half of students worked alone; 40% worked with others
- Field placements have impact on greatest number of gains,
- Also beneficial:
  - Projects that required the greatest investment of time,
  - Working in groups,
  - Meeting often with supervising faculty member, and
  - Receiving clear expectations for the activity.

### What is it about these high-impact activities that appear to be so effective with students?

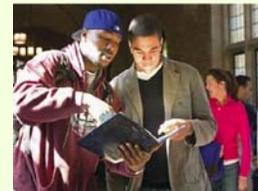
Practices Increase Odds That Students Will:

- ✓ Invest time and effort
- ✓ Interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- ✓ Experience diversity
- ✓ Get more frequent feedback
- ✓ Discover relevance of their learning through real-world applications

### What to do??

*Make it possible for every student to participate in at least two high impact activities*

- **One in First Year**
  - FY seminars
  - Learning communities
  - Service learning
- **One Later in Major**
  - Study abroad
  - Student-faculty research
  - Field placement or internship
  - Capstone project



### Assessment questions about high-impact practices

1. How often are students experiencing high-impact practices?
2. Do all students have an equal likelihood of participating? To what extent do underrepresented students participate?
3. Are these practices done well?



### Participation in High-Impact Educational Experiences

	First-Year Experiences		Senior Year Experiences		
	Learning Community	Service Learning	Research with Faculty	Study Abroad	Senior Culminating Exp
<b>Type of Institution</b>					
Less Selective	16%	36%	16%	10%	30%
More Selective	18%	37%	23%	21%	35%
<b>Race</b>					
African American	18%	40%	17%	9%	27%
Asian	17%	37%	22%	14%	28%
Pacific Islander	17%	36%	19%	15%	34%
White	20%	36%	17%	11%	26%
Hispanic					
<b>Enrollment</b>					
Part-Time	10%	26%	12%	7%	22%
Full-Time	18%	37%	23%	21%	35%
<b>First-Generation?</b>					
No	18%	37%	22%	19%	36%
Yes	15%	35%	16%	9%	29%
<b>Transfer?</b>					
Started Here	17%	37%	23%	19%	38%
Started Elsewhere	13%	32%	14%	9%	25%
<b>Age</b>					
Under 24	17%	37%	23%	18%	37%
24 or Older	10%	24%	13%	7%	24%

### Inventory of High-Impact Practices

Participation in HIPs on our campus based on NSSE results and other institutional data. To what extent are practices available to all students?

	Learning Communities (first year students)	Service Learning	Research w/ Faculty
<b>On Our Campus</b>	✓		
Required for all	no		
% Students involved	35%		
% First Generation	22%		
% Transfer Students	0		
% African American	15%		
% Latino Students	5%		
% Asian American	15%		
% other			
% Adult Students	0		



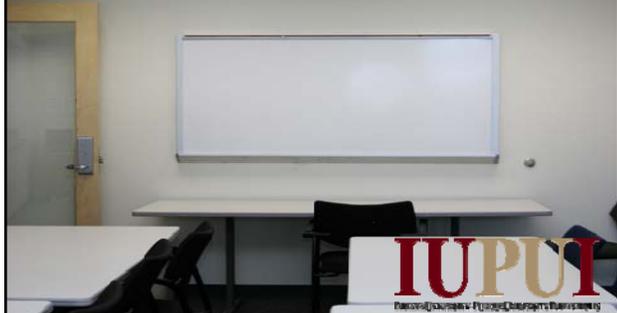
### One Campus Response: IUPUI

- Make Undergraduate Learning Outcomes clear to students
- Intensive learning communities
- Personal Development Planning (PDP)
- RISE Initiative

**Make Undergraduate Learning Outcomes clear to students**

**In the classrooms...**

Principles of Undergraduate Learning      Core Communication and Quantitative Skills



IUPUI  
Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis

**Make Undergraduate Learning Outcomes clear to students**

**In the stairwells...**



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### Personal Development Planning (PDP)

Personal Development Planning is a process to enable first-year students at IUPUI to understand, implement, and mark progress towards a degree and a career goal by creating and following a personalized plan that is open to revision and reevaluation every semester in collaboration with an academic advisor.



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### RISE initiative at IUPUI

- Research
- International Study Abroad
- Service Learning
- Experiential Learning

*Every student earning a bachelor's degree will complete at least 2 of the 4 types of qualifying RISE educational experiences*

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Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis



### Recommendation: If you have NSSE Results think about...

- To what extent do our students report participation in high-impact activities? Do all students participate?
- What % of First-Years report that they "plan to do" a learning community, work on a research project with a faculty member, or study abroad? How are these expectations set?
- Linking your student-level NSSE results to student information to gain greater insights into who participates and how they benefit (GPA, retention, outcomes measures).

### Recommendations

**For high-impact activities to make more of a difference to student learning & success....**

1. Make it possible for students to participate in *at least 2 high impact activities* during their undergraduate program, 1 in the first year, and 1 later related to their major field.
2. Ensure **all** students have a chance to participate in these experiences – *are students in some majors less likely to participate? To what extent do first-generation students take advantage of these experiences?*
3. Reduce barriers to participation, encourage all students to see potential for their involvement.
4. Ensure programs are of high quality. *What is your evidence for effectiveness?*
5. Know how your students benefit from the experience.

### Recommendation

**Use data to inform practice - examine equity gaps to evaluate performance**

- **Use information about the student experience to improve.**
- **ASK: What are we doing that is not working with underrepresented students? How can we be more successful with historically underserved students?**
- **Examine routine student data disaggregated by race and ethnicity - evaluate performance according to equity in outcomes.**

### Example: Examine Success Indicators from an “Equity Scorecard”<sup>\*</sup> Perspective

- What percentage of students who graduate with 3.5 GPA are African American & Latina/o? How does this compare with the percentage of enrolled students?
- What percentage of Latina/o students who start out in ESL non-credit courses earn an A.A. degree within three years? Five years?
- What percentage of African American students participate in study abroad?

<sup>\*</sup>University of Southern California, Center for Urban Education, <http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CUE/projects/equityscorecard.htm>

### Recommendation

#### Consider Student Success Research on Underrepresented Groups

- Students with a history of social and educational marginalization attribute successful outcomes to the **formation of supportive relationships with institutional agents, or practitioners**
- Institutional agents foster minority students’ sense of belonging, validate their knowledge, experience, and hopes, and help them muster the confidence and courage to succeed in college.

Source: Bensimon, E.M (2007). *The Review of Higher Education* 30,(4), 441-469

### Recommendation

#### Cultivate “Positive restlessness”

- ✓ **“We know who we are and what we aspire to.”**
- ✓ **Confident, responsive, but never quite satisfied...**
- ✓ **Self-correcting orientation**
- ✓ **Continually question, “are we performing as well as we can?”**



### Discussion and Questions

