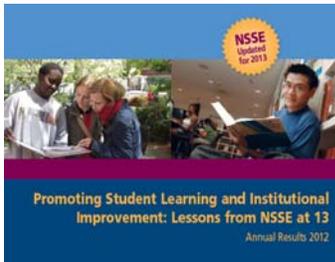


Foster, Sustain and Improve Quality in the First College Year: Creating Magical Processes and Making Dreams...Reality

32nd Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience, Orlando



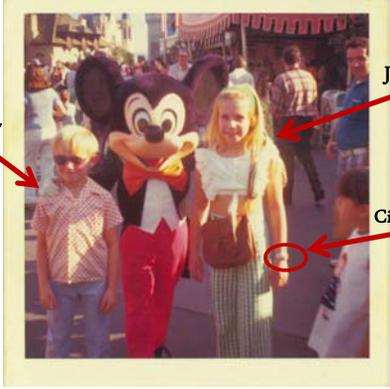
Jillian Kinzie, Associate Director
Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research and NSSE
nse.iub.edu

NSSE Turns 13!



Disney World Vacation, 1975



Jack, age 7

Jillian, age 10

Cinderella watch








Disney Principles to Create Magic for Guests



- **Dream** beyond the boundaries of today
- **Believe** in sound values
- **Dare** to make a difference
- **Do**, go out and do it

Strive for perfection, but settle for excellence

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The Power of Disney Principles



- **If we structure with powerful principles and values in mind we can create something magical**
- **And, best practices become magic only when applied and implemented**

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The Magical World of the First College Year



- Educators have assigned **special importance** to the first year of college as the **foundation** for the college experience.
- The first college year is **too important to leave to chance**.
- The first year is a **distinct** time period – **intentionally designed** to produce specific experiences and outcomes



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Using NSSE to Foster a Magical First Year



- **Research shows engagement matters to student success**
- **NSSE focuses campus attention on what matters to student success**
- **NSSE encourages campuses to use data to create environments rich with opportunities for engagement**
- **Campuses are acting on results and realizing improvements!**

Dream

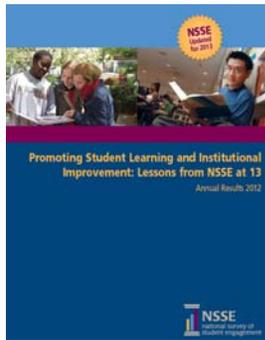
Believe

Dare

Do

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NSSE and CCSSE Users??



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Using NSSE to Foster a Magical First Year

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Dream
Believe
Dare
Do

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DREAM



All learning and development requires an investment of time and effort by the student.

C. Robert Pace (1984).
Measuring the quality of college student experiences.



Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

- Student-faculty contact
- Active learning
- Prompt feedback
- Time on task
- High expectations
- Experiences with diversity
- Cooperation among students



(Chickering & Gamson, 1987)

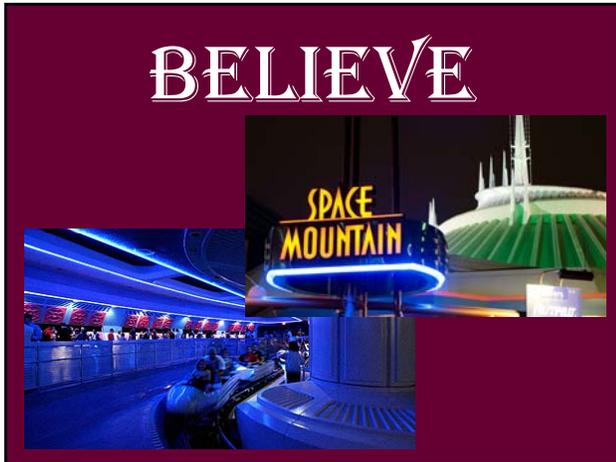
Ernest T. Pascarella
Patrick T. Terenzini

How COLLEGE AFFECTS STUDENTS

VOLUME 2 | A THIRD DECADE OF RESEARCH

“Because individual effort and involvement are the critical determinants of college 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



Predicting Educational Outcomes

“NSSE results are good proxy measures for growth in important educational outcomes such as critical thinking, moral reasoning, intercultural effectiveness, personal well-being, and a positive orientation toward literacy activities.”

Study on the effectiveness of the NSSE benchmarks
 Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education Pascarella, Seifert, & Blaich (Change, Jan/Feb, 2010)
 Center of Inquiry
 WABASH COLLEGE

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Focus on Educational Practices in the First Year

NSSE measures of educational practices may be best used to focus on the effectiveness of the first year of college—a period of time during which the greatest developmental impact of postsecondary education occurs.

Study on the effectiveness of the NSSE benchmarks
 Pascarella, Seifert, & Blaich
 (Change, Jan/Feb, 2010)

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Engagement in effective educational activities in the first year is essential to student persistence & success

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High-Impact Pedagogical Practices in the First Year

- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
- Made a class presentation
- Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment
- Worked with other students on projects during class
- Worked with classmates outside of class on assignments
- Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)
- Participated in a community-based project as part of course
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
- Discussed ideas from readings/classes with faculty outside class
- Received prompt feedback on your academic performance
- Worked harder than you thought
- Worked with faculty on activities outside coursework (committees, student life, etc.)
- Discussed ideas from readings/classes with others
- Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity and those who differ from you - religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values

Power of Peers

- “Student’s peer group is the single most potent source of influence on growth and development” (Astin, 1993)



- Peer learning is an effective, engaging pedagogy for all students

Power of Timely Feedback

- New students need immediate feedback to understand what is expected
- Feedback in **first 3 weeks** to modify behaviors accordingly



Connect students in multiple ways to resources for learning

- Connect students to academic support resources by **requiring** use of writing center, peer tutors, study groups,
- Online, mobile, kiosk support services
- Supplemental Instruction in high D,F,W courses – “gateway” course intervention
- **High-challenge** research support groups, writing centers, academic clubs & activities



Students don't do optional!

- Guide students to what is important to do
- Require visits to advisor, tutoring, writing or math center -- knit-in to course assignments



What do you require of students?

Engagement had a **stronger** effect on **first year grades & persistence** to the second year for underprepared (low ACT) and historically underserved students (first-gen, students of color)



Value of High-Impact Practices in the First Year

- **First Year Seminars**
- **Learning Communities**
- **Service Learning/Community-based projects**



Do First Year Students Invest Enough Time in their Studies?

- Average FY spends **15** hrs per week
 - Women spent 1 hr. **more** than men
 - First-generation devoted 1 hr. **less** per week
 - Major differences – Engineering 5 hrs. more
- Faculty no longer hold to 2 hrs. for every 1 in class
FSSE results show time **faculty expect is only slightly higher** than what students report



What About Transfers?

- Transfer students less engaged than students who started at the institution
 - No differences on study time, discussing assignments with faculty
- Institutions of all types need to consider early and ongoing programs to engage transfer students.



The Simple Truth:

At institutions where faculty members use effective educational practices more frequently in their classes, students are more engaged overall and gain more from college.



(Faculty Survey of Student Engagement – FSSE)

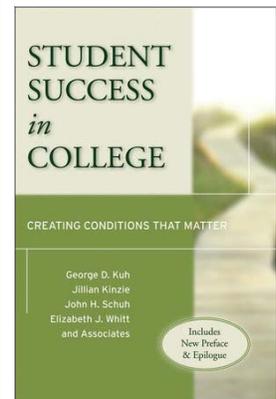
DARE



Project DEEP:

A Study of High-Performing Institutions

What do educationally effective institutions do to foster student engagement and success?



Six Shared Conditions of Educationally Effective Institutions

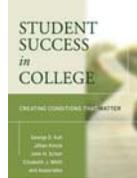
1. “Living” Mission and “Lived” Educational Philosophy
2. Unshakeable Focus on Student Learning
3. Environments Adapted for Educational Enrichment
4. Clearly Marked Pathways to Student Success
5. Improvement-Oriented Ethos
6. Shared Responsibility for Educational Quality

Educational Effectiveness: Guaranteed to Last?

Checked back with DEEP schools 5 years later...

- NSSE results about the same – a few slips, a few gains
- Graduation rates comparable, or better - 7 schools increased by 6%, and 3 by 10%
- Six shared conditions still hold
- Still “positively restless”

Keys to Sustaining the Student Success Agenda



- a. *Student success is an institutional priority when everyone--especially campus leaders--make it so.*
- b. *Data-informed Action. Measure and act on what matters to student success Stay "positively restless".*
- c. *Better collaboration between student and academic affairs.*

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Designing for Student Success

No matter what program or practice a college implements, it is likely to have a greater impact if its design incorporates the following principles...



Design Principles for Student Success



A Strong Start

- ❖ Institutional publications accurately describe what students experience
- ❖ Ensure students' earliest contacts and first weeks incorporate experiences that will foster personal connections and enhance their chances of success
- ❖ Structured Orientation, First Year Experience programs

Design Principles for Student Success



Clearly Marked Pathways

- ❖ The many choices students face as they navigate college can create unnecessary confusion – *create coherent pathways*
- ❖ Make plain to students the resources and services available to help them succeed
- ❖ Redundant early warning systems and safety nets

Design Principles for Student Success



Integrated Support

- ❖ Connect with students where they are most likely to be: the classroom -- build support, such as skills development & supplemental instruction, into courses rather than referring students to services separate from the learning experience
- ❖ Require use of support services (writing center, math tutors)

Design Principles for Student Success

Intensive Student Engagement

- ❖ Promoting student engagement is the overarching feature
- ❖ Make engagement inescapable for students



Engaging Institutions take Action on Evidence

- Focused on data that were actionable, not immutable institutional or student characteristics
- Evolved from simply gathering data to using evidence to guide changes.

“Positive Restlessness”

“Talking all the time about what works well and what needs to be fixed”

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DO



Are Institutions Improving?

- More than 10 years of NSSE data
- 600 institutions have 4+ data points
- What can we learn about systematic improvement in colleges and universities?



Are Institutions Improving?

Yes.



University of Texas-San Antonio

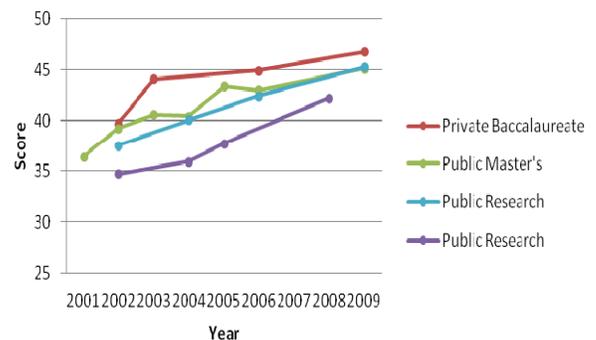
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Findings: Improvement Over Time

Positive trends outnumber negative ones, by margin of 7:1



Figure 1. Trends in First-Year Active & Collaborative Learning at Four Institutions



Patterns of Change

- **41%** of institutions saw improvement in measure for **first-year students**, **28%** for seniors
- First-year student engagement may be more amenable to improvement than senior engagement (**OR**, more institutions have targeted the FYE for improvement).

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Characterizing Change Efforts

- “Supersystematic” – integrated strategic planning, pushing all fronts
- Targeted, focused
- By-product of larger campus reform (e.g., Gen Ed)
- **First Year Focus**
- Major/Department site for change
- Identity Distinction or Refinement
- Distributed/Many Levers



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First Year Focus

University of Akron

- Foundations of Excellence
 - Data to identify what worked and what needed improving in the first year
 - Structured process** to study and implement reforms: FYE Task Force and Student Success & Retention Committee (faculty-administrative committee)



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Evolutionary Change at Lynchburg College



- Created **Connections Program** to support FY students – orientation, Hornet Days, success seminar, connection leader (peer), advising
- Student Success Team (30 members – faculty, coaches, student affairs)
- Faculty committed to improving teaching to support student learning and success

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First Year Focus: Informed by Data & Research: Southern Connecticut State University



No First-year Experience in 2005; 50% students in FYE in 2007; **All** in FYE in 2009

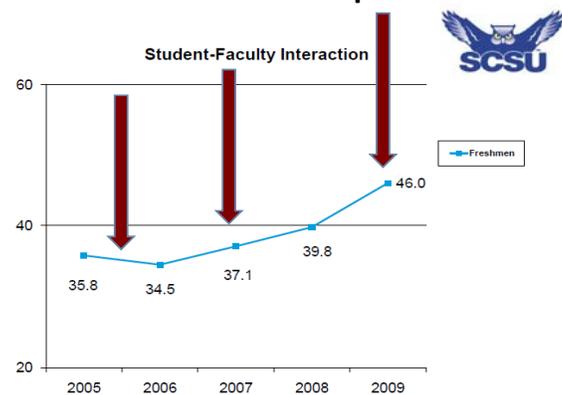
FYE components:

- Orientation
- Common read
- Learning communities
- Inquiry 101 seminar
- Academic tracking & early intervention
- Student success workshops
- Academic support workshops & study groups
- FYE program office

www.southernct.edu/academics/academicaffairs/assess/

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First-Trend Example



Quinnipiac University (CT)



- **Increased Integrated Learning & High Impact Practices via:**
 - Embedding 10 Essential Learning Proficiencies more intentionally in University Curriculum and reinforcing in academic programs
 - Nurturing intentional learning and curricular cohesion via the QU Seminar Series – 3 required seminars connecting students to local, national and global communities
 - Instructional support to faculty

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What Accounts for Improvement in the First Year (FY)?



- **Required Orientation**
- **Early alert + Interventions**
- **Faculty development - teaching FY courses**
- **Attention to curriculum - sequenced FY courses, general education revision**
- **Revitalized FY Seminars – greater academic content, connected to institutional learning goals & mission; outcomes based**

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What Accounts for Improvement in the First Year (FY)?

- **Self study – FoExcellence, Accreditation**
- **Partnerships =AA+SA+CTL+Tech+Faculty²**
- **Peer mentoring/teaching/learning support**
- **More common FY experiences**
- **Themed learning communities paired with high-impact practices**
- **Improving success in “gateway courses” – writing, math, science**

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Positive Change is Happening!

A desire to improve, coupled with broad consensus and commitment



– and **risk taking** – among campus leaders and those who impact undergraduate education, are necessary ingredients for change.

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Making Change

- **Use data to focus attention**
- **Improvement begins in small ways**
start something!
- **Evaluate effectiveness of action**
- **Recognize and celebrate innovation**



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Emphasize Action & Improvement

“The most fruitful way to learn if the conclusions that drawn from assessment data are correct is to try to change something and see what happens.”



Blaich & Wise, 2011, NILOA publication

Enacting Disney Principles

- Dream what you want for students & anchor in evidence-based practice **Dream**
- Believe in the talent and capacity of students and what matters to success **Believe**
- Dare to create environments rich with opportunities for engagement and hold students accountable **Dare**
- Do assess and act on findings to make improvements! **Do**

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Creating Magical Processes in the First College Year



- ★ **Dream**
- ★ **Believe**
- ★ **Dare**
- ★ **Do**

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