Promoting High Impact Practices: Approaches to Increase Engagement & Access in the First Year
First-Year Experience Annual Conference, 2011

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NSSE Institute for Effective Educational Practice

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

Transformational Learning

- Assertion: College should be a transformative experience for students
- What experiences transform?
  -- Disorienting dilemmas (i.e., community, roommate, diversity...)
  -- High expectations, high challenge
  -- High-impact practices!

Findings from NSSE and AAC&U: Some Educational Activities are Unusually Effective

Growing evidence that “high-impact practices” provide substantial educational benefits to students


High-Impact Practices

Educational experiences that make a significant difference to student persistence, learning outcomes, and student success.

1. Structural features
2. Pedagogical practices

High Impact Activities

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses/Projects
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

To Ponder:
How might you ensure that students – particularly in their first year – understand the value of high-impact pedagogical practices?
And that more students experience these practices?

High Impact Activities

2 minute colleague conversation:
★ Which of the HIPs do you think makes the biggest contribution to First Year Student learning and success?
★ Does your campus have a distinctive HIP?

HIPs Resources

- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) – Annual Results reports 2007-2010
- Student Success in College (2005, 2010) – documents what 20 high-performing institutions do to promote student success

HIPs Benefits & Outcomes

High Impact practices are positively associated with:
- Persistence and GPA
- Deep approaches to learning
- Higher rates of student-faculty interaction
- Increases in critical thinking, writing skills,
- Greater appreciation for diversity
- Higher student engagement overall

Brownell, J & Swaner, L (2010); NSSE, (2007); Kuh (2008)

HIPs Resources

- Five High-Impact Practices (Brownell & Swaner, 2010) monograph examines body of research on five high-impact practices: first-year seminars, learning communities, service learning, undergraduate research & capstones.
  - Outcomes;
  - Outcomes for traditionally underserved populations;
  - Conditions under which positive outcomes are more likely to be found;
  - Strengths and weaknesses of outcomes literature.

www.aacu.org
What is it about these magical, high-impact activities that appear to be so effective with students?

Do All Students Experience High-Impact Practices?

• **Nope.** High Impact Practices Only Reach A Fraction of Students

**OVERALL NSSE Participation Levels:**

- **First Year Students:**
  - Learning Communities: 17%
  - Service Learning: 36%

- **Seniors:**
  - Research With Faculty: 19%
  - Internship: 53%
  - Study Abroad: 18%

*First-generation, racial-ethnic, major differences too*

**NSSE results, see “Annual Results”**

Involvement in HIPs Varies Substantially by Major

• Considerable differences in 4 largest-enrollment majors: English, biology, business administration, & psychology.

**Characteristics of HIPs that make them effective with students**

**Practices Increase Odds That Students Will:**

1. Invest time and effort
2. Interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters
3. Experience diversity
4. Get more frequent feedback
5. Discover relevance of their learning through real-world applications
6. Occur in context of Coherent, Academically Challenging Curriculum
Recommendation:
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

Challenges
- Beneficial for all students, yet not all take part – differences by major, racial-ethnic groups, transfer status, first-generation
  - How to ensure more widespread participation?
- Maximizing the “compensatory effects” (for underserved students)
  - How to ensure underserved student participation?
- Cost
- Getting experience on students radar
- Institutional impediments
- What else??

Types of Campus Action on HIPs
- Inventory interest in & availability of HIPs
- Promote opportunities to students early
- Target underserved students
- Structure HIPs in undergraduate program
- Embed or require HIPs
- Assess impact of HIPs

Inventory and Promote HIPs
University of Wisconsin Madison

At UWM, HIPs that have generated demonstrable student outcomes:
- In the first year:
  - FIGS (First-Year Interest Groups)
  - RLCs (Residential Learning Communities)
  - URS (Undergraduate Research Scholars)
- Available Throughout College:
  - Study Abroad
  - Service Learning/Community-based Research
  - Undergrad Research
  - Student Leadership (in class, such as Peer Mentoring, and out of class, through student organizations)
- Some aspects of Gen Ed requirements (Comm A & B, QR-A & B; options for Ethnic Studies Requirement); Honors courses
- In the final year(s):
  - Capstones
  - Internships
  - Senior Thesis

Inventory Interest in HIPs
- Tulane’s NSSE FY “expect to do” results showed high levels of interest in 3 HIPs:
  - Internships (71%), Undergraduate Research (44%), Study Abroad (62%)
- Results suggested need to expand opportunity based on student interest
- Center for Engaged Learning & Teaching created to foster HIPs

Campus Action on High Impact Practices
Promote HIPs
University of Wisconsin Madison

- Intentional promotion of HIPs in Summer Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR)
- Ensured that Advisors asked students about their interest and intentions about HIPs
- Saw increase in number of students making inquiries into study abroad, undergraduate research

Targeting Underserved Students in Mission Relevant HIPs
Hobart and William Smith Colleges

- Focused effort to expand two HIPs — service learning and study abroad — salient to HWS mission.
- Convinced these experiences made a difference to student persistence and engagement, HWS administrators determined who was UNDERREPRESENTED in these experiences (males & low-income students) and involved faculty & student affairs staff in devising approaches to make experiences more possible.

RISE to the IUPUI Challenge

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

The challenge: Every student earning a bachelor’s degree will complete at least two of the four types of educational experiences which qualify for appearing on the student’s transcript.

Structured, Early Exposure to HIPs
Eastern Oregon:
Ensure FYs (60% first-gen) exposed to HIPs early.
— 2 quarter, linked FY seminars;
— Undergrad Research in HUM 101

Structured HIPs: University College at IUPUI

- RISE to the IUPUI Challenge
- Personal Development Plans
- First Year Seminars
- Themed Learning Communities

My IUPUI Experience

- Research, International, Service and Experiential Learning
- What students say about the IUPUI experience
- Professional and Personal Growth
- Career Success
- The IUPUI Experience
Themed Learning Communities (TLC) at IUPUI

- 3 or more linked courses including an integrative first-year seminar connected through an interdisciplinary theme.
  
  **TLC Ex: “It’s Not Easy Being Green”**
  First-year students conduct research on environmental issue in Indianapolis.

- Faculty and instructional team members work together to integrate the curricula

- Opportunity to integrate high impact practice in meaningful way in first-year curriculum.

Examples of Undergraduate Research in TLCs

- “Our Chemical World”
  - First-year students paired with science faculty conducting research.

- “It’s Not Easy Being Green”
  - First-year students conduct research project on environmental issue in Indianapolis under guidance of faculty researchers.

Service Learning in TLCs

33% Include Service Learning

- 3 Education TLCs
- 3 Nursing TLCs
- 2 SPEA TLCs
- 2 University College TLCs
- 1 Liberal Arts TLC

24% Include One Time Service Projects

- 2 Engineering TLCs
- 2 Liberal Arts TLCs
- 2 Psychology TLCs
- 2 University College TLCs

Introduction to study abroad/international efforts

15% of 2009 TLCs using Global Crossroads.

Assessing Student Success in TLCs

First Semester GPA

- TLC participants: 2.79
- Non-participants: 2.55
- GPA 3.0 or above: 43%
- GPA 3.5 or above: 22%

First Semester Retention

- TLC participants: 76%
- Non-participants: 67%

*Adjusted to control for significant covariates including: course load, gender, ethnicity, SAT scores, high school percentile ranks, units of high school math, and first-generation students.

Impact of HIPs: CSU Northridge

Conclusion: Multiple HIPs distributed through Gen Ed and majors would, “require only small curricular changes.” Such “modest change” can yield a significant increase in student success and persistence.
Considerations for HIPs in the First Year

To Ponder:
How might you...
- develop structural HIPs and ensure students take part?
- increase first-year students engagement in pedagogical HIPs?
- ensure that the 6 conditions that mark HIPs are more a part of your first-year experience program?
- set expectations for HIPs?

Recommendation: Lay out the Path to Student Success
- Make plain to students the experiences that matter
- Front load resources
- Communicate expectations for engagement and success

Recommendation: Set Expectations for HIPs
How do students learn what they should experience in college?
HIPs:
- explore students’ expectations for HIPs
- focus more on communicating expectations of students than on meeting student expectations

Recommendation: Examine HIPs on your Campus
1. How often are students experiencing high-impact practices?
2. Do all students have an equal likelihood of participating?
3. Are these practices done well?

Be Intentional about Exposing Students to Educationally Effective Practice
Inventory: High-Impact Practices
To what extent does your institution provide these experiences?
( √ = have on campus; √ = required; estimate the % of various student populations in these activities)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Community</th>
<th>First Year Seminars</th>
<th>Research w/ Faculty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On Our Campus</td>
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<td>Required for all</td>
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<td>% First Generation</td>
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<td>% Transfer Students</td>
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<td>% other</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Adult Students</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Final Recommendations:
1. Know how available HIPs are on your campus. Conduct an inventory, explore expectation setting for HIPs
2. Introduce HIPs early and often -- get experience on students radar and debunk myths
   - Example: Communicate value of learning communities, study abroad, explain benefits, introduce throughout first-year; Explain financial aid policies about study abroad; advise student into FIGs, URS

As you consider HIPs...
1. Which high-impact practice is distinctive to your campus? Why?
2. To what extent are FY students participating in high-impact practices? Which students are not and why?
3. How might opportunities for ALL students to participate in high-impact practices be expanded?

Final Recommendations:
3. Be Intentional. Structure HIPs into Curriculum, Requirements, Advising,
   - Example: IUPUI requires, Emory & Henry advises 2, knits into curriculum
4. Expose students to “mini-HIPs” (short term study abroad, research in a course)
   - Example: Short term study abroad experiences had as much impact on student learning gains as year long experiences. Short term experiences associated with later longer term experiences Help students seek out and value short term experiences

Discussion and Comments
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Student engagement = the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities – practices shown to be related to desired educational outcomes.

Student engagement can be thought of in three ways:

- What students do -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
- What institutions do -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things
- Educationally effective institutions channel student energy toward the right activities

High-Impact Practices

Growing evidence that “high-impact practices” provide substantial educational benefits to students

High Impact Pedagogical Practices: To increase retention, persistence and student success (GPA, essential learning outcomes), institutions can focus on increasing engagement in these educationally purposeful activities...

- 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
- Time spent studying, preparing academic work
- Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity and those who differ from you - religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values


High Impact Structural Practices

AAC&U identified 10 promising “high-impact” activities in its 2007 report, *College Learning for a New Global Century* including: first-year seminars, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, service learning, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments & projects, undergraduate research, study abroad & other experiences with diversity, internships, and capstones. NSSE data shows HIPs provide substantial educational benefits to students, however, not all students participate (Kuh, 2008; National Survey of Student Engagement, 2007). NSSE Annual Results available for download from [www.nsse.iub.edu](http://www.nsse.iub.edu) – "Reports and Services".

Practitioners and researchers need a better understanding about variation among & within these practices.

**Table 1. Percent of Seniors Who Participated in High-Impact Practices by Institution and Student Characteristics (NSSE 2010)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Characteristics</th>
<th>First-Year Students</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
<th>Study Abroad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Community</td>
<td>Service-Learning</td>
<td>Cumulating Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 Basic Carnegie Classification*</td>
<td>RUVM</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RUH</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DRU</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Master’s L</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Master’s M</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s S</td>
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<td></td>
<td>BacABS</td>
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<td>BacDiverse</td>
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<td>Control</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
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<td>Caucasian/White</td>
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<tr>
<td>First-Generation</td>
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<td>42</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Started elsewhere</td>
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<td>Age</td>
<td>Under 24 years</td>
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<td></td>
<td>24 years &amp; older</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Category</td>
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<td>Other professional</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social sciences</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Students reported having “done” the activity before graduating for all high-impact practices except service-learning, where they reported participating at least “sometimes,”* during the current school year.

*For details on the Carnegie Classification, visit classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/descriptions/basic.php.*

*Neither parent holds a bachelor’s degree.*
NSSE’s 2010 Annual Results explored "Major Differences" -- Differences exist in engagement by academic major. This is partly the result of traditions and standards for undergraduate education that are transmitted and reinforced in graduate education and through disciplinary associations. That is, faculty members exchange ideas as they design academic programs, curricula, teaching methods, and assessment practices. For example, internship or practicum experiences were most common among seniors majoring in journalism and education and least common among accounting and business administration majors. Similarly, seniors in nursing were more likely to do service-learning in their courses than were mathematics or physics majors. Understanding this variation should help campus leaders place the student experience in context and possibly to focus campus conversations about potential changes.

Characteristics of High Impact Practices -- *High-Impact Practices Increase Odds That Students Will:*

- Invest time and effort
- Participate in challenging, active learning experiences
- Interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- Experience diversity
- Get more frequent feedback
- Discover relevance of their learning through real-world applications

*How might we be more intentional about ensuring more widespread participation in HIPs?*

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

Conclusions for Expanding High Impact Practices:

1. Historically underrepresented students benefit substantially from HIPs, yet not all take part (First-generation, some racial-ethnic groups, transfer students, certain majors)
2. Must introduce HIPs early and often -- get experience on students radar
3. Explore students’ assumptions about practices (who participates, cost, demands, etc.) – debunk myths
4. Expose students to “mini-HIPs” (short term study abroad, research in a course)

Resources:

High-Impact Practice Inventory

Growing evidence that “high-impact practices” provide substantial educational benefits to students. Yet, not all students take part.

**Inventory:** To what extent does your institution provide HIPs? Do all students have an equal chance of participating? To what extent do underrepresented students participate in these activities? Use the worksheet below to inventory high-impact practices.

[✓ = yes, have on campus; estimate the % of various student populations in these activities]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Learning Community</th>
<th>First Year Seminars</th>
<th>Writing-Intensive Courses</th>
<th>Research w/ Faculty</th>
<th>Service Learning</th>
<th>Study Abroad</th>
<th>Internships</th>
<th>Senior Capstone</th>
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<td>On Our Campus</td>
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