

High Impact Practices: Why they work and who benefits

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Jillian Kinzie, Ph.D.
Indiana University Center for
Postsecondary Research
jikinzie@indiana.edu



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**

What We Know About Student Success:



- Student success in college is no accident.
- Student engagement in intentionally designed educationally purposeful activities is necessary to achieve desirable learning outcomes.
- Institutions must deploy resources appropriately and provide students explicit messages about success-oriented behaviors.
- Institutions need information about how well they're doing & to use this information to enhance student engagement & success.

Sources



STUDENT SUCCESS
in COLLEGE

CREATING CONDITIONS THAT MATTER

George D. Kuh
Julian M. Kinzie
Elizabeth A. Whitt

- **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)** – results from first-year students & seniors at 1,400 institutions
- **Student Success in College** (2005) – documents what 20 high-performing institutions do to promote student success
- AAC&U and Kuh's (2008) **High-Impact Educational Practices**



New Markers for Student Success

- More **comprehensive framework for judging student success** is needed
 - How students spend their educational time in college
 - How frequently, and with what results, do students engage in educational practices—curricular, co-curricular, and pedagogical—that provide them opportunities to develop the learning they need
- Persistence still counts, but a contemporary framework for student success needs to address both **student learning outcomes** and the **kinds of practices that foster** intended outcomes.

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

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

Activity:

Think of a powerful learning experience for KU undergraduates. In pairs, share your idea and the reason why it is so powerful (2 min. each).



High-Impact Practices

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

1. Structural features
2. Pedagogical practices for all classrooms

High Impact Activities

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- ★ 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 and Projects

NSSE Finding: Value of High-Impact Practices



Students who took part in one or more “high-impact” practice such as a learning community, research with faculty, study abroad, and culminating senior experience reported greater levels of deep learning and greater gains in learning and personal development.

NSSE Deep/Integrative Approaches to Learning

- Integrating ideas or information from various sources
- Included diverse perspectives in class discussions/writing
- Put together ideas from different courses
- Discussed ideas with faculty members outside of class
- Discussed ideas with others outside of class
- Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory
- Synthesizing & organizing ideas, info., or experiences
- Making judgments about the value of information
- Applying theories to practical problems or in new situations
- Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views
- Tried to better understand someone else's views
- Learned something that changed how you understand an issue

Strong Positive Effects of High-Impact Activities

- Self-reported gains in 3 clusters of learning & personal development outcomes, & in engaging in deep approaches to learning
- In contrast to surface-level learning, **deep-level processing** emphasizes acquiring information and understanding the underlying meaning of information. **Students who use deep approaches earn higher grades and retain, integrate, and transfer information at higher rates.**
- Students who have these experiences are also more engaged in all practices measured on NSSE

Highlights: High-Impact Practices

- Learning communities
- Undergraduate research
- Service learning
- Study abroad
- Culminating, or Senior Projects



Learning Community Characteristics that Make a Difference

- **Integration activities**—either by discussion group or class assignments —**associated with higher levels of engagement, 3 educational gains, and deep approaches to learning**
- **Undergraduate peer advisors associated with higher reports of supportive campus environments**
- **Out-of-class activities** (i.e., field trips, organized social gatherings, service) associated with gains in self-understanding, deep learning, & social life

Highlights: High-Impact Practices

- Undergraduate Research.

Reviewing literature and interpreting findings most closely related to deep learning. Data collection had the weakest relationship.



- **Service learning.** Most beneficial when connected to course; particularly within learning community; most powerful as community-based research.

Study Abroad



- 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.

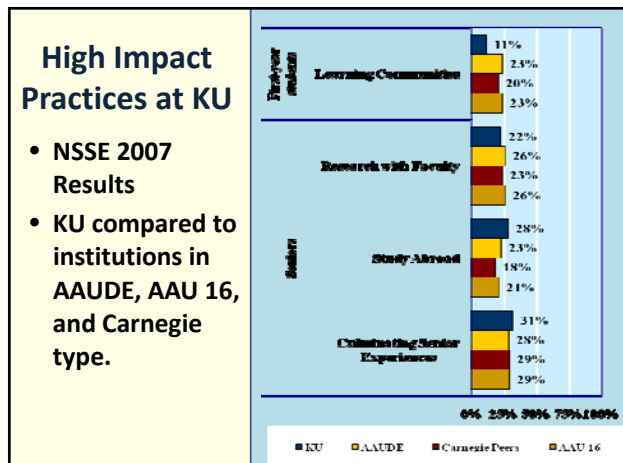
Study Abroad: Consideration for Practice

- 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.
- 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.





Do All Students Experience High-Impact Practices?

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

– Participation Levels in NSSE cohort:

First Year Students:

Learning Communities	17%
Service Learning	36%

Seniors:

Research With Faculty	19%
Internship	53%
Study Abroad	19%

First-generation, racial-ethnic, major differences...

Discussion:

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



Marked by 6 Conditions

1. Time on Task

- ✓ Activities demand students devote considerable time & effort to purposeful tasks.
- ✓ Most require daily decisions that deepen students' investment in the activity.

2. Faculty and Peer Interaction

- ✓ Nature of activities puts students in circumstances that essentially demand interaction with faculty and peers about substantive matters over a period of time.

Marked by 6 Conditions

3. Interaction with Diversity

- ✓ Participation increases the likelihood that students will experience diversity through interaction with people who are different from themselves. Students are challenged to develop new ways of thinking & responding to novel circumstances.

4. Frequent Feedback

- ✓ May be faculty, internship supervisors, peers, others. Close proximity provides opportunities for nearly continuous feedback.

Marked by 6 Conditions

5. Connections between learning context and real-world settings

- ✓ Opportunities for students to see how what they are learning works in on- and off-campus settings.

6. Occur in context of Coherent, Academically Challenging Curriculum

- ✓ Curriculum should deepen learning, bring one's values & beliefs into awareness, be infused with opportunities for active, collaborative learning... so students will better understand themselves in relation to others and the larger world.

To Ponder...



1. How might you ensure that these features are more a part of the undergraduate experience at KU?
2. How might you knit these experiences into your courses, or for students in your department?

High-Impact Pedagogical Practices



1. Engagement in the first year is essential to student persistence & success
2. Some students appear to benefit more than others from the same educational programs or practices

Educational Activities that Matter to Success in the First Year

NSSE items, 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
- Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity and those who differ from you - religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values



Compensatory Effect of Engagement

- Student engagement *positively related to student grades and to persistence for all students*

- Engagement has compensatory effect on FY grades & persistence to the second year -- Historically underserved students tend to benefit more from engagement than majority students.

What Do These High Impact Pedagogical Practices Look Like??



Prompt Feedback important to student learning and success

- Most useful feedback is timely, apt - provides opportunity for students to use information to improve their performance
- First-year (FY) students need immediate feedback to understand what is expected
- FY need feedback in first 3 weeks to modify their behaviors accordingly
- Pre-university study habits, and those developed in first couple months amazingly persistent

Be Explicit About What it Takes... "Introduce Students to Academic Citizenship"

Student success requires that professors explain more things to today's students that we once took for granted –

"Make clear the demands of academic work and show students how to begin to address those tasks..."You must buy the book, you must read it and come to class, you must observe deadlines or make special arrangements when you miss one"

Richard Turner (*Thought & Action*, 1998, p.34)

Extend Learning Outside the Classroom

- Common intellectual content (readings, co-curricular experiences) should be a nonnegotiable organizing principle for early college experiences; when students have read and discussed some of the same material in one or more classes, they are more likely to talk with their peers about these ideas outside of class, which infuses a measure of intellectual vitality into the campus culture

Collaborative Assignments and Projects

- ✓ Students benefit from: peer teaching opportunities; concrete applications of coursework to their lives outside the classroom; collaborations with community agencies; real-world applications...; all forms of active learning...games; simulations; presentations; quizzes.



To Ponder...



1. How might you increase opportunities for KU students to experience these high-impact pedagogical practices?
2. Are there other pedagogical practices you employ that engage students at high levels?

Summary: Benefits of High-Impact Structural features and Pedagogical practices

1. **High-impact practices** correlated highly with NSSE Educational Gains scales (general education, personal and practical gains), Deep Learning measures, and overall engagement.
2. **Engagement in range of effective educational practices (classroom based)** provides Compensatory Benefit for First Year Students With Lower Entering Board Scores (ACT) and students from historically-underrepresented populations

Kuh, G.D. (2008). *High Impact Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*. AAC&U

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

