



How to be a "HIP" College Campus: Maximizing Learning in Undergraduate Education

Rogers, Satu; and Galle, Jeffery
Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015

Book Review

Tags: collaborative learning | learning outcomes | outcomes-based learning | student learning outcomes

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Date Reviewed: November 30, -0001

Outcomes-based learning invites the question of how to best produce them, and this book introduces the reader to seven high-impact practices (HIPs), namely high expectations, close and frequent student-faculty interaction, effective teaching strategies, undergraduate research, collaborative learning, service learning, and diversity. Chapters are organized around these seven features. The authors use their own school, Oxford College of Emory University, as a test case for their hypothesis that these features provide the best means for student success as measured in desire to continue learning, graduation rate, STEM interest, and community engagement. Institutions promoting HIPs provide intentional support to their students for these practices, cultivate diversity, and blur the boundaries between classroom and extracurricular life. The book is seasoned with excerpts from faculty and student interviews and almost constant reference to the last thirty years of research on academic practice.

High expectations are created in classroom synergy between students and instructors, where instructors lead students in exploring beyond the basic subject information students are expected to learn on their own. Students report appreciation for being pushed beyond introductory knowledge and for gaining the self-knowledge that they underestimate their own learning capacities, something they would not have learned without high expectations. High expectations are successful when students have more opportunities to interact with faculty. This works best at smaller institutions and requires the institution's support to work. While faculty report that interaction helps them tailor their instruction to students' needs and abilities, they also caution against an over-customization that reduces a subject's breadth and prevents students from being challenged by new and unfamiliar material.

As expected, high-impact teaching calls for active learning techniques, with fourteen such practices – called “Inquiry Guided Learning” – described in the third chapter. Among them are student discovery (as in problem-solving), systematic construction of knowledge, cross-disciplinary integration, addressing misconceptions, creating surprise in the classroom, and using mistakes strategically. These practices are not formulas set forth by the authors but were derived from student-faculty conversations about good teaching at Oxford College. The reader looks in vain, however, for the redemption of the lecture as a component in active learning. In any case, faculty are advised to use practices that fit their personality and their discipline; some fit better than others.

Collaborative learning is enhanced through student research projects, which should be found across the disciplines (STEM fields have done the best job here). Such learning is best coupled with collaborative leadership in student life activities. The greater benefit accrues the less division there is between a campus’s academics and student life. Students learn leadership skills and gain confidence if collaboration with their peers is encouraged in both areas. Service learning includes collaboration and moves students beyond mere cognition to an experience the authors describe as spiritual and aimed at the “whole student.” And, the more diverse a campus, the better the outcome of any sort of collaborative activity.

The conclusion offers readers ways and means of implementing these HIPs on their own campuses. Flexibility and adaptation are key, and in the process, more HIPs may be devised from conversations among all parties in different campus contexts.

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