What Works?
Research-Based, High-Impact Practices for Promoting Student Success

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Seven *Universal Principles* of Student Success
&
*High-Impact Practices* for Implementing Them
1. **PERSONAL VALIDATION**

Student success is fostered when students feel personally significant—i.e., when they feel recognized as individuals, that they matter to the institution, and that the institution cares about them as whole persons (Rendón, 1994; Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989; Terenzini, et al., 1996).

High-Impact Practices:

* Creating a *Welcoming (& Validating) First Impression of the College*

* Knowing Our Students:
  a) Their names (knowing who they are)

  b) Their personal talents, interests, aspirations, etc. (knowing about them)

* Treating & Educating the Student as a “Whole Person”

2. **SELF-EFFICACY**

Students are more likely to strive for and achieve success when they believe that their personal effort matters—when they think they can exert significant influence or control over the outcomes of their life and their future success (Bandura, 1997; Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Elias, & Loomis, 2002; Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991; Solberg, et al., 1993).

High-Impact Practices:

* Balancing *Challenge & Support* for Optimal Growth: “Scaffolding”

* Providing Effective Performance-Enhancing *Feedback*

* Exposing Students to *Successful Role Models* (With Whom They Can Identify)

3. **PERSONAL MEANING**

Success is more likely to take place when students find meaning or purpose in their college experience—i.e., when they perceive relevant connections between what they’re learning in college, their current life, and their future goals (Ausubel, 1978; Fink, 2002; Mezirow, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wlodkowski, 1998).

High-Impact Practices:
* Helping Students Discover Meaning, Purpose, & Value of *College Learning*

* Helping Students Make Connections:

  a) Between *Courses and Disciplines* in the Curriculum

  b) Between *Academic* Learning (Curriculum) and *Experiential* Learning (Co-Curriculum)

  c) Between Their *College Experience*, Their *Current Life* & Their *Future Goals*

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**4. ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

Success increases commensurately with the degree or depth of student *engagement* in the learning process—i.e., the amount of *time* and *energy* that students invest in the college experience—both *inside* and *outside* the classroom (Astin, 1993; Kuh, 2001; Kuh, et al., 2005; McKeachie, et al., 1986; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005).

**High-Impact Practices:**

* Using *Engaging Pedagogy Inside* the Classroom

* Engaging Students in Learning Experiences *Outside* the Classroom

  a) Creating *Course Assignments that Promote Active Learning*

  b) Actively Involving Students in *Campus Life* (Student Support/Development Programs)

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**5. SOCIAL INTEGRATION**

Student success is promoted by *human interaction, collaboration,* and the formation of *interpersonal relationships* between the student and other members of the college community—peers, faculty, staff, and administrators (Astin, 1993; Bruffee, 1993; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998; Slavin, 1996; Tinto, 1993).

**High-Impact Practices:**
* Promoting Student-Faculty Interaction Outside the Classroom

* Promoting Student-Staff Interaction in Campus Offices & Support Services

* Promoting Student-Student Interaction Inside & Outside the Classroom

6. PERSONAL REFLECTION

Success is more likely to be experienced by students who engage in reflective thinking about their learning experiences, elaborate on them and transform them into a form that connects with what they already know or have previously experienced (Bruner, 1990; Ewell, 1997; Flavell, 1985; Svinicki, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978).

High-Impact Practices:

* Having Students Reflect on Academic Learning: Periodic Pauses for Thinking

* Having Students Reflect on Experiential Learning:
  a) Reflection (Reaction) Papers
  b) Learning Portfolio

7. SELF-AWARENESS

Success is more likely to be experienced if students become aware of themselves and remain mindful of their learning strategies, learning habits, and ways of thinking (Brooks, 2009; Buckingham & Clifton, 2001; Langer, 1989, 1997; Pintrich, 1995; Weinstein & Meyer, 1991; Weinstein & Underwood, 1985).

High-Impact Practices that Promote Self-Awareness Encourage Students to Engage in:
* **Self-Monitoring**: periodically stopping to monitor whether they're truly comprehending what they're attempting to learn—i.e., whether they're engaging in "deep learning" vs. "shallow learning" (surface memorization).

* **Meta-Cognition**—thinking about how they are thinking—i.e., the nature of their thought process.

* **Self-Regulation**—adjusting or modifying their learning strategies to meet the distinctive demands of different academic disciplines, learning tasks, and testing formats.

* **Self-Assessment**—gaining awareness and self-insight into their learning styles, learning habits, personal interests, aptitudes (talents) and values; and using this self-knowledge to make meaningful, realistic life choices and decisions (e.g., decisions about their educational and career goals).

References


**Appendix**
Key Properties/Principles of Effective Educational Interventions and Student-Success Support Programs

1. **INTENTIONAL (PURPOSEFUL):** They are deliberately designed and delivered with research-based principles of student success in mind, namely:
   * Personal Validation.
   * Self-Efficacy,
   * Active Involvement (Engagement),
   * Personal Meaning,
   * Social Integration,
   * Personal Reflection, and
   * Self-Awareness.

2. **STUDENT-CENTERED:** They are centered on and driven by the educational needs and personal welfare of students, rather than by institutional habit or convenience, or by the self-serving needs and preferences of faculty, administrators, or staff.

3. **MISSION-DRIVEN:** They are grounded in and guided by a well-articulated program mission that is consistent with the college or university mission.

4. **INTRUSIVE:** They are not offered passively on a come-find-and-use basis, i.e., waiting and hoping that students will discover and capitalize on them ("passive programming"); instead, supportive action is initiated by the institution by actively reaching out to students and bringing its services to them, thereby ensuring that support reaches students who are unlikely to seek it out on their own.

5. **PROACTIVE:** They take early, preventative action that address students' learning needs and developmental adjustments in an anticipatory fashion—before they eventuate in problems that require reactive (after-the-fact) intervention.

6. **DIVERSIFIED:** They are tailored or customized to meet the distinctive needs of different student subpopulations (first-year students, underrepresented students, transfer students, etc.)

7. **COMPREHENSIVE (HOLISTIC):** They focus on the student as a "whole person," addressing the multiple dimensions of self that affect student success (social, emotional, physical, etc.).

8. **DEVELOPMENTAL:** They are delivered in a timely, stage-sensitive sequence that helps students accommodate challenges as they emerge at successive phases or stages of their college experience, and in so doing, promote student growth by providing a "scaffold" that balances challenge with just-in-time support.

9. **COLLABORATIVE:** They involve cooperative alliances or partnerships between different organizational units of the college/university, which work together in a complementary and interdependent manner, harnessing their collective power to exert synergistic (multiplicative) effects on student success.

10. **SYSTEMIC:** They occupy a central (rather than a peripheral or marginal) place on campus, which positions them to produce a pervasive effect on the student body and the potential to exert transformative effects on the institution itself.

11. **DURABLE:** They are institutionalized—i.e., they’re built or weaved into the fabric of the institution (e.g. its table of organization and annual budget process), thus ensuring the program’s longevity and its capacity to exert perennial impact on successive cohorts of students across an extended period of time.

12. **EMPIRICAL (EVIDENTIARY):** They are supported by assessment data (both quantitative and qualitative), which are used for summative evaluation—to "sum up" and prove the program’s overall impact or value, and formative evaluation—to "shape up" and continually improve program quality.