

***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*

#### 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)

#### 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).



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## 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.

