Connecting Learning with Work: Exemplars from the Field

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High-Impact Practices

A fair amount of literature indicates that certain high-impact practices (HIPs) seem to have positive effects on students.

HIPs are intentionally-structured activities in which undergraduate students participate that are highly correlated with engagement in educationally purposeful tasks, desired learning outcomes, and persistence (Kuh, 2008).
AAC&U HIPs Resources

High-Impact Educational Practices

Ensuring Quality & Taking High-Impact Practices to Scale
AAC&U HIPs Resources

Five High-Impact Practices

Assessing Underserved Students’ Engagement in High-Impact Practices

By Ashley Finley and Tia McNair

With an Assessing Equity in High-Impact Practices Toolkit
Developed by Estela Mara Bensimon, Alicia C. Dowo, and Debbie Peterson Hanson of the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California
AAC&U HIPs Resources
High-Impact Activities

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- “Science as Science Is Done”; Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects
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
## Effects of Participating in High-Impact Activities on Deep/Integrative Learning and Gains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Deep Learning</th>
<th>Gains General</th>
<th>Gains Personal</th>
<th>Gains Practical</th>
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# Effects of Participating in High-Impact Activities on Student Engagement

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Level of Academic Challenge</th>
<th>Active and Collab. Learning</th>
<th>Student-Faculty Interaction</th>
<th>Supportive Campus Env.</th>
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Graduation Rates by Ethnicity and Participation in High-Impact Practices

Source: CSU Northridge Institutional Research
August, 2010

Latino/a
- 0: 38%
- 1: 49%
- 2: 65%
- 3+: 73%

not Latino/a
- 0: 55%
- 1: 63%
- 2: 68%
- 3+: 69%
Employers assess the potential value of high-impact educational practices

- **84%** Students complete a significant project before graduation that demonstrates their depth of knowledge in their major AND their acquisition of analytical, problem-solving, and communication skills *(62% help a lot)*

- **81%** Students complete an internship or community-based field project to connect classroom learning with real-world experiences *(66%)*

- **81%** Students develop research skills appropriate to their field and develop evidence-based analyses *(57%)*

- **73%** Students work through ethical issues and debates to form their own judgments *(48%)*

% saying each would help a lot/fair amount to prepare college students for success
High-Impact Activities
Increase Odds Students Will:

✓ Invest time and effort
✓ Interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters
✓ Experience diversity
✓ Get more frequent feedback
✓ Reflect & integrate learning
✓ Discover relevance of learning through real-world applications
✓ Publicly demonstrate competence
The Premise and Promise

When done well, HIPs help students transfer what they are learning to concrete, unscripted situations and reflect on these experiences. This session features two proven examples of engaging students in this manner:

- The Washington Center academic internship program
- The University of Iowa’s Guided Reflection on Work initiative (GROW)
About The Washington Center

- Founded in 1975 as an education nonprofit
- Partner to over 400 universities in the United States
- Students from 20 countries from around the world in 2013
- Flagship program is our Academic Internship Program
- Also feature 1 & 2 week Academic Seminars
- Over 50,000 Alumni
Academic Internship Program

Academic Semester Built Around an Internship

- Review major components
- Highlight the scaffolding of experiences and reflection
- Share our framework for assessment of Integrative Learning
Academic Internship Program

The Internship

- On site 4-4.5 days per week
- Tailored selection process
- Positions with a wide range of organizations available
- Substantive responsibilities
- Support from TWC Academic Program Advisor
Academic Internship Program

Academic Courses

- One evening per week for 3 hours
- Typically upper-level electives, sometimes in the major
- Range across many disciplines
- Academically and Professionally qualified Associate Faculty
Academic Internship Program

The Leadership Forum
- Simpson-Mineta Leaders Series
- Public Policy Dialogues
- Career Specific Programming (Business & Global Trade, Law and Criminal Justice, etc.)
- Civic Engagement Project

www.twc.edu
Academic Internship Program

Professional Living

- Apartment-style
- Shared with interns from around the world
- Support from TWC student services staff and Alumni in Residence
The Final Portfolio

- Assembled over the semester in our electronic MyTWC environment
- Contains syllabi, work samples and reflection artifacts
- Massive, untapped institutional information asset documenting how students learn
- Rich base of evidence for assessing Integrative Learning
Integrative Learning Assessment

Typical Artifacts in the TWC Portfolio include:

- Individual Development Plan
- Resume and Cover Letter
- Informational Interview Report
- Civic Engagement Reflection
- Project from the Career-specific Program Track
- Internship & Course Work Samples
- Capstone Reflection
Integrative Learning Assessment

Adopted the framework of AAC&U’s VALUE Rubric on Integrative Learning
Rubric Adaptation Process

- Reviewed by multiple staff members
- Identified a “campus-based” flavor to the rubric (mainly in two lines)
- Updated language maintaining distinctness of each level
- Kept careful notes on the process
Integrative Learning Assessment

- Connections to Experience
  - Update: “Fields of Study” → “Academic Learning”
- Connections to Discipline
- Transfer
- Integrated Communication
  - Update: Streamlined the language
- Reflection and Self-Assessment
Integrative Learning Assessment

Progress to Date—mainly “behind the scenes”

- Evaluated Portfolios from a full year (2013)
- Professional development and calibration workshops
- “Integrative Learning Inventory” of our assignments, learning activities and patterns of engagement
Next Steps

- Identify targets for improvement of learning activities
- Engage students in the assessment of their own Integrative Learning
- Share findings with partner universities and collaborate on building more Integrative Learning
What if we made work something akin to a high-impact activity?
The University of Iowa

- 31,000 students (22,000 undergrads)
- 8,000 students employed part-time, on campus
- Division of Student Life is largest student employer with over 2,000 employees
IOWA GROW™
Guided Reflection on Work

• Campus employment has often been viewed as a “throwaway” activity in higher education

• IOWA GROW™ uses brief, structured conversations between student employees and their supervisors to make the learning that is occurring through student employment more “visible” to students.
IOWA GROW™
Guided Reflection on Work

• IOWA GROW™ conversations use 4 key questions:
  • How is this job fitting with your academics?
  • What are you learning here at work that’s helping you in school?
  • What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?
  • Can you give me a couple of examples of what you’ve learned here that you think you’ll use in your chosen profession?
IOWA GROW™ participants are more likely to report...

• Their supervisor helped them make connections between work and academics
• They could see connections between work and academics
• Their job has helped prepare them for the world of full-time employment
• Their job contributed positively to:
  – Written and oral communication skills
  – Critical thinking skills
  – Conflict resolution skills
  – Time management
IOWA GROW™ participants are more likely to...

• Mention positive outcomes of employment *other* than money

• Note they felt like they were making a positive contribution to The University of Iowa

• Report of positive outcome of forming relationships with students, faculty, staff

• Be able to explain at least one thing they have learned as a result of employment
IOWA GROW™ priorities

• Supporting integration across contexts (work, academics, future career)
• Providing scaffolded practice with reflection
• Cultivate adaptive expertise – ability to use learning flexibly in various contexts
• Metacognition – helping students view themselves as learners no matter the setting
Pre-Medicine Student (Tutor)

“My job has helped me learn to explain things in multiple ways…to think of problems from different perspectives….to make complicated things simpler, and to be patient when explaining things in order to help others understand.”
Pharmacy Major (Desk Clerk)

“I’ve learned to work more effectively as a part of a team. Eventually I’ll be working with nurses, physicians, etc. and on my job I’ve learned that each of us contributes to overall processes working smoothly. Sometimes that means conflicts, and I’ve learned key conflict resolution skills in working with the public.”
## Connecting Work to Academics – the BIG picture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UI Institutional Learning Goals</th>
<th>Key Outcomes from IOWA GROW</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Build a broad knowledge base</strong> inside and outside the classroom</td>
<td>•Specific content knowledge such as software, project management, teaching methods, etc.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Intellectual and practical skills** (communication – oral/written, teamwork, problem solving, critical and creative thinking, information literacy) | •Communication  
•Teamwork  
•Critical thinking/problem solving  
•Conflict resolution |
| **Develop intellectual, personal, and social responsibility** (responsibility, intercultural knowledge) | •Time management  
•Multicultural competence  
•Relationship skills  
•Study skills |
| Learn to apply knowledge in new settings (integrate ideas across experiences within and beyond the classroom) | •The very nature of IOWA GROW is connecting across contexts |
## Potential Barriers

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<th>Strategies</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>• Small groups vs. 1:1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Provide questions ahead of time</td>
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<td>• Build time for questions into regular meetings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Reframe the conversation as an investment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Concerns about “carrying” the conversation</strong></td>
<td>• Provide questions ahead of time</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reframe the conversation as an investment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrate genuine care</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Not sure what to do if something else comes up</strong></td>
<td>• Reframe as a sign of trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>(e.g., student opens up about a problem)</td>
<td>• Learn referral resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Acknowledge, support, refer</td>
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Tips From the Trenches

• Start the trend early

• Know what skills and knowledge students should gain from their position

• Take the time to care

• Empower supervisors
Supporting Supervisors

• Program training

• Resource Lists

• IOWA GROW™ website

• Direct support from HR representatives and Sarah
Benefits for supervisors

“The conversations gave me instant feedback on how the students were coping with balancing both work duties and classes and gave me valuable information on how to help students with any issues they were having. I also found it helpful to see how the students were learning their jobs and relating to other employees in the workplace.”

Bill Kelly, Housing & Dining

Bill also shared the themes of the student conversations with his permanent staff so that they could know that students were indeed learning important things at work.
Benefits for supervisors

“The student perspective provides a mirror for me – it points out aspects of our work that I sometimes take for granted or just assume everyone knows because I have been in this work environment for so long.”

Tanya Villhauer, Student Health and Wellness
The Major Tasks

Teach students to:

- **Reflect** – think about experiences inside and outside the classroom

- **Integrate** – connect what they are learning from different courses, out-of-class experiences, and life beyond the institution

- **Apply** – transfer and use what one has learned in different settings presenting novel challenges and opportunities
May the Force be with us
Questions & Discussion