

2002 AAHE Research Forum

**Learning in Context:
Who are our Students?
How do they Learn?**

A Research Agenda

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The Research Forum has been a steadfast part of AAHE's national conference since 1984. This year the Forum involves individuals committed to the scholarship of student learning. What is learning? Who learns, in what ways, under what conditions? How does education promote and hinder learning?

Conference presenters met before a general session to generate a preliminary set of research questions around these and other topics. In the general session, two panelists addressed questions that led to lively and intellectually challenging small-group discussions among educational practitioners about the scholarship of student learning. In this way, session participants were involved in creating a research agenda—to be disseminated broadly—based on conference themes.

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What is the Purpose of the Research Forum? Involvement and critique from educators in dialogue with researchers is a critical element for achieving clarity about what research will benefit educational policy and practice. The AAHE Research Forum is convened annually to involve individuals committed to research and scholarship in higher education. The Forum stimulates educators' involvement in creating a research agenda that speaks to current educational concerns. Each year's agenda is developed around the conference theme. Thus, educators and researchers can continually rely on the Forum agenda as an up-to-date source of common research questions that flow from the year's most central educational issues. The Forum enables educators to provide leadership and support for those researchers who share educators' interests, who speak clearly to educators about their findings, and who actively respond to educators' most pressing questions.

Since 1985, the AAHE Research Forum has provided leadership from educators for bridging the gap between research and practice, and has enabled educators and researchers to define the kinds of contexts that need to be reshaped within colleges and universities for research findings to benefit students.

Why AAHE? AAHE has traditionally brought together a wide range of interested educators, and has been successful in defining current issues that stimulate a broad spectrum of higher education constituencies. A recent survey shows the AAHE annual conference to be the most stimulating meeting of its kind. There are other forums at which research results are presented and discussed, but many of them are not regularly attended by or directed toward higher education administrators and faculty. AAHE membership has the desire and potential to stimulate research among its members, and to engage the research community in continual dialogue about research questions and findings that directly relate to educational practices for governance, for teaching and learning, and for student development.

What is the Forum Process and Product?

1. **The Invitational Pre-Conference Session.** Educators (selected from conference experts) generate research questions on topics that emerge as central to the conference theme through a specially designed group process. Experts on each topic serve as group leaders and synthesizers. Each topic group reviews the current issues around their topic and discusses with those who currently, or are likely to, research the year's agenda. Questions are synthesized in each group, and session leaders edit and prepare them for distribution at the All Conference session.
2. **The All Conference Forum and Panel.** Forum leaders bring the questions generated in the pre-conference session to the attention of the conference membership and involve the larger audience in discussion of issues and research questions in their own settings. Forum leaders also elicit discussion of research questions by a panel comprised of experts on the year's conference theme. The 2002 theme was Learning in Context: Who are our Students? How do they Learn? Creating a Research Agenda. The panelists were *Randy Bass*, Executive Director, Center of New Designs in Learning and Scholarship, Georgetown University, and *Adrianna Kezar*, Assistant Professor of Higher Education, University of Maryland. Group discussions on each topic followed the panel and allowed for more focused critique and discussion of the pre-conference questions.

3. **The Research Agenda and Its Dissemination.** Following the session, Forum leaders edit and integrate questions from topic group syntheses and individual work sheets for a final agenda. Thus, AAHE's annual research agenda is a timely, collaborative product of interactive, on-the-spot discussion. It is another way of knowing about the professional interests of a wide range of educators. The research agenda is a product of a process that captures and articulates the informal conversation that occurs at AAHE meetings about what should be researched. Conference presenters generate research questions on emerging topics in higher education, elicit questions from their colleagues, and then synthesize all questions. Dissemination and discussion of the agenda with researchers follows.

4. **Dissemination.** The agenda is disseminated to all contributors; participants are credited. Advisors to the Research Forum process and other associations/groups in higher education also receive the agenda. The history and rationale for the American Association for Higher Education Research Forum are described in M. Mentkowski and A. W. Chickering, *Linking Educators and Researchers in Setting a Research Agenda for Undergraduate Education*, *The Review of Higher Education*, 1987, 11(2), 137–160. The 1987 agenda, "*The Classroom Researcher's Research Agenda*;" the 1988 agenda, "*A Research Agenda in Support of Our Highest Calling*;" the 1989 agenda, "*Improving the Odds for Student Achievement: A Research Agenda*;" the 1990 agenda, "*The Future of the Professoriate: A Look in the Mirror*;" the 1991 agenda, "*Achieving the Promise in Diversity: A Research Agenda to Inform the Issues*;" the 1992 agenda, "*Reclaiming the Public Trust: A Research Agenda to Explore the Validity of the Criticisms*;" the 1993 agenda, "*Reinventing Community: A Research Agenda to Create Common Purposes, Build Commitment, and Sustain Improvement*;" the 1994 agenda, "*A Research Agenda for Envisioning the 21st Century Academic Workplace Through Responsive Academic Citizenship*;" the 1995 agenda, "*The Engaged Campus: A Research Agenda to Serve Society's Needs*;" the 1996 agenda, "*Crossing Boundaries: A Research Agenda Toward Productive Learning and Community Renewal*;" the 1997 agenda, "*Learning, Teaching, and Technology: A Research Agenda for the Way We Work*;" the 1998 agenda, "*Taking Learning Seriously: A Research Agenda for Learning*;" the 1999 agenda, "*Organizing for Learning: A Research Agenda*;" the 2000 agenda, "*Diversity and Learning: A Research Agenda*;" the March, 2001 agenda, "*Private Gain and Public Good: Creating a Research Agenda for Achieving Balance*;" and the June, 2001 agenda "*Enacting a Scholarship of Assessment: A Research Agenda*" are available from Marcia Mentkowski, Office of Educational Research and Evaluation, Alverno College, 3401 South 39th Street, P.O. Box 343922, Milwaukee, WI 53215.

2002 RESEARCH FORUM LEADERS

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FOREWORD

In the opening plenary, we were treated to Lee Shulman's latest thinking on a new taxonomy for higher education. Delightfully simple (yet oh so complex), the taxonomy has six elements: engagement, understanding, performance, reflection, design/judgment, and commitment.

To those of us used to hierarchical taxonomies, the notion of a cyclical taxonomy, or even a spider-web taxonomy, comes as a creative relief. Shulman urged us not to read the taxonomy devotionally but to play with it—to make it meet our needs, not some ideology. We were also pleased to hear him say that the taxonomy related to the attributes of faculty and institutions as well as students, giving us new insights for policy and practice in all aspects of higher education.

It is perhaps not surprising that all of the elements of Shulman's taxonomy showed up in the questions generated by the leaders at our pre-conference workshop. Shulman's language is already embedded in these experts' ways of thinking about higher education, although he certainly gave the terminology coherence and connectedness.

Here are a few of the questions asked:

- **Engagement** (of students):
What does it mean to be engaged in learning? Can engagement be directed? How do we use the faculty/student tension between world views, values, expectations of education to engage students in meaningful learning?
- **Knowledge and understanding** (of faculty):
How does our understanding of our disciplines influence our own learning as well as our ideas about what and how our students need to learn?
- **Performance and action** (of students):
We introduce first year students to a "community of learning." How do we transition sophomores, juniors, and seniors into a "community of practice?"
- **Reflection** (of students):

How do we encourage students to reflect outside of class to connect their learning with their lives?

- **Design and judgment** (of institutions):
How can the various efforts—curricular and co-curricular—be made more systematic to increase intercultural understanding and learning?
- **Commitment** (of institutions):
How do we encourage an institutional commitment to global education which is necessary to assure adequate resources for it?

Since we're already comfortable with Shulman's language, we may be ready to think more systematically about how to draw relationships among these terms over a wide range of subjects concerning learning in context. Better yet, we may be ready, as William Perry proposed in his scheme of intellectual and moral development, to examine the transitions between the elements in this taxonomy, so we can better understand how the real change occurs. When we understand how students get from action to reflection, how faculty get from understanding to performance, how institutions get from design to commitment, we will be better able to ask, and to answer, research questions that can truly transform higher education.

LEARNING ABOUT LEARNING

Learning about student learning—young and adult—involves stepping aside to question the relationships among the context of learning, the developmental qualities of learners, and various components of learning processes. Educators increasingly are recognizing that the socioeconomic context for learning matters. How is learning shaped by demographics, by the global economy, by technology? How do these forces interact to influence what students want to learn and need to learn, as well as their access to learning? How can assessment of learning be made an integral part of the learning enterprise?

If we view students as developing individuals, what is the interplay between learning, development, and performance? How does one affect the other? What theories and models of human development, including adult development, help us account for and understand the complex dimensions of development? For example, how do socially-constructed factors such as race, class, and gender interact to influence an individual's learning and development? How do theories and models of competence and performance help educators build new ways to assist learners to reflect on performance in order learn from and to improve it?

Assuming that learning is, in part, a process of constructing meaning, how do people make sense of their experience? What is the role of experience in constructing knowledge? How does the process of meaning-making become an individual and a social endeavor? What are differences between individual and pedagogical learning? What theories and models of integrated learning, development, and performance advance our understanding of the learning process?

On Support in the Learning Environment

What is the role of student perceptions of other students in class as a support group? How does this affect learning? How do different students (direct from high school, working adult, transfer student, adult with pre-established career) create and respond to support groups? How do faculty and these students together negotiate a learning environment? How do they develop the ability to negotiate their learning?

What institutional structures are conducive to learning about learning? What structures help faculty learn about the learning processes and then use that information to improve teaching?

To what extent has our new understanding of learning as a socially-constructed process influenced the thinking and practices of faculty?

Given what we know about learning, how do we move from applying what we know from the individual course level to curriculum/program level?

How do faculty understand their own learning styles? Does the degree of institutionalization of learning styles influence how students learn?

How can faculty conversations about learning be promoted and supported? What can certain disciplines and fields (e.g., psychology, adult learning) teach other disciplines/fields about learning?

How is the conversation about learning happening on campus now?

How does the issue of power and powerlessness of faculty and students impact learning?
How do we construct our institutions so that we facilitate learning without power being a barrier?

How can we make learning outcomes more public and transparent for all members of the campus? How do we communicate learning outcomes across student groups (e.g., incoming student, graduating students) and levels of understanding?

To what degree does a faculty member's beliefs and values affect their openness to pedagogical change?

How do we increase the potential for enduring student learning?

How do you enable new teachers to understand the practices that lead to quality learning?

How effective are graduate teaching assistants?

How do teachers conceptualize learning? How do they conceptualize teaching?

How can new faculty learn from their experienced/tenured colleagues?

How do teachers think about what preconceptions and preferences their students start out with? How do they use that knowledge to shape their teaching practices? Does anyone help teachers use that knowledge, and how does that work?

What makes some teachers particularly successful/effective: not just skills and knowledge, but values, beliefs, etc? What experiences, programs, and resources are helping them?

What are values, beliefs, assumptions, mindsets of successful teachers? How do these change over the life of a faculty member?

What motivates faculty to be interested in learning? What institutional structures are effective?

How can we connect faculty learning and student learning?

What does faculty transformation look like? What difference does teaching make?

On Developing Identity as a Learner

How do students construct their identity as learners? Why do some develop this identity while others don't? What faculty practices encourage this?

What is the motivation and engagement for students to develop their identity as learners? What kind of unlearning has to take place to prepare them for conscious identity development?

What is it that helps students derive meaningful learning from a variety of pedagogical strategies and opportunities, learning more about themselves as learners? Are there particular disciplines that help students learn to develop such an identity?

Are there particular learning styles that fit best with certain disciplines? And how does our understanding of our discipline influence our own learning as well as our ideas about what and how our students need to learn? How accurate are students at identifying their own learning styles or preferences? More significantly, how are they at identifying their own constructions of meaning?

How might faculty and students articulate their own learning outcomes across campus? How can this be taught?

What kinds of learning inventories still need to be developed? How do we measure how students come to understand the learning process?

The workplace expects workers to learn and perform in accordance with that “culture”; How can we prepare students to learn using a variety of styles so that they develop flexibility and adaptability to different environments?

Some of literature on learning styles has been misused to create the impression that pedagogies should be oriented to the particular learning styles of individual students. How do we prepare students to learn from multiple pedagogies even if it involves some discomfort?

Students become embedded in certain learning styles, and faculty are embedded in certain pedagogical strategies. How can we move each group beyond preferred style toward developing greater flexibility and expanding repertoires?

What methods/approaches promote deeper dialogue between faculty and students about using learning styles profiles as a bridge to identify development and constructing meaning?

To what degree does a student’s stage of development (success, emotional, intellectual) affect student learning?

What effect does brain development have on attaining critical thinking skills?

How do students learn differently in different contexts (e.g., different disciplines, out-of-school settings like service learning or internships)? How does learning in one context shape/affect learning in another?

How do students think and learn differently in different social contexts? In work settings and in classrooms, for experiential education? In different kinds of academic disciplines and courses (e.g., humanities, natural science, pre-professional)? Across different phases of their lives, especially across their college years?

When students are thinking/learning in one context (e.g., internship site), how is that process shaped by their thinking/learning in another setting (e.g., a college course or program)? That is, do they “use” practical experience to inform their academic thinking, and vice versa?

How do students’ preconceptions and prior experiences shape their encounters with learning opportunities (e.g., classes, majors) when they go to college? Do they have preferences for learning in a particular way, or conceptions about what will be expected of them? Do they understand subjects or disciplines in particular ways?

PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES THAT SUPPORT LEARNING

Teaching to support learning becomes ever more challenging as educators grapple with the complexities of learning in multiple contexts, teach complex subject matter online, orient their teaching to articulated learning outcomes, and serve as mentors/advisors to diverse learners. What pedagogical philosophies and strategies are best suited to mediate learning in today's challenging learning environments? Which ones serve to foster deeper approaches to learning among diverse learners? How can teachers learn to better align learning outcomes, subject matter, and assessment of student learning in their courses? What adaptations are necessary when teaching online in order to promote deep learning?

Teachers increasingly are assuming the roles of mentor and advisor. What is the role of mentor/advisor in assisting students through cognitive and affective transitions? What are the effects of good mentoring? Conversely, what are the effects of poor or absent mentoring? How might efforts in the scholarship of teaching identify strategies that support learning?

How can all pedagogical strategies from the traditional (lecture) to active and interactive (service-learning, inquiry-based, etc.) be efficaciously integrated within a curriculum?

How do we prepare students, faculty, and administrators for teaching and learning in multi-pedagogical environments?

How can pedagogical strategies be developed and planned collaboratively within departments and across entire institutions?

How can we create effective pedagogies for a variety of learners: students of different learning styles, new and more experienced learners, students learning at a distance, traditional and non-traditional students, and student with varying life experiences?

How do we comparatively evaluate and assess efficacy of various pedagogies in reaching diverse students?

How can we determine what makes effective collaborative team teaching? Can we investigate various models, such as each faculty member contributing his or her expertise to the creation and delivery of the course (research, lecture, mentoring, teaching material design), to determine their effectiveness? Can faculty be effective partners in team-teaching even if they never come into the classroom?

How do we bring departments together to plan and communicate with students?

What kinds of teaching materials are thought to be most effective?
Are electronic materials—CD's; websites—more or less effective than printed?

How can traditional textbooks be adapted to cooperative/collaborative learning?

What is the role of asynchronous lectures in conventional educational styles?

Where and when in the educational process, do students feel they are learning?

How can we teach students to reflect on their learning? How can we assess teaching strategies within a department?

Are teaching strategies different than teaching styles?

How can we include teacher dynamics (personality) into the teaching/evaluating process?

Which techniques create communities of learners and facilitate students' feelings of interconnectedness?

How do you plan for student practice? What does student practice look like? How do you design for practice rather than teaching and learning—both inside and outside of the classroom?

How do we best conceptualize the entire learning process?

How can we best teach metacognitive skills?

How can faculty/students better inform the makers of educational materials about their needs?
How can we open the dialogue with multiple interest groups or communities of practice?

How do we motivate students to prepare for class? Why are our students failing to prepare for class?

Given that there is so much scholarship on learning, why aren't more faculty using research findings?

CREATING INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS TO SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING

We know that student learning occurs both inside and outside the classroom, but in many colleges, academic departments and student development professionals report to different vice presidents and produce events and programs without consultation. Should it be entirely up to students to integrate their in-class and out-of-class learning, or should academic and student affairs take responsibility for coordination of their activities to promote student development? What are the opportunities and challenges of creating partnerships between academic affairs and student affairs? What are successful models of collaboration? Even when coordination has not taken place, is there potential for academic affairs or student affairs to help students develop the capacities to integrate programs and events into their learning? Is it more difficult for academic and student affairs in commuter colleges to create integrated opportunities for student development than in residential colleges? What are the special challenges in community colleges, given the wide range of curricula and students, to develop effective linkages between student and academic affairs?

What other institutional structures need to be considered? How do faculty development programs help the campus address the quality of instruction and student learning? What kinds of supports will help faculty and staff collaborate in an integrated practice aimed at student learning?

What can institutions do to encourage faculty to strengthen learning outcomes?

How do institutions compete for faculty time in promoting student learning?

What are the models of successful collaborations between student affairs and academic affairs?

Can faculty development be the bridging set of activities in enhancing student learning by including faculty in student development activities?

How can inclusion be increased to support student learning?

How do higher education graduate programs need to be redesigned to integrate student affairs and academic affairs?

How can Student Affairs and Academic Affairs share learning outcomes?

What structure would best support student learning centered institutions?

Should another title replace "Student Services"? What should that title be?

Should an institution start with grass roots movements or restructure as a whole?

How can learning outcomes be served by student development and other institutional Services?

How can learning and development be layered for students throughout their experiences across the entire campus?

How can the implicit and explicit institutional emphasis on teaching be reframed to focus on learning—student, staff and faculty?

How do we identify *shared* learning outcomes across disciplines?

What are effective models of faculty development in support of student learning?

How can we actively invest in faculty development to increase/enhance student learning?

How do course assessments inform us about how students learn in addition to how much and how deeply they've learned?

How should course assessments change as students become more expert in their fields?

How should program assessments of ending student proficiency reflect status approaching expert?

Where does self-assessment of learning fit? At what point should an individual begin to look at own learning and set goals?

How does time affect learning—speaks to semester/quarter structures, amount of content, reflection time, and repetition throughout a program?

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR OWN LEARNING

Active engagement in the learning process engenders deeper and more meaningful learning on the part of the individual learner. Most educators are likely to support this statement; and most educators would acknowledge the challenges that this premise represents.

What will help motivate students to seek active involvement in their own learning? What are the actual benefits to learners when they do engage? What kinds of approaches and activities are especially conducive to involvement that results in deep learning—those that promote learning from experience, foster reflective learning, and stimulate self-direction? Lessons from the service learning movement may provide useful clues for learning in broader contexts.

Students' involvement in their own learning suggests that educators pay more attention to not just the cognitive dimension of learning but to the affective and conative (doing) dimensions as well. It suggests that even greater emphasis be given to teaching students how to learn, not just what to learn. And student involvement in learning elevates the importance of self-assessment—offering students practice and feedback throughout the educational process. What approaches and strategies are working? What insights might we glean from the literature and practices of adult learning?

On Engagement in Learning

What does it mean to be “engaged” in learning? Can engagement be directed? What is its impact on learning?

What are students' emotional experiences when faced with the prospects of questioning and possibly changing their beliefs and values?

We have adult students, transfer students, and students at the other end of the computer—how do we come to know about their identities? How do we ask those students about their learning and development as human beings?

How do we use the faculty/student tension between world views, values, expectations of education to engage students in meaningful learning?

How do we promote, increase, and assess affective learning?

How do we promote meta-thinking? How do we as faculty respond?

How can we involve students in teaching other students?

How can we facilitate students to examine what they already know, what they want to know and ways to know it?

What is the impact of evaluation methods on student engagement in their own learning?
What measures of engagement in learning get at the affective component of learning?

What are the dimensions of engagement that we could measure and how do we measure them (qualitative vs. quantitative)?

What are the techniques for providing students tools to promote engagement in learning?

How does the course structure promote or obstruct student engagement?

What does student involvement and engagement mean for our students? What does engagement look like? What are its correlates and outcomes? What institutional structures and supports are needed? How should faculty roles and rewards be addressed?

How and in what ways does student involvement in their own learning vary by discipline?

What is the impact of different grading schemes/assessments on student involvement/learning?

What's the role of "technology" in student involvement in own learning?

How can students help us develop assessment measures that are meaningful as well as valid and reliable?

How do the epistemologies of our students impact the learning that takes place?

How do we learn more about and value/utilize what our students already know (e.g., as first-year students)?

How do we learn more/gain a richer understanding of students' engagement in their own learning? What are the implications?

What instruments measure student involvement in their own learning? Are new ones needed?

How would students describe their own learning?

What do students think they know—about how they learn, what they know?

On Connecting Student Engagement across Settings

How do we encourage students to reflect outside of class to connect their learning to their lives? How do we help students become aware of their own learning styles and the implications for further learning?

How can students of varying backgrounds and community experiences become motivated to engage in service-learning? What kinds of service learning opportunities are most conducive to their learning?

How does one create and sustain a community of learning in an online environment?

What is the role of technology in student involvement in their own learning? What role do out-of-class learning experiences play?

How do organizational structures (i.e., curriculum, work-study, orientation programs, advising) contribute to learning?

Much learning that takes place on the college campus is not faculty driven. What are some effective learning initiatives that go beyond the classroom?

How can campus teaching and learning centers utilize students in training faculty in best classroom practices?

What available funding sources exist that will help campuses and their partners answer these questions?

Do community service learning programs result in greater interdisciplinary understanding?

How do students in a discipline (a box) learn in an interdisciplinary context (outside the box)?

How do students learn differently in different contexts?

TAKING LEARNING SERIOUSLY IN AN INCREASINGLY WIRED WORLD

As new technological horizons emerge for higher education, we need to continually revisit our understandings of learning and educational practice. Web-based instruction, Internet connections, email capacities, portable laptops, and other technologies are described as creating new kinds of cultures of learning. What do we need to know about learning in this increasingly wired environment? How will technological expertise integrate with pedagogical expertise? More students are entering higher education with increased sophistication in technological applications. However, many students will need support as they move into these types of learning contexts. What processes will campuses use to support the full range of student sophistication? Furthermore, how will faculty develop their expertise to create effective learning opportunities?

Distance learning has entered as not only a new way to deliver education, but also a platform for new providers that bring particular perspectives on education, such as just-in-time learning and an emphasis on the delivery of content rather than the deeper wells of liberal learning. What challenges do we face as new technology opportunities interact with best practices regarding integrated and coherent curricula? What kinds of scholarship will most help us understand and evaluate the benefits and challenges of these new learning opportunities? The hope has been that technology would bring increased access and flexibility in relation to learning differences among students, but in implementation campuses frequently face issues of access and equity. How can research help us deal with these barriers and refocus attention on student learning?

On Learner Characteristics

What are the characteristics of successful on-line learners?

What are the profiles of students choosing on-line courses? What are their motivations and expectations for taking courses on-line?

What is the “media mindset” (knowledge, experience, expectations) of the next generation(s) of students? How might this impact their learning experiences in college?

How do we in higher education prepare for increasingly technology-savvy learners?

What fundamental shifts in the way teachers and learners think and process information are driven by the structure and limitations of the on-line environment?

On Delivery Methods

What kinds of learning environments exist now, in what proportions? What kinds are emerging?

What are the benefits of having on-line courses developed and taught by individual faculty vs. off-the-shelf models with one designer and multiple instructors?

How might teaching roles/responsibilities be unbundled for given courses? (e.g., what are models for team-teaching? For involving librarians in classroom instruction?)

What is the role of hybrid courses?

What collaborations will be necessary in the technology-based learning environment?

What kind and level of individualized instruction is afforded by on-line courses?

What is the impact of synchronous vs. asynchronous communications in terms of achieving a sense of community among students? Between students and teacher?

What is the impact of resource-based teaching (data bases, compiled readings)? e.g., What is lost or gained when a textbook is not used as the course organizer? Are there differences among disciplines?

What criteria are essential to learning, irrespective of the type of learning environment?

What are the communication/participation patterns in on-line courses? What is the quality? Do they resemble patterns in face-to-face courses? (e.g., agree, disagree—counter perspective; stimulate new thread of conversation)

Do faculty expand or refine (settle in) the on-line features that they use on-line?

What are categories of faculty activities that shape/foster learning in an on-line environment (e.g., the language for coaching)?

What are new faculty roles/activities in on-line learning environments (e.g., the process of shaping communication in course, provision of specific resources to individual students)?

What is the role of office hours online? What is the impact of technology on the face-to-face faculty-student contract?

Can we create a categorization of types of hybrid courses or degrees?

How might workplace (experiential) contexts be linked to sustained development of learning in a curriculum through on-line writing and reflection technologies?

What are best practices in on-line teaching? How can distance education serve in-service teacher education?

On Learning Outcomes

Can the same learning outcomes be achieved through courses regardless of the delivery methods (e.g., on-line, face-to-face, hybrid)?

How can we accurately assess these outcomes?

In what ways can on-line learning foster deeper learning skills, such as critical thinking?

What changes has wiredness brought to the role of learning?

What are the institutional standards for information literacy?

How do we evaluate information literacy?

How is time/space shifting? What is the impact on time-on-task?

How does on-line learning impact traditional classroom interactions?

How are technology-based interactions between students and teachers different from face-to-face interactions?

How can we measure student learning (across time) through on-line courses?

Given that cognitive research suggests that focused attention best facilitates learning, how does the multiple demands on student attention that technology enables (e.g., multiple visual, auditory stimuli) impact learning?

What are the outcome effects of different kinds of hybrid environments? How do particular kinds of online learning improve the classroom? What are conditions that maximize the effects of hybridity?

Given different research models, what kinds of research questions need to be addressed with respect to assessment of on-line learning?

On Institutional Support

What are the factors that institutions use in deciding how they will invest in technology?

What does the administration expect of faculty and staff in return for investments in technology?

What are the real costs associated with on-line education when principles of effective student learning are practiced?

What changes in faculty reward systems will be necessary to recognize excellence in teaching in a wired world? What changes are being made now?

What are the best practices in technology support for on-line learning?

What are the important implications of privacy and security matters in on-line learning environments?

What is driving institutions toward on-line learning (e.g., to compete, to provide access to students, to promote learning)?

What challenges and opportunities do online courses offer for developing curricular coherence?

How is an assignment that includes distance education courses tied into faculty tenure and promotion?

How do we recognize the nature, time, and talent involved in teaching on-line? What exactly does faculty work look like? (from “office hours” to group instruction to individual coaching)

When faculty who use technology in teaching are then assigned to teach in a non-technology classroom, what is the impact on faculty engagement, motivation, and morale?

How can team teaching models be supported for on-line teaching?

THE FIRST-YEAR/SENIOR-YEAR EXPERIENCE

First-year programs have been implemented in many colleges over the years, and a growing number of colleges are now developing special experiences for graduating students as well. Campuses have recognized the helpfulness of first-year programs for retention, and an increasing emphasis on assessment has made colleges consider the special circumstances of the senior year for understanding learning outcomes. What are successful methods of mentoring, advising, and supporting students in their first and last years? What are the responsibilities of various campus parties, such as minority support programs, advising centers, student success centers, writing centers, and retention programs, in these efforts? What are models of best practice in developing goals for first-year and senior-year programs?

On Seamless Learning

We introduce first-year students to “community of learning”—How do we transition sophomores, juniors, and seniors into a “community of practice?” How do we prepare them for a world of citizenship?

Who will be responsible for what part of the enterprise (see question above)?

How do we connect experiences from the first year and senior year, and provide continuity from “entrance” to “exit”? (They enter, then spend two years in a “black box.” Then we address issues again when they are seniors). How do we bridge those experiences into a seamless environment?

To what extent is the senior year geared toward “transitioning out” students vs. having them “work at a higher level” in their major?

What does the first-year/senior-year mean for transfer students and adult students? What gateways are most effective for these learners?

How do we strike a balance between helping first year and senior students develop skills and competencies and helping them transition to their next level, whatever that may be?

What can we draw on from the “novice-expert continuum” to help us understand differences in learning between first and senior year students? What can we draw on from the literature on brain development?

How might students’ engagement in self-assessment help them mediate the transition between the first and senior years?

How do we stimulate student learning on campus in such a way that when the stimulus is removed, learning continues?

How can we inculcate an academic culture in the first-year experience?

How do we sequence students effectively so they have a meaningful senior capstone experience?

Is there evidence that the first-year experience helps students develop skills and habits of inquiry that are persistent throughout the collegiate experience?

What do we do with the students' their sophomore/junior year so as to not lose the momentum generated in the first year?

On Standards of Excellence

How will we measure outcomes and provide evidence that institutions have been effective in moving student from "communities of learning" to "communities of practice?"

Is there evidence that the first year academic experience helps students develop habits of inquiry that are persistent throughout the collegiate experience?

How do we identify what models/programs are effective in the first year (are standards of excellence identifiable?)

What are the best methods by which we can identify faculty who will be the most effective as advocates of first year students?

What is the effect of institutional type on program structure? How does that structure in turn affect student learning?

How can we initiate an effective paradigm shift among senior faculty regarding the needs of first-year students?

How can we initiate an effective paradigm shift among senior faculty regarding the needs of first-year faculty?

How will we measure outcomes and provide evidence that we are effective in moving students from learning to practice?

How can we best get faculty involvement/commitment, etc.?

How do we structure the course(s) to meet student/faculty/institutional needs?

On Learning Outcomes

Once identified, how can learning outcomes become instituted campus-wide?

What is the role of student affairs in embracing and promoting learning outcomes? How can outcomes for seniors best be assessed?

What is the relationship between senior integrated outcomes and general education outcomes? If there are general education outcomes that all students should develop, how do we foster those throughout their learning experience?

Senior capstone courses are opportunities to integrate learning outcomes from general education. What kinds of rising junior assessment might be appropriate to diagnosing where students are?

Once identified, how can learning outcomes become instituted campus-wide?

EDUCATING FOR GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING

This year, many campuses have begun to understand that the gaps students—and others—have in their knowledge of other cultures are enormous, and that even knowledge does not necessarily lead to understanding, empathy, or engagement. How can campuses move from the “it’s a small world, after all” variety of global education to more sophisticated and integrated educational paradigms? What roles do academic and student affairs have in developing curricula, programs, and student organizations which will support global education? What are the responsibilities of and challenges for campuses which include a large number of international students? How can homogeneous campuses participate effectively in global education? What roles can foreign language study, study abroad, and student and faculty exchange programs play in increasing intercultural understanding?

On Institutional Responsibilities

How can the various efforts—curricular and co-curricular—be made more systematic toward intercultural understanding and learning?

How do we encourage our students and ourselves to recognize and act upon our global citizenship, global connectedness, and global responsibility?

How do we encourage students, faculty, and staff to move beyond their own cultural assumptions and perspectives and to engage in intercultural learning themselves?

How do we encourage a commitment to global education which is necessary in order to commit adequate resources to it?

How do we address the homogeneity of the faculty and staff through changes in hiring practices?

How do we channel resources to immersion experiences for students, faculty and staff in cultural settings different from their own?

How do we recognize and address the issue that higher education is an alien culture for many students?

How can we best incorporate the understanding of religion, politics, economics, and national aspirations into intercultural education?

What are expectations of faculty in regard to their responsibility for educating for global understanding?

Is there a paradigm shift required for effective global education? Does effective global education engender a paradigm shift

On Difficult Dialogues

What steps can campuses take to encourage campus-wide intercultural dialogue?

In what ways, to what extent, does our self-understanding as Americans stand in the way of achieving understanding of others?

How can we bring about attitudes and behaviors of respect for other cultures?

How do we provide the training for conducting dialogue and encourage faculty to access these opportunities and take responsibility for student development in these areas?

How do we encourage the kinds of conversation across faculty and staff that develop our common understanding of intercultural competence?

How can we do the research which would establish the efficacy of love in overcoming evil?

How do we change the dysfunctional patterns of communication which are endemic to the hierarchical culture of higher education and analogous to intercultural miscommunication?

Is intellectual understanding of right action sufficient to guarantee right action, especially under stressful conditions?

Is there a role in higher education for education about traditional spiritual practices (like meditation or purification techniques) in developing right action under stressful conditions?

On Partnerships

How do we create more effective partnerships with local and international organizations and businesses to garner (e.g., more internships) more support for intercultural education?

How do we utilize the expertise and perspective of international students while respecting, rather than marginalizing or tokenizing, their contribution?

How do we work with the for-profit, non-profit and governmental sectors to develop our expectations for students' global competence?

What impact have foundations, funding bodies, accrediting bodies, and educational associations had in their efforts to promote students' global competence and effective citizenship?

How do we build upon the large existing literature on small group process and team work, mediation resources on our campus, and existing models of non-violent conflict resolution to help our institutions institute and carry out difficult dialogues on cultural conflict?

On Developing Competence

What is the understanding of intercultural competence that must ground cultural immersion experiences?

How do we make global learning a student learning outcome that most students can achieve?

Can we help students integrate (not bifurcate) their intellectual, moral, and ethical development?

How does students' orientation to religion and spirituality relate to how students construct learning?

How to create a culture of integrity?

What is the role of spirituality?

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