Exploring our First Year Students

Who are they?
What do they expect?
What should we expect from them?
How can we help them excel?
We will talk briefly about our student’s expectations for their College of Charleston experience. I have also included a summary of survey information and a section of the College’s Wabash Study that analyzes student responses to provide more in-depth information about our incoming students. Finally, articles by Schilling and Schilling/Chickering and Gamson that focus on student expectations and performance that can help to focus our thinking on raising our student’s academic performance.

Support Material
• BCSS and NSSE Results
• Wabash Section III: Incoming Student Qualities
• Schilling Article – “Expectations and Performance”
• Chickering and Gamson Article: “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education”
First-Year Students: Expectations and Experiences

Combined BCSSE 2009 and NSSE 2010 Report

The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE, “bessie”) collects data about entering college students' high school academic and co-curricular experiences, as well as their expectations for participating in educationally purposeful activities during the first college year. BCSSE administration at the College of Charleston takes during orientation and is designed to be paired with a The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) administration at the end of the first college year, providing an in-depth understanding of first-year student engagement on your campus.

Longitudinal differences in expectations and experiences from BCSSE 2009 and NSSE 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BCSSE/NSSE Item</th>
<th>Difference in Expected vs. Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often did you or expect to work with faculty members on activities other than coursework? (BCSSE Often/Very Often = 46.8%, NSSE Often/Very Often = 12.4%)</td>
<td>↓34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often did you or expect to make a class presentation? (BCSSE Often/Very Often = 59.6%, NSSE Often/Very Often = 29.3%)</td>
<td>↓30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often did you or expect to discuss ideas from your readings or classes with teacher/faculty members outside of class? (BCSSE Often/Very Often = 50.2%, NSSE Often/Very Often = 20.6%)</td>
<td>↓30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often did you or expect to work with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments? (BCSSE Often/Very Often = 70.8%, NSSE Often/Very Often = 45.7%)</td>
<td>↓25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often did you or expect to put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions? (BCSSE Often/Very Often = 80.3%, NSSE Often/Very Often = 57.9%)</td>
<td>↓22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often did you or expect to have serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own?</td>
<td>↓20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How often did you or expect to work on a paper or project that requires integrating ideas or information from various sources?  
(BCSSE Often/Very Often = 70.3%, NSSE Often/Very Often = 50.4%)

How often did you or expect to discuss grades or assignments with a teacher/instructor?  
(BCSSE Often/Very Often = 93%, NSSE Often/Very Often = 74.4%)

How often did you or expect to ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions?  
(BCSSE Often/Very Often = 83%, NSSE Often/Very Often = 65.6%)

How often did you or expect to try to better understand someone else's views by imaging how an issue looks from his or her perspective?  
(BCSSE Often/Very Often = 80.8%, NSSE Often/Very Often = 64%)

How often did you or expect to have serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of religious beliefs, political opinions or values?  
(BCSSE Often/Very Often = 73.4%, NSSE Often/Very Often = 64.9%)
[SECTION III: INCOMING STUDENT QUALITIES (8.1.11)]

College of Charleston Wabash Committee Members: Karin Roof, Lynne Ford, Kay Smith, Penny Brunner, Jeri Cabot, Page Keller, Susan Kattwinkel, Chris Korey, Mindy Miley, Chris Warnick
Assessment question to be addressed
How, when, and under what conditions does integrated learning occur in the First Year Experience and other high impact learning experiences (such as senior capstone, undergraduate research, internship/field placement, global immersion, study abroad, and community engagement), and in interdisciplinary minors, majors, and programs of study?

AAC&U definition of integrative learning
Integrative learning is an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus.

Two outcomes for this study

- **Outcome 1**: Students will demonstrate integrative learning skills through their FYE coursework based on the AAC&U Value Rubric (Expectation: scores will fall within the levels of 1 and 2 on a 4 point continuum where 0 is a possible score for the elements “connections to experience” and “connections to discipline”).

- **Outcome 2**: Students will demonstrate integrative learning skills through a study abroad/global immersion experience based on the AAC&U Value Rubric. (Expectation: scores will fall within the levels of 2 and 4 on a 4 point continuum where 0 is a possible score for the elements “transfer” and “reflection and self-assessment”).

Brief overview of The College and the incoming class of 2014
The College of Charleston has approximately 10,000 undergraduate students and 1,500 graduate students. The campus is composed of 66% female students, 16% minority students, and approximately a third of our students are residential.

The Class of 2014 is composed of 2039 freshmen representing 43 states and 12 countries. The incoming class is a high achieving group with SAT scores averaging between 1070 and 1230 for in-state students and 1140 and 1280 for out-of-state students and 182 students enrolled in the Honors College. The projected number of freshmen for the Class of 2015 will be approximately 2350 with 198 of those students participating in the Honors College.
Summary of Evidence: Integrative Learning and the FYE: Main themes noted from data and lessons learned

**Evidence 1.1:** BCSSE data of incoming students regarding their high school experiences and college expectations relevant to integrative learning

**Evidence 1.2:** CIRP Freshman Survey data regarding high school experiences and college expectations relevant to integrative learning

1. Student-Faculty Interaction

Our incoming students do not have a strong history of interacting with their high school teachers and do not foresee regular, substantive interactions as a part of their college experience.

BCSSE 2009 survey results:
- 33% of students discussed ideas from their readings or classes with high school teachers outside of class regularly
  - This number is slightly higher for males (36%) than for females (32%)
- 51% of incoming students expected to discuss ideas from their readings with faculty members outside of class regularly
  - This number is higher for males (56%) than for females (48%)
- Less than half of the incoming students (47%) expect to work with faculty members on activities other than coursework
  - Higher achieving students have higher expectations (50%) than do lower achieving students (44%)

CIRP 2010 survey results:
- Only a third of the incoming students reported that there was a “very good chance” that they would communicate regularly with their professors (30.8%)
  - Women report slightly higher numbers than men (33%, 27%) as do higher achieving students than lower achieving students (34%, 27%)
- Only a quarter of incoming freshmen thought there was a “very good chance” that they would work on a professor’s research project (26%)
  - Women report slightly higher numbers than men (28%, 23%) as do higher achieving students than lower achieving students (30%, 21%)

2. Integrative Learning Practices

Our incoming students reporting have had minimal, regular opportunities to integrate knowledge from various learning environments in high school but have high expectations that they will be expected to do this work as college freshmen.

BCSSE 2009 survey results:
- 93% of incoming students expect to work on a paper or project that requires integrating ideas or information from various sources.
Female students report slightly higher numbers than male students (94%, 90%) as do higher achieving students than lower achieving students (94%, 91%)

- 81% of incoming students expect to put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments on a regular basis.
  - Higher achieving students have higher expectations (84%) than do lower achieving students (77%)

CIRP 2010 survey results:

- Only a half of the incoming students reported that they “frequently” integrated skills and knowledge from different sources as a high school senior (54.4%)
  - Women report slightly higher numbers than men (56%, 52%) as do higher achieving students than lower achieving students (57%, 52%)
- Less than half of our incoming students (46.6%) reported that they frequently sought alternatives solutions to a problem in their last year of high school.
  - High achieving students (48%) were only slightly more likely to report that they sought alternative solutions to a problem than were lower achieving students (45%)

Lessons learned (path forward):

1. The above presents an opportunity to ensure we are communicating the message that interacting with faculty is welcomed, valued, and expected as part of the learning process.
   a. Marketing messages, information given by admissions counselors and on campus tours regarding faculty-student interaction and FYE specifically should be reviewed for content.
   b. It was noted that these surveys are conducted very early in orientation and that students have not yet been impacted by any information received via orientation. Simply changing the point at which these surveys are administered may impact results.
2. Opportunities for professional development exist among our FYE faculty as well as the peer facilitators who work with FYE students.
   a. Discuss the different ways “office hours” can be structured to encourage more interaction with students.
   b. Discuss with faculty the use of a more intentional approach with students regarding integrative learning, why it is important, and how to do it correctly.
   c. Educate and use the peer facilitators to discuss integrative learning and how it applies to the FYE with students.
3. Review our campus environment to ensure it offers both the intellectual environment and physical environment that offer opportunities for intellectual discourse.
   a. Review the master plan – are there spaces available and/or planned in upcoming development that aid these types of interactions?
   b. Current restructuring in “convocation discussions” (small group interactions with a faculty member that occur early in the first semester) – are there opportunities here to include a discussion of the importance of integrative learning in a liberal arts education?
Summary of Evidence: Integrative Learning and Study Abroad:
Main themes noted from data and lessons learned

Evidence 2.1: BCSSE data of incoming students regarding their high school experiences and college expectations relevant to integrative learning

Evidence 2.2: CIRP Freshman Survey data regarding high school experiences and college expectations relevant to integrative learning

1. Diverse Perspectives

Students entering college with strong foreign language experience and a sense of open-mindedness to learning about other cultures are more likely to have meaningful study abroad experiences and, thus, increase the propensity for integrative learning to occur. The evidence shows that our incoming students have some experience with diversity, have expectations that this will increase in college, and that women tend to be more inclined to intercultural experiences than are men.

BCSSE 2009 survey results:
- 59% of incoming students had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than their own during their last year in high school
  - Women (64%) were more likely to report this than are men (57%)
  - Lower achieving students (62%) were more likely to have racially diverse conversations than were higher achieving students (57%)
- 58% of incoming students had serious conversations with students who are different from them in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values during their last year of high school
  - Men (63%) were more likely to report this than are women (57%)
- Less than half of the incoming students (47%) expected to work with faculty members on activities other than coursework
  - Higher achieving students (50%) have higher expectations to work with faculty than do lower achieving students (44%)
- 70% of students expect to have serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than their own
  - Men (74%) were more likely to report this than are women (68%)
- 75% of incoming students expect to have serious conversations with students who are different from them in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values
  - Women (76%) were slightly more likely to hold this expectation than are men (73%)
- 81% of incoming students expected to try to better understand someone else’s views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective
  - Women (82%) were slightly more likely to hold this expectation than were men (79%)
- 61% of incoming students reported that it was important that their college provide opportunities to interact with students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
  - Women were more likely to report this as important than were men (51%)
  - Higher achieving students (63%) were more likely to report this as important than were lower achieving students (59%)
CIRP 2010 survey results:
- 76% of incoming students rated themselves as tolerant of others with different beliefs
  - Women (77%) were more likely to report this than were men (74%)
- 80% of students rated themselves as being able to work cooperatively with diverse people
- 64% of students rated becoming a more cultured person as a very important factor in deciding to go to college
  - Women (67%) were more likely to rate this as important than were men (57%)
- 55% of incoming students rated improving their understanding of other countries and cultures as important to them personally.
  - Women (58%) were more likely to rate this as important than were men (48%)
  - Higher achieving students (56%) were more likely to rate this as important than were lower achieving students (53%)

2. Foreign language experience

Fewer than half of our entering students have developed the foundation necessary upon which to build fluency or a very deep intercultural competency.

BCSSE 2009 survey results:
- 54% of incoming students had 3 years of language experience in high school
  - Men (53%) were slightly more likely to have 3 years of experience than were men (57%)
- 35% of incoming students had 4 or more years of foreign language experience
  - Women (38%) are more likely to have 4 or more years of experience than were men (26%)

CIRP 2010 survey results:
- 49% of incoming students had 3 years of language experience in high school
  - High achieving students (51%) were slightly more likely to have 3 years of experience than lower achieving students (47%)
- 36% of incoming students had 4 or more years of experience in a foreign language
  - Women (37%) were slightly more likely to have 4 or more years of experience than were men (32%)

3. Study Abroad Expectations

At the point of entering college, less than half of the students reported a strong interest in studying abroad with a striking difference between women and men.

CIRP 2010 survey results:
- 46% of the incoming students reported that there was a “very good chance” that they would participate in a study abroad program.
  - Women are much more likely to indicate a strong interest in study abroad (52%) than are men (32%)
Lessons learned (path forward):

1. The above presents an opportunity to review the information and materials potential students and incoming students receive to ensure we are communicating the message that we view study abroad as an opportunity where integrative learning should occur.
2. Create assignments that have students connect their study abroad experience to course work and personal "at-home" experiences. This work should be structured enough so that assessment occurs via a rubric, similar to the writing assignments for the FYE.
3. Opportunities for professional development exist among our faculty to provide tools and guidance regarding how they may assess student learning to capture integrative learning as it occurs in study abroad experiences.
   a. Review current institutional support provided to faculty for study abroad experiences.
   b. Provide training on the use of reflective writing and portfolios as tools to assess student learning in study abroad experiences.
4. Review curriculum in programs that require study abroad for consistency in experiences and missed opportunities for integrative learning.
   a. Begin review with International studies, Latin American and Carribean Studies, and alternative spring break.
   b. Examine how the varying levels of language ability present in our incoming students prepares them to use those skills as a tool to gain greater access to integrative learning experiences while abroad.
Evidence 1. Data for Outcome 1: FYE and Integrative Learning

1.1. Before College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE): College of Charleston 2009 Results

Experience in high school

During your last year of high school, about how often did you do each of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>H.S. Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with teachers outside of class</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=1700)</td>
<td>(N=1192)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, etc.)</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=1700)</td>
<td>(N=1192)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expectations for college

During the coming school year, about how often do you expect to do each of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>H.S. Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ Work on a paper or project that requires integrating ideas or information from various sources</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=1694)</td>
<td>(N=1191)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=1690)</td>
<td>(N=1187)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ Discuss ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=1693)</td>
<td>(N=1190)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ Work with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=1691)</td>
<td>(N=1190)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ Discuss ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=1694)</td>
<td>(N=1192)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2 CIRP Freshman Survey: College of Charleston 2010 Results

|                                | Gender | H.S. Grades |
|                                | Total  | Men          | Women      | A Grades | B+ or lower grades |
|                                | (N=1563) | (N=544)    | (N=1019)  | (N=783)  | (N=801)            |
| High school experiences        |        |             |            |          |                   |
| During the past year, did you "Frequently": | 46.6% | 46.7%        | 46.5%      | 48.2%    | 45.0%             |
| Seek alternative solutions to a problem | 54.4% | 51.8%        | 55.8%      | 56.6%    | 51.9%             |
| Integrate skills and knowledge from different sources and experiences |        |             |            |          |                   |
| College expectations           |        |             |            |          |                   |
| Student estimates "Very Good Chance" that they will: | 30.8% | 26.8%        | 32.8%      | 34.4%    | 27.1%             |
| Communicate regularly with your professors | 37.3% | 29.7%        | 41.0%      | 41.1%    | 32.8%             |
| Discuss course content with students outside of class | 25.9% | 22.8%        | 27.5%      | 30.4%    | 21.0%             |
| Work on a professor's research project |        |             |            |          |                   |
Evidence 2. Data for Outcome 2: Study Abroad and Integrative Learning

2.1. Before College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE): College of Charleston 2009 Results

Experience in high school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>H.S. Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own</td>
<td>59% (N=1702)</td>
<td>57% (N=1192)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values</td>
<td>58% (N=1699)</td>
<td>57% (N=1190)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Foreign language experience in high school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>H.S. Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years of experience</td>
<td>54% (N=1699)</td>
<td>53% (N=1190)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 or more years of experience</td>
<td>35% (N=1699)</td>
<td>38% (N=1190)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expectations for college

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>H.S. Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own</td>
<td>70% (N=1693)</td>
<td>68% (N=1190)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to better understand someone else’s views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective.</td>
<td>81% (N=1692)</td>
<td>85% (N=1190)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values.</td>
<td>75% (N=1690)</td>
<td>76% (N=1191)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How important is it to you that your college provides you with each of the following? ~ Important is defined as a response of 5 or 6 on a 6 point scale~

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>H.S. Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to interact with students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds</td>
<td>61% (N=1682)</td>
<td>66% (N=1190)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2 CIRP Freshman Survey: College of Charleston 2010 Results

**Student reported ratings:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tolerance of others with different beliefs</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>H.S. Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=1519)</td>
<td>(N=522)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76.2%</td>
<td>74.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to work cooperatively with diverse people</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>H.S. Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=1522)</td>
<td>(N=525)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Foreign language experience in high school**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>During high school, how many years of foreign language experience did you complete?</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>H.S. Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=1563)</td>
<td>(N=544)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years of experience</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 or more years of experience</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**College expectations:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student estimates &quot;Very Good Chance&quot; that they will:</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>H.S. Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=1563)</td>
<td>(N=544)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in a study abroad program</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Personal priorities:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance to you personally:</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>H.S. Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(very important or essential)</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=1392)</td>
<td>(N=459)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve their understanding of other countries and cultures</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER SIX

Expectations and Performance

Karen Maitland Schilling Karl L. Schilling

Well, before I came, I had tons of images of what college would be like. I was scared because I didn't know if I could handle all of the work I'd be given. -Susie, first-year student

I expect to not only grow intellectually, but also emotionally. I expect to develop myself so I am well rounded and completely ready when it is time to enter the real world .... -Annette, first-year student

I thought in college ... the classes would be extremely hard, with students being happy to pass courses. I thought everyone would be open-minded and much more liberal. I thought I would learn many things and be able to take any course I wanted to. -Jim, first-year student

Imagine for a moment that these first-year students are seated in the front row of the auditorium on your campus with several hundred other first-year students. It is the first day of a new school year. You have been asked, as an administrator, to welcome incoming students and to set the tone for the work that they will be facing at your institution. Or perhaps you, as a faculty member, are sitting with a group of these students, reflecting somewhat anxiously on the design of the new syllabus for the course you will be offering to a number of these entering first-year students in the weeks ahead. Or maybe you are an adviser. You look out on the sea of new faces and reflect for a moment on the thousands of questions you anticipate trying to answer in the next few weeks.

But why should you care about what your first-year students' expectations are when they come to your institution? These student expectations may or may not seem particularly interesting to you. Even if you find them fascinating, you might ask, "Shouldn't our focus as faculty, staff, or administrators be on sharing our expectations for student engagement with our institutions?" Isn't this what we mean when we talk about "raising the bar"? Isn't it our expectations, not the students', that really matter? Why is awareness of students' expectations important for my work? As faculty and staff, isn't it our job to create expectations for students through our syllabi, lectures, institutional policies, and grading standards, not the other way around? Clearly, this is not an either-or question. Both students and faculty have expectations of themselves and for each other. We think it is important to focus on both student expectations about what college will be like as well as faculty and institutional expectations for students and then examine the gaps between these sets of expectations. It is in these gaps that we find the greatest sources of student dissatisfaction as well as the greatest faculty disappointments with students. Narrowing these gaps can help facilitate successful transitions for students to college.

In this chapter, we will briefly review discussions of expectations in the higher education community and present a quick overview of the perspectives offered by psychologists on the importance of expectations in shaping human performance in a broad range of domains. We will suggest some strategies for learning about expectations on your campus. We will lay out what is currently known about expectations of students and the expectations of institutions for students. In this chapter, we present results from some of our research conducted at Miami University. Because this institution enrolls traditional-age, predominantly white college students from middle- and upper-middle-class backgrounds, this research cannot be generalized to institutions with more diverse first-year students. However, we do believe that the techniques used in this research can be adapted effectively to other institutions, regardless of the makeup of the student body.

We will also present several approaches to getting information about the expectations of students. We will argue for
the critical importance of the first year in providing an intentional socialization of students to their appropriate role, suggesting the important functions that experiences in the first year play in putting in place patterns of behavior that will endure over the students' years at our institutions. We will identify other gaps, in addition to the gap between student expectations and faculty or institutional expectations that may limit the educational effectiveness of our colleges and universities. We will end with a discussion of implications of this research for practice and policy development on campus, including offering a list of some suggested actions.

WHY CARE ABOUT FIRST-YEAR STUDENT EXPECTATIONS?

By the time first-year students arrive on campus, they have a myriad of expectations swirling around in their heads about what college will be like. For some students, these expectations have been building for a long time; college has been a family goal for them almost from birth. For others, the idea of college is more recent, and their expectations may be less specific and differentiated than those of students who have parents or siblings who have been orienting them to college long before they set foot on a college campus. However, it is safe to bet that most students arrive with fantasies and nightmares about what will happen to them at college. No first-year student arrives with a truly blank slate.

It is important for faculty and staff to realize this when they try to write their expectations on a student's slate: these new expectations will be interpreted in the context of what has already been written on that slate.

From the literature in psychology (Bandura, 1982; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Feather, 1966; Zajone & Brickman, 1969), we know that expectations are very important in shaping human behavior. Researchers have found that merely stating an expectation results in better performance, and the higher the expectations are, the higher the level of performance given is. Expectations can influence students' willingness to take on, actively engage in, and persist in responding to intellectual challenges.

Higher education policy leaders have also sought to bring a focus on expectations. A report by the National Institute of Education (1984) called for institutions to heighten their expectations for student learning. This report acknowledged that students come to college with widely varying educational backgrounds and skill levels. The report's authors urged faculty and institutions to challenge students to perform at a higher level, with the understanding that faculty would provide the necessary support to allow students to attain these higher levels of performance. More recent influential works, including Involving Colleges (Kuh et al., 1991) and An American Imperative: Higher Expectations for Higher Education (Wingspread Group, 1993), have echoed this call for heightening expectations for student performance.

But what is the strategy that is most likely to achieve the goals identified in these reports? Even within the homogeneous Miami University sample cited at the beginning of this chapter, the range of student responses to our question about expectations is remarkable and presents a challenge to anyone wishing to deliver a message about higher expectations. If I am eighteen years old and pumped up with new feelings of independence, how am I going to hear a presentation on the exciting new general education requirements? If I am already scared to death about how hard classes will be, how am I going to react to the amplification of that theme in the emphasis on the demanding nature of college work? If I am scared to death that I will not even be able to find the rooms where my classes are meeting, how will I hear the invitation to undertake new and exciting risks? If I am looking around for women to date, I may not fully share the presenters' excitement over this new first-year seminar. Or if I am really excited about all of the new things I am going to learn in new and challenging ways, how am I going to react to courses and modes of instruction that sound and feel a lot like the boring high school classes I thought I had left behind?

Much of the recent discussion of the importance of shifting attention on campuses from an emphasis on teaching to an emphasis on learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995) recognizes the difficulties in assuming that even the best-delivered message to students will be received intact and suggests that we may be using the wrong metaphors to shape thinking about interactions with students. If faculty continue to think of their role as one focused on delivery, they may find that no one is home to receive their "packages." In discussing our work with students in the teaching and learning process, we might more productively employ the metaphor of taking a journey together. In this chapter, as we think about our expectations for students, their expectations of themselves, their expectations for their collegiate
experience, and of their professors, we try to envision all of us—students, faculty, and staff—together in the same boat. Having a shared understanding of expectations of where we are going to go and how we are going to get there—paddling in the same direction—is more likely to foster a successful journey through college.

The current national preoccupation with standards may seem to parallel this focus on high expectations. There are important differences, though, between the discussions about standards and those around expectations that relate to our investments in facilitating successful transitions for students. The discussion about standards is about raising the bar—focusing on the competence that should be there at the end of students’ educational journey. This powerful rhetorical stance for higher standards—achieving better "end products" from the educational system—does nothing, however, to illuminate for students the steps that they must take to reach these new levels of performance. Setting high expectations involves sharing with students what we know about the steps that they need to take in order to meet these new, higher standards. However, currently many students are seemingly on the job without a job description. As educators, we have a choice: help provide this job description (Schilling, 2001) or continue to let students write their own job descriptions as they go along, based on their evolving and very partial sense of what it takes to succeed on campus, while we sit back smugly observing their struggles or choosing to look the other way when they fail.

UNDERSTANDING STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

If we agree that understanding expectations is important, how do we go about learning more about student expectations and also clarifying faculty and institutional expectations for students? There are basically two choices: an institution may proceed on its own by asking its students about their expectations of their collegiate experience or participate in national studies such as those suggested in Chapter Five. Or some combination of both might fit best.

The more local and personal approach begins with asking first-year students before they enroll to respond to selected prompts. In other words, if we are interested in learning about students’ expectations, why not ask them? The student quotations that opened this chapter were produced in free-writing exercises. At either summer orientation or the end of the first semester in college, first-year students were asked to respond to prompts. At summer orientation, the prompt was: "Write for five minutes about your hopes, dreams, fears, and expectations for the fall semester." At the end of the fall semester, it was this prompt: "Before you came to Miami, what did you think college would be like?" Students were instructed to write for a few minutes, not removing their pens from the paper.

The results, as the illustrative quotations suggest, provide insights into students’ lives without requiring a significant time investment. We have sometimes conducted systematic content analysis of collections of such free-writes in order to make some generalizations about students. We have also often found it helpful to share an unedited collection of student responses to such questions with faculty for their consideration and discussion. For several years, in the School of Interdisciplinary Studies at Miami University, first-year students and their parents were asked each year during summer orientation to write briefly about their "hopes, dreams, and aspirations for the coming year." These responses were collected, duplicated, bound, and then distributed to the entering class and faculty at the beginning of the fall semester as an introduction to the new class. The responses of each class and their parents had a distinctive character that seemed to follow entering classes across their college years.

Another approach is to use a more standardized approach to understanding expectations through use of available questionnaires that focus on students’ expectations. Perceptions, Expectations, Emotions, and Knowledge About College (PEEK) developed by Weinstein, Palmer, and Hanson (1995) samples student expectations in three major domains: personal, social, and academic. With help from Deborah Olsen and George Kuh and their support staffs at Indiana University, we developed a modification of the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (Kuh, Vesper, Connolly, & Pace, 1997), called the College Student Expectations Questionnaire (CSEQ), which focuses on student expectations as they enter college. The CSEQ, discussed by Kuh in Chapter Five, uses modified versions of many of the questions from the CSEQ survey about student experiences to gather data on student expectations about the same areas that are explored on the CSEQ: library and information technology, student-interactions with faculty members, course learning activities, writing experience, campus programs and facilities, clubs and organizations, student acquaintances, scientific and quantitative experiences, topics of conversation, information in conversation, and amount of reading and writing. The parallelism between the two forms allows ready comparison of students'
experiences after a year or more in college with their initial expectations.

WHAT WAS LEARNED ABOUT STUDENTS’ EXPECTATIONS?

When we have asked students to respond in an open-ended fashion about their expectations for their college or university experience, we have found, consistent with Weinstein et al. (1995), that these responses most often fall into three domains: academic, personal, and social. As reflected in the quotations at the beginning of this chapter, entering first-year students most often compare and contrast the expected difficulty of college classes to their high school classes. They talk of fears of hard, intimidating, and aloof professors and large classes with intense competition. They express excitement about learning new things and maturing intellectually. Not surprisingly, personal issues are also on students’ minds. Particularly in this group of eighteen year olds, students emphasize freedom and independence, missing family and friends, increased responsibility, maturation and self-development, and having their values tested. Expectations also center on social engagement or campus life; fitting in to new groups, being exposed to diverse peoples and perspectives, making commitments to new activities, and partying.

Faculty, staff, and administrators may despair in reading comments like these from incoming students about their personal and social expectations for college, wishing to see students place greater emphasis on the purely academic. However, it is important to note the similarity of these domains; identified by students in stating their expectations for college life, to the domains identified by faculty committees in their attempts to formulate statements of general education goals and objectives for students. There is a convergence here that is almost never identified. General education programs typically emphasize new learning in traditional academic areas, but they also emphasize development of personal values and sense of self and social engagement—those tasks most often associated with responsible citizenship—which are the same personal and social domains identified in student expectations.

On most campuses, though, faculty and staff bemoan student “resistance” to general education and puzzle over how to overcome the student view of general education as “something to get out of the way.” How is it that understandings of student expectations in the personal and social domains do not provide the foundation for these broader general education goals? Perhaps if we had a bit more insight into students and their expectations for college—expectations very similar to those that faculty and staff hold for them in the personal, social, and academic domains—we would not have to work so hard at convincing them of the things we think would be good for them.

It is interesting to imagine what a general education program would look like if it were to begin with this set of assumptions about goals already shared by students and faculty. It might begin in student statements like those at the beginning of this chapter, with discussion of reasonable expectations for academic engagement, and move on to discussions of social and personal engagement. Today on most campuses, we struggle to get students on board. We then paddle in different directions, all the while bemoaning the fact that we are getting nowhere fast. If we take the time to listen, we may find that students are on board already. Recognizing and acknowledging publicly our shared concerns and goals can change the tone of the conversation. Think of how far we could go if we all paddled in the same direction.

MAKING THE LEAP FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE-LEVEL INVESTMENTS

When entering first-year students describe their expectations for college-level work, most identify the need to work harder than they did when they were in high school. Many recall a specific interaction with a high school teacher who chided them, “Just wait until you get to college!” as instrumental in this change. But even if they get this message, students rarely recognize the differences in scale that are involved. Working twice as hard may seem to be a real stretch. But if the student’s daily total investment in out-of-class work during high school has been about an hour a day, as the data collected annually from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program would suggest is accurate for the average high school student in the last year of high school, then the change that would represent the needed investment identified by most faculty in their “two to three hours outside of class for every hour in class,” would mean working ten times as hard as they did in high school - a stretch that may seem nearly impossible to imagine even for the most committed student.
But perhaps this imagining is not really necessary. We have compared student expectations, indexed by the CSXQ at the start of the first year, and these same students’ reported actual experiences in their first year, indexed by the CSEQ at the end of the first year. Following students longitudinally is always a challenge, but the insights that come from these repeated assessments can be very powerful. Consistent with the findings presented in Chapter Five, not only do students report working less than they expected, but also they do fewer additional readings outside class than they expected, they read less about scientific theories and concepts, go to art exhibits and varied cultural events less than expected, and so on. The overall pattern of results suggests that although students’ initial expectations for their academic involvement may be less than faculty might wish, their actual engagement is even less than those initial expectations.

Students’ grades, however, do not suffer proportionally. Earlier researchers (Berdie, 1966, 1968; Stern, 1970; Whiteley, 1982; Baker, McNeil, & Siryk, 1985), observing a similar discrepancy between students’ reality and their expectations, described this gap as the “freshman myth.” However, such a formulation placed the blame on students for the disappointing reality of their engagement—asserting that they had unrealistic expectations for their own engagement—rather than crediting students for being good economists and accurately reading the environmental cues in their new surroundings about how much they needed to work in order to achieve the grades they desired. Imagine the impact if curricula and course expectations lived up to this freshman myth. What if colleges fully engaged those initial expectations of entering first-year students? The curricular challenges offered would have to go far beyond current levels.

Based on our longitudinal studies of student time use, we have written elsewhere (Schilling & Schilling, 1999) of the importance of the first year in establishing durable economies of time investment for students. Using the well-established methodology of event sampling (Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1983), we have been able to profile students’ allocation of time during a typical week in a semester. Using programmable watches, we periodically signaled students in preset random patterns over a week’s time. Each time a student is signaled, they record in two to three words the activity they are engaged in at that moment. This sampling has allowed us to specify economies of time for individual students—to identify categories of behavior such as academic work and socializing and to catalogue students’ relative apportionment of time to these various activities in the course of a typical week.

This approach to understanding time on task can graphically and powerfully represent for students the choices they make about investment of time in academic work as well as in other activities. Students often initially express surprise at their time investment profiles, but on reflection, they have typically expressed considerable enthusiasm for the accuracy of the method for capturing their time investments. First-year students often have commented on how different their pattern of time investment was from what they recalled of their typical time investments during their last year of high school. In trying to summarize these data for faculty to talk about typical first-year students, we observed considerable variability across students in patterns of time investment.

However, in contrast to this variability across students in patterns of time allocation, we observed remarkable consistency across years for students in their individual patterns of time allocation. We were able to enlist the participation of students across several years in these event-sampling tasks. These longitudinal profiles are particularly illuminating. Students appear to set in place in their first semester the pattern of time allocation that will serve them across their years at college. The patterns of allocation of time observed in a student’s last year of college mirror the patterns of time allocation in the first year. Time apportioned for academic work is remarkably stable over students’ four years. So if little time investment is required to master the demands of a first-year curriculum, that minimal time investment will likely characterize students’ academic engagement in their senior year. Students are busy making up that job description for “college student” in their day-to-day activities in their first year. This is not the typical justification offered for putting in place a challenging general education curriculum, but perhaps we should be giving less attention to the content of general education and more attention to general education as intellectual basic training or boot camp: demanding introductions to college or university life that are designed to exercise the mind and produce a fitness for later college-level work—work designed to live up to the freshman myth and narrow another troubling gap between expectations and experience.
UNDERSTANDING FACULTY EXPECTATIONS

Faculty and staff also come to each year with a set of expectations about what the year will be like and who their students will be. Through their syllabi, faculty communicate a set of expectations for students' performance in the design of their assignments and their grading criteria. We have asked faculty time and again during visits to campuses across this country how they communicate their expectations to students. There is remarkable convergence about a statement made on the first day of class - in community colleges, liberal arts institutions, and comprehensive and research universities: "I expect you to put in two [or three] hours outside of class for every hour in class." This statement has made it into student guidebooks, deans' or presidents' welcoming speeches for new students, and faculty course syllabus overview sessions with students at the beginning of thousands of courses each term. When asked the origin of this bit of advice to students, faculty, time and again, have reacted with surprise. "Isn't that what everybody says?" "That's what I was always told." "Seems about right." Occasionally a professor will say, "That's how long it will take to do the work well enough to really understand it." Rarely do professors detail the nature of student assignments and the kinds and amounts of work that will be necessary to complete the course to the specified level of proficiency. Many first-year students sit puzzled, trying to figure out what they should be doing in those two hours dedicated to each class when they have completed the assigned tasks in less than an hour.

Our work suggests that it is important for faculty to realize the important role that they play in the design of their first-year classes and the significant impact that this course design can have on the socialization of students. By detailing the specific activities that will lead to success in their courses, professors will define college-level work for their first-year students. Can faculty do a better job of clueing students in on what they believe it takes to succeed? Most faculty have a clear sense of what they view as college-level work. They know the kinds of papers they would like to receive in their senior seminars. Can they share with first-year students the steps it will take to get from here to there?

We have developed an interview protocol to help faculty to enhance the clarity of their expectations for students. Some sample questions from this interview are included in Exhibit 6.1. Most faculty in their own educational background have had the experience of being the "good students" in their classes. Many of the steps for gaining understanding that were obscure to other students were obvious, almost automatic, for these faculty when they were students. Then as faculty members, these "former good students" tend to be less conscious of teaching the steps that may be necessary for their students to follow in order to achieve identified class objectives. If faculty are able to clarify their expectations for students, they too will be more satisfied with the level of student accomplishment in their classes.

CULTURAL AUDIT: THE CUES WE GIVE ABOUT WHAT WE EXPECT

We have discussed how faculty expectations may not be communicated to students with sufficient clarity or detail. It is also the case that as students scan the campus environment, they may encounter a broad variety of cues related to expectations that may either support or contradict the messages of the faculty and staff about expectations. What messages do typical campus viewbooks communicate to prospective students about their role as a student, for example? What do the all-too-common outdoor campus scenes of tanned students under leafy trees on sunny days communicate about expectations for intellectual engagement? Or do they contribute to the confusing mixed messages that students receive about college life? The intersections of policies on grading, minimum hours of registration, and financial aid are problematic for faculty who are committed to setting high expectations on many campuses. Students may confront faculty on the "$10,000 C" they just received in their class that will make the difference in their continued eligibility for financial aid.
Exhibit 6.1. Sample Questions from a Faculty Interview About Expectations

1. What do you expect a student to bring to this class, i.e., what kinds of knowledge, skills such as reading and writing, ability to ask questions, etc., do you expect from a student who will likely earn the equivalent of a B grade in this course?
2. How much time devoted to this class would you expect that a student enrolled in this course who wishes to earn the equivalent of a B grade would spend outside of class each week?
3. How is this expectation communicated to students?
4. What kinds of activities would you expect a student in your course to engage in, for what amounts of time?
5. What kinds of expectations do you have for attendance?
6. What would be your expectations for in-class hours? What kinds of activities would students engage in?
7. What kinds of assignments do you typically require in this course?
8. Do students typically need to use the library or a laboratory to complete these assignments? How about a computer? To do what?
9. Do you expect that they [students] will use other resources on or off campus to complete the work for this course? If yes, what are they?
10. Do you expect that they [students] will meet with other students, need to attend campus lectures or other events, travel to another site, etc., to complete these assignments?
11. How often do you expect that students will get together outside of the classroom around the focus of your course?

We have developed a cultural audit to guide exploration of cues about expectations on campus. Sample questions from this audit are included in Exhibit 6.2. The logic behind this assessment strategy and the others identified thus far is simple and straightforward: if faculty and staff understand the expectations that entering first-year students bring to campus, if they work consistently to support and heighten these expectations, and if they clearly and consistently state their own expectations for students, then student performance likely will be enhanced. By getting all the parties paddling in the same direction, we will likely get somewhere that is different and better from the place where we started, and our shared journey will be much more interesting and rewarding.

Exhibit 6.2. Sample Questions from a Cultural Audit Focused on Expectations

1. What are the best features of academic life at ________? How are these promoted?
2. What is attendance like at special campus lectures, arts events, etc.?
3. What do your promotional materials sent to prospective applicants convey about the academic focus at ________?
4. What are your library hours? How many students are in the library on a weekday night? On the weekend?
5. When does the weekend begin? How do you know? When does it end?
6. What newspapers and magazines are readily available on your campus? Are they well used?
7. Does your campus newspaper give prominent coverage to academic life on campus? Do academic achievements get equal billing with social or athletic achievement?
8. Are there visible and prominent ways to recognize the academic achievements of students on your campus?
9. How prominent are student literary magazines, student productions, student poster sessions, etc.?
10. Are there vehicles for students to play an active role in curriculum and pedagogical development?
11. On a stroll through campus residence halls, what percentage of students is reading or studying? What percentage is watching television? Other prominent activities?
12. What are the strongest academic traditions on your campus?
13. If a student is really excited about an idea, what does it take for that student to get support to do focused independent work in that area?
14. What does your admissions staff communicate to prospective students about the academic experiences of students on your campus?
15. What messages about campus policies on financial aid eligibility, dismissal, suspension, etc., communicate academic expectations to students?
16. How readily can you distinguish a first-year student from a graduating senior on your campus? What are the differences you identify?
RECOMMENDATIONS

If an institution is serious about establishing high expectations for first-year students, it should:

• Encourage faculty and staff efforts to shape student expectations with their initial engagements with first-year students, because the chances of success will be greater than at any other time during their college careers.

• Work to collect, understand, and respond to the expectations of first-year students. They arrive on campus with expectations about what their college experience will be like based on their experiences in high school and what they have heard about college from their older siblings, friends, movies, and other sources. There is already writing all over what we have presumed to be a blank slate. What we write anew will be interpreted in the context of what has been written previously. If we work to collect, understand, and respond to expectations of entering students about college, we can play a more productive role in helping students make a successful transition from high school to college.

• Intentionally socialize first-year students to a rigorous, demanding college life. First-year students come to campus expecting to work harder than they actually do during the first year. In referring to this gap as the freshman myth, previous researchers have wrongly suggested that this is a student problem—a loss of motivation or inaccurate perceptions about college. A more compelling explanation for this gap comes from examination of the actual level of academic demands presented to students in the first year.

• Integrate students’ expectations with general education goals. Students’ expectations for college usually focus on academic, personal, and social domains. These are the same domains of focus for general education programs on many campuses. Greater student buy-in to the goals of general education can come from identification of this convergence and enhanced faculty understanding of student expectations as a starting point for general education.

• Design the first-year curricula to create the kinds of students we wish to have in senior seminars. The initial experience in college sets patterns of time usage for students that will remain durable throughout their collegiate experience. For example, students who devote 15 percent of their waking time to academic efforts in their first year are very likely to devote about 15 percent of their waking time to academic activity in their senior year. Those entering our institutions learn how to be college students in their first months on campus. Faculty should be more reflective about their own pedagogical practice and more willing to share with their students realistic information based on data about the kinds and amounts of effort that students must engage in to be successful in their classes.

• Encourage faculty to share with their students realistic information based on data about the kinds and amounts of effort that students must engage in to be successful in their classes. They need to incorporate this message into their pedagogical practice.

• Use first-year seminars to reorient students to the college experience. Provide a description based on evidence about what it takes to be a successful college student at the institution.

• Conduct campus culture audits that collect data and information on student as well as faculty, staff, and administrators’ expectations. Institutional policies, procedures, and day-to-day practices often send conflicting messages to students about what they must do in order to succeed on campus. It is rare for students to receive consistent messages about expectations for their behavior. Audits of campus culture can identify these conflicting messages and guide institutional actions to communicate more clearly and consistently about expectations for students. Institutional cultures are different based on the kinds of students served, the nature of the faculty, and the history and traditions of the institution. Thus, each institution should gather its own data and information on students as well as on faculty, staff, and administrators’ expectations.

• Share data about student time use, cultural audits, student interviews, and portfolios of actual student work with faculty, so that they can engage students in meaningful conversations about expectations. These conversations can be used to help clarify institutional goals related to student learning. Orientation and admissions and recruitment
programs that are rooted in such clarified goals are likely to be much more successful.

CONCLUSION

In order for the expectations-experience gap to be narrowed or eliminated, institutions must develop very intentional strategies to create and sustain high and clear expectations for first-year students. That includes knowing what first-year students’ expectations are and transforming them by challenging them with experiences that result in a rigorous academic and collegiate experience. Creating a challenging educational environment can happen only if faculty, administrators, and staff make an intentional and concerted effort to do so.
Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

by

Arthur W. Chickering and Zelda F. Gamson

Summary

Following is a brief summary of the Seven principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education as compiled in a study supported by the American Association of Higher Education, the Education Commission of the States, and The Johnson Foundation.

1. Good Practice Encourages Student-Faculty Contact

Frequent student-faculty contact in and out of classes is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Faculty concern helps students get through rough times and keep on working. Knowing a few faculty members well enhances students' intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own values and future plans.

2. Good Practice Encourages Cooperation among Students

Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one's own ideas and responding to others' reactions improves thinking and deepens understanding.

3. Good Practice Encourages Active Learning

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

4. Good Practice Gives Prompt Feedback

Knowing what you know and don’t know focuses learning. Students need appropriate feedback on performance to benefit from courses. In getting started, students need help in assessing existing knowledge and competence.

In classes, students need frequent opportunities to perform and receive suggestions for improvement. At various points during college, and at the end, students need chances to reflect on what they have learned, what they still need to know, and how to assess themselves.

5. Good Practice Emphasizes Time on Task

Time plus energy equals learning. There is no substitute for time on task. Learning to use one's time well is critical for students and professionals alike. Students need help in learning effective
time management. Allocating realistic amounts of time means effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty. How an institution defines time expectations for students, faculty, administrators, and other professional staff can establish the basis for high performance for all.

6. Good Practice Communicates High Expectations

Expect more and you will get it. High Expectations are important for everyone - for the poorly prepared, for those unwilling to exert themselves, and for the bright and well motivated. Expecting students to perform well becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when teachers and institutions hold high expectations of themselves and make extra efforts.

7. Good Practice Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning

There are many roads to learning. People bring different talents and styles of learning to college. Brilliant students in the seminar room may be all thumbs in the lab or art studio. Students rich in hands-on experience may not do so well with theory. Students need the opportunity to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them. Then they can be pushed to learning in new ways that do not come so easily.

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Apathetic students, illiterate graduates, incompetent teaching, impersonal campuses - so rolls the drum fire of criticism of higher education.

More than two years of reports have spelled out the problems. States have been quick to respond by holding out carrots and beating with sticks. There are neither enough carrots nor enough sticks to improve undergraduate education without the commitment and action of students and faculty members. They are the precious resources on whom the improvement of undergraduate education depends. But how can students and faculty members improve undergraduate education? Many campuses around the country are asking this question. To provide a focus for their work, we offer seven principles based on research on good teaching and learning in colleges and universities.

**Good practice in undergraduate education:**

1. Encourages student-faculty contact.
2. Encourages cooperation among students.
5. Emphasizes time on task.
6. Communicates high expectations.
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

We can do it ourselves - with a little bit of help....

**A Focus for Improvement**

These seven principles are not ten commandments shrunk to a twentieth century attention span. They are
intended as guidelines for faculty members, students, and administrators - with support from state agencies and trustees - to improve teaching and learning. These principles seem like good common sense, and they are - because many teachers and students have experienced them and because research supports them. They rest on 50 years of research on the way teachers teach and students learn, how students work and play with one another, and how students and faculty talk to each other.

While each practice can stand on its own, when all are present, their effects multiply. Together, they employ six powerful forces in education:

- Activity
- Diversity
- Interaction
- Cooperation
- Expectations
- Responsibility

Good practices hold as much meaning for professional programs as for the liberal arts. They work for many different kinds of students - white, black, Hispanic, Asian, rich, poor, older, younger, male, female, well-prepared, under prepared. But the ways different institutions implement good practice depends very much on their students and their circumstances. In what follows, we describe several different approaches to good practice that have been used in different kinds of settings in the last few years. In addition, the powerful implications of these principles for the way states fund and govern higher education and for the way institutions are run are discussed briefly at the end.

As faculty members, academic administrators, and student personnel staff, we have spent most of our working lives trying to understand our students, our colleagues, our institutions, and ourselves. We have conducted research on higher education with dedicated colleagues in a wide range of schools in this country. We draw the implications of this research for practice, hoping to help us all do better.

We address the teacher's how, not the subject-matter what, of good practice in undergraduate education. We recognize that content and pedagogy are present, their effects multiply. Together, they employ six powerful forces in education:

Activity Diversity Interaction Cooperation Expectations Responsibility

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As faculty members, academic administrators, and student personnel staff, we have spent most of our working lives trying to understand our students, our colleagues, our institutions, and ourselves. We have conducted research on higher education with dedicated colleagues in a wide range of schools in this country. We draw the implications of this research for practice, hoping to help us all do better.
We address the teacher’s how, not the subject-matter what, of good practice in undergraduate education. We recognize that content and pedagogy interact in complex ways. We are also aware that there is much healthy ferment within and among the disciplines. What is taught, after all, is at least as important as how it is taught. In contrast to the long history of research in teaching and learning, there is little research on the college curriculum. We cannot, therefore, make responsible recommendations about the content of good undergraduate education. That work is yet to be done.

This much we can say: An undergraduate education should prepare students to understand and deal intelligently with modern life. What better place to start but in the classroom and on our campuses? What better time than now?

Prepared with the assistance of Alexander W. Astin, Howard Bowen, Carol M. Boyer, K. Patricia Cross, Kenneth Eble, Russell Edgerton, Jerry Gaff, Joseph Katz, C. Robert Pace, Marvin W. Peterson, and Richard C. Richardson, Jr.

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1. Encourages Student-Faculty Contact

Frequent student-faculty contact in and out of classes is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Faculty concern helps students get through rough times and keep on working. Knowing a few faculty members well enhances students' intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own values and future plans.

Some examples: Freshmen seminars on important topics, taught by senior faculty members, establish an early connection between students and faculty in many colleges and universities.

In the Saint Joseph’s College core curriculum, faculty members who lead discussion groups in courses outside their fields of specialization model for students what it means to be a learner. In the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, three out of four undergraduates have joined three-quarters of the faculty in recent years as junior research colleagues. At Sinclair Community College, students in the "College Without Walls" program have pursued studies through learning contracts. Each student has created a "resource group," which includes a faculty member, a student peer, and two "community resource" faculty members. This group then provides support and assures quality.

2. Encourages Cooperation

Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one's own ideas and responding to others’ reactions sharpens thinking and deepens understanding.

Some examples: Even in large lecture classes, students can learn from one another. Learning groups are a common practice. Students are assigned to a group of five to seven other students who meet regularly during class throughout the term to solve problems set by the instructor. Many colleges use peer tutors for
Learning communities are another popular way of getting students to work together. Students involved in SUNY at Stony Brook's Federated Learning Communities can take several courses together. The courses, on topics related to a common theme like science, technology, and human values, are from different disciplines. Faculty teaching the courses coordinate their activities while another faculty member, called a "master learner," takes the courses with the students. Under the direction of the master learner, students run a seminar which helps them integrate ideas from the separate courses.

3. Encourages Active Learning

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

Some examples: Active learning is encouraged in classes that use structured exercises, challenging discussions, team projects, and peer critiques. Active learning can also occur outside the classroom. There are thousands of internships, independent study opportunities, and cooperative job programs across the country in all kinds of colleges and universities, in all kinds of fields, for all kinds of students. Students also can help design and teach courses or parts of courses. At Brown University, faculty members and students have designed new courses on contemporary issues and universal themes; the students then help the professors as teaching assistants. At the State University of New York at Cortland, beginning students in a general chemistry lab have worked in small groups to design lab procedures rather than repeat pre-structured exercises. At the University of Michigan's Residential College, teams of students periodically work with faculty members on a long-term original research project in the social sciences.

4. Gives Prompt Feedback

Knowing what you know and don’t know focuses learning. Students need appropriate feedback on performance to benefit from courses. When getting started, students need help in assessing existing knowledge and competence. In classes, students need frequent opportunities to perform and receive suggestions for improvement. At various points during college, and at the end, students need chances to reflect on what they have learned, what they still need to know, and how to assess themselves.

Some examples: No feedback can occur without assessment. But assessment without timely feedback contributes little to learning.

Colleges assess students as they enter in order to guide them in planning their studies. In addition to the feedback they receive from course instructors, students in many colleges and universities receive counseling periodically on their progress and future plans. At Bronx Community College, students with poor academic preparation have been carefully tested and given special tutorials to prepare them to take introductory courses. They are then advised about the introductory courses to take, given the level of their academic skills.

Adults can receive assessment of their learning from work and other life experiences at many colleges and universities through a portfolio process or through standardized tests; these provide the basis for sessions with advisors.

Alverno College requires that students develop high levels of performance in eight general abilities such as
analytic, valuing, and communication skills. Performance is assessed and then discussed with students at each level of each ability in a variety of ways and by a variety of assessors.

In writing courses across the country, students are learning, through detailed feedback from instructors and fellow students, to revise and rewrite drafts. They learn, in the process, that feedback is central to learning and improving performance.

5. Emphasizes Time on Task

Time plus energy equals learning. There is no substitute for time on task. Learning to use one’s time well is critical for students and professionals alike. Students need help in learning effective time management. Allocating realistic amounts of time means effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty. How an institution defines time expectations for students, faculty, administrators, and other professional staff can establish the basis for high performance for all.

Some examples - Mastery learning, contract learning, and computer assisted instruction require that students spend adequate amounts of time on learning. Extended periods of preparation for college also give students more time on task. Matteo Ricci College is known for its efforts to guide high school students from the ninth grade to a B.A. in six years through a curriculum taught jointly by faculty at Seattle Preparatory School and Seattle University. Providing students with opportunities to integrate their studies into the rest of their lives helps them use time well.

Workshops, intensive residential programs, combinations of televised instruction, correspondence study, and learning centers are all being used in a variety of institutions, especially those with many part-time students. Weekend colleges and summer residential programs, courses offered at work sites and community centers, clusters of courses on related topics taught in the same time block, and double-credit courses make more time for learning. At Empire State College, for example, students design degree programs organized in manageable time blocks; students may take courses at nearby institutions, pursue independent study, or work with faculty and other students at Empire State learning centers.

6. Communicates High Expectations

Expect more and you will get more. High expectations are important for everyone - for the poorly prepared, for those unwilling to exert themselves, and for the bright and well motivated. Expecting students to perform well becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when teachers and institutions hold high expectations of themselves and make extra efforts.

Some examples: In many colleges and universities, students with poor past records or test scores do extraordinary work. Sometimes they out-perform students with good preparation. The University of Wisconsin-Parkside has communicated high expectations for under prepared high school students by bringing them to the university for workshops in academic subjects, study skills, test taking, and time management. In order to reinforce high expectations, the program involves parents and high school counselors.

The University of California-Berkeley introduced an honors program in the sciences for under prepared minority students; a growing number of community colleges are establishing general honors programs for minorities. Special programs like these help. But most important are the day-to-day, week-in and week-out expectations students and faculty hold for themselves and for each other in all their classes.

7. Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning
There are many roads to learning. People bring different talents and styles of learning to college. Brilliant students in the seminar room may be all thumbs in the lab or art studio. Students rich in hands-on experience may not do so well with theory. Students need the opportunity to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them. Then they can be pushed to learning in new ways that do not come so easily.

Some examples: Individualized degree programs recognize different interests. Personalized systems of instruction and mastery learning let students work at their own pace. Contract learning helps students define their own objectives, determine their learning activities, and define the criteria and methods of evaluation. At the College of Public and Community Service, a college for older working adults at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, incoming students have taken an orientation course that encourages them to reflect on their learning styles. Rockland Community College has offered a life-career-educational planning course. At the University of California, Irvine, introductory physics students may choose between a lecture-and-textbook course, a computer-based version of the lecture-and-textbook course, or a computer-based course based on notes developed by the faculty that allow students to program the computer. In both computer-based courses, students work on their own and must pass mastery exams.

Whose Responsibility is it?

Teachers and students hold the main responsibility for improving undergraduate education. But they need a lot of help. College and university leaders, state and federal officials, and accrediting associations have the power to shape an environment that is favorable to good practice in higher education.

What qualities must this environment have?

- A strong sense of shared purposes.
- Concrete support from administrators and faculty leaders for those purposes.
- Adequate funding appropriate for the purposes.
- Policies and procedures consistent with the purposes.
- Continuing examination of how well the purposes are being achieved.

There is good evidence that such an environment can be created. When this happens, faculty members and administrators think of themselves as educators. Adequate resources are put into creating opportunities for faculty members, administrators, and students to celebrate and reflect on their shared purposes. Faculty members receive support and release time for appropriate professional development activities. Criteria for hiring and promoting faculty members, administrators, and staff support the institution’s purposes. Advising is considered important. Departments, programs, and classes are small enough to allow faculty members and students to have a sense of community, to experience the value of their contributions, and to confront the consequences of their failures.

States, the federal government, and accrediting associations affect the kind of environment that can develop on campuses in a variety of ways. The most important is through the allocation of financial support. States also influence good practice by encouraging sound planning, setting priorities, mandating standards, and reviewing and approving programs. Regional and professional accrediting associations require self-study and peer review in making their judgments about programs and institutions.

These sources of support and influence can encourage environments for good practice in undergraduate education by:
Setting policies that are consistent with good practice in undergraduate education.

Holding high expectations for institutional performance.

Keeping bureaucratic regulations to a minimum that is compatible with public accountability.

Allocating adequate funds for new undergraduate programs and the professional development of faculty members, administrators, and staff.

Encouraging employment of under-represented groups among administrators, faculty members, and student services professionals.

Providing the support for programs, facilities, and financial aid necessary for good practice in undergraduate education.

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**Selected References**


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