

Aligning Pedagogy, Curriculum and Assessment: Support for Student Success

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Beginning with Questions About Student Success

- What does student success mean at your institution? Nationally? In terms of your own values? Your institutional values?
- What classroom and teaching/learning processes and approaches lead to student success?
- What institutional (university, college, department) features support and promote student success?

What Is Student Success at Your Institution?

- How do you define it?
- What are the indicators of student success?
- How do students know?
- Are your graduates distinctive?

Student Success -- from a National Perspective

- Academic Achievement (LEAP)
- Retention and Graduation
- Engaged Citizens (Civic development)
- Student Well-being (mental health, etc.)
- Teamwork/Collaboration
- Leadership

Educational Excellence: Indicators (E. Pascarella, 2001)

- Student/alumni outcomes
- Effective educational practices

Student Success is Learning

- Learning is not merely development of skills but of self awareness of their use and ethical sensibility about use.
- Learning is the capacity to hold onto complexity and ambiguity –to live certain answers.
- Learning is the capacity to be in community at multi-levels.
- Learning is the capacity for love—of learning, of the world, of... (Shulman, 2000).

Does Student Success Describe
What You Care About?

Does Student Success
Capture What is Important
to Your Institution?

Engagement = Student Success

- **Engaged Learning** (“the time and energy students devote to educationally sound activities inside and outside of the classroom and the policies and practices that institutions use to induce students to take part in these activities” (Kuh et al, 2005) – correlated with academic success, retention, graduation, and learning gains.

Engagement at the Institutional Level: Student Success

- Alignment
- First Year Programs
- Culminating Experiences
- Students engaged in Community
- Student voice/leadership
- Faculty relationships with students
- Students' identity as a learner
- Students' identity as a member of their institutional community
- Program review process

Learning Focus = Student Success

- Shifts focus from teaching to learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995)
- Challenges basic assumptions about learning and about our role in learning (Huba & Freed, 2000)
- Requires intimate faculty-student contact that encourages feedback and motivates student effort (Guskin, 1997)
- Rethinks the purpose of assessment (Banta, 1996)

Engaged Pedagogy: Learning Focused for Student Success

- Students have clear expectations
- Students apply knowledge to important issues and problems
- Students are actively involved
- Students experience support and feedback for learning
- Students are able to practice and take risks

Engaged Pedagogy con't

- Scaffolding of curriculum
- Collaborative/cooperative learning
- Community-based or service learning
- Alignment with learning outcomes
- Project or problem-based learning
- Judicious use of class presentations
- Interactive lectures
- Technology enhancement

Engaged Curriculum: Learning Focused for Student Success

- Builds on previous learning
- Integrates education and experience
- Communicates values for and connection to student lives
- Attends to learning needs
- Synthesizes content
- Addresses relevant issues

Engaged Assessment: Learning Focused for Student Success

- Purpose of assessment is to promote learning
- Assessment information is “public and visible”
- Assessment enhances, extends, expands, and enriches learning

Learning Outcomes: for Student Success

- Clearly stated and well understood by students (make sense)
- Direct the design of curriculum, pedagogy, assignments, resources, and assessment
- Are visibly connected to the course elements (class sessions, assignments, assessments, etc.)

Learning Evidence: Assessment for Student Success

- Evidence of student learning respects varied learning strengths, interests, needs
- Evidence of student learning is well matched to level of learning outcome

Learning Criteria: for Student Success

- Criteria level the “playing field” for success
- Criteria are articulated, explained, and supported in class
- Criteria support self-assessment, dialogue about student work and success

Alignment for Student Success

Alignment of Pedagogy, Curriculum,
and Assessment in the context of a
Learning Focused Institution for
Faculty and Student Support

Learning Focused Institutions

- Leadership attention to distinctiveness of approaches to learning
- Institutional culture models learning environment
- Strong focus on institutional character or distinctiveness or identity (Boyce, 2003)
- Inquiry and dialogue characterize institutional processes for planning, implementation, and change (Marsick & Watkins, 1999; Senge, 1990)
- Networks are in place to support learning efforts (Kezar, 2005)

Learning Focused Institutions

- Institutional investment in student success
- An improvement oriented ethos directed to student success
- Experimentation in learning is rewarded
- A persistent tendency to move forward, to improve, to go beyond sustaining efforts (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005)

A Few Insights about Learning

- Learning is a process of making and maintaining connections
- Learning takes place in the context of a compelling situation
- Learning is a social process and is affected by the social climate
- Learning involves monitoring of a learning by self
- Learning is grounded in particular contexts and individual experiences

Student Success in Learning

- What are our assumptions about learning?
- What are our assumptions about how students learn?
- What are our assumptions about the best way to teach?
- How do we know that our teaching supports student success?

Final Challenges

- Develop “pedagogies of uncertainty” (Lee Shulman, 2005)
- Integrate “effortful practice” with authentic problems and meaningful feedback (Carl Weiman, 2007)
- “Let us work to elevate learning to the level of identity rather than the level of accomplishment” (Yves Labissiere, 2007)

An Alignment Agenda:

- Articulate your description of student success.
- Study institutional “promises” for descriptions of student success.
- Select one question about learning to focus a collegial conversation in the next week.
- Select and try out one pedagogy, curricular quality, and an assessment approach that support student success.