

High-Impact Practices and Experiences from the Wabash National Study

In our research thus far, we have found that four broad categories of teaching practices and institutional conditions predict growth on a wide variety of student outcomes including moral reasoning, leadership, openness to diversity and challenge, and positive attitude toward literacy. These four categories of high-impact teaching practices and supportive institutional conditions were derived from survey questions in the Wabash National Study about student experiences. The questions come from both the Student Experiences Survey and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

This document lists the survey questions within each of the high-impact practice areas shown below.

- **Good Teaching and High-Quality Interactions with Faculty**, which includes:
 - Faculty interest in teaching and student development
 - Prompt feedback
 - Quality of nonclassroom interactions with faculty
 - Teaching clarity and organization
- **Academic Challenge and High Expectations**, which includes:
 - Academic challenge and effort
 - Frequency of higher-order exams and assignments
 - Challenging classes and high faculty expectations
 - Integrating ideas, information, and experiences
- **Interactional Diversity**
- **NSSE Deep Learning**, which includes:
 - Higher-order learning
 - Integrative learning
 - Reflective learning

Students who report higher levels of these experiences tend to grow more on our outcome measures. Similarly, students who report lower levels of these experiences are less likely to grow on the outcomes.

Good Teaching and High-Quality Interactions with Faculty

Good teaching and high-quality interactions with faculty includes the following groups of questions:

Faculty interest in teaching and student development

- Are most faculty with whom you have had contact:
 - genuinely interested in students?
 - interested in helping students grow in more than just academic areas?
 - outstanding teachers?
 - genuinely interested in teaching?
 - willing to spend time outside of class to discuss issues of interest and importance to students?

Prompt feedback

- How often have:
 - faculty informed you of your level of performance in a timely manner?
 - faculty checked to see if you learned the material well before going on to new material?
 - you received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance?*

Quality of nonclassroom interactions with faculty

- To what extent do you agree that:
 - your non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on your personal growth, values, and attitudes?
 - your non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on your intellectual growth and interest in ideas?
 - your non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on your career goals and aspirations?
 - you have developed a close, personal relationship with at least one faculty member since coming to this institution?
 - you are satisfied with the opportunities to meet and interact informally with faculty members?

Teaching clarity and organization

- How often did your faculty:
 - give clear explanations?
 - make good use of examples and illustrations to explain difficult points?
 - effectively review and summarize the material?
 - interpret abstract ideas and theories clearly?
 - give assignments that helped in learning the course material?
 - present material in a well-organized way?
 - come to class well prepared?
 - use class time effectively?
 - clearly explain course goals and requirements?
 - have a good command of what they were teaching?

¹ The questions we have marked with an asterisk are from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE); the remaining questions are from the Student Experiences Survey in the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education.

Academic Challenge and High Expectations

Academic challenge and high expectations includes the following groups of questions:

Academic challenge and effort

- During the current school year, about how often have you:
 - worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations?*
 - asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions?*
 - made a class presentation?*
 - prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in?*
 - come to class without completing readings or assignments? (reverse coded)*
- To what extent does your institution emphasize spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work?*
- In a typical 7-day week, how many:
 - hours do you spend preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)?*
 - problem sets take you more than an hour to complete?*
- To what extent during the school year did your examinations challenge you to do your best work?*
- During the current school year, about how many:
 - assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings have you done?*
 - written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages have you done?*

Frequency of higher-order exams and assignments

- How often have exams or assignments required you to:
 - write essays?
 - use course content to address a problem not presented in the course?
 - compare or contrast topics or ideas from a course?
 - point out the strengths and weaknesses of a particular argument or point of view?
 - argue for or against a particular point of view and defend your argument?

Challenging classes and high faculty expectations

- How often have faculty:
 - asked challenging questions in class?
 - asked you to show how a particular course concept could be applied to an actual problem or situation?
 - asked you to point out any fallacies in basic ideas, principles, or points of view presented in the course?
 - asked you to argue for or against a particular point of view?
 - challenged your ideas in class?
- How often have students challenged each other's ideas in class?

Integrating ideas, information, and experiences

- To what extent do you agree that:
 - courses have helped you understand the historical, political, and social connections of past events?

- courses have helped you see the connections between your intended career and how it affects society?
- your out-of-class experiences have helped you connect what you have learned in the classroom with life events?
- your out-of-class experiences have helped you translate knowledge and understanding from the classroom into action?
- During the current school year, about how often have you:
 - worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources?*
 - put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions?*
 - discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)?*
- During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized:
 - synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships?*
 - making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions?*

Interactional Diversity

Interactional Diversity includes the following questions:

- During the school year, how often have you:
 - attended a debate or lecture on a current political/social issue?
 - participated in a racial or cultural awareness workshop?
 - had serious discussions with student affairs staff (e.g., residence hall staff, career counselor, student union or campus activities staff) whose political, social, or religious opinions were different from your own?
 - had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own?*
 - had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values?*
- To what extent does your institution emphasize encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds?*
- While attending this college, how often have you:
 - had discussions regarding inter-group relations with diverse students (e.g., students differing from you in race, national origin, values, religion, political views)?
 - had meaningful and honest discussions with diverse students about issues related to social justice?
 - shared personal feelings and problems with diverse students?

NSSE Deep Learning

Deep learning includes the following groups of questions:

Higher-order learning

- During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized:
 - analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components?*
 - synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships?*
 - making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions?*
 - applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations?*

Integrative learning

- During the current school year, about how often have you:
 - worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources?*
 - included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments?*
 - put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions?*
 - discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty outside of class?*
 - discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)?*

Reflective learning

- During the current school year, about how often have you:
 - examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue?*
 - tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective?*
 - learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept?*