

 SEMQ REVIEW

Key Practices for Fostering Engaged Learning: A Guide for Faculty and Staff

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Reviewed by Diane Treis

Among the core principles of an effective strategic enrollment management (SEM) plan are the establishment of objectives that advance the mission of the institution as well as cross-functional collaborative routines across academic and non-academic departments (Bontrager 2004). Teaching and learning, and the faculty and instructional staff who deliver that learning, are thereby central to any SEM plan and should be engaged (Trainer 2018). High Impact Educational Practices (HIPS) have been shown to improve student learning proficiency, increase academic engagement, support development of academic identity, and improve student metacognition. In turn, these outcomes can support retention and completion (Kuh *et. al* 2008; Kuh and O'Donnell 2013; Zilvinskis *et. al* 2022).

In *Key Practices for Fostering Engaged Learning: A Guide for Faculty and Staff*, Jessie Moore synthesizes HIPS research with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) knowledgebase. She distills from her analyses six critical elements of andragogy that deliver transformative educational outcomes within and beyond college or university. This review will provide a summary of Moore's six criteria and outlines ways institutional lead-

ers may apply Moore's practices to SEM planning. Next, it considers how the author's findings uniquely illustrate the imperative to engage faculty in plan design and implementation.

The Framework

In chapter one and throughout the book, Moore integrates educational activities often referred to as High Impact Practices (HIPS). HIPS are most commonly identified as a set of specific educational activities that support student learning and persistence. Most often cited are a set of eleven educational activities that incorporate eight elements or qualities (Kuh, O'Donnell, and Schneider 2017).¹ Student success may be best supported

¹ Activities include first-year experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing and inquiry intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, study away, community-based learning, internships/field experiences, capstone projects, and portfolio. HIPS qualities include student investment of effort over an extended period; interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters; exposure and contact with people and circumstances that differ from those with which they are familiar; frequent, timely, and constructive feedback; periodic, structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning; discovery of learning relevance through real-world applications; and public demonstration of competence.

when these educational activities are integrated across the curriculum so that students are provided with repeated exposure to HIPs (Viramontes and Castor 2022). Moore, among others are uncovering the mechanisms by which HIP activities positively impact student success, thus answering the question: Why are HIPs impactful for some groups of learners, but not for others?

For a student to benefit from a HIP activity, first they must access the experience. Moore's framework suggests that HIP activities can be integrated across enrollment. Moreover, variance in student learning experiences may moderate the potential value of the HIP (Chittum, Enke, and Finley 2022). The author suggests there are six key practices that are critical to engaging learners. The incorporation of these elements may improve the impact of the HIP and improve equity of its impact. Moore's six factors include 1) acknowledgement and recognition of prior learning; 2) facilitating student relationships; 3) offering goal directed feedback; 4) framing and connecting learning across a broader context; 5) fostering self-awareness through reflection; and 6) promoting integration and transfer of knowledge and skills. The framework illustrates how these elements often interact to strengthen the impact on student success.

Prior Knowledge and Experiences

According to Moore, learning occurs in formal and informal educational settings, in and outside of the college or university. Thus, the learning occurs prior to, during, and beyond enrollment at an institution. In chapter two, Moore emphasizes the importance of uncovering impactful prior learning as a means to engage students in new learning. In some cases, students can adapt prior learning to a new context and expand upon it. In other cases, students and teachers will identify learning gaps. Moore emphasizes that both are critical to student progress.

Recognizing the learning that has not occurred enables instructors to respond with scaffolded activities. These activities provide specialized knowledge and empower students with self-assessment and metacognitive skills to identify and fill gaps, in the present and future. Moore provides the reader with activities and

prompts so students can inventory prior classroom and non-classroom learning. Through reflection and self-assessment, students identify the relevancy of their learning to the current subject matter. Moore identifies the continual uncovering of prior learning as a critical step to producing novel learning. If not uncovered, she says, "students may assume their prior knowledge from these contexts isn't relevant or valued, so they may not consciously draw from it." Once students recognize the value of their learning, they are able to gain confidence and produce novel contributions. Such contributions—to the workforce, community, and disciplines—are often central in institutional or departmental missions. Moore notes that universities can support the recognition of prior learning by tracking and mapping the progression of student learning. This can be done at the level of the academic unit, program, or institution.

Facilitating Student Relationships

Theories of academic and social integration (Tinto 1975; Pascarella and Terenzini 1983) are foundational to the study of student retention. Moore reflects on similar findings drawn from SoTL and HIPs. In chapter three, she summarizes how the quality of a relationship between students and faculty/staff can powerfully impact the students' sense of belonging and confidence at the institution. Such relationships span the student's ecosystem, from relationships with faculty and instructors in academic spaces to staff in co-curricular and academic support spaces and peers in both curricular and co-curricular spaces. She notes that any faculty or staff member can serve as an important contributor to producing an array of purposeful and quality relationships, thus suggesting how HIPs can extend beyond the classroom to on-campus employment, community-based learning, and co-curricular activities. Within the classroom, Moore discusses the building blocks of creating strong student-faculty relationships. Examples include recognizing student names and identities, check-ins regarding student wellness and outside interests, and low-stakes and non-threatening ways to evaluate content proficiency—such as students providing exit reflections or questions at the end of class.

Moore describes how this information can be used to further build rapport with students and their network of resources beyond the classroom. These may include mentoring or connecting students to work-integrated learning experiences on campus or in the community—and then empowering students to recognize and reconnect that learning to the classroom. Or it may include connecting students to people who, and resources that, align to their wellness and outside interests.

Furthermore, Moore provides evidence of how clear and transparent communication can lower student anxiety that may be produced through the hidden curricula of higher education, which is the assumptions regarding individuals' experiences navigating higher education language, policies, and practices. It includes elements of institutional cultural and practices (*e.g.*, idioms, access to office hours, implicit messages) and represents what practitioners think students should know about “doing” college. Moore references strategies such as transparent syllabi, or incorporating faculty-initiated routines that support equity in one-on-one conversations with instructors or access to resources.

Offering Goal Directed Feedback

In chapter four, Moore discusses strategies for faculty and staff to provide formative feedback that is accessible, timely, and actionable for the student. She discusses how the creation of a learning culture can create a safe space for students to test ideas and respond to feedback, without fear of negative repercussions. Creating a culture of feedback assumes that the process is normalized and that all parties have a shared understanding of the method. This includes strategies to provide and utilize feedback. Moore discusses strategies for written, oral, or recorded feedback and strategies to create assignment guidelines and collaborative assessment rubrics. She provides examples of how feedback strategies can be utilized in experiential learning opportunities outside of the classroom. In applying these strategies, Moore discusses how feedback not only serves to improve student learning of specialized content but equips students with important skills that can be adapted to other

courses. Also, learners are prepared to adapt practices to other contexts, such as informal peer mentorships and workplace environments.

Framing and Connections to Broader Contexts

In chapter five, Moore offers further analysis of how learning across contexts can be scaffolded to energize student engagement in the classroom by encouraging application of the knowledge to their lived experiences, and visa versa. She provides examples of how such activities enable students to put theory into practice or see how practice informs theory. She argues that this is a critical workplace skill, citing research indicating employers value training that provide students with practice opportunities in which they can make errors, receive feedback, acquire self-awareness, and improve proficiency. Yet, Moore cites that in national studies only half of former student respondents indicated they were offered such experiences during their college years.

As in other chapters Moore emphasizes experiential-based HIPs, such as work-integrated learning (internships/student employment), undergraduate research, or community-based learning. She notes how such opportunities—when supported by trusting relationships and coupled with feedback and reflection—can provide students with interactive opportunities to transfer learning between environments, test ideas in practice, and assess for outcomes and proficiency gaps. In cases in which university-sponsored experiential HIPs are not available, Moore suggests that these connections can be simulated in the classroom through case study projects that integrate authentic questions and relevant challenges.

Fostering Self-Awareness Through Reflection

In chapter six, Moore discusses how self-awareness of learning through reflections may serve as a central component of student engagement. Student reflections can serve as a means to inventory and organize information and make sense of how prior and emerging learning interconnect. Moore stresses that reflective prompts and activities must be meaningful to the student. She pro-

vides examples of how prompts can ground a student in a present set of learning experiences and then speculate how their learning may serve them in a new context or be applied in a different discipline. Such a process invites a learner to be curious. These appreciative inquiry steps can be the foundation on which a student builds a decision for action.

Again, Moore emphasizes the importance of incorporating other key teaching practices into development and delivery of reflective activities. Iterative, non-judgmental, and inquiry-based feedback are important components of the process. Furthermore, the strength of the relationship between instructor/supervisor and the learner may impact perceptions of safety, and thus a student's response to feedback. Moore notes that when students build self-awareness through proficiency in reflection, they report greater ease in accepting and responding to feedback in subsequent academic and workplace pursuits.

Evidence presented by Moore further suggests that these reflective skills may best serve the learner when integrated early and throughout the curriculum. Citing SOTL research, she notes that the metacognitive skills created through reflective exercises can be particularly useful to students when they must navigate how new information contrasts with previous beliefs. Moore offers examples of how reflective activities can be integrated into several classroom and experiential learning opportunities (for example, to promote team-based problem solving required as part of collaborative projects and assignments). Too, she notes the power of reflection to organize and connect disparate learning experiences in portfolio activities.

Promoting Integration and Transfer of Knowledge and Skills

In chapter seven, Moore discusses how the six practices interact and together support student integration and transfer of learning. Her expansive discussion summarizes learning from prior chapters and applies that learning to a holistic discussion of program-based student learning outcomes and the student experience across all years of study. The activities and prompts

exemplified by the author intend to illustrate how the original purpose of a given assignment will connect to subsequent assignments or coursework. By unveiling the purpose of sequenced activities and coursework for students and challenging them to consider how they will apply the learning in their unique context, students are able to create ownership and the story of their learning. Thus, students can begin to answer the inevitable question, what can you do with that degree?

Summary and Implications for SEM Planning and Institutional Leaders

After reading Moore's book, enrollment management professions may identify how they already integrate the author's key student engagement practices into their day-to-day work. Admissions advisors and recruiters are on the frontlines to create meaningful relationships with potential students. They create on-campus experiences intended to excite students about potential learning opportunities, connecting the dots for prospective students (and parents) as to how their studies will lead them toward their goals. Academic advisors routinely provide meaningful feedback to students. Prepared with predictive analytics based on the many, they connect with the student before them and incorporate appreciative inquiry into their coaching practices. Their efforts help students frame the information relative to their personal goals and make decisions to achieve those goals. Guiding students in reflections to inventory and articulate their prior learning and translate that learning to emerging work opportunities is the bread and butter of career advisors.

Furthermore, the story that HIPS can promote student retention and completion and how telling the story of HIPS can be utilized in recruitment efforts is not novel to SEM strategies. While Moore does not specifically speak about enrollment management processes, her recommendations have several applications. Moore's findings are relevant to SEM, because teaching and learning is central to institutional mission. The author draws focus on why and how faculty and instructional staff should be engaged in SEM planning, and how strategies can be executed at multiple levels of the

institution. For this reader, Moore's book provoked the following questions and observations:

- For institutions that require specific HIPs, what accounts for the variation in student outcomes?
- Who interacts (or does not interact) with proven high impact teaching and learning practices, and when do they engage in HIPs? Mapping available HIPs across the learner's experience can reveal gaps and strategies to improve access.
- Since teaching and learning is central to student success, there is a need to engage and support centers for teaching and learning and their staff. These units comprise trusted faculty partners. They serve as an important source of professional and instructional development that is critical to delivering HIPs. Alongside the faculty, center staff support efficiency by curating authentic assessments, classroom activities, and assessment rubrics that support efficacy of HIPs.
- Consider the power of one faculty member, and build the power of many. Through SoTL, faculty can scale student success assessment efforts, one course and one HIP at a time. Faculty can immediately apply learning to their course or program, impacting a significant number of students. Institutions can grow and sustain faculty trust and participation by investing in those who have daily contact with students. For example, extending the number of summer appointments for nine-month faculty (0.75 FTE) to full-time can glean returns on investment. The added capacity can enable faculty to establish early relationships with entering students or provide outreach by engaging in SEM-related projects such as degree completion programs. Early contact with faculty in their discipline can impact student enrollment decisions (O'Beirne and Treis Rusk 2011). Furthermore, summer appointments enable faculty to develop or deliver additional HIP opportunities. Department-based design can serve as an effective strategy to create and sustain HIPs activities (Viramontes and Castor 2022). Last, such appointments provide faculty with dedicated time to evaluate and hone their teaching and learning practices through applied research, findings which can evidence qualitative returns on investment.
- How can we adapt Moore's practices to elevate a culture of credit for prior learning assessment? In her discussion of prior learning and learning transfer, Moore does not extend the discussion of work-integrated learning to non-university sponsored experiences. Because many new traditional learners are not presented with a choice between work and school, they will present work-integrated learning that occurred prior to or in between enrollment. Research evidence suggests that Moore's framing can be adapted to credit for prior learning assessment by portfolio, an activity that incorporates student self-assessment, reflection, and application of learning that similarly produces a transformative learning experience to the student (Treis Rusk and Smith 2022).
- Recognize that teacher and mentor relationships can be built in non-academic settings where students live and work. Moore notes the quality of relationships between students and staff can powerfully impact the students' sense of belonging and confidence. Such relationships span the student's ecosystem and include non-academic spaces. On-campus student employment emerged as one opportunity for institutions to engage supervisors and staff in the creation of work-integrated learning experiences. Such opportunities allow students to shift and transfer learning between contexts and may make experiential learning opportunities more accessible to students who must work and cannot afford to partake in other HIP opportunities.
- How can we adapt Moore's findings to create strategies that consider alternative student pathways through higher education? Moore's discussion regarding integration and transfer of knowledge and skills largely assumes that students embark on a conventional four-year pathway through college. The concepts presented by the author could be adapted to a new traditional student population who may stop-in and -out of higher education. Activities that synthesize and integrate competencies could be

applied to smaller batches of learning that the student completes in a year, or even a semester. Through review of course learning outcomes and guided reflections, students can create an immediate and personalized narrative of their knowledge and

skills and uncover how these apply in the workforce. Such a strategy may help the student to advance job prospects or potential, either while in school or if life events cause them to depart before earning a credential.

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Diane Treis has more than three decades of public service in education, local government, and economic and community development. She currently serves as the Director of Academic Programs and Student

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