Promoting Student Engagement in the Classroom

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Instructional Factors that Contribute to Student Engagement

- Student perception that classroom environment is supportive (Fassinger, 1995; Nunn, 1996)
- Self-perception of personal control & autonomy (Boggiano, Main & Katz, 1988)
- Collaborative, shared learning (Tinto, 1997)
- Initial or pre-enrollment characteristics of students (Astin, 1993)
- Organizational or environmental influences of the institution attended (Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn & Terezini, 1996)
- Students’ academic expectations (Tinto, 1997)
- Students’ social or non-academic expectations (Tinto, 1997)
Educational Practices that Foster Student Engagement

- Student-faculty contact (Anaya, 1999; Avalos, 1996)
- Cooperation among students (Cabrera, et al., 2002)
- Active learning (Kuh, Pace and Vesper, 1997)
- Prompt feedback to students (Feldman, 1997)
- High expectations (Arnold, Kuh, Vesper & Schuh, 1993)
- Diversity experiences (Pascarella, Palmer, Moye & Pierson, 2001)
- Academic effort (Astin, 1993; Hagedor, Siadat, Nora & Pascarella, 1997)
- Quality of teaching received (Feldman, 1997; Pascarella, et al., 1996)
- Influential Interactions with other students (Astin, 1993; Whitt et al, 1999)
- Supportive environment (Carini and Kuh, 2003)
Course Engagement

Four types of course engagement

- (Handelsman, Briggs, Sullivan & Towler 2005)

1. Skills  (e.g. taking notes in class).
2. Emotional  (e.g. applying course material to my life).
3. Participation  (e.g. asking questions to understand).
4. Performance  (e.g. doing well on tests).
Recent Research on Course Engagement at UNK

What instructional factors promote course engagement?
- Types of course engagement affected by instructional factors
- Role of student motivation.

Factors examined
- Class Size
- Teaching Style
- Target Audience
- Instructor Activities
- Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Student Motivation
Method

• Participants
  - All UNK students in introductory psychology classes: Fall 2007
  - 665 Participants
    - 226 Men; 429 Women
  - Ages ranged from 18 to 39 years of age
Materials and Procedure

- 27 item SCEQ (Briggs, et al., 2005)
  - Measures 4 types of engagement
    1. Skills
    2. Emotional
    3. Participation
    4. Performance
  - Used Likert scale ranging from 1 = not at all characteristic of me to 5 = very characteristic of me.
Student Factors

- **Goal motivation**
  - “If I had to choose between getting a good grade and being challenged in class, I would choose: ___”

- **Perceived importance of**
  - Getting good grade
  - Being challenged
    - 5 point scales ranging from 1 = *not important* to 5 = *very important*
Survey Administration

- SCEQ administered during a regular class meeting
- Faculty information
  - Instructional Style
    - Lecture, Lecture/discussion, Discussion
    - Percent of students names they knew
- Class size and target audience was obtained from the course record file.
- Instructional activities information from regular course evaluation forms completed by students
Results

- **Does Engagement Matter?**
  - Significant positive correlation between course engagement and grades
    - \( r(665) = .62; p < .001 \)

- **Class Size**
  - Small negative correlation between classroom engagement & class size.
    - \( r(665) = -.13, p < .05 \)
Teaching Style

Teaching style effects on engagement

- Discussion based classes  $M = 98.7$
- Lecture/discussion  $M = 89.5$
- Lecture  $M = 88.1$

$F(2, 600) = 8.73, p < .001$
Types of Engagement Responsive to Teaching Style

- Emotional
  - $F(2, 600) = 3.45, p < .05$

- Participation
  - $F(2, 600) = 15.48, p < .001$

- Performance
  - $F(2, 600) = 3.63, p < .05$
Target Audience

- Students in service courses \((M = 87.9)\) were as engaged as were students in courses designed for psychology majors/minors [\(F < 1, p = \text{ns.}\)] \((M = 89.3)\)
Instructor Activities

- Responsive to student questions, $r(610) = .20, p < .01$
- Assigned effective aids for learning, $r(610) = .19, p < .01$
- Encouraged students to seek assistance, $r(610) = .19, p < .01$
- Knew a majority of the students’ names, $r(610) = .18, p < .01$. 
Student Motivation

- Importance of getting a good grade, $t(665) = .27; p < .001$.

- Importance of being challenged, $t(665) = .47; p < .001$.

- Intrinsically motivated students more involved in classroom ($M = 93.7$) than extrinsically motivated students ($M = 88.2$), $F(1,577) = 16.53, p < .001$.

  - I/E and Emotional Engagement
    - $F(2, 600) = 27.69, p < .001$

  - I/E and Participation Engagement
    - $F(2, 600) = 12.91, p < .001$
Discussion

- Instructors can promote classroom engagement
  - Teaching Style
  - Individuation
  - Supportive

- Practical methods for meeting students’ needs
  - Relatedness (Furrer & Skinner, 2003)
  - Competence (Connell et al., 1994)
  - Autonomy (Patrick et al., 1993)
Conclusions

- Additional Influences on Student Engagement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, Friedel, & Paris, 2004)
  - Family
  - Community
  - Culture
  - Education

- Role of personality
  - Locus of control
  - Openness to experience
  - Conscientiousness
  - Extraversion
Questions?