Student Engagement & The Library

Kevin Fosnacht, Ph.D.
Indiana University Bloomington
@k_fosnacht

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Imagine walking onto the most engaging college campus. What do you see?
Participating in co-curricular activities
Discussing ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class
Service-learning—A community-based project as part of a regular course
Attending art exhibits, plays, or other arts performances (dance, music, etc.)
Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
Preparing for exams by working through course material with other students.
Using learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)
Learning to work effectively with others
All learning and development requires an investment of time and effort by the student.

C. Robert Pace (1984). Measuring the Quality of College Student Experiences
Engagement is not the sole responsibility of students!
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

• Collects data at about first-year and senior students' participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development.

• 1600+ institutions have participated since 2000

Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)
Missouri Participants Since 2013

Avila University
Central Methodist University
College of the Ozarks
Columbia College
Culver-Stockton College
Fontbonne University
Lincoln University
Lindenwood University
Maryville University of Saint Louis
Missouri Southern State University
Missouri State University
Missouri University of Science & Technology
Missouri Valley College
Missouri Western State University
Northwest Missouri State University
Park University
Rockhurst University
Saint Louis University
Southeast Missouri State University
Southwest Baptist University
Stephens College
Truman State University
University of Central Missouri
University of Missouri-Columbia
University of Missouri-Kansas City
University of Missouri-St. Louis
Westminster College
William Jewell College
William Woods University
Evidence for the Importance of Engagement

Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education

Engagement results are good proxy measures for growth in important educational outcomes such as

- critical thinking,
- moral reasoning,
- intercultural effectiveness,
- personal well-being, and a
- positive orientation toward literacy activities.
Evidence for the Importance of Engagement

“Connecting the Dots” Study

• Engagement significantly and positively effects grades and persistence, after holding constant pre-college skills, financial aid/need, socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, etc

• The relationship between engagement and these outcomes is stronger for students with lower skills when entering college and historically underrepresented groups.
Experiences with Information Literacy Module
NSSE was approached by instructional librarians hoping to add more information literacy content on NSSE.

Informal NSSE-librarian working group (led by Carrie Donovan [Ferris State University], myself, 18 other members) created the module

Pilot-tested in 2013

Added as an official NSSE module in 2014

199 schools have administered the module since 2014

150,000+ students have responded to the module
Information Use

- Completed an assignment that used an information source other than required course readings¹
- Worked on a paper or project that had multiple smaller assignments such as an outline, annotated bibliography, rough draft, etc.¹
- Received feedback from an instructor that improved your use of information resources¹
- Completed an assignment that used the library’s electronic collection of articles, books, and journals¹

¹ “Often” or “Very Often”
Information Evaluation

Decided not to use an information source in a course assignment due to its questionable quality¹

Changed the focus of a paper or project based on information you found while researching the topic¹

Looked for a reference that was cited in something you read¹

Identified how a book, article, or creative work has contributed to a field of study¹

¹ “Often” or “Very Often”
Instructors' Emphasis

- Not plagiarizing another author's work²
- Appropriately citing the sources used in a paper or project²
- Using scholarly or peer-reviewed sources in your course assignments²
- Questioning the quality of information sources²
- Using practices of a specific major or field of study²

² “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much”
A Quick Summary

Positive
Faculty role
• Plagiarism
• Emphasized the use of scholarly resources
• Emphasized questioning the quality of resources
• Modelled information seeking and use process
• Provided feedback on information use

Negative
Students’ critical use of information
• Most did not reject a source due to its quality
• Most did not revise the focus of a paper
• Most did not look for a source cited in something they read
# Role of Information Engagement in Senior Outcomes

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<th>Higher-Order Learning</th>
<th>Reflective &amp; Integrative Learning</th>
<th>Perceived Gains</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Est.</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>Est.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Use</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>0.15</td>
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<td>0.13</td>
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<td>R² change</td>
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<td>.20</td>
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\( p < .05, \; ** p < .01, \; *** p < .001 \)

*Note: All variables shown standardized with mean of 0 & SD of 1. Models control for both student background characteristics and institutional fixed-effects.*
Styles of Information Engagement
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% of First-Year Students in Each Group

- Infrequent Users: 22%
- Basic Searchers: 35%
- Deep Searchers: 20%
- Critical Searchers: 23%
First-Year Students Need Help

• Most first-year students use information, but many fail to do so effectively and/or critically
• Students information literacy instructional needs vary widely

Solutions

• Collaboration with K-12 librarians/teachers
• Information literacy instruction embedded within first-year curriculum (writing requirements, first-year seminars, etc.)
Don’t Assume Who is in Each Group

The ONLY student characteristic significantly associated with group membership was race/ethnicity. African Americans were more likely to be critical searchers.
Looking to the Future

Some *speculation* on the future of libraries from an engagement perspective
A new generation is here…

• The last of the millennials are ~20!
• iPhone released in 2009
• Marked changes in 2012
• Staying home
• High rates of psychological distress

What do these changes mean for the future?
Focus on collaboration/interaction

- In the curriculum
- Building design – face-to-face interactions

Solutions
- Mini-rooms designed for group work
- Open spaces that encourage interaction
- Noise is ok!*
How to get students to the library

• Social media
• Host “special” events – exhibitions, galleries, contests
• Host orientation
• Food destination
• Rare collections
• Home away from home for commuter students
• Free coffee?
Libraries are special

- Generally at the heart of campus
- Knowledge economy

Northwest Missouri State University
Discussion with You

Kevin Fosnacht, Ph.D.
Associate Research Scientist
Center for Postsecondary Research
Indiana University School of Education
kfosnach@indiana.edu

Web: nsse.indiana.edu
Twitter: @k_fosnacht/@NSSEsurvey
Facebook: @NSSEsurvey
Blog: NSSEsightings.indiana.edu