2007 SUMMER READINGS

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS is pleased to announce the reading list for summer 2007. The readings are designed to engage the campus in conversations focused on enhancing and sustaining an environment that supports student achievement of learning outcomes.

The purpose of the readings for summer 2007 is to provide an update on current issues in higher education and to provide a foundation for participation in:

1. Reviewing the NSU general education program;
2. Developing the NSU Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) in 2007-2008 (the QEP theme is Creating Coherent Pathways to Develop Critical Thinking Skills in Students); and
3. Enhancing the quality of student learning outcomes.


Alignment is a key concept in the design and assessment of general education curricula. University faculty have the responsibility to offer a cohesive curriculum that systematically and intentionally fosters the agreed-upon general education learning outcomes. Alignment strategies allow faculty to examine curricular pathways students take and determine the effectiveness of curricular designs in achieving outcomes, thus providing information for curricular reviews and improvements.


Amid increasing pressure to document student learning outcomes, this report argues that public colleges and universities, working with states and accreditors, should lead the movement toward value-added assessment. In the interest of promoting a better understanding of the value college adds, such a model would advocate use of standardized instruments to measure student achievement of core outcomes, focus on achievement and measurement of general intellectual skills, and employ a multi-faceted approach to determine the value an institution adds to student success.


This report, part of the Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) initiative, highlights the essential aims, learning outcomes, and guiding principles for advancing and strengthening college education in the 21st century. Liberal education develops habits of study and thought and builds a broad knowledge base, transferable skills, and a strong sense of value, ethics, and civic engagement. The essential learning outcomes described in this report apply to professional and occupational majors as well as traditional liberal arts education. This publication focuses on the promises America makes — and needs to keep—for all who seek a college education and for the community that depends on “economic creativity and democratic vitality” that results.


This chapter demonstrates how William Perry’s model of intellectual and ethical development can be utilized both for assessing and for understanding collaborative learning. Collaborative learning environments promote a wide range of cognitive and affective student learning outcomes. Perry’s model of intellectual and ethical development represents a broad, multi-dimensional indicator of student progress that can be utilized to assess collaborative learning approaches. This model provides a strategy for developing parsimonious and meaningful measures of academic performance and “success” to complement more readily accessible measures such as GPA and persistence rates to understand student development and success. The framework for the QEP is grounded in Perry’s model.
BEGINNING IN SCHOOL, AND CONTINUING AT SUCCESSIVELY HIGHER LEVELS ACROSS THEIR COLLEGE STUDIES, STUDENTS SHOULD PREPARE FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CHALLENGES BY DEVELOPING THE FOLLOWING LEARNING OUTCOMES:

KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN CULTURES AND THE NATURAL WORLD
- grounded in the study of the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts
- actively acquired through engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

INTELLECTUAL AND PRACTICAL SKILLS
- inquiry, critical and creative thinking
- written and oral communication
- quantitative literacy
- information literacy
- teamwork and problem solving

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES
- civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
- intercultural knowledge and competence
- ethical reasoning and action
- foundation and skills for lifelong learning

INTEGRATIVE LEARNING
- synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies
- demonstrated capacity to adapt knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and questions

http://www.aacu.org/advocacy/leap/index.cfm