NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

The Trusted Expert and Internationally Recognized Leader
for all Postsecondary Student Transitions

A Foundation for Success:
The "Who?" "What?" & "Why?" of First-Year Seminars

Jennifer R. Keup

Director, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition

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Session Learning Objectives

As a result of this session, participants will:

- Advance the understanding of first-year seminars as a high-impact practice

- Gain a greater understanding of the background, needs, & transition experiences of first-year students

- Review the outcomes & characteristics of first-year seminars

- Provide a national, empirical picture of common practices in first-year seminars to serve as a context for institutional practice

Qualifications
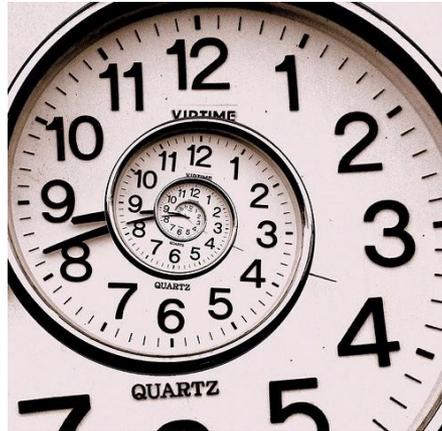
INTRODUCTION

Outline

- Introduction of I-E-O Model

- WHAT? First-year seminar (FYS)

  – Definitions and delimiters

  – FYS & high-impact practices

- WHY? Education to what end?

- WHO? Who are today's college students?

- Final thoughts and future directions

Data Sources

- National Resource Center surveys
  - 2012-2013 National Survey of First-Year Seminars
  - 2014 National Survey of Sophomore-Year Experiences
  - 2016 National Survey of Senior Capstone Experiences
  - **2017 National Survey of First-Year Experiences**
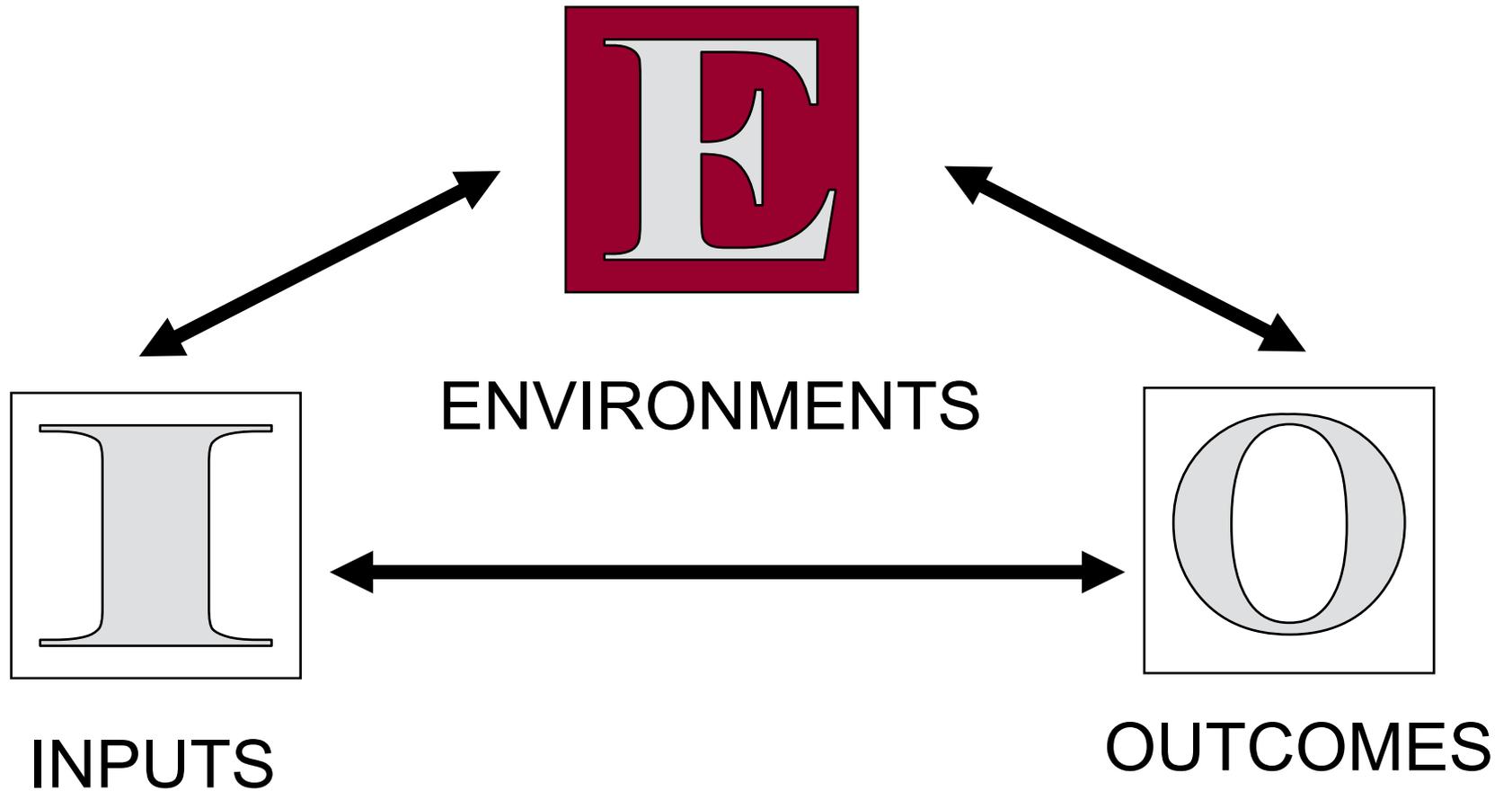
- National Resource Center publications
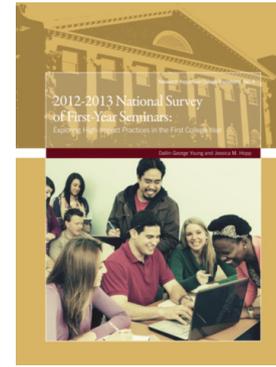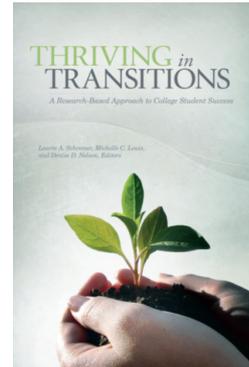
- JNGI, AACC, NSSE, AAC&U, CIRP, CERI….

Theoretical Grounding: Astin's I-E-O Model

ENVIRONMENTS

INPUTS

OUTCOMES

(*Astin, 1993*)

Deconstructing "First-Year Seminars"

"First Year"

- For new students
- First year in college
- First year on our campus

"Seminar"

- Small class size
- Discussion-based setting
- Responsibility for teaching and learning is shared

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FYS: Definitions

"A [*first-year*] seminar is a course intended to enhance the academic and/or social integration of first-year students by introducing them to (a) a variety of topics, which vary by seminar type, (b) essential skills for college success, and (c) to selected processes, the most common of which is the creation of a peer support group."
(Barefoot, 1992, p. 49)

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FYS: Distinctions

First-year seminars tend to include "engaging pedagogy," which includes:

- A variety of teaching methods
- Meaningful discussion of homework
- Challenging assignments
- Productive use of class time
- Encouragement for students to speak in class and work together

(Swing, 2001)

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FYE Initiatives

FYE Initiative (2017 NSFYE)	%
First-year academic advising (ADV)	80.4
Early alert systems (EA)	79.0
Pre-term orientation (OR)	75.4
First-year seminars (FYS)	**73.5**
Placement testing (PT)	65.9
Peer education (PE)	62.3
Student success center (SSC)	55.2
Developmental/remedial education (DEV)	54.5
General education (GE)	54.1
Convocation	52.6

N = 525 institutions

Different FYS "Flavors"

FYS: Typology

- Extended orientation seminars

- Academic seminars
  - Academic seminars with generally uniform content
  - Academic seminars on various topics

- Professional or discipline-based seminars

- Basic study skills seminars

- Hybrid seminars

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All Types of FYS Offered

*overall proportion of institutions
offering a FYS has declined.

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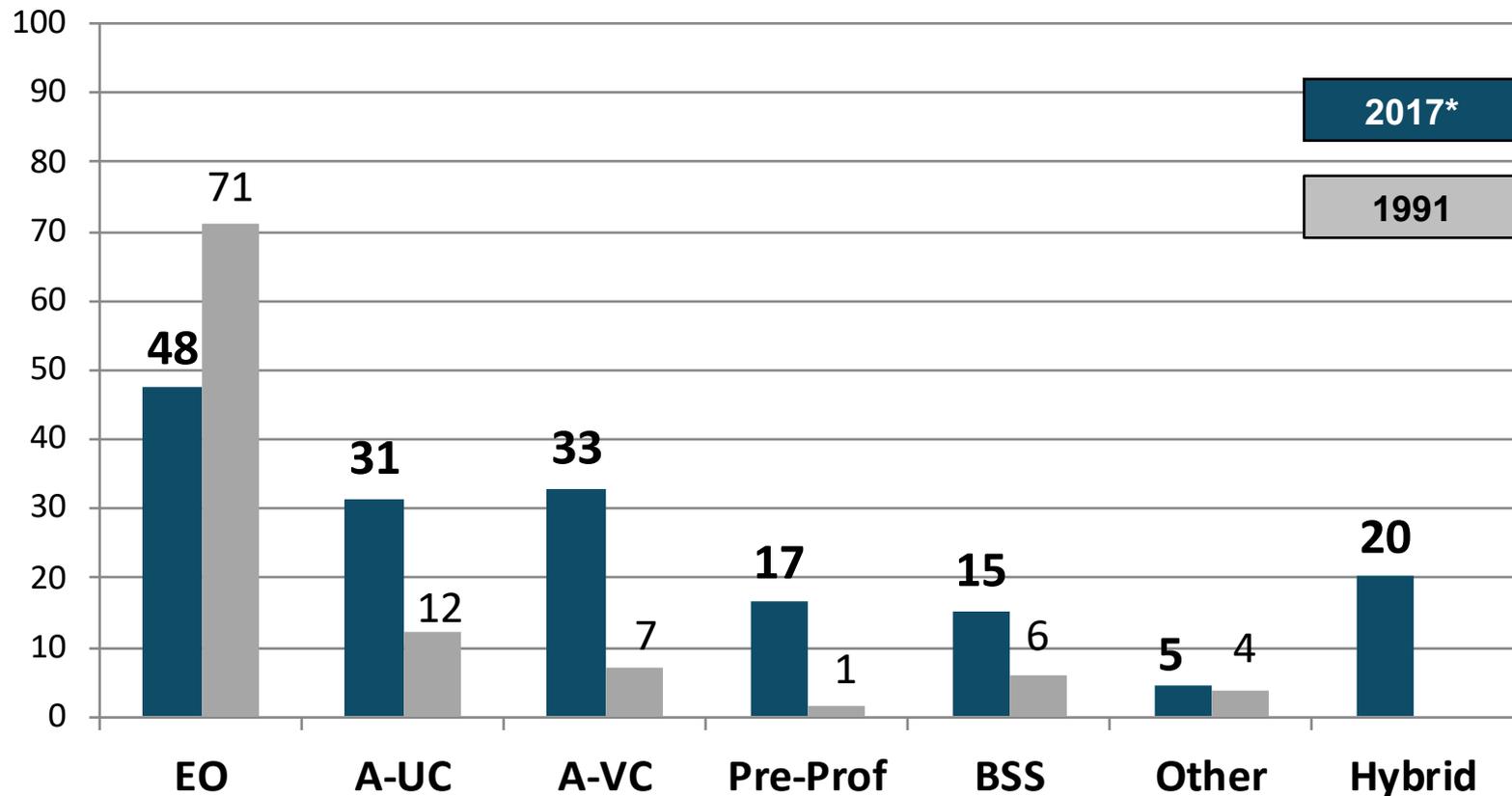FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
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High-Impact Educational Practices

First-Year Seminars and Experiences

Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members' own research.

Common Intellectual Experiences

The older idea of a "core" curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community (see below). These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and cocurricular options for students.

Learning Communities

The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with "big questions" that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link "liberal arts" and "professional courses"; others feature service learning.

Writing-Intensive Courses

These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice "across the curriculum" has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry.

Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.

Undergraduate Research

Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students' early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.

Diversity/Global Learning

Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore "difficult differences" such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

ePortfolios

ePortfolios are the latest addition to AAC&U's list of high-impact educational practices, and higher education has developed a range of ways to implement them for teaching and learning, programmatic assessment, and career development. ePortfolios enable students to electronically collect their work over time, reflect upon their personal and academic growth, and then share selected items with others, such as professors, advisors, and potential employers. Because collection over time is a key element of the ePortfolio process, employing ePortfolios in collaboration with other high-impact practices provides opportunities for students to make connections between various educational experiences.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

In these programs, field-based "experiential learning" with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both *apply* what they are learning in real-world settings and *reflect* in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

Internships

Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

Capstone Courses and Projects

Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "best work," or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.

College Learning for the New Global Century

The LEAP Vision for Learning
Outcomes, Practices, Impact, and Employers' Views
Liberal Education & America's Promise

High-Impact Educational Practices
What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter

Five High-Impact PRACTICES

Ensuring Quality & Taking High-Impact Practices to Scale

High-Impact Educational Practices

First-Year Seminars and Experiences

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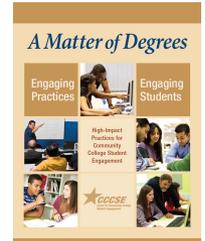
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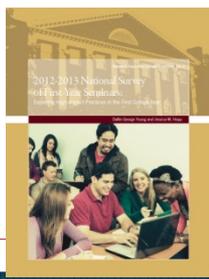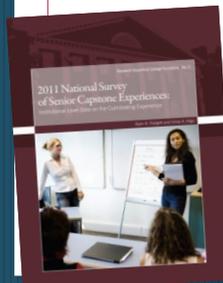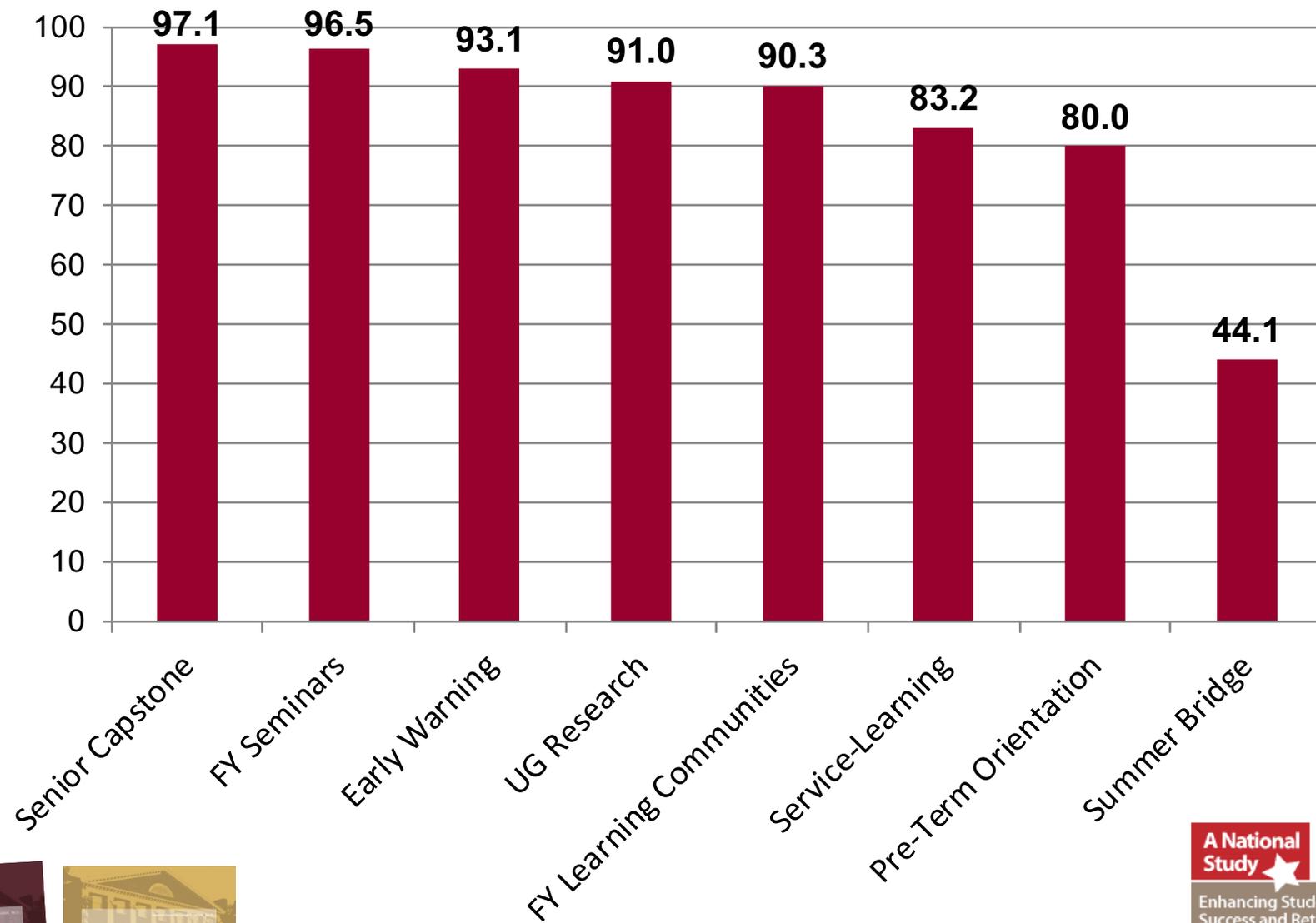
Promising Practices for CC Student Engagement

- Assessment & Placement
- Orientation
- Academic Goal Setting & Planning
- Timely Registration
- Accelerated or Fast-Track Developmental Ed
- **First-Year Experience***

- **Student Success Course***
- Learning Community
- Class Attendance
- Alert & Intervention
- Experiential Education Beyond the Classroom
- Tutoring
- Supplemental Instruction
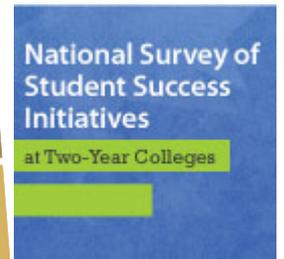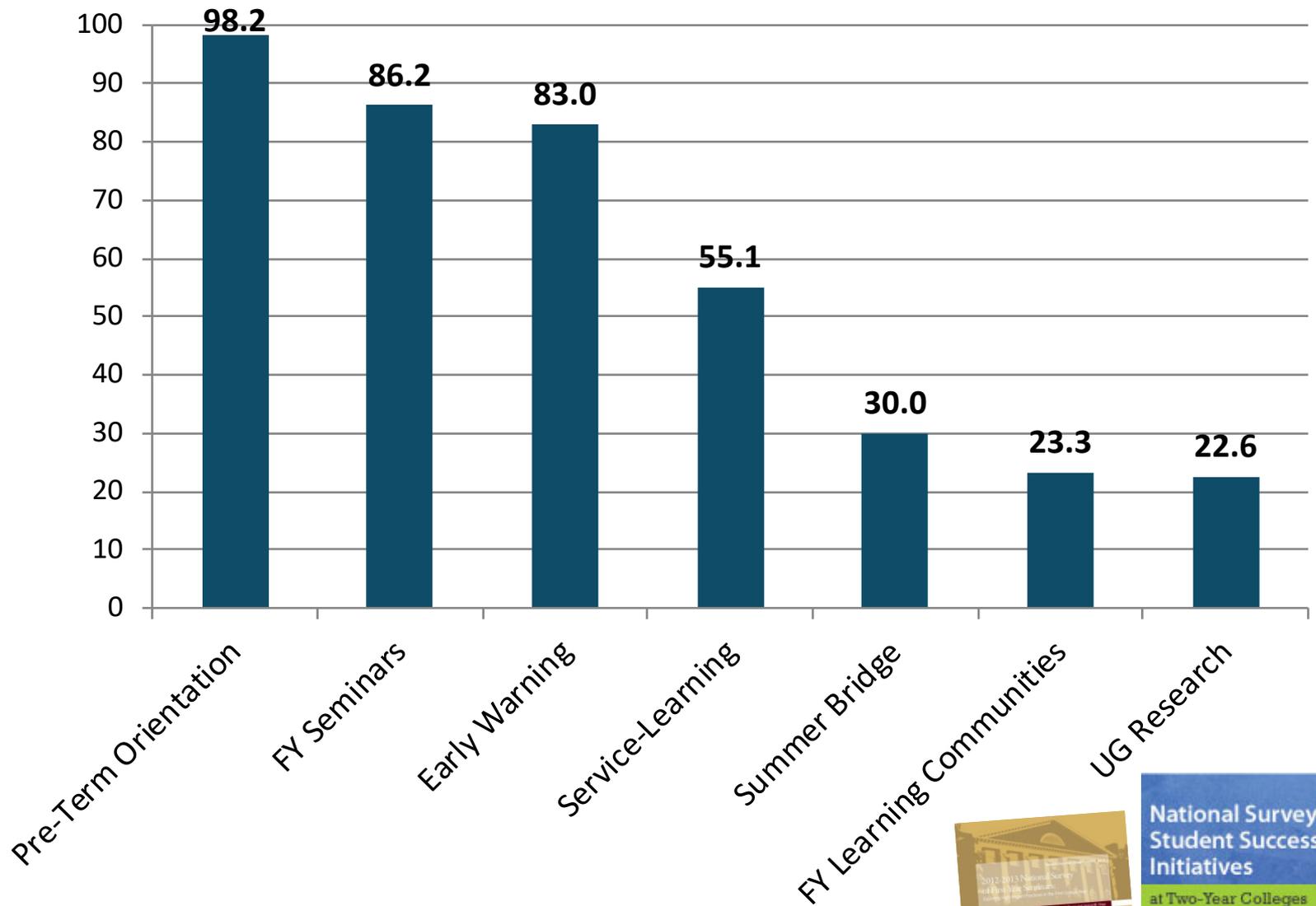
Consider Quality of HIPs (FYS)

"While promising, **they are not a panacea**. Only when they are **implemented well** and **continually evaluated…will we realize their considerable potential.**"

(Kuh in Brownell & Swaner, 2010)

What does it mean to be HIP?

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Characteristics of HIPs

- Creates an investment of time and energy
- Includes interaction with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- Real-world applications
- High expectations
- Includes frequent feedback
- Exposure to diverse perspectives
- Demands reflection and integrated learning
- Public displays of accountability

Ensuring Quality & Taking High-Impact Practices to Scale

Characteristics of HIPs

- Creates an i............................nergy
- Includes inte.........................peers about substantive
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- Includes freq
- Exposure to
- Demands re...........................earning
- Public displa..............................

Metrics of Quality

- Creates an investment of time and energy
- Includes interaction with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- Real-world applications
- High expectations
- Includes frequent feedback
- Exposure to diverse perspectives
- Demands reflection and integrated learning
- Public displays of accountability

FYS: Structural Characteristics

- Most FYS programs report up to **academic affairs** central office (37%) followed by **student affairs** (29%)

- Most programs have **programmatic longevity**: most are at least 3-5 years old and 21% are 20+ years old

- 78% of FYS are one term in **duration**

- 96% offer the course for credit
  - 39% of FYS carry **one credit hour**
  - 33% of FYS carry **three credit hours**

- FYS **credit applies** most often toward GE (57%) or as an elective (33%) rather than in the major

FYS: Structural Characteristics

- 55.6% report a **class size** of >20 students*

- 52% **require** <u>all</u> students to take a FYS

- If not required, campuses tend to **target**
  - Students in developmental/remedial courses (33%)
  - Honors students (32%)
  - First-generation college students (31%)
  - Provisionally admitted students (30%)

- 86% of FYS are **letter graded**

- Often coupled with other **HIPs**

FYS: Instruction

Instructor	%
Tenure-track faculty	69
FT non-tenure-track faculty	68
Student affairs professionals	53
Adjunct faculty	53
Other campus professionals	23
Graduate students	9
Undergraduate students	5

First-Year Seminar Content

Most Important Course Topics	%
Academic success strategies	**51**
Campus resources	**31**
Academic planning or advising	**29**
Academic success resources	**28**
Critical thinking	**28**

First-Year Seminar Content

"The course content in the first-year seminar represented by course objectives and topics are largely aligned."
Young & Hopp, 2014

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A Call for Innovative and Integrative Pedagogy in First-Year Seminars

"First-year seminar practices [*tend to*] be used in **more functional rather than novel approaches**. It seems that these…practices have great, albeit **currently unrealized, potential** for transformation into truly high-impact learning experiences for students [*and*] pillars in an integrated, intentional first-year experience."
(*Padgett & Keup, 2011*)

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A Call for Innovative and Integrative Pedagogy in First-Year Seminars

"First... tio... in **mo... th... es.** It se... act... eit **ze...** tra... uly... g e... en int... fi..."

Ke...

FYS: Not just <u>as</u> a HIP but <u>with</u> HIPs

High-Impact Practice in the FYS	%
Goal setting and planning	71
Diversity/Global learning	68
Collaborative assignments & projects	66
Monitoring of class attendance	64
Writing-intensive	43
Common reading experience	43
Learning community	41
Service-learning	32
Undergraduate research	13
Internships	2

A Constellation of FYE Programs

Legend:
- Lines represent correlations phi > .25
- Colors of boxes represent percentage of institutions reporting FYE program offered.

Dark Blue = > 70%
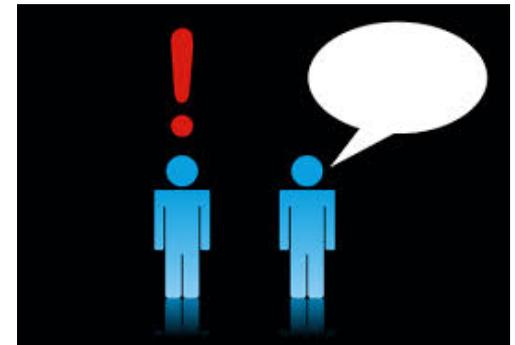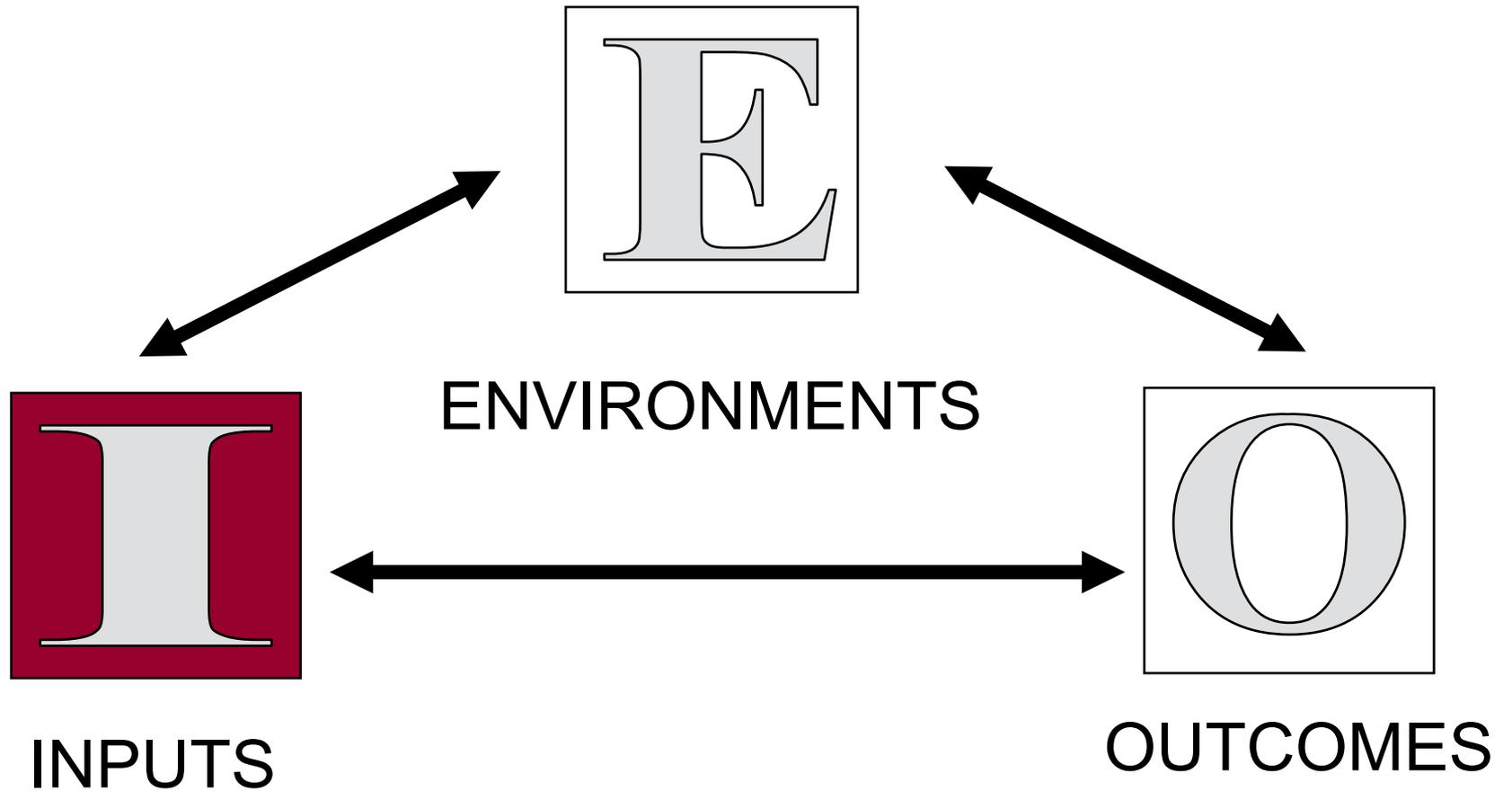Royal Blue = 50-69%
Light Blue = 30-49%
Gray = < 30%

Discussion Questions

- How are practices at your institution similar or different from these national data? Why?

- Who is teaching in your first-year seminar? Who do you wish was teaching? How do you engage them?

- What other HIPs are connected to your first-year seminar? How are they integrated structurally and pedagogically?

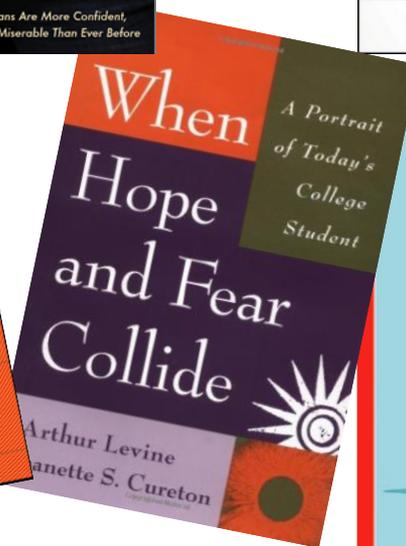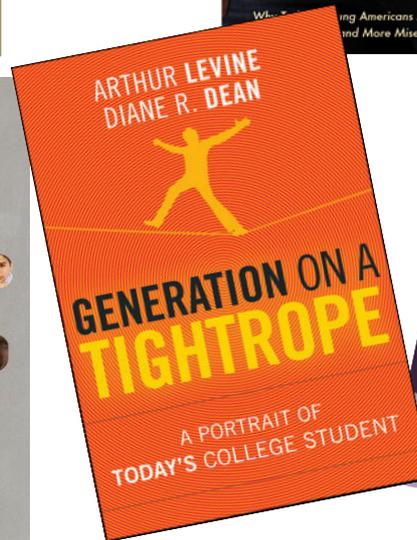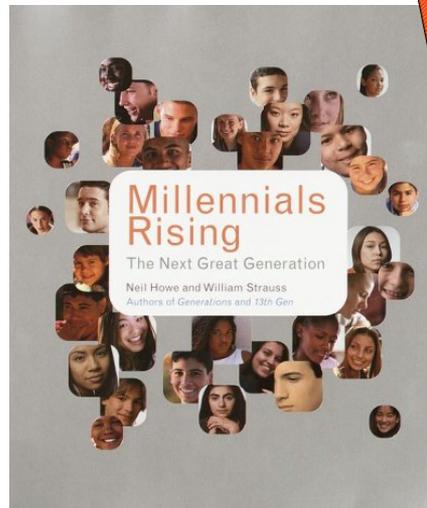- How does your current or aspira-tional first-year seminar fulfill the conditions of high-impact
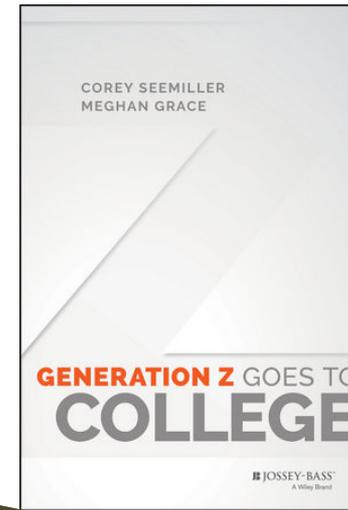
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ENVIRONMENTS

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INPUTS

OUTCOMES

WHO ARE OUR STUDENTS?

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What words would you use to describe your first-year students?

THE AMERICAN FRESHMAN
FIFTY-YEAR TRENDS | 1966-2015
Expanded Edition

JEAN M. TWENGE, PH.D.
Generation Me
REVISED AND UPDATED

COREY SEEMILLER
MEGHAN GRACE
GENERATION Z GOES TO COLLEGE

Millennials Rising
The Next Great Generation
Neil Howe and William Strauss

ARTHUR LEVINE
DIANE R. DEAN
GENERATION ON A TIGHTROPE
A PORTRAIT OF TODAY'S COLLEGE STUDENT

When Hope and Fear Collide
A Portrait of Today's College Student
Arthur Levine
Jeanette S. Cureton

TIME
THE ME ME ME GENERATION
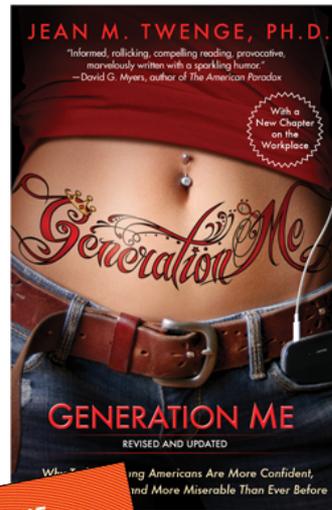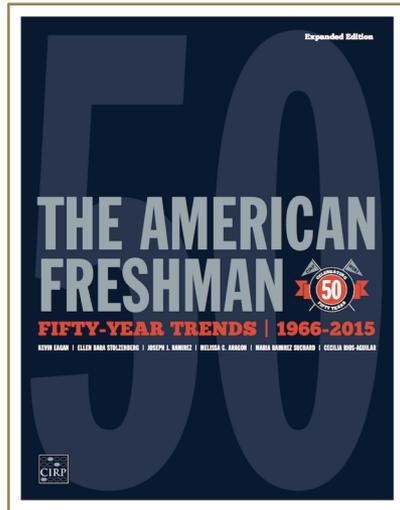
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READINESS: "We need to meet students where they are."

"We need to meet students where they are."

"Educators need to identify how their programs, policies, and pedagogies capitalize on the multiple perspectives that…college students bring with them—perspectives that contribute to the total campus environment."
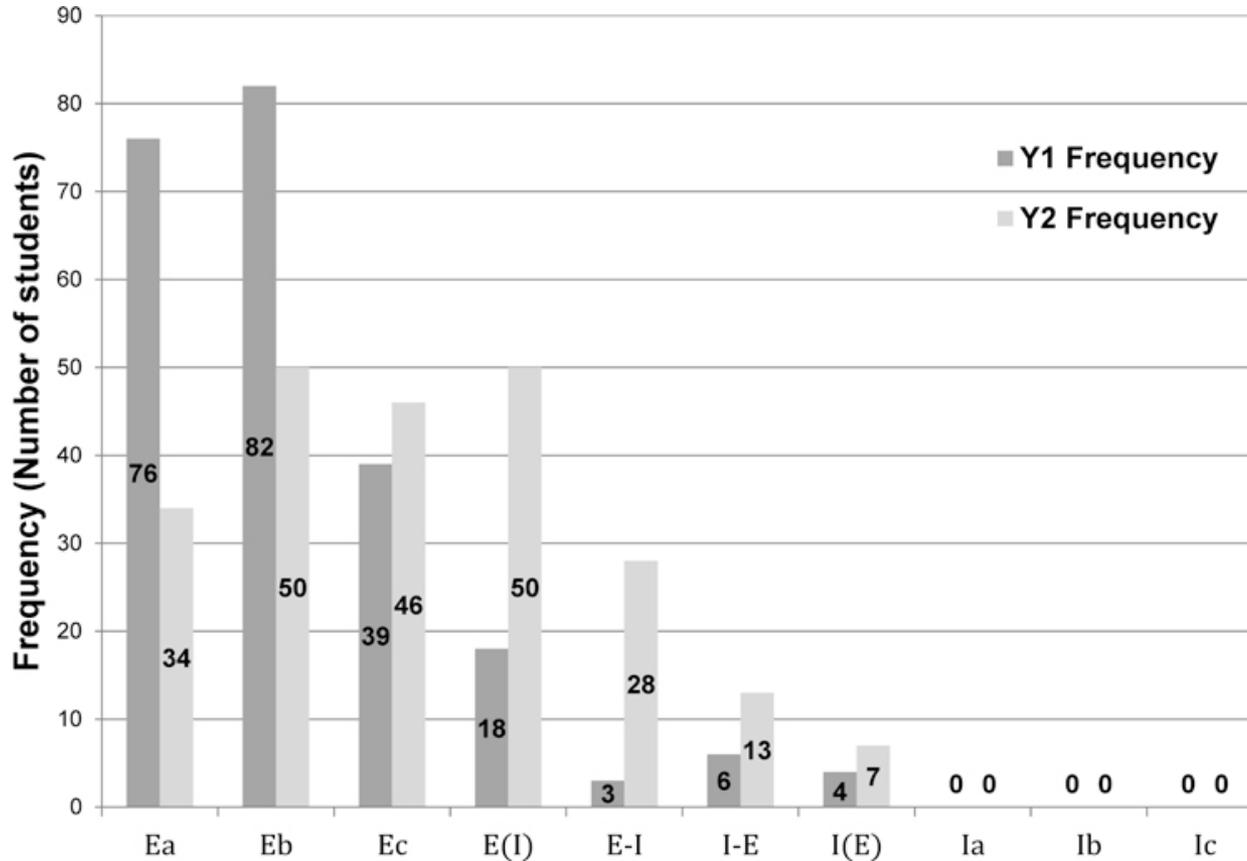
(Keup, 2008)

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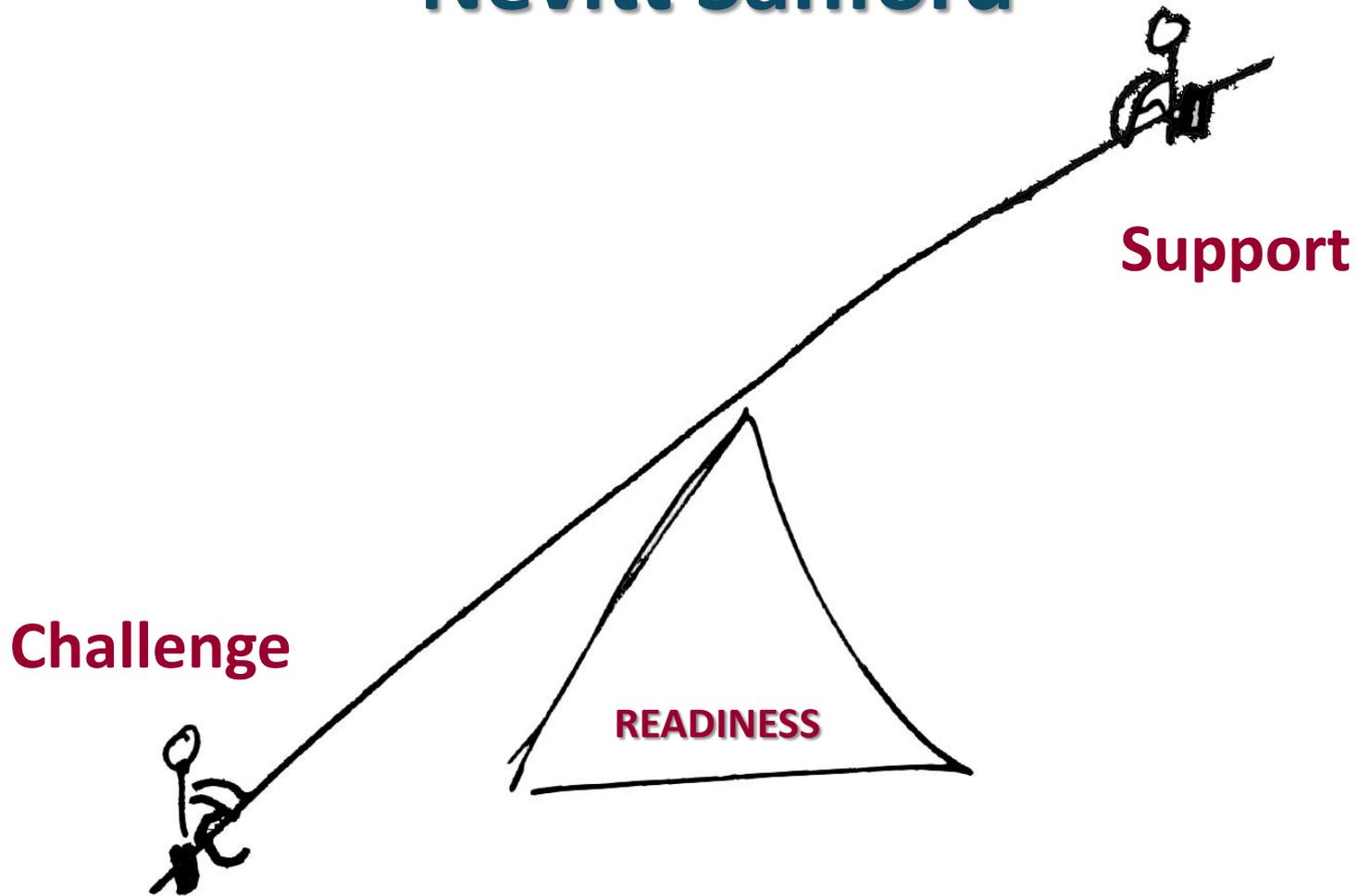
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Nevitt Sanford

Support

Challenge

READINESS

First-Year to Sophomore: Developmental Potential

Source of identity and meaning-making:

Ea-External voice-unquestioning
Eb-External voice-low tension
Ec-External voice-high tension
E(I)-External with awareness of internal
E-I or I-E: Balanced
I(E)-Internal with acknowledgement of external
I(a-c): External

Baxter-Magolda, M.B., King, P.M., Taylor, K.B., & Wakefield, K.M. (2012). Decreasing authority dependence during the first year of college. *Journal of College Student Development, 53*(3), 481-435.
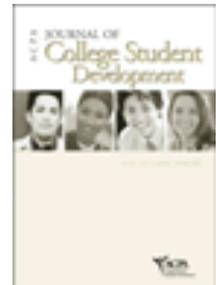
EQUITY and the Potential of HIPs (FYS)

"**The most valuable finding [*is*] the 'equity effects' that appear in students' report of their learning as their success is boosted by HIPs**; the equity-minded perspective that educators can nurture; the principles of inclusive excellence that can guide colleges and universities in providing a liberal education that offers not only equitable access to HIPs, but also equitable achievement of outcomes*."*
(*Schneider & Albertine
in Finley & McNair, 2013*)
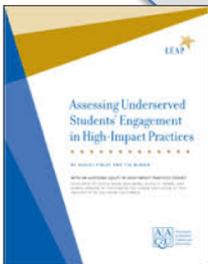
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Compensatory Effect

CSUN Graduation by Ethnicity & Participation in HIPs
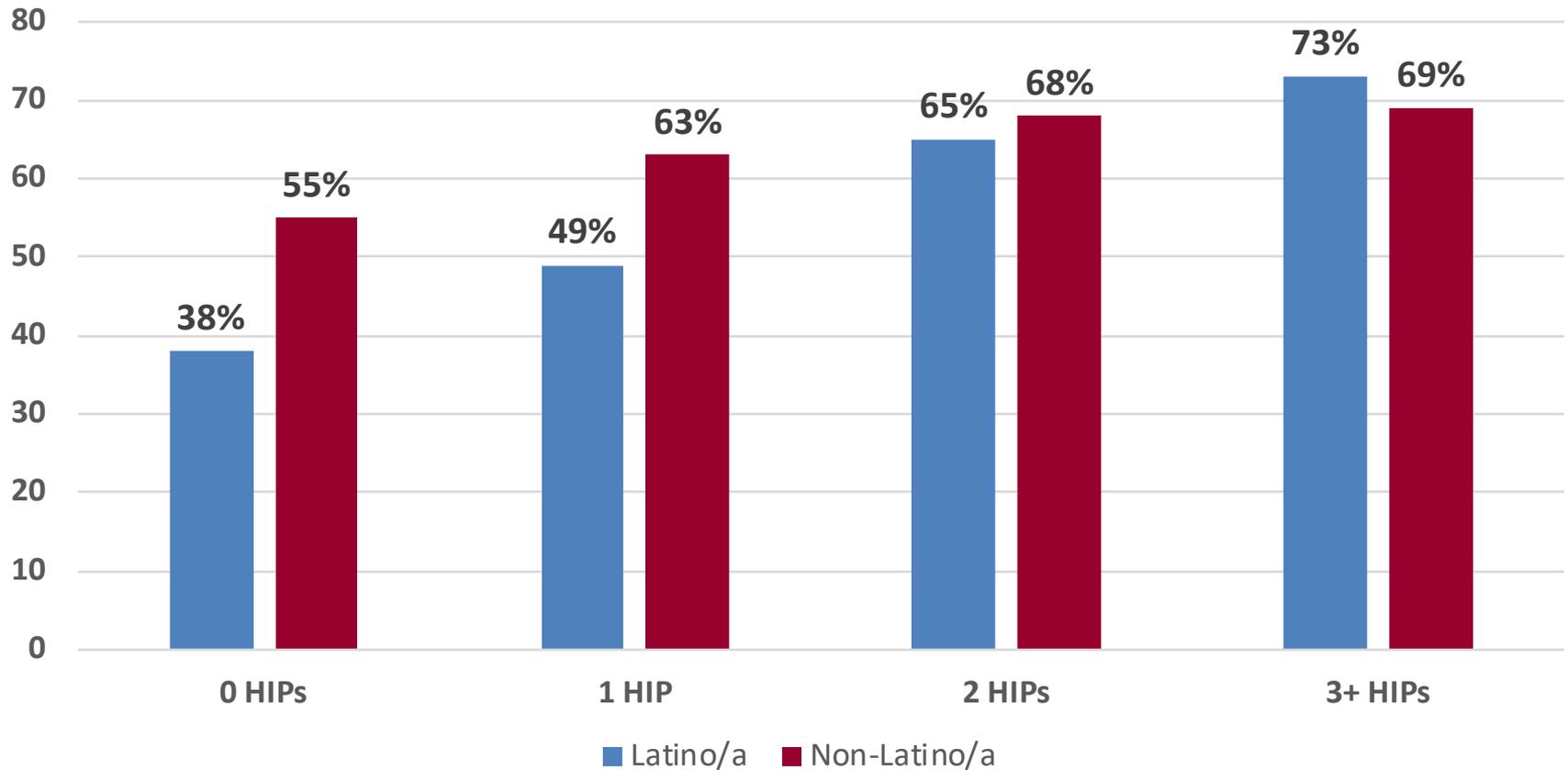
	0 HIPs	1 HIP	2 HIPs	3+ HIPs
Latino/a	38%	49%	65%	73%
Non-Latino/a	55%	63%	68%	69%

California State University
Northridge

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Student Populations of Concern?

- Students of color
- Women & minorities in STEM
- Men
- Religious minorities
- LGBT students
- Students on the spectrum
- Learning disabilities/ differences
- International students
- Indigenous students
- Immigrant populations
- First-generation
- Low income/working
- Adult and returning
- Veterans/GIs

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Discussion Questions

- What are the implications of students' backgrounds, issues, learning, and development for our work in first-year seminars?

- How do these data inform the programming, content, and pedagogy for first-year seminars?

- What data on first-year students can you currently access? How do these data inform FYS decisions?

- What other data on first-year students might be valuable to your efforts with the seminar?
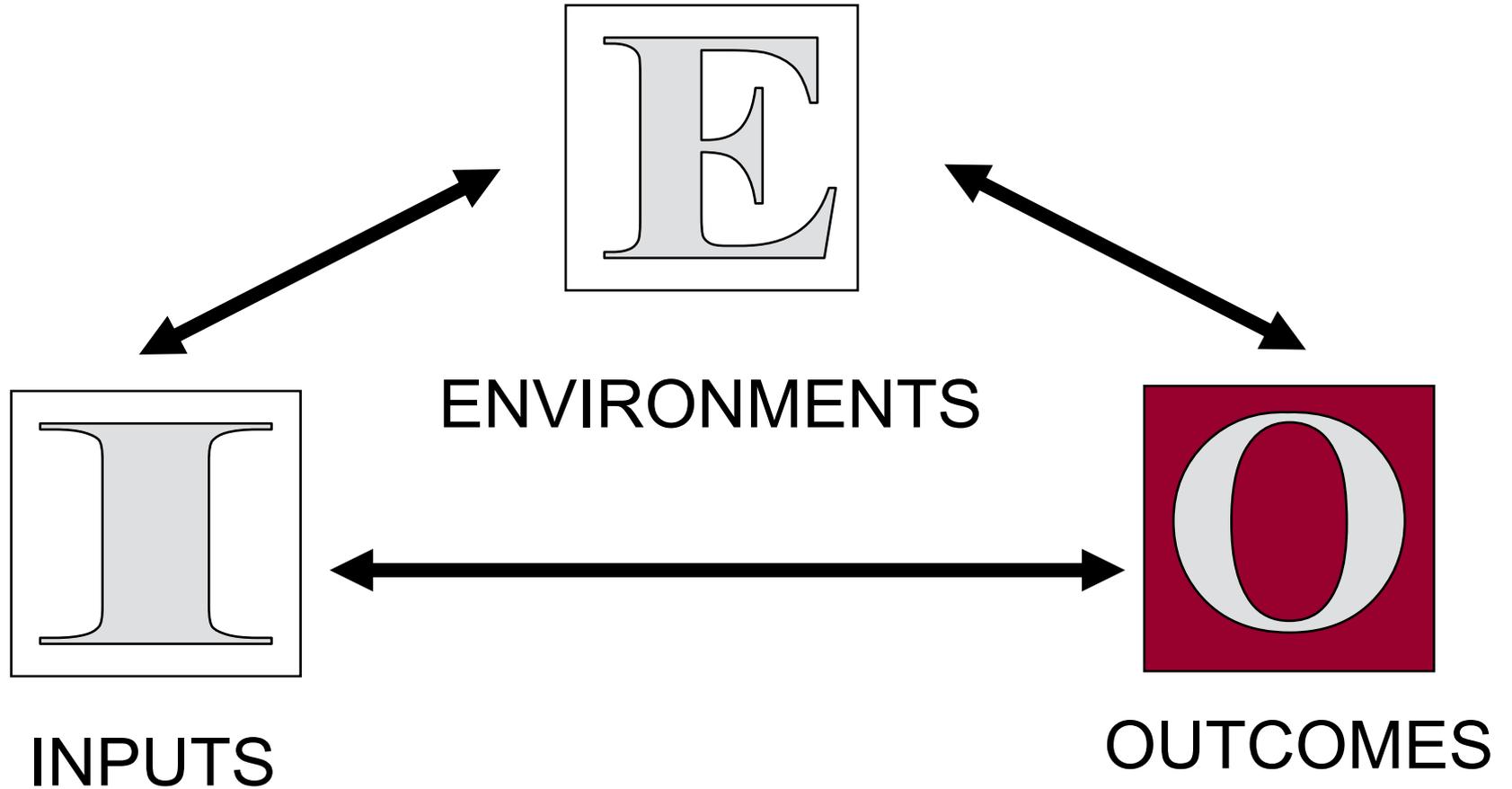
What is Being Measured? Outcomes

"Excuse me," said Alice, "how do I get out of here?"

"That depends a great deal on where you want to end up" said the cat.

"I don't care where I end up," said Alice, "I just want out!"

"Well," said the cat, "if it doesn't matter where you end up, it doesn't matter which road you take."

(Carroll, 1865)

What Outcomes are Being Measured?

Persistence: [verb] "to continue steadfastly or firmly in some state, purpose, course of action, or the like, **especially in spite of opposition, remonstrance**, etc."

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Common Goal of Undergraduate Initiatives

Goal of "improved retention/graduation rates"	Percent
First-year seminars	**89**
Early alert warning systems	89
Learning communities	83
Orientation	82
Bridge programs	75
Undergraduate research	49
Service-learning	31

Beyond Retention: Theory

"While many [theories] have seen the role of first-year and transition programs as solely focused on retaining the student, **these programs should have a greater influence on setting the tone for what it means to be an educated individual and the responsibilities that come with gaining a postsecondary education**."
(Torres & LePeau, 2013)

Beyond Retention: Methods

"Student persistence, or retention to the sophomore year, and academic achievement...are common measures [and] are of great importance as metrics for student success [but] learning outcomes desirable for all college students, such as **written and oral communication, information literacy, problem solving, civic engagement, and intercultural and global understanding** are also worthy of study."
(Kinzie, 2013)

Beyond Retention: Practice

"The almost singular focus on retention and graduation rates as...student success is inadequate, [there must be] a revised definition grounded in student learning outcomes."
"Definitions of student success must include not only retention and graduation rates, but also a **wide range of student learning and developmental outcomes**."
(Reason & Gansemer-Topf, 2013)

21st Century Learning Outcomes

- Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world

- Intellectual and practical skills

- Personal and social responsibility

- Integrative learning

Association of American Colleges and Universities

College Learning for the New Global Century

The LEAP Vision for Learning
OUTCOMES, PRACTICES, IMPACT, AND EMPLOYERS' VIEWS

Employment Metacompetencies

- Multicultural competence
- Civic engagement/development as citizens
- Ability to identify, seek, and utilize organizational resources and student programs
- Leadership skills
- Moral and ethical development
- Project management
- Information literacy
- Quantitative literacy

Domains for FYS Outcomes

- Retention
- Academic skills/experiences
- Campus connection
- Interpersonal skills
- Personal development
- Employability
- Civic engagement/democratic citizenship

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Domains of FYS Outcomes

- **Retention**
  - Persistence to the 2nd year
  - Graduation rates
- **Academic skills/experiences**
  - Analytical & critical thinking skills
  - Development of educational career goals
  - Declaring a major
  - Knowledge integration & application
  - Academic engagement
  - Academic achievement
  - Cognitive complexity
  - Study skills
  - Introduction to a discipline

- **Campus connection**
  - Knowledge of university requirements
  - Ability to identify, seek, & use organizational resources
  - Connection to campus community
  - Understanding history & traditions
  - Involvement in cocurricular activities
  - Satisfaction with student experience
- **Interpersonal skills**
  - Conflict resolution
  - Written & oral communication
  - Development of a social support network
  - Multicultural competence

Domains of FYS Outcomes

- **Personal development**
  - Time management
  - Identity exploration & development
  - Values clarification
  - Practical competence
  - Life management skills
  - Physical health
  - Emotional wellness
  - Moral and ethical development
  - Leadership skills

- **Civic engagement/democratic citizenship**
  - Participation in service
  - Engagement in philanthropy
  - Political awareness/engagement
  - Political activism/social advocacy
  - Community involvement

- **Employability**
  - Analyzing a problem from various sources
  - Innovation and creation of new knowledge
  - Providing direction through interpersonal persuasion
  - Ability to integrate ideas and information
  - Applying knowledge to a real-world setting
  - Ability to coach and mentor others
  - Project planning and management
  - Engage in continuous learning
  - Desirability as a candidate
  - Initiative
  - Ethical decision-making
  - Professionalism
  - Ability to build a team

- **Others?**

FYS Objective (n=372)	%
Academic success strategies	48
Connection with the institution or campus	35
Knowledge of the institution resources/services	30
Analytical, critical thinking, or problem-solving skills	25
Introduction to college-level academic expectations	24
Academic planning or major exploration	21
Personal exploration or development	15
Common first-year experience	13
Student-faculty interaction	11
Writing skills	10
Retention or second-year return rates	**8**

Discussion Questions

- What are the outcomes of interest for your first-year seminar?

- How are your outcomes of interest being communicated to the students and instructors?

- How are you operationalizing and measuring these outcomes?

- How would you know your seminar was successful at achieving these outcomes?

Discussion Questions

- What are the outcomes of interest for your first-year semina...

- How are you...st being communicat...d instructors?

- How are you... measuring these outcomes?

- How would ...ar was success... outcomes?

FINAL THOUGHTS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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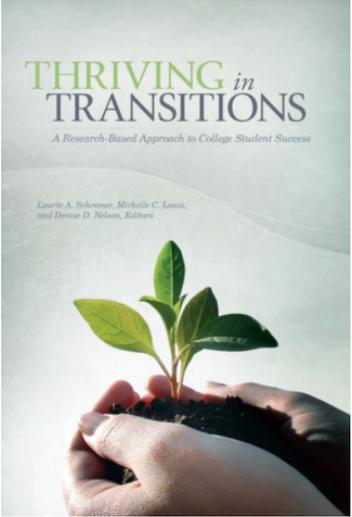
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Next Steps: Today

- "**What Makes a First-Year Seminar High-Impact? Exploring Conditions That Count**" by Tracy Skipper

- "**By Your Powers Combined: The Essential Elements of Dynamic First-Year Seminar Classrooms**" by Lauren Rippy & Rico Reed

- "**Building Blocks for an Effective First-Year Assessment Plan**" by Jennifer Keup

Next Steps: Tomorrow

- **Institute on Developing and Sustaining First-Year Seminars**; June 5-7, 2019 in Columbia, SC

- **Fostering First-Year Student Success** (online course); June 17-July 12, 2019

- **26th National Conference on Students in Transition**; October 12-14, 2019 in Orlando, FL

- **Institute on Peer Educators**; July 29-31, 2019 in Columbia, SC

- **39th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience**; February 21-24, 2020 in Washington, DC

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Next Steps: Tomorrow

Questions & Comments

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