

# Using institutional evidence of effective practices and conditions to improve student learning outcomes

Long Beach, California  
October 2008

## *Wabash National Study details*

- 49 institutions
- 15,000 students to date
- Longitudinal
  - Follow one class for *at least* 4 years
- Purpose
  - To identify teaching practices and institutional conditions that promote critical thinking, moral reasoning, openness to diversity, leadership, psychological well-being, need for cognition

## *Wabash National Study*

- Larger institutions

- Brandeis University
- Butler University
- Delaware State University
- Fairfield University
- Millersville University
- North Carolina A&T State University
- Salem State College
- San José State University
- University of Kentucky
- University of Michigan
- University of North Carolina Wilmington

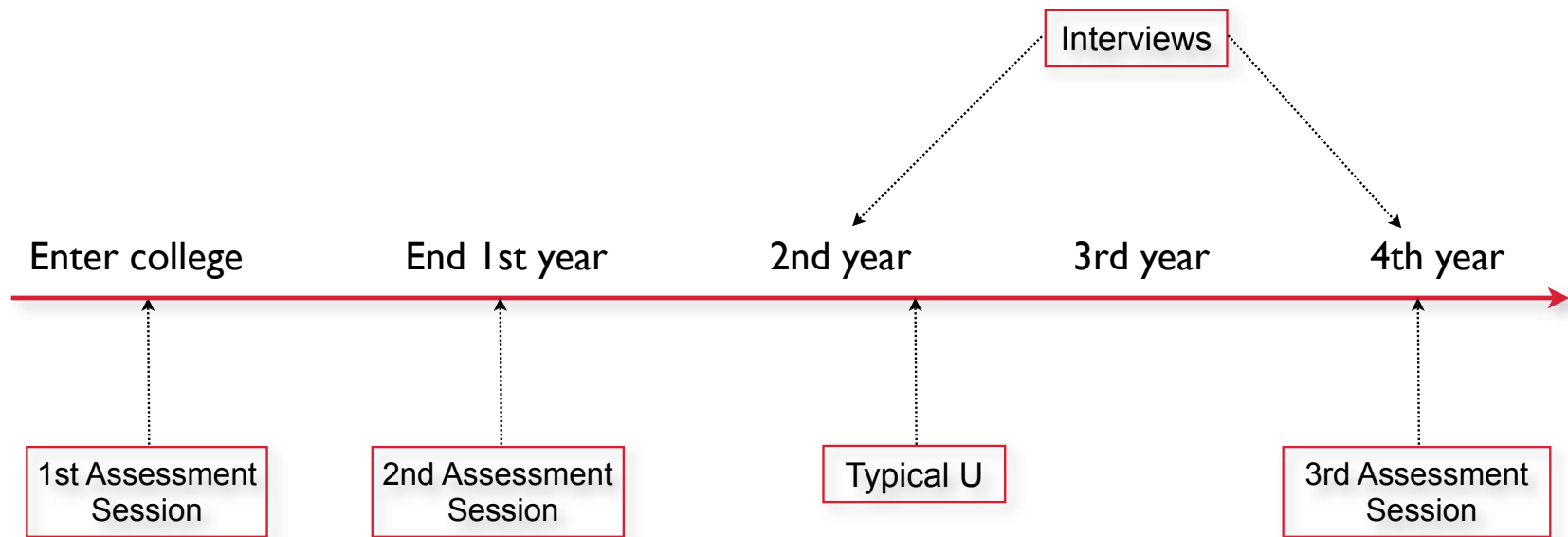
- University of Notre Dame
- University of Rhode Island
- Worcester Polytechnic Institute
- Worcester State College

- Community colleges

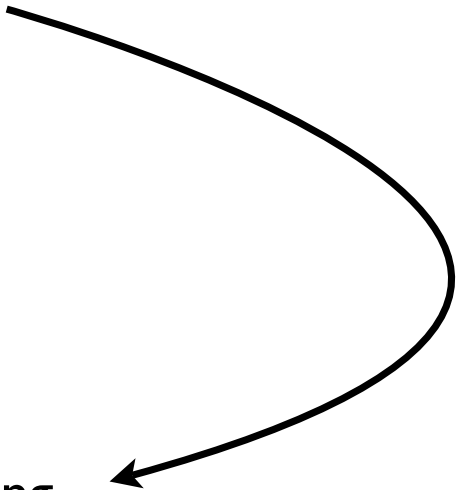
- Ivy Tech Community College
- Kirkwood Community College
- Community College of Rhode Island

## *Wabash National Study - Small Colleges*

- Allegheny College
- Alma College
- Alverno College
- Augustana College
- Bard College
- Bard College at Simon's Rock
- Bennington College
- Blackburn College
- Carleton College
- Coe College
- College of the Holy Cross
- Columbia College (SC)
- Connecticut College
- Drew University
- Franklin College
- Gustavus Adolphus College
- Hamilton College
- Hampshire College
- Hobart & William Smith Colleges
- Hope College
- Lasell College
- Marlboro College
- New College of Florida
- Oxford College of Emory
- Prescott College
- Ripon College
- Vassar College
- Wabash College
- Warren Wilson College
- Wheelock College
- Whittier College



## *What surveys and tests do students take?*

- Survey questions on
    - Long-term goals and aspirations
    - High school and college experiences
    - Economic and social background
  - Outcome surveys and tests
    - CAAP Critical Thinking Test
    - Defining Issues Test
    - Need for Cognition Scale
    - Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being
    - Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale
    - Socially Responsible Leadership Scale
    - Additional short scales
- 

## *Good teaching and high-quality interactions with faculty*

- Students report that they
  - Have faculty who are interested in teaching
  - Have faculty who are good at teaching
    - ▶ Give clear explanations, summarize material well, use good illustrations, use class time effectively, and have command of what they are teaching
  - Have faculty who are interested in helping students grow personally and professionally
  - Get prompt feedback
  - Have meaningful interactions with faculty outside of class
- Unique positive impact on 24/28 outcome measures
  - High = 28%; Moderate = 72%; Low = 1%

## *Academic challenge and high expectations*

- Students report that they
  - Work hard both in terms of quantity and difficulty
  - Get exams and assignments that require them to write and think
  - Are asked challenging questions by faculty and students
  - Are asked to integrate, synthesize, and interpret information and ideas
- Unique positive impact on 24/28 outcome measures
  - High = 18%; Moderate = 82%

## *Diversity experiences*

- Students report that they
  - Attend lectures and debates on political and social issues
  - Participate in multicultural awareness workshops
  - Have meaningful conversations and interactions with students and staff who are different from themselves
- Unique positive impact on 17/28 outcome measures
  - Negative impact on academic motivation
  - High = 3%; Moderate = 83%; None = 14%

Good Teaching  
and High Quality  
Interactions with  
Faculty

+

Academic  
Challenge  
and High  
Expectations

+

Diversity  
Experiences

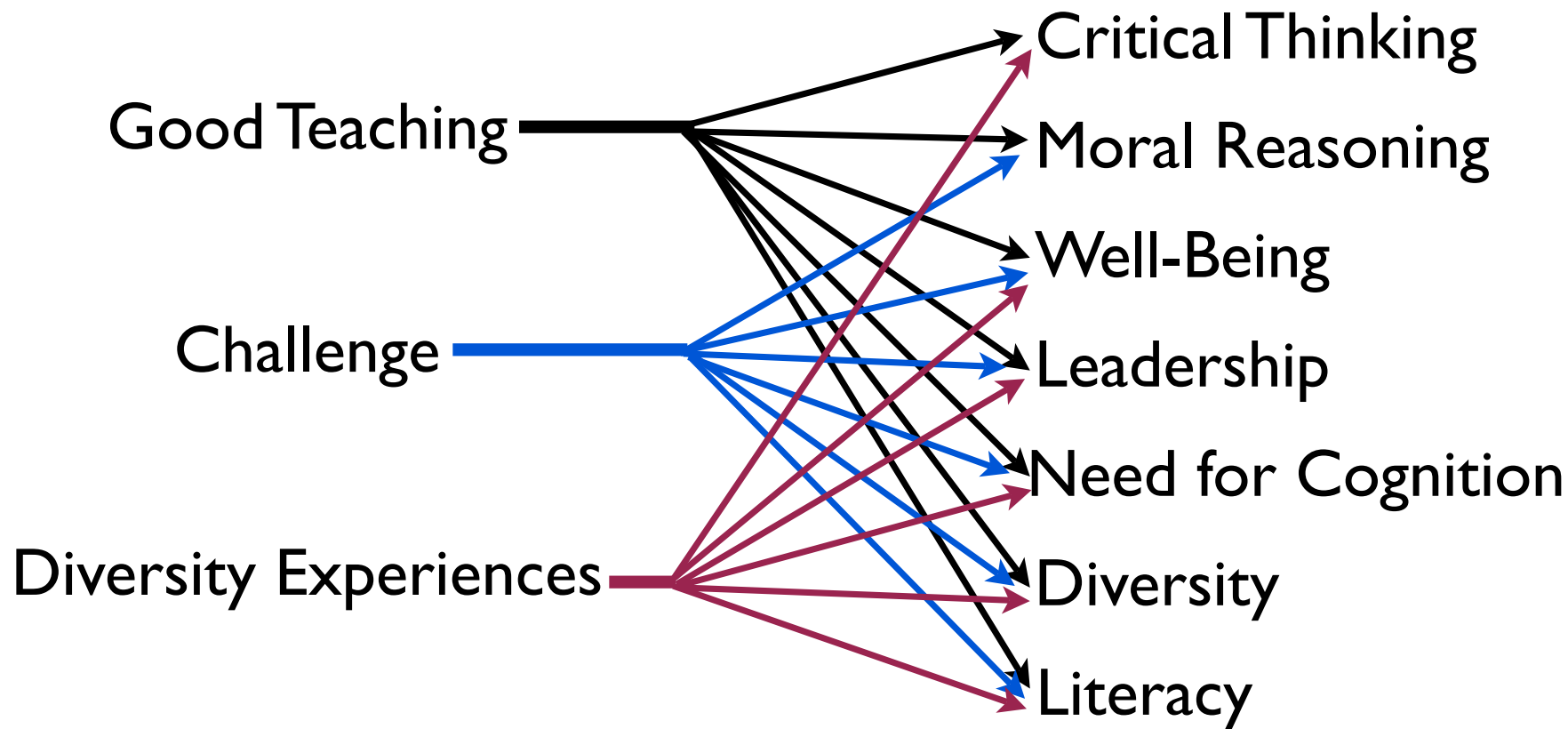
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Effective  
Learning  
Environment

Diversity Experiences → Openness to Diversity

Challenge → Curiosity

Good Teaching → Critical Thinking



## *Task*

### 1. Audit

- Review and make sense of the evidence
  - What story do the data tell?

### 2. Communication

- How will you share this story with campus constituencies?

### 3. Action

- What practical consequences follow from the data?

## *Documents*

- Audit/Communication/Action questions to guide discussion
- Typical University fact sheet
- First-year outcomes data for Typical U
- Information on good practices at Typical U
- Action Plan worksheet for groups to complete