

Exploring the Design and Delivery of High Impact Experiences FLC

Traditional Definition of High Impact Experiences

[University of Maryland, Eastern Shore](#) (Adapted from Koh & O'Donnell, 2013)

Characteristics of High Impact Experiences

All of these characteristics may not all be part of one practice but they may interact in different ways within a practice. Generally speaking, a HIP will include multiple of these characteristics

- Has a reflective component
- Authentic engagement
- Investment of time and effort over an extended period of time
- Interaction with faculty and peers with substantive matters
- Frequent, timely, and constructive feedback
- Opportunities to integrate learning in meaningful experiences
- Active engagement
- Learning through authentic activities needed for career and community
- Public demonstrations of competence
- Opportunities to work-one-on-one with faculty or other professionals
- Engagement with diverse perspectives and cultivation of empathy

Outcomes of High Impact Experiences

- Changes the way a student thinks
- Deeper involvement on a personal level
- Promotes personal growth and long-term retention of the subject matter
- Correlates with academic retention and graduation rates
- Promotes critical thinking, reflection and integrates action
- Increases student investment and persistence
- Promotes the development of transferable skills (problem solving, public speaking, collaboration)
- Students give their best output
- Openness to different perspectives
- Interpersonal Communication
- Social Responsibility
- Cultural/Global Humility and Inclusive Action
- Self-Awareness and Growth Mindset, Collaborative Mindset and Synergistic Action

How it Works

- Provides opportunities for agency and autonomy
- Fosters connections, feelings of belonging, and validation
- Promotes empathy
- Fosters slow and deep thinking
- Allows for creativity

How to Set up an Experience to Make it High Impact

- Create a welcoming and belonging classroom
 - Welcome and model comfort with ambiguity
 - Develop trust

- Create opportunities for storytelling
- Establish classroom norms for civility
- Provide students with opportunities to design the projects, papers, or experiences
- Find experiences or connections with the world outside the classroom
- Set clear expectations
- Communicate the skills students should develop and the rationale for tasks

Examples/Types of High Impact Practices

- Capstone courses
- Classroom-based
 - Collaborative projects
 - Field trips/site visits
 - Guest speakers
 - Service learning
- First year seminars
- Immersive experiences (Alternative spring break, STRIVE, study abroad)
- Independent or collaborative research
 - Long term or collaborative projects
- Professional development experiences
 - Conference participation
 - Internships
 - Teaching Assistantships

Evaluation methods

- Badges/microcredentials
- e-portfolios
- Paper, poster, presentation, or other deliverable
- Reflective assignments/essays/papers/journaling
 - This can be as simple a 5-point exercise at the end of a course to multi-entry journal over the length of the experience

Learning Objectives

- If you are implementing a High Impact Experience in your class, and want to write learning objectives to align with them, we suggest looking at UMBC's [Affective Competencies](https://affect-education.umbc.edu/afcs/) (see <https://affect-education.umbc.edu/afcs/> for explanations of each of the affective competencies). Example learning objectives are:
 - Recognizes differences across cultures and the diverse viewpoints that emerge from these differences. Recognizes how these factor into one's identity and identities of others
 - Understands how one's experiences/actions affect cultural norms/values and local/global communities and how culture shapes personal experience
 - Integrates core beliefs/values into own complex set of ethics and priorities

Considerations

- Not all experiences are meant for all classes
- You may need department/university buy-in
- May take a considerable time investment
- Outcomes may be difficult to measure; and impact may not be noticed until later
- Need to be comfortable with giving up some amount of control

Recommendations

- Start small
- Reach out to colleagues who have implemented these practices
- Seek out an advocate for professional development experiences
- Zilvinskis, J., Kinzie, J., Daday, J., O'Donnell, K & Vande Zande, C. (2022). *Delivering on the promise of high-impact practices*. Stylus Publishing.