Student Engagement

In 1984, Alexander Astin proposed a developmental theory for college students that focused on the concept of involvement, which he later renamed engagement. Astin defined engagement as “the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (Astin, 1984, p. 297). Today, engagement is conceptualized as the time and effort students invest in educational activities that are empirically linked to desired college outcomes (Kuh, 2009). Engagement encompasses various factors, including investment in the academic experience of college, interactions with faculty, involvement in co-curricular activities, and interaction with peers (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Kuh, 2009). Kuh (2009) emphasizes two major facets: in-class (or academic) engagement and out-of-class engagement in educationally relevant (or co-curricular) activities, both of which are important to student success.

Chickering and Gamson (1987) proposed seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education, all of which are related to student engagement. They are:

1) Student/faculty contact
2) Cooperation among students
3) Active learning
4) Prompt feedback
5) Emphasizing time on task
6) Communicating high expectations
7) Respecting diversity

Kuh (2009) reported that institutions of higher education can directly influence engagement by implementing these seven principles.

Excerpt from: