Engaging Students in General Education

Academic Administrator Workshop
Summer 2019

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Director of Assessment

Topics
• GE’s role in Student Success and Social Mobility
• Instructional goals: integration, transparency, transferability
• Resources for GE faculty
Opportunity!

General Education Reform:
• Emphasis on broad, transferable “essential skills”
• Institutional flexibility

LEADS 2025
• Enhance student success...
• Promote social mobility...
• Close the achievement gap...

2016 2017 2018 2019 2020
General education and student success

GE courses comprise one-half of a 60-credit associates degree...

GE courses are a key component of most students’ initial academic experiences at NMSU

...and one-fourth of a 120-credit bachelors degree

• To broadly impact *all* students’ *academic* experience, where better to start than GE?

• How do you frame GE’s purpose to students and faculty?
Measures of Student Success and Social Mobility

- Retention and degree completion
- Career attainment
- Reducing achievement gaps
- Social Mobility Index
- Etc.

Characteristics of a successful student/graduate?*

Transferable competencies

- Cognitive
- Intrapersonal
- Interpersonal

Benefits of learning in multiple/varied contexts

• Groups A and B practiced different tasks as shown
• When tested later on a bucket 3 ft away, *group B did best by far*

[Image of buckets and tasks]
Benefits of learning in multiple/varied contexts

"... varied practice ... improves your ability to transfer learning from one situation and apply it successfully to another."

Essential Skills instructional goals

- Integration not decoration. Disciplinary context is vital
- Transparency. Students must know our learning objectives
- Transferability. Teach for "deep" (transferable) learning
How we teach matters!

LEADS 2025 goal: Be a “recognized leader in serving diverse students and eliminating achievement gaps”

• Currently, achievement gaps for our students mimic those that are ubiquitous in higher education nationwide

• Student success depends on a variety of cognitive and non-cognitive factors, i.e., on transferable competencies such as those discussed above

• Closing those gaps likely will require us to reconsider how we teach
How we teach matters!

Students preferred study strategies...
- give the illusion of mastery
- don’t really help them learn

Do faculty prefer teaching strategies that...
- give the illusion of students’ mastery?
- don’t really help students learn?

Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning
by Brown, Roediger III, and McDaniel (2014)
Farrington, C.A. et al. (2012). *Teaching adolescents to become learners: The role of noncognitive factors in shaping school performance.*
Student success depends heavily on non-cognitive factors.

Quality course design and instruction reduces achievement gaps.

Farrington, C.A. et al. (2012). Teaching adolescents to become learners: The role of noncognitive factors in shaping school performance.
Resources for GE Instructors

http://gened.nmsu.edu/Resources:

• *Integrating Essential Skills Instruction into General Education.* At the Teaching Academy (Oct. 14, 17) or by request

• Certification documents include narratives on integrating essential skills & sample assignments

• A library of assignments for teaching and assessing essential skills is being created

• More generally, OCIP and Teaching Academy offerings
What can YOU do?

• Frame it well! Communicate the purpose and value of General Education and Essential Skills to faculty and students

• Connect GE essential skills to your programs. Program-level learning objectives/outcomes should reflect transferable competencies

• Recognize, acknowledge, and reward faculty for effective teaching and professional development activities. “Support efforts to improve student learning through robust professional development” (LEADS 2025)

Thank you! Questions?
Integrating Essential Skills Instruction into General Education

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Monday, October 14 OR
Thursday, October 17
10:30-11:45 am
Milton Hall Room 50