High-Impact Practices Online: Challenges and Unique Opportunities

First-year seminars and experiences

- There are many different formats for FYS experiences to explore (including several hybrid/blended models).
- The FYE as a whole includes many other high-impact practices (HIPs) that could be integrated and explored together.
- Unlike traditional first-year students in face-to-face courses, the population engaging in the FYE online is very diverse and may need different support structures.

Common intellectual experiences

- How do you provide a common intellectual experience when the population of students in higher education is becoming more and more diverse?
- Common intellectual experiences (CIEs) require quite a bit of logistical oversight to design and implement, so scaling to an online environment can pose many challenges.
- Who gets to decide what the CIEs should be?

Learning communities

- Learning communities come in lots of different models that incorporate online and hybrid/blended elements.
- Online environments provide the possibility of increased diversity for student learning communities.

Learning communities (continued)

- Many online students bring work or other lived experiences as part of their background, which can offer unique contributions to a learning community.

Writing intensive classes

- Online courses are already text-heavy with required writing to engage in the learning experience.
- Writing needed for online engagement may be different than the academic writing skills we are imparting.
- The authenticity of writing assignments may help online students to better engage in the process.

Collaborative assignments and projects

- Asynchronous online environments create challenges for designing collaborative assignments.
- Online tools and technologies offer unique possibilities for online collaboration in real-time or asynchronously.
- Like other pedagogical elements, collaborative activities online should be designed intentionally.

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Undergraduate research in the humanities / sciences

- Instructors need to plan for distributed students in remote research facilities or hands-on lab-based experiences.
- Instructors will need to consider ways to maintain project consistency and quality with remote coordination of a collaborative project.
- Take the opportunity to build modern collaboration skills with digital tools for project management and documentation.

Diversity and global learning

- Think of ways to bring together diversity of thought, lived experience, culture, and ideas with students and the instructor.
- Conversations about diversity and inclusivity can be sensitive or challenging in any environment, but there are additional considerations in remote discussions.
- Online learning allows you to view the same curriculum through the lens of a different part of the country or world.

eService-learning

- There are many options for eSL – including group, individual, remote, or location-based opportunities.
- It is important to add applied experience for distance learners.
- Connecting the learner back to their own community or creating a new community with a shared goal and experience should be a priority.

Internships

- The coordination and consistency of experiences across learners and sites can be a challenge.
- The addition of applied experience in related degree field for distance learners is one main benefit.
- Internships can increase relevancy and strengthen the program of study with direct connection back to the employers and community.

Capstone courses and projects

- Remote mentoring can offer new challenges and opportunities for distance communication.
- Adding transferable value of a capstone project for graduates is key.
- Try to juggle variability across learner experience and resulting projects.

ePortfolios

- Making meaning of and synthesizing a learner's full academic journey, especially online, can be overwhelming and very diverse.
- Since most, if not all, of the student’s work is already digital, ePortfolios are well suited for the online space.
- As a “meta-HIP,” ePortfolios integrate seamlessly with any of the other HIPs and highlights the learning that occurs.