

SoTL Commons 2014
Internship as High-Impact Practice: How to Make a Better Internship in Half the Time

Presented by Jennifer Dobbs-Oates, Ph.D.
jendo@purdue.edu

Consider your own internship, co-op, student teaching, or other field-based experience. Which of these characteristics of high-impact practices are evident in your experience? How so?

- Students “devote considerable time and effort to purposeful tasks”

- Students “interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters, typically over extended periods of time.”

- Students “experience diversity through contact with people who are different from themselves.”

- Students receive “frequent feedback about their performance”

- Students get to “see how what they are learning works in different settings.” They “integrate, synthesize, and apply knowledge.”

- Students gain an understanding of “themselves in relation to others and the larger world.”

Select one of these characteristics for improvement. What could your program do to strengthen this characteristic?

Presentation Summary

- A well-run internship can be a high-impact practice
- It's especially important to focus on:
 - Frequent and meaningful student interaction with faculty
 - Frequent and timely feedback for students
 - Requiring students to make connections between what they have learned/are learning and their internship setting (“classroom” → “real world”)
- It was possible to create an 8-week summer internship experience that preserved the quality of the experience
 - Student performance was largely unchanged
 - Anecdotally, internship sites that hosted summer interns were eager to do so again
- Possible disadvantages of distant internship placements can be minimized through the effective use of technology to increase communication and relationship-building

Recommended Reading

Kuh, G.D. (2008). *High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter*. Washington DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.