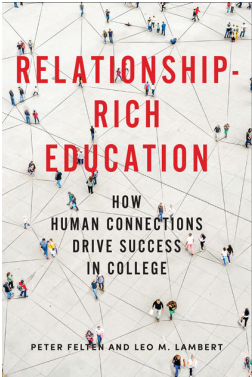


READING GROUP GUIDE

from the Center for Engaged Learning



RELATIONSHIP-RICH EDUCATION

How Human Connections Drive Success in College

Peter Felten and Leo M. Lambert

October 2020, Johns Hopkins University Press

Supplemental resources can be accessed at www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org/books/relationship-rich-education

FOR DISCUSSION

1. How do the book's four main principles (introduced on pages 17-18) resonate with your own experiences—as a student, faculty or staff member, administrator, coach, mentor, advisor, parent, or member of a governing board?
 - a. When and where do you see these principles in action?
 - b. When or where do they seem most absent?
2. How would you describe your campus culture with regard to relationship-rich education? Are there barriers to relationship-rich education in your institution's culture or policies? How could these barriers be addressed or removed to make relationship-rich education a more significant priority?
3. When do you and your institution communicate with students about the importance of relationships to a high quality undergraduate experience?
4. What might be the root of inequitable student engagement and outcomes at your institution? How might relationship-rich approaches address inequities related to belonging and learning?
5. What systems and metrics does your institution use to track students' sense of belonging and engagement? How can you use data to guide your own and your institution's efforts to enhance educational equity and quality?
6. How is your institution leveraging the power of effective peer mentoring to enhance learning, belonging, and success? Could enhancements to or investments in existing programs reach more students and improve training for mentors?
7. The book provides many examples of how faculty and staff have led intentional, targeted, grassroots approaches to foster relationships with and among students. (This practice is sometimes referred to as "leading from your seat.") How do you lead from your seat to create a more relationship-rich environment on your campus?
8. One key aspect of building relationship-rich cultures is that simple strategies, applied intentionally, authentically, and creatively, can make a big difference. What practices already in place at your institution nurture meaningful interactions? Which examples cited in the book resonate with you for possible adoption or adaptation?

9. Are regular mentoring conversations with undergraduate students a cultural norm in your work and at your institution? How so? How can these occur for every student?
10. The classroom is the most important place on campus to begin the cultivation of meaningful relationships between faculty members and students. What do you already do in your classes to encourage purposeful interactions? How might you make simple changes in your course design or teaching practices to give greater emphasis to relationships?
11. Which other spaces and places on your campus best facilitate relationship-building for students? Why? How could you expand the influence of these spaces and places?
12. How does your institution support and recognize the significant contributions of adjunct faculty in building relationships with students? How might you further enhance these relationships?
13. How does your institution support and recognize the significant contributions of all types of staff in creating relationship-rich environments? How might you further enhance these relationships?
14. When do you (or when could you) build time into your schedule to ask students, “How are you?” and then listen generously to their responses?
15. What is one concrete idea you will act on now to make the education of your students more relationship-rich? What one idea would you would like to pursue in the next academic year?

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Peter Felten is executive director of the Center for Engaged Learning, assistant provost for teaching and learning, and professor of history at Elon University. He has published six books about undergraduate education including *The Undergraduate Experience* (Jossey-Bass, 2016), *Transforming Students* (Johns Hopkins, 2014), and *Engaging Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching* (Jossey-Bass, 2014).

Leo M. Lambert is a professor of education and president emeritus of Elon University. As president, Lambert led two, ten-year strategic plans that deepened Elon’s academic excellence and elevated the institution’s profile nationally. The establishment of a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the founding of Odyssey Program and the Elon Academy, and the creation of the School of Law and the School of Health Sciences were highlights of his tenure.

The Center for Engaged Learning at Elon University brings together international leaders in higher education to develop and to synthesize rigorous research on central questions about student learning. Jessie Moore and Peter Felten co-edit the Stylus/Center for Engaged Learning Series on Engaged Learning and Teaching. See our website for more information on our book series.

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