

60-Second SoTL

Episode 33 – How do Collaborative Projects & Assignments Impact Student Learning and Experience?

(Piano Music)

0:03

Jessie L. Moore:

How do students perceive collaborative projects and assignments? That's the focus of this week's 60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning. This episode is the last in an 8-part series hosted by Elon University Masters of Higher Education students who are exploring collaborative assignments and projects as a high-impact practice. Listen to other episodes in their series wherever you subscribe to 60-Second SoTL.

0:26

(Piano Music)

0:29

Marie-Clare Ofoegbu:

Hi, I'm Marie-Clare Ofoegbu.

In "High-Impact Educational Practices' Influence on the Emerging Values Model: Group Work Impact", published by the Journal of Effective Teaching in Higher Education. Eriksen and Williamson-Ashe examined the perceived experience of undergraduate students as it relates to their participation in different high-impact practices, HIPs for short, with an integration of collaborative projects and assignments.

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Through an Emerging Values model, the researchers conducted a study to evaluate the impact students' participation in HIPs, infused with collaborative projects and assignments, had on their perceived values of the experience. Formally created by Eriksen and Williamson-Ashe in 2017, the Emerging Values model illustrates the beneficial values students discern when participating in academic collaborative projects and assignments. Two of the overarching value themes in the model are peer value and group work value. Within peer value, students utilize their unique skills to collaborate with group members which contributes to the students' overall success. Whereas students' perceived group work values included the ability to problem solve and make decisions with group members which yields to productivity. In this process, students take part in a rewarding journey where they learn to navigate creating an end product with peers.

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1:45

This study took place at a U.S. four-year, minority-serving higher education institution. The student participants were enrolled in a learning community course, an in-class group activity course, or a group course. All the courses were social work centered and each course varied in its level of complexity from an advanced, graduate level to sophomore level. Using mixed methods, the researchers surveyed forty-three students in these courses to receive qualitative and quantitative data on each cohorts' experiences.

2:15

In their findings, the researchers recognized that participants in each cohort identified benefits from their participation in the collaborative projects and assignments in their HIPs course. Throughout the study, students perceived and reported each of the values and benefits mentioned in the Emerging Values model. Across each cohort, collaboration served as a peer value that students perceived and nurtured their ability to apply the skill to the real world. The group course exposed students to a higher level of content and called for more engagement which led to these students reporting the greatest impact in participating in collaborative projects and assignments. Within the learning community course, students reported a lower number of benefits and values in their participation which can be attributed to students' perception and contribution to the learning community. The in-class group activities course, like the group course, revealed many benefits and values based upon the courses' call for high engagement.

3:10

Holistically, this text suggests that the Emerging Values model plays a key role in our understanding of collaborative projects and assignments and its impact on students' learning and experiences. Collaborative projects and assignments can present themselves in different HIPs and can offer students transferable skills when done intently. Throughout this SoTL podcast series, collaborative projects and assignments has shown to take a multitude of forms. When carefully researched and through trial and error, higher education professionals will begin to understand this HIP further and find the most effective practices to enhance students' overall development. To learn more about this study, see the full citation in our show notes.

3:51

(Piano Music)

Jessie L. Moore:

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Join us next week for another snapshot of recent scholarship of teaching and learning on **60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning**. Learn more about the Center at www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org.

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