

Accreditation and Professional Standards Support

IDEA Alignment with NSSE Engagement Indicators



Introduction and Rationale

Assisting colleges and universities in their progress toward institutional improvement and student success is a central **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)** goal. Among the ways NSSE works toward this goal is by encouraging institutions to use their NSSE data to enhance the capacities of other assessment tools and resources. This toolkit provides suggestions to productively pair NSSE results with data from the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction Diagnostic Feedback Instrument (DFI).

Through its survey, NSSE collects information from first-year and senior students about their participation in educationally effective programs and activities. The survey also asks students to report how their institutions and faculty organize the curriculum and how they encourage students to engage in activities and utilize resources that research has shown promote learning and development. The survey results provide a broad perspective of teaching and learning on college and university campuses, allowing institutions to identify areas where they can improve.

Because the questions in NSSE align with items in the IDEA DFI, pairing the results of these instruments can provide an enhanced, comprehensive assessment of teaching effectiveness including both summative and formative feedback about the use of effective teaching methods and student progress toward course goals. IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction Diagnostic Feedback Instrument

Recommendations

Looking at NSSE and the IDEA DFI together can benefit institutions and academic colleges or departments in a variety of ways that enable them to examine institutional and course-level dimensions of teaching and learning on their campus.

For instance, a school of business with a goal of increasing the use of collaborative teaching and learning strategies in their courses may review NSSE findings to determine how business students are broadly performing on the Collaborative Learning Engagement Indicator Items. Following this, using the institution's IDEA DFI results, the school can gain detailed information about their students' business courses by reviewing responses to items on such practices as “[involving] students in hands-on projects such as research, case studies, or real life activities,” or “[asking] students to help each other understand ideas or concepts.” Finally, the school can look for relationships between their students' IDEA DFI responses and their NSSE responses.

As another example, a mathematics or statistics department that has set a goal to increase progress in students' ability to express themselves orally or in writing can find multiple relevant items on the NSSE instrument. NSSE results can help departments determine the frequency at which student are giving presentations and students' perceived gains during their time at the institution in writing and speaking clearly and effectively. The IDEA DFI can help identify which courses students report contribute more to these gains. NSSE also provides information about the number and length of papers students have written and the frequency of their oral presentations—which may suggest approaches for increasing these opportunities in specific courses.

Mapping NSSE to IDEA

This toolkit is not intended as a formula for mapping NSSE results to IDEA but, rather, as encouragement for institutions to think more broadly about how these data can be used to inform improvements in teaching and learning. While NSSE data are useful in supporting and documenting institutions' improvement efforts, they are most meaningful when paired with other measures of student learning and campus outcomes.

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NSSE Survey Items		IDEA DFI Items
1. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?		
a.	Asked questions or contributed to course discussions in other ways	17
b.	Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	25, 27
c.	Come to class without completing readings or assignments	23, (35)
d.	Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater, or other performance	25, 26,
e.	Asked another student to help you understand course material	5, 17, 21, 24, 27
f.	Explained course material to one or more students	5, 17, 21, 24, 27
g.	Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students	5, 16, 17, 21, 24, 27
h.	Worked with other students on course projects or assignments	5, 14, 16, 17, 21, 24, 27
i.	Given a course presentation	27
2. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?		
a.	Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments	2
b.	Connected your learning to societal problems or issues	2, 11
c.	Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments	2, 21
d.	Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	
e.	Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	2, 16, 21
f.	Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	2
g.	Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	2, 3
3. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?		
a.	Talked about career plans with a faculty member	19
b.	Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)	12, 19
c.	Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class	3, 6, 12, 19
d.	Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member	3, 7,
4. During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following?		
a.	Memorizing course material	20
b.	Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	3, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 22, 28, 29
c.	Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	4, 13, 14, 18, 22, 28, 29, 30
d.	Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	11, 13, 14, 18, 22, 28, 29, 30
e.	Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information	3, 13, 14, 18, 22, 28, 29, 30
5. During the current school year, to what extent have your instructors done the following?		
a.	Clearly explained course goals and requirements	4, 6, 10
b.	Taught course sessions in an organized way	6
c.	Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points	6, 13
d.	Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress	1, 3, 7, 19
e.	Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments	1, 3, 7, 19
6. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?		
a.	Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)	3, 18, 28, 29, 30, (32)
b.	Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)	3, 11, 12, 14, 18, 22, 28, 29, 30, (32)
c.	Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information	3, 28, 29, 30, (32)
7. During the current school year, about how many papers, reports, or other writing tasks of the following length have you been assigned? (Include those not yet completed.)		
a.	Up to 5 pages	27
b.	Between 6 and 10 pages	27
c.	11 pages or more	27
8. During the current school year, about how often have you had discussions with people from the following groups?		
a.	People of a race or ethnicity other than your own	2, 16, 21, 30
b.	People from an economic background other than your own	2, 16, 21, 30
c.	People with religious beliefs other than your own	2, 16, 21, 30
d.	People with political views other than your own	2, 16, 21, 30
9. During the current school year, how often have you done the following?		
a.	Identified key information from reading assignments?	11, (4)
b.	Reviewed your notes after class?	
c.	Summarized what you learned in class or from course materials	

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10.	During the current school year, to what extent have your courses challenged you to do your best work?	
11.	Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate?	
a.	Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement	
b.	Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group	
c.	Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	
d.	Participate in a study abroad program	
e.	Work with a faculty member on a research project	12, 14, 19
f.	Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)	12, 14
12.	About how many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service-learning)?	11, 12, 14, 31
13.	Indicate the quality of your interactions with the following people at your institution.	
a.	Students	
b.	Academic advisors	
c.	Faculty	12, 19
d.	Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.)	
e.	Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)	
14.	How much does your institution emphasize the following?	
a.	Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	8, 23
b.	Providing support to help students succeed academically	8
c.	Using learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)	
d.	Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)	2, 30, (21)
e.	Providing opportunities to be involved socially	
f.	Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.)	
g.	Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	
h.	Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc.)	
i.	Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	
15.	About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing the following?	
a.	Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)	8, 23
b.	Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)	
c.	Working for pay on campus	
d.	Working for pay off campus	
e.	Doing community service or volunteer work	31
f.	Relaxing and socializing (time with friends, video games, TV or videos, keeping up with friends online, etc.)	
g.	Providing care for dependents (children, parents, etc.)	
h.	Commuting to campus (driving, walking, etc.)	
16.	Of the time you spend preparing for class in a typical 7-day week, about how many hours are on assigned reading?	
17.	During the current school year, about how many papers, reports, or other writing tasks of the following length have you been assigned? (Include those not yet completed.)	
a.	Writing clearly and effectively	27
b.	Speaking clearly and effectively	27
c.	Thinking critically and analytically	30
d.	Analyzing numerical and statistical information	22, 32
e.	Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills	23
f.	Working effectively with others	24
g.	Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics	29
h.	Understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.)	21
i.	Solving complex real-world problems	11, 14, 18, 22
j.	Being an informed and active citizen	31
18.	How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	
19.	If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?	