

~~From the Three R's to The Three A's in Higher~~
Education¹: *Assessability, Accountability, & acceptability.*

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Where we once talked about the three Rs of education - readin', 'ritin, and 'rithmetic, we now talk about the three As - accessibility, accountability, and acceptability. Accessibility has been a major concern in higher education for half a century, ever since returning G.I.s flooding into colleges 50 years ago demonstrated that there was far more "college material" in the population than anyone had ever considered. Accountability has been an issue for nearly a quarter of a century, ever since A Nation at Risk proclaimed, loud enough for everyone to hear, that "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity. . ." (p. 5). Acceptability -- more crassly known as marketability -- has been gradually creeping up on us, making institutions not only competitive with one another, but with a whole host of new options, including for-profits and new technologies that are able and willing to deliver anything the consumer may want or need to anyplace the consumer may want or need to be.

Assuming that the 3 As, are worthy goals and appropriate challenges for higher education, the question is, How does the huge, very diverse, hard-to-steer conglomeration of institutions that we call "higher education" go about improving access, accepting responsibility for learning, and competing successfully

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in the marketplace? As complicated as the national scene is, local scenes are becoming equally difficult.. How do institutions prepare for change and then steer a reliable path to implementation?

When WASC set out five years ago to conduct a probing examination of the accreditation process and its relevance to today's concerns, its study commissions adopted a general approach that included increased flexibility, greater responsiveness to institutional variety, and an emphasis on the presentation of evidence. I think WASC has it right. Change and constructive innovation is encouraged and accomplished through an infinite variety of procedures and processes, and monitoring progress through continuous collection of evidence is critically important every step of the way. From students and teachers in the classroom, to departments, to institutions, to states, to the nation, all of us need evidence of what we are accomplishing, and where we can do better.

Since educational effectiveness is the common goal of all institutions of higher education, WASC selected it as the central organizing concept for a 21st century model of accreditation. So with apologies for succumbing to the temptation, I suggest that the formula for success is $2E = 3A$. Educational Effectiveness *equals* ~~includes consideration of~~ Accessibility plus Accountability plus Acceptability. It is only recently, I think, that we have become aware that the 3As are necessarily interrelated. Access doesn't mean much without accountability and acceptability. Making a seat available at the table of higher education does not necessarily imply serving a nourishing or attractive meal -- nor is the same meal going to be nourishing and attractive to all diners.

I'd like to reflect a bit this ^{noon}~~morning~~ on progress made, lessons learned, and challenges yet to be addressed in higher education's experience with the 3As. Since we should have learned a lot from 50 years of experience with improving the access to higher education, let us start there.

Prior to the impressive success of the returning veterans of WWII as college students, the United States had not even considered access to college an issue. Then in 1947, the President's Advisory Commission on Higher Education, faced with the question of planning for the post-war expansion of higher education, undertook to estimate what proportion of the population would be attending college in the future. They estimated that 49 percent of the population could profit from at least two years of post-high school study, and that 32 percent had the capacity for a four-year course of study. Note that, then as now, forecasters had remarkable confidence in the accuracy and precision of their forecasts. Why estimates of 49% and 32% instead of "approximately half" and "approximately a third" ^{maybe} is as baffling as how they arrived at the general size of the estimates.

One of the lessons we should learn is that predictions of the future are always made in the context of the present. Much as the first-generation colleges of the aristocracy had assumed that their curriculum was static and designed for an elite proportion of the population, so the second-generation colleges of the meritocracy assumed that only a fairly small portion of the population had the ability to benefit from what they offered. Whether colleges might offer something different or play a different role in society did not

really break through the surface of general acceptance until the 1960s and '70s..

Today, ⁸⁰~~ninety-five~~ percent of students graduating from high school say they expect to go on to some form of postsecondary education, and ~~nearly~~ 70 percent of them actually do so ^{in 2 years.} (~~Boesel & Fredland, 1999~~). We take pride in accommodating the growing numbers of so-called "first-generation" college students, but the story of the accessibility of higher education over the past half-century is written in the lives of children who simply expect to have more education than their parents.

It is important to note, I think, that accessibility to a college education has not been accomplished ~~on~~ one smooth expansion of opportunity. Four quite distinctive waves of students gained access to higher education in the latter half of the 20th century: Those subgroups of college students are : 1) poorly-prepared students who gained access to higher education via policies of Open Admissions 2) students of color 3) adult, part-time learners, and 4) consumer- oriented students, who attend college wherever and whenever it suits their needs and meets their personal goals. Each wave of students gaining access, made different demands on higher education, and each subgroup entered college with varying degrees of acceptance and accommodation from the establishment. Some student groups were accepted into the academy with reluctance, some with hostility, some with puzzlement, and some with genuine enthusiasm.

I am going to try to describe in brief capsule form the pathways traversed by each of these subgroups and the response of the academy to them. For those of ~~you~~ who want more detail

on how higher education has changed over the past 30 years, I recommend the new book entitled Learning from Change, edited by Deborah DeZure. Subtitled, "Landmarks in Teaching and Learning," the book presents selected excerpts from articles published in Change Magazine in the 30 years between 1969 and 1999. [DeZure, 2000 #507]. The extent of development and change in higher education that took place over that period is refreshing to those of us who think education is inflexible and slow to respond.

Open Admissions

The battle over open admissions took place most famously at the City University of New York (CUNY) in the 1970s. Robert Marshak was the eighth president of City University of New York when open admissions was mandated by the Board of Higher Education in 1970. In an article for Change Magazine, entitled *Open Access, Open Admissions, and Open Warfare*, (1981), he described the on-campus perspectives when an urban university moved almost overnight from rigorously selective admissions to open admissions. President Marshak observed that the faculty were "driven into opposition to open admissions when it confronted them with a life crisis to teach types of students that they had never been prepared to teach." Professor Theodore Gross confirmed the impact of open admissions on the faculty. In an article entitled, *How to Kill a College*, he wrote these words, "What really gnawed away at our innards and left us hollow, what coursed in our bodies like an incurable illness was our growing realization and fear that in middle age we no longer had a profession." (Gross, 1978) Those attitudes sound pretty extreme

to us today, but they reflect the pressure and anxiety felt by a faculty asked to change their perception of their role in higher education.

Remember that it was not poverty or race or social disadvantage per se that was the issue in open admissions.. .Rather the issue was poor academic performance. The burning question, stated in its most inflammatory phrasing, was Should students who can't do college-level work be admitted to the university? CUNY had been proudly admitting financially poor but ambitious and academically accomplished immigrant students to a tuition-free college education for 125 years, so access for first-generation students was not the issue.

As in most social change, the reaction inside the academy was mixed, but it is fair to say that initially, the welcome that these students ^{re}~~per~~ceived was at best cool and in some cases downright hostile. After the initial shock, however, other points of view began to emerge. There were professors at CUNY who were sympathetic and interested in the students who sought a higher education under open admissions, *-- most of whom were the white sons + daughters of blue-collar workers.* Edward Quinn, Chairman of the English Department at City College, declared that the one thing that open admissions students had in common was that "most of them have not been particularly successful people. They lack the social ease of those whose parents went to college, the confidence of those who have always been near the top of their class, and in many cases the elementary sense of feeling at home here --"here" being not only at the City University of New York but the United States of America." (1973, p. 30) And there was Mina Shaughnessy, a remarkable professor who taught remedial English

at CUNY. In her classic book, *Errors and Expectations*, she showed that under the messy surface of the writing of students who had little experience with written expression, there was coherence and meaning. Other faculty too discovered that teaching students who really needed good teachers could be the most rewarding career of all.

Revisiting the battlegrounds of open admissions raises questions both historical and contemporary. If early depictions of confrontation and hostility are hard to understand from today's perspective, certain themes are contemporary and continue to resurface in modern times. Open admissions is now accepted as national policy; most college students in this country attend open admissions colleges. Some, admittedly, are not prepared to do college-level work, and the old debate resurfaces. Do colleges have an obligation to prepare students for college-level work or should they wait until students are prepared before admitting them? What ^{can} ~~should~~ colleges expect of students, and what ^{can} ~~should~~ students expect of colleges?

In the end, the obligation of higher education to admit under-prepared students was defined more by establishing new kinds of colleges with new missions than by changing established institutions. Ultimately, it was the mere presence of these new learners in college classrooms that presented faculty with that most profound of professional challenges -- an intellectual challenge of tremendous significance, known today as "producing learning."

Diversity

A second wave of students gaining increased access to higher education in the latter half of the 20th century are students of color. These students are often confused with open admissions students, but the access issues raised by open admissions and diversity are separate and distinct.

As you may be aware, the courts have been debating whether affirmative action is really an access issue or a quality of learning issue. ^AThe Michigan courts recently rejected the defense of affirmative action as a way to right decades of wrongful discrimination, but defended it on the grounds that diversity in the student body resulted in an improved education for all students. Thus accountability enters the picture, not only for students of color but for all students who, researchers are testifying, gain a richer, deeper, and more valuable learning experience in a diverse population of students..

Although achieving diversity is still commonly regarded as an access issue, the 3 A's of higher education are strongly blended here. Minority students who hurdle the barriers to access are not finding a learning environment that is either accountable or acceptable.

Horace Porter describes his experience as a black student on a white campus in an article entitled, *Reflections of a Black Son*, (1977, p. 36). "Amherst was like a foreign country those first few months" he wrote,. . . "Everyone, or so it appeared, discussed books that I had not read. No one discussed the books that I had read." (p. 36).. Paula Giddings, another student writing about her disappointment with her experiences on campus, said flat out that "I realize that I avoided educational institutions because I didn't

trust them. In the '60s, when the crunch came, when the necessity arose for them to come clean on the issue of race, they proved themselves unworthy. I lost faith in them." (1990, p. 14). In somewhat more measured tones, Porter wrote that "the fact that the faculty and administration approached Afro-American and black studies with the same reserve and circumspection they brought to all important matters, shook my confidence in the scholarly process." (1977, p. 36)

But against this dark background, once again, there are bright spots -- here and there a tribute to a brilliant lecture, a gifted teacher, a special friend. Porter shows how much difference a single faculty member can make. He pays tribute to his advisor at Amherst in these words. "[He] became my friend and my guide to clear thinking. He suggested works by black writers of whom I had no knowledge. He taught me how to read novels critically. He was never too busy or too indifferent to read assorted essays that I stuck in his mailbox. He made no secret of the fact that he disagreed with my politics, but on many occasions he invited me home for dinner." (1977, p. 38-9)

~~Lifelong Learning~~

Lifelong learners began arriving on the scene of higher education in droves in the 1970's and '80s. Unlike either open admissions or diversity, lifelong learning was greeted with enthusiasm by higher education. Times were bleak for higher education in the 1980s. Some of you will remember the dreary scary predictions of the decline of college enrollments due to the looming demographic crisis of a ^{the baby-bust} declining 18-year old population.

This doomsday prophecy was so prevalent in the late 1970's that a study by the American Council on Education (Frances, 1980), that predicted a relatively rosy picture of future enrollments came in for sharp criticism by Fred Crossland of the Ford Foundation (1980). He ^{criticized the ACE report, warning} wrote that "the report's optimism is unwarranted and unsubstantiated by known trend lines. I fear it may actually be counterproductive by shielding administrators from reality and delaying sensible planning".

Rather than heeding Crossland's advice for "sensible planning," however, some institutions went all out, enthusiastically designing creative and innovative programs and marketing them without seemly academic restraint. Indeed, John Sawhill, President of New York University, saw fit to complain that,

"Higher education is approaching the territory of lifelong learning with standards, forethought, and sense of dignity of the California Gold Rush. . .the adult population looks like the last frontier for educators, and institutions are eager to stake their claims. This drive for the high noon of the life cycle has brought some new vigor to our colleges and universities, but the competition for students has also produced a cornucopia of dubious offerings." (p. 7).

Benjamin DeMott was an equally sour critic. In an article entitled, *The Thrills and Shills of Lifelong Learning*, he reviewed a number of the popular guides to adult opportunities, concluding the "unremitting hucksterism" of the new advocates of lifelong learning was downright painful.

Even the critics, however, conceded that the necessity to seek out new markets for higher education had stimulated an era of exceptional ^{responsiveness} ~~creativity~~ and flexibility. ~~Credit for life experience, credit by examination, distance learning, career programs with business, flexible scheduling -- even increased day-care and parking facilities --~~ ^{some} ~~became accepted alternatives to the widely-feared retrenchment.~~ In the final analysis, the creative efforts to make college more accessible and more attractive to adults resulted in a 14 percent increase in college enrollments between 1980 and 1990, rather than the 26 percent decline that had been widely predicted.

Two A's, accessibility and acceptability, did very well in higher education's adjustment to lifelong learning. Accountability, however was and is more problematic. Evidence for the effectiveness of distance learning is lacking, and given the current cognitive emphasis on interactive and collaborative learning, questions arise about how to combine the convenience of the new technologies with the accountability for learning.

Students as Consumers

Finally, we come to the fourth wave of students that are forcing changes in higher education. Today's consumer-oriented students are not really a demographic group, but a generation of students with new and sometimes frightening expectations for higher education. Arthur Levine, ^{Pres. of Teachers' College} offers this description of today's students, based on a survey of student attitudes toward their education:

"Higher education is not the central feature of their lives, but just one of a multiplicity of activities in which they are engaged every day. For many, college is not even the most important of these activities. Work and family often overshadow it.

The relationship these students want with their college is like the one they already have with their banks, supermarkets, and other organizations they patronize. They want education to be nearby and to operate during convenient hours. . . They want easy, accessible parking, short lines, and polite and efficient personnel and services. They also want high-quality products but are eager for low costs. They are very willing to comparison shop -- placing a premium on time and money. (Levine, 1993, p.

For student-as-consumer, accessibility is taken for granted, accountability is a question mark, and acceptability is king. Indeed for students with this mindset, it is not a question of whether higher education will accept them, but whether they will accept higher education. William Bennett^{US}, Secretary of Education in the 1980s, gained a measure of fame or infamy when he remarked in a speech that if his son came to him and said, "You promised to pay for my tuition at Harvard; how about giving me \$50,000 instead to start a little business?" I might think it was a good idea." said Bennett. (Krukowski, 1985, p. 22) .

Traditional academics are cool to this turn of student expectations. They claim that consumer-oriented students are obsessed with making a living, whereas they should be concerned with "making a life." In an article entitled *Customers: The Cuss Words of Academe*, the author claims that the very idea of "responding to the market place" and treating "students as customers" raises the hair on the back of professorial necks."

(Swenson, 1998, p. 34). Others, representing the school of stark realism, counter by warning that if higher education is unwilling or unable to meet the demands of the market place, then other providers will rise in their place. Bob Zemsky and his colleagues raised some hackles in higher education by their use of a market taxonomy to segment the market for higher education into "name brand" colleges, which attract student enrollments by the prestige of their degree and "convenience/user-friendly" institutions that gear their services to the consumer marketplace.

Let me give an example of a user-friendly institution that puts a little different spin on the three A's.. DeVry Institute is a for-profit, regionally accredited 4-year institution, that maximizes acceptability and takes a pragmatic view of accountability. Their mission statement is carefully targeted to consumer oriented students. DeVry's mission is to, "provide a high-quality career-oriented higher education programs in business and technology to a diverse student population. These programs integrate general education to enhance graduates' personal development and career potential." With steadily growing student enrollments, a highly diverse student body consisting largely of first-generation students, average age 26, and an admirable ethnic mix of 43 percent white, 22 percent black, 14 percent Hispanic, and 13 percent Asian, DeVry represents the growing number of institutions aiming for acceptability. While relatively high cost, most students at DeVry are full-time students with part-time jobs, and many employers are supporting some of the cost of their education. Accountability for learning is another matter, and a very interesting one. DeVry must serve two masters. If it wishes

to remain accredited, it must provide evidence of accountability for learning in traditional academic terms. But the accountability that matters to DeVry and its students is to employers. DeVry has carefully courted a reputation among local employers surrounding its 21 campuses, for preparing students ~~that are well-prepared for~~ ^{not for jobs, but for} careers. DeVry boasts a 90 percent placement rate within six months of graduation, and has employers asking how many students are available for jobs in this year's crop. Accountability is real. If employers find that DeVry graduates cannot perform well on the job, acceptability to students will almost certainly decline. In today's consumer-oriented climate, DeVry is an institution geared to the demand. ^{if acceptability to ✓ & employers} ~~When its market declines,~~ its *raison detre* declines. .

Lessons Learned

Initially, I promised to derive some lessons from the history of higher education in the latter half of the 20th Century that can be applied to the early years of higher education in the 21st Century. Baldly stated, here are three premises that I derive from this overview of the responsiveness of higher education to pressures that are student propelled.

1. Broad public support is essential for change..
2. Pressure or threat from sources outside of higher education is helpful in bringing about change, and is probably necessary.
3. Money is helpful, but not always necessary.

Let me try to marshal the evidence for these premises:

The pressure for lifelong learning had broad social support. But it had something else going for it. It was accomplished in a time of serious distress within higher education. It was the alternative to the threat of decline and retrenchment, and was welcomed by educators who had a personal stake in the recruitment of large numbers of adult part-time learners to replace the dwindling supply of 18- year olds. It serves as an example of extraordinary creativity and experimentation in a time of scarce resources. It is a clear example of cost and survival pressures that proved to be opportunities for shaping new missions in higher education.

The change involved in meeting the demands of students as consumers has much in common with the lifelong learning movement. It too has broad social support; it is about meeting students' desires for access, convenience, and relevance. But it occurs in a period of affluence and relative comfort with student enrollments. The threat from without in this case is not declining enrollments but rising competition. If students cannot get what they want from higher education, then there are other places to go, especially since the lifelong learning movement generally weakened higher education's monopoly on credits and credentials.

Open admissions had, in the beginning, broad public support, but limited enthusiasm within academe. It was accomplished more through the creation of community colleges, designed and dedicated to a new mission, than through change in existing structures and people. Questions are resurfacing today about the role of remedial education in higher education

The change required to make diversity a deep rather than a surface phenomenon is a work still in progress. I think it is fair to say that the notion of fairness and equal educational opportunity is given broad support by the general public. Affirmative action, however, is more strongly supported within academe than without--hence all of the current political thrashing around to find some alternative to affirmative action that would be supported by the general public. But as we see in the reactions of students of color to their education, the surface changes that are often bragged about by institutions achieving numerically high ratios of students of color, have a long way to go to achieve the depth of change that is required to accomplish an education of quality for all students. Until accountability and acceptability join access as a major concern, ~~2E, that is,~~ educational effectiveness^{2 ←} will be hard to achieve.,

Finally, the student-as-consumer movement is probably on a greased track -- at least in the present climate. It has all of the necessary ingredients to maintain its momentum -- broad public support, external pressure in the form of aggressive competition, enthusiastic support from employers, and the resources of technology and high national prosperity to deliver almost any kind of education almost anywhere.

My conclusion from this overview of higher education's responsiveness to pressures for access is that as a national conglomeration of diverse institutions, higher education has been broadly responsive to student needs for access to postsecondary education. Admittedly, some of the inclination to respond has been self-serving -- i.e. to save jobs and boost enrollments. Some

has been in response to intense public pressure, and some has been the result of initiative, commitment, and integrity on the part of institutions. Although equality of opportunity for access is an obligation still in process, the commitment, procedures, and measures of access are pretty well established. We are moving now to a new era that calls upon educators to be educators -- to go beyond attaining access -- which is really an administrative and policy function -- to achieving learning, which is a distinctly educational function. Whereas Access ^{for all} was the mantra of the 20th century, Accountability ^{for all} is the mantra of the 21st.

The transition to accountability for learning is nicely illustrated by two recent national reports. ^{which you will be hearing more of tomorrow & Fri} (Kuh, 2000; National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2000) Although both reports have received a healthy amount of discussion, criticism, and accolades, one report speaks largely to the accomplishments of the 20th century, whereas the other speaks to the challenges of the 21st.

The report entitled Measuring Up 2000: A State-By-State Report Card For Higher Education, issued by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, grades each state on five measures of accomplishment. The five measures are all concerned with improving access to higher education. They are:

1. Preparation, which basically measures how well prepared high school graduates are for higher education. It includes such things as rates of high school completion, high school course taking patterns, K-12 achievement, etc.

2. Participation, which includes the rates of young and working adults enrolling in higher education.
3. Affordability, which includes measures of family ~~early~~ ability to pay, and types and amounts of financial aid available.
4. Completion, which includes measures of persistence in college and completion of degrees.
5. Benefits, which includes levels of adult educational attainment, economic benefits, and levels of adult literacy.

Each state receives a grade of A through F on each of the five measures. For example, Vermont gets an A on Completion because a high percentage of college students return for their sophomore year and also because a large percentage of students complete a bachelor's degree. Nevada receives an F and New Mexico a D- because they have low college retention and degree completion rates.

Very significantly and most importantly, there is a sixth measure in the National Report Card for which no grades are issued. All 50 states receive an incomplete in "Learning" because, the authors conclude, all states lack information on the educational performance of college students.

Like all report cards, the National Report Card is useful in stating what has been accomplished. It is, indeed, appropriately named. It is a "report card," and it has all of the characteristics of that stalwart measure of educational accomplishments; it is summative, quantitative, and competitive. Moreover, it is addressed ^{directly} ~~primarily~~ to policy makers and state legislatures, the parental surrogates of colleges and universities.

The National Report Card tells us how well we have accomplished the major national priority of the 20th century. --and importantly how far we have to go.
Basically, it concludes, -- like the report cards of my personal experience -- "not living up to potential, can do much better." -- esp respect to Equal opp.

A second national report on higher education, also issued within the past year, is The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). ^{pronounced NESSE} It attempts to fill in what the National Report Card leaves blank, namely some information about students' learning. The NSSE is also well-named. It is a survey that was administered to 63,000 first-year and senior college students from 276 four-year colleges and universities volunteering to participate in the study. The NSSE's College Student Report develops five national benchmarks for effective educational practice. The benchmarks arise out of research on learning, and you will recognize the categories as related to the widely-known "Seven Principles" for effective educational practice (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). The survey consists of 40 self-report questions, asking students about their experience with learning-related activities at their college. These categories are designed to get evidence related to the accountability for students' learning. . The five categories are:

1. Level of Academic Challenge, which includes student perceptions of the challenge of the environment, amount of time spent studying, complexity of the cognitive tasks assigned, etc.
2. Active and Collaborative Learning, which includes opportunities for asking questions in class, working on projects with other students, making class presentations, participating in community-based projects, and the like.

3. Student Interactions with Faculty Members, which includes questions about how often the student gets feedback from teachers, talks with faculty about assignments, career plans, and ideas, and works with faculty on joint projects.

4. Enriching Educational Experiences, which includes participation in independent study, internships and study abroad, interaction with students of different ethnicity, opinions, and values, experiences with electronic technology, co-curricular activities, etc.

5 Supportive Campus Environment, which includes perceptions of a climate that promotes supportive relationships across campus, helps students succeed academically, thrive socially, and manage non-academic responsibilities.

These two national reports are similar to the typical ways that teachers evaluate student progress. The National Report Card uses grades as traditional indicators of achievement. Grades generally involve quantitative feedback on a defined set of courses, and they are expressed in normative form -- A through F, with pluses and minuses for presumed added precision.

The ^{Nesse}NSSE is more akin to formative evaluation. The measures are not yet competency based -- they do not tell what or how well students are learning -- but they do give helpful formative guidance on what to do to improve your score. For example, the research evidence is strong that the quality and extent of students' learning is significantly related to their active engagement in the learning activities of their college. The results of the NSSE show large differences between individual colleges as well as between types of institutions. For example, students attending liberal arts colleges report greater participation in

collaborative learning activities than students attending research universities, but some research universities undoubtedly score higher than some liberal arts colleges on student engagement in collaborative learning..

While there is room for criticism of student self-reports as proxies for learning rather than measures of learning, in some ways, the NSSE scales are actually more helpful than summative achievement measures because they tell an institution what it needs to do to improve the opportunities for learning. We have made enormous progress over the past two decades in accumulating and synthesizing knowledge about how students learn, and especially in identifying the correlates or conditions for learning.

Stunning new research on the brain by neuroscientists is adding a new dimension to our knowledge about learning, and it is reinforcing the work from cognitive psychology. There is growing evidence that learning is about making connections -- whether the connections are established by firing synapses in the brain, the "ah ha" experience of seeing the connection between two formerly isolated concepts, or the satisfaction of seeing the connection between an abstraction and a "hands-on" concrete application.

Your theme for this conference, "Deepening the Dialogue: Building Learner^{ing}-Centered Institutions in Partnership with Each Other," is all about making connections, on campus and across campuses. On-campus, many colleges are experimenting with learning communities that call for making connections with the ideas and challenges of peers.. New programs in service learning and workforce preparation, as well as new approaches to

problem-based learning and research-based learning, call for making connections between knowledge and its uses.

Interdisciplinary courses, writing across the curriculum, and team teaching call for making connections across the disciplines. The new technologies are connecting people with others and with powerful new sources of knowledge. The common denominator in this current rash of innovations is "making connections," and that basic concept has strong support in research.

Across campuses, colleagues in higher education have as much reason to engage in "learning communities" as students and faculty on campus. The concept of communities of learners, should be as relevant to inter-institutional communities as to ~~local~~ ^{on-campus} communities. This conference presents a rich opportunity to make connections with your peers and to deepen the dialogue with colleagues sharing your interests.

In conclusion, this is an incredibly exciting time to be involved in higher education. The action, the intellectual challenge, and the potential for developing human resources have never been greater. We do know what to do. The work ahead involves, as never before, everyone in every position in higher education in a united commitment to creating a learning environment that maximizes human potential.

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