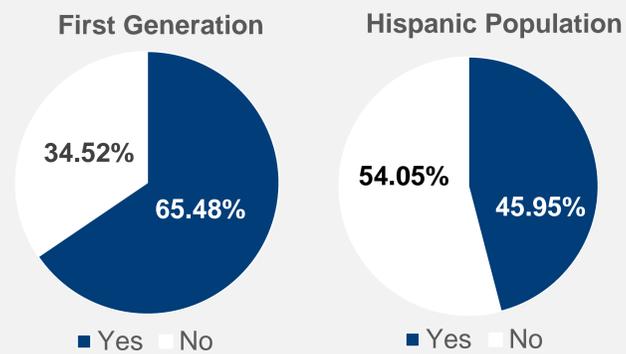




Background

UC Merced Freshman Enrollment 2012



Center for Research on Teaching Excellence

Students Assessing Teaching and Learning

SATAL helps faculty, teaching assistants, and academic programs gain a better sense of student learning experiences in their classes and in other academic contexts.

Research Goal

To gain freshman students' perspective on the teaching practices that help them learn.

Methods

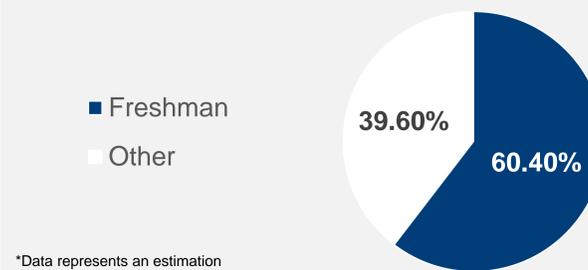
- The SATAL Program aggregated class interview results from predominantly freshman courses from the academic year of 2011-2012.
- These are the questions that guided our research:
 - What helps learning in this class?
 - What changes could the instructor make to improve your learning?
 - What changes would you do to your learning?

Courses Included

- **School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts N=106**
 - HIST 40, *Technology in Society* (n=22)
 - WRI 10, *College Reading & Composition* (n=15)
 - CORE 1, *The World at Home* (n=69)
- **School of Natural Sciences N=89**
 - BIO 5, *Biology Today* (n=44)
 - CHEM 1, *Preparatory Chemistry* (n=45)

Participating Students

Freshman Participants AY 2011-2012



7 Principles for Good Practice

7 Principles For Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

Arthur W. Chickering and Zelda F. Gamson (1987)

- Encourages contact between students and faculty
- Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students
- Encourages active learning
- Gives prompt feedback
- Emphasizes time on task
- Communicates high expectations
- Respects diverse talents and ways of learning

Results

School of Natural Science (SNS)

“What helps learning in this class?”	Rate of Agreement (N=89)
Homework	72 or 81%
Examples	41 or 46%
Lecture	29 or 33%
Discussion or lab sessions	24 or 27%
Office hours with professor	21 or 24%

“What changes could the instructor make to improve your learning?”	Rate of Agreement (N=89)
Give reviews for exams	69 or 78%
Provide answers/review homework	43 or 48%
Prepare lecture better (organization of slides, more examples)	36 or 40%
Stay focused on topic of lecture	25 or 28%
Provide more interactive activities	25 or 28%

“What changes would you do to your learning?”	Rate of Agreement (N=89)
Attend office hours	38 or 43%
Study more	34 or 38%
Put in more effort	25 or 28%
Ask questions	20 or 22%
Read materials before coming to lecture	17 or 19%

School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts (SSHA)

“What helps learning in this class?”	Rate of Agreement (N = 106)
Class Discussions	62 or 59%
Peer reviews for assigned essays	40 or 38%
Videos that promote interaction between students and instructors	38 or 36%
Examples	25 or 24%
Group activities	22 or 21%

“What changes could the instructor make to improve your learning?”	Rate of Agreement (N = 106)
Be specific in regards to reading assignments	39 or 37%
Post agenda/ schedule ahead of lecture	26 or 25%
Have more discussion with the class as a whole	25 or 24%
Utilize discussion time better	23 or 22%
Go over the lecture in discussion session to understand main points	16 or 15%

“What changes would you do to your learning?”	Rate of Agreement (N = 106)
Prepare for class by reading ahead	45 or 43%
Complete assignments in a timely manner	40 or 38%
Attend office hours	36 or 34%
Pay attention during lecture	29 or 28%
Utilize feedback more effectively	15 or 14%

Discussion

- Results show that what helps students learn vary according to school, whether SNS or SSHA.
- There was a strong correlation between student responses in the interview and the 7 Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education.
- Students are aware of behaviors to improve their performance in courses across schools.
- Cooperation is a practice identified by students from both schools. Cooperation is expressed as “formal” group work, for e.g., peer reviewed essays in SSHA courses and lab partners in SNS courses.
- Future research will focus on collaborative learning activities.

Acknowledgments

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