Learning Communities

Promoting community, curricular connections, collaboration, & reflective practice

(Levine Laufgraben, 2005, p. 375)
What is a Learning Community?

- **Shared, collaborative learning**
  - Common courses
  - Common co-curricular experience

- **Connected learning**
  - Theme of courses

- **Purposes**
  - Facilitate active over passive learning
  - Encourage collaboration over competition
  - Facilitate community over isolation
Format

- **Paired courses**
  - Two related courses
  - Back-to-back scheduling
  - Small class sizes
  - 1 is normally “basic”

- **Clustered courses**
  - 3 or 4 related courses
Format

- Specific populations
- “New Student House”
  - LaGuardia Community College
  - Basic skills for non-traditional students
Other Formats

- Cohorts in larger courses
  - Recitations with skilled facilitators
- Team-taught programs
  - 2 to 5 courses around a larger theme
- Residence-based / Living-learning
Outcomes

- **Learning**
  - Self-reported gains
  - Increases in problem solving, reading

- **Learning-related activities**
  - Increased academic involvement
  - Library use, writing, course engagement
  - Interactions with faculty
  - Peer Interactions
  - Intellectual content of peer interactions
Outcomes of Learning Communities

- **Persistence**
  - Positive into 2nd semester and 2nd year
  - Increases of 5 to 12% in persistence
  - Indirect through other activities
    - Classroom experiences
Other Outcomes

- Increases in faculty satisfaction
  - Relationships with colleagues
  - Relationships with subject matter
- Greater integration of curriculum
Recommendations for Success

- Assess from the beginning
- Be collaborative and take risks
- Senior leadership
Recommendations for Success

- Professional Development & Support
  - Support acquisition of new pedagogical approaches
  - Cultivate academic partnerships
  - Create structures to encourage faculty involvement
  - Meet regularly