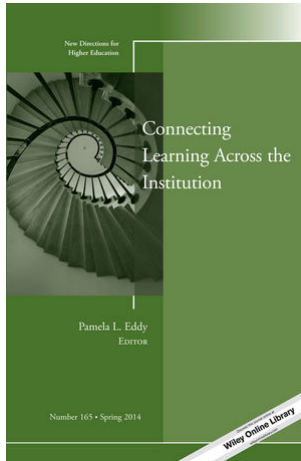




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Connecting Learning Across the Institution (New Directions for Higher Education, Number 165)

Eddy, Pamela L., ed.
Wiley, 2014

Book Review

Tags: assessing learning | learning and assessment |
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Through a framework of three segments that set educational context, demonstrate integration, and provide planning models, Pamela L. Eddy's edited volume of essays explores the question of learning across the institution by framing research around questions that consider stakeholders, institutional populations, and applicability of theoretical approaches to learning. Offering both a scholarly focus and practical applicability, this volume brings together and advances the way faculty think about learning, it highlights the common features that stakeholders share, and presents insight about how to support faculty learning and development.

In the initial section, "Setting the Context," Barber's essay "Integration of Learning Model: How College Students Integrate Learning" provides a helpful introduction to the study of integrated learning for undergraduate student populations. He identifies the issues contemporary students face - compartmentalization, expanding digital tools, lack of reflection - and urges faculty to develop a theory of learning that is both intentional and explicit in its awareness of these issues and mindful of the shifting demographics of the undergraduate. Further challenges to faculty vision are suggested by Eddy's "Faculty as Border Crossers," whose analysis of Fulbright faculty reveals that faculty are forced to confront their assumptions about teaching and learning in light of direct exposure to new environments, which can include language, systems, space, or values. Closer to home, Moor and Mendez's "Civic Engagement and Organizational Learning Strategies for Student Success" proposes that a deliberate approach to cultivation of civic values both inside and outside the classroom holds great potential for integrated learning and student success.

After Leslie's chapter on stakeholder impressions and demands regarding learning and assessment, Wawryznski and Baldwin's essay encourages academic leaders (beginning with chief academic officers) to model and promote (both in and outside of the classroom) the types of "high-impact practices" that make for a holistic approach to higher education. Zakrajsek's "Developing Learning in Faculty: Seeking Expert Assistance from Colleagues," encourages a return among faculty to the types of learning cultures that are formulated within a graduate experience. In addition to seeking feedback regarding classroom teaching, Zakrajsek reminds the reader that disciplinary expertise aside, an interprofessional approach to the academic culture is recommended for both student and professorial success. The concluding essay in the second section, VanDerLinden's "Blended Learning as Transformational Institutional Learning," encourages thoughtful consideration of hybrid course models that include critical reflection at multiple levels in order to achieve the greatest level of success: student, professorial, and institutional.

The final portion of this collection addresses consequences of the theories and practices outlined thus far. While authors Amey, Neumann, and Bolitzer propose organizational frameworks and strategies, Chance identifies connections and key issues that bring all of the groups identified in this volume into conversation with one another.

The notion that faculty must scaffold disciplinary content with institutional and civic values is growing increasingly common. Irrespective of Fulbright activity, more and more faculty are being challenged to be "border crossers" within their field and across the campus. This volume of essays provides an excellent start to considering both the theoretical and the practical elements and implications of these shifts in higher education in North America.

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