South African Survey of Student Engagement

Introduction to SASSE

CHE-UFS Student engagement and success workshop
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Overview

- AIM: Introduce you to the SASSE

- Student Engagement and:

  – The success puzzle

  – The prediction of success

  – It's relevance to the South African context

  – Theory?

- The Student Engagement trinity

- Getting your hands dirty?

- Reflection on the measure

Student Engagement and the student success puzzle

- Major theoretical perspectives

  - **Sociological perspectives:** Tinto's interactionist theory -successful academic and social integration into university cultures.

  - **Organisational perspectives:** That focus on institutional size, selectivity, resources and student-staff ratio's

  - **Psychological perspectives:** Constructs that have been related to student success include, internal locus of control, expectancy theory, self-efficacy theory, motivational theory to name a few.

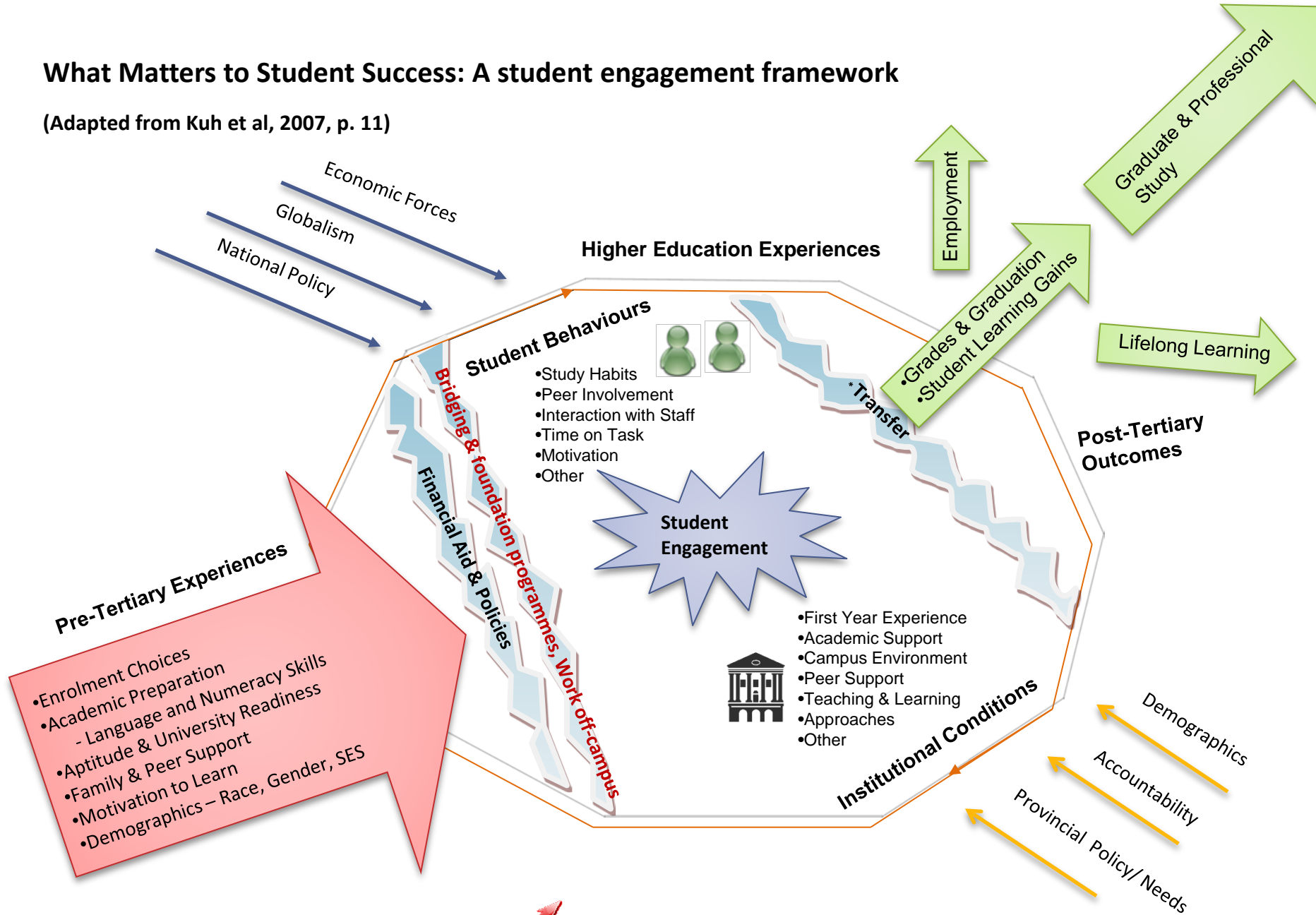# Student Engagement and the student success puzzle

- Major theoretical perspectives

  - **Cultural perspectives:** Indicate that historically underrepresented groups encounter challenges that make it difficult for them to access resources needed for the personal and learning development of student.

  - **Economic perspectives:** The costs and benefits associated with participation in higher education

  - **Higher education/ student development perspectives:** Tinto's Longitudinal model of Institutional Departure (1993), Pascarellas's general causal model for assessing the effects of differential environments on student learning and cognitive development (1985), Weidman's- Conceptual model of undergraduate socialization (1989) and more recently Tinto and Pusser's - Model of Institutional Action for Student Success (2006)

What Matters to Student Success: A student engagement framework

(Adapted from Kuh et al, 2007, p. 11)

Economic Forces

Globalism

National Policy

Higher Education Experiences

Employment

Graduate & Professional Study

Student Behaviours

Bridging & foundation programmes, Work off-campus

Financial Aid & Policies

•Study Habits
•Peer Involvement
•Interaction with Staff
•Time on Task
•Motivation
•Other

*Transfer

•Grades & Graduation
•Student Learning Gains

Lifelong Learning

Post-Tertiary Outcomes

Student Engagement

Pre-Tertiary Experiences

•First Year Experience
•Academic Support
•Campus Environment
•Peer Support
•Teaching & Learning
•Approaches
•Other

•Enrolment Choices
•Academic Preparation
 – Language and Numeracy Skills
•Aptitude & University Readiness
•Family & Peer Support
•Motivation to Learn
•Demographics – Race, Gender, SES

Institutional Conditions

Demographics

Accountability

Provincial Policy/ Needs

SASSE
South African Survey of Student Engagement

What is Student Engagement and the prediction of success

- **Predictors of student success**
  - Academic preparation
  - Motivation
    - Institutions increase selectivity and focus on recruiting the "best and the brightest"
    - Only a few institutions can do this
  - **Student Engagement**
    - Principle: What students do matters to their persistence and success
      - Amount of time and effort students spend on academic activities and other activities that enhance their success
      - Allocation of resources and organisation of learning opportunities and services to encourage students to participate

      (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005 & Kuh et al., 2005)

Student Engagement it's relevance to the South African context

- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

  - Conceived in 1998

  - In 2009 the NSSE study included 640 institutions (including, Canadian universities) in North America.

  - Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) which was conducted for the first time in 2009 in 35institutions in Australia and New Zealand.

  - South African Survey of Student Engagement (SASSE) was piloted in 7 institutions in South Africa

  - Chinese pilot underway with 23 institutions

Student Engagement it's relevance to the South African context

TABLE 1: CHALLENGES FACING HIGHER EDUCATION	
United States of America	**South Africa**
Low pass rates (around 50%)	Very low pass rates (around 15% graduate in time)
Low enrolment of minority group students	Participation rates of previously excluded Black African students around 12%
Lower pass rates amongst low income, minority group students	One in three Black African students pass in time, less than 5% of this cohort obtains a degree
Students not adequately prepared in high school	Students not adequately prepared in FET schools or colleges
Increased demand for graduates in the knowledge economy results in a rapidly expanding student body with unprecedented levels of diversity and large numbers of first generation students.	Widening access and an increased demand for graduates in the knowledge economy lead to unprecedented levels of diversity and many first generation students.

Student Engagement and theory

- **Time on Task (Tyler, 1930s)**

- **Quality of effort (Pace, 1960-70s)**

- **Student Involvement (Astin, 1984)**

- **Social and academic integration (Tinto, 1987, 1993)**

- **Good practices in undergraduate education (Chickering & Gamson, 1987)**

- **College impact (Pascarella, 1985)**

- **Student engagement (Kuh, 1991, 2005)**

(Kuh, 2007)

The Student Engagement Trinity

- **In summary**
  - **What students do – time and energy devoted to educational purposeful activities**
  - **What institutions do – using effective educational practice to induce student to do the right things**
  - **Educationally effective institutions channel student energy towards activities that matter.**

(Kuh, 2007)

South African Survey of Student Engagement

Getting your hands dirty

South African Survey of Student Engagement

Reflecting on the measure

Student Behaviours →

Institutional Actions & Requirements →

Reactions to Higher Education →

Student Background Information →

Student Learning & Development

Benchmarks

- Level of Academic Challenge
- Active and Collaborative Learning
- Student-Staff Interaction
- Enriching Educational Experiences
- Supportive Campus Environment

Level of Academic Challenge

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and institutional quality. Universities promote high levels of student achievement by emphasising the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance.

Level of Academic Challenge

Items measure the following activities and conditions:

- Time spent preparing for class (12a)

- Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an lecturer's standards or expectations (4r)

- Amount of assigned reading (6a)

- Amount of written work required (5 pages, 5-19 pages, 20+ pages) (6c, 6d, 6e)

- Items related to Bloom's taxonomy (5b, 5c, 5d, 5e)

- Campus emphasis on spending significant amounts of time on academic work (14a)

Active and Collaborative Learning

Students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings.

Collaborating with others to solve problems or master difficult materials prepares students to deal with the messy, unscripted problems they will encounter daily during and after university.

Active and Collaborative Learning

Items measure the following activities and conditions:

- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions (4a)

- Made a class presentation (4b)

- Worked with other students on projects during class (4g)

- Worked with other students outside of class (4h)

- Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary) (4j)

- Participated in a community-based project (4k)

- Discussed ideas from readings or classes with others outside of class (4t)

Student-Staff Interaction

Students see first-hand how experts think about and solve practical problems by interacting with staff members inside and outside the classroom. As a result, their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, life-long learning.

Student-Staff Interaction

Items measure the following activities and conditions:

- Discussed marks or assignments with an lecturer or tutor (4n)
- Talked about career plans with an lecturer or counselor (4o)
- Discussed ideas from readings or classes with lecturer outside of class (4p)
- Worked with staff members on activities other than coursework (4s)
- Received prompt feedback from lecturers on performance (4q)
- Worked with a staff member on a research project (10d)

Enriching Educational Experiences

Complementary learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom augment the academic program. The benchmarks taps into diversity experiences, use of information technology and experiences such as internships and community service activities. Such experiences make learning more meaningful and, ultimately, more useful because what students know becomes a part of who they are.

Enriching Educational Experiences

Items measure the following activities and conditions:

- Talking to students with different religious beliefs, political opinions, or ethnicity (4v)
- An institutional climate that encourages contact among diverse students (14c)
- Use of electronic mediums in academic activities (4l)
- Participating in supplementary activities such as:
  - Internships or field experiences (10a)
  - Community service or volunteer work (10b)
  - Foreign language coursework (10e)
  - Study abroad (10f)
  - Study of a subject or course for non-degree purposes (10g)
  - The development of a community project using knowledge obtained at university (10h)
  - Co-curricular activities (12e)
  - Academic student societies (law, psychology, etc.) (10c)

Supportive Campus Environment

Students perform better and are more satisfied at universities that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus.

Supportive Campus Environment

Items measure the following conditions on campus:

- Environment provides support needed to help you succeed academically (14b)
- Environment helps you cope with non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc) (14d)
- Environment provides the support needed to help you thrive socially (14e)
- Quality of relationships with other students (11a)
- Quality of relationships with lecturers and staff members (11b)
- Quality of relationships with administrative staff and offices (11c)

Thank you