High Impact Practices

**First-Year Seminars and Experiences**
First-year seminars bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis and place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students’ intellectual and practical competencies.

**Common Intellectual Experiences**
The older “core” curriculum model has evolved into a variety of modern forms, including common courses or vertically organized general education programs that include advanced integrative studies and/or participation in a learning community.

**Learning Communities**
Learning communities often encourage integration of learning across courses and involve students with “big questions” that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors.

**Writing-Intensive Courses**
These courses emphasize writing at all levels and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice “across the curriculum” has led to parallel efforts in quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and ethical inquiry.

**Undergraduate Research**
Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research has been most prominently used in science disciplines. In these programs, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students’ early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research.

**Collaborative Assignments and Projects**
Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one’s own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences.

**Global Learning**
Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—addressing US diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore “difficult differences” related to racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or human rights, freedom, and power.

**Community-Based Learning**
In these programs, field-based “experiential learning” with community partners is an instructional strategy. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community.

**Internships**
Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

**Capstone Courses and Projects**
Whether they’re called “senior capstones” or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of college to create a project that integrates and applies what they’ve learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio, or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones can be offered in departmental programs and in general education as well.

http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm