

BOOK REVIEW

**Pascarella, T. and Terenzin, P. (2005). *How College Affects Students, A Third decade of Research* (2nd ed.)  
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass**

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*How College Affects Students* is one of the most authoritative and most cited publications in student affairs. It is authored by Ernest T. Pascarella and Patrick T. Terenzini. At the time of writing, Pascarella served as professor of educational psychology at the University of Illinois, Chicago and as an associate director for research at the Center for Instructional Development at Syracuse University. The main focus of his research deals with the impact of college on students and student persistence in higher education. Terenzini served as professor of higher education and senior scientist at the Center for the Study of Higher Education at the Pennsylvania State University. He was also professor of higher education at the Institute of Higher Education of the University of Georgia from 1986 to 1989 and an assistant to the president for planning and director of institutional research at the State University of New York, Albany. He has received the Sidney Suslow Award and two Forum Best Paper Awards from the Association for Institutional Research.

In 1991 Pascarella and Terenzini published a first volume of the book entitled *How College Affects Students*. The original publication reviewed a vast and complex body of existing literature – from the 1960s through to the late 1980s – that focused on trends in college student development in American higher education. In the American context, “college” refers to undergraduate studies at university level and does not refer to technical and vocational (further education) colleges as is the case in South Africa.

In 2005 Pascarella and Terenzini released an updated and expanded second volume of the book, which reviews what has been learnt in the last decade and introduces more theories involving the overall effects of college on students. It also provides a more detailed view concerning the factors that may play a role in how life at university affects students’ development. The structure of the second edition does not differ much from the 1991 edition; the sections of the original have been retained. It builds on existing knowledge obtained in the first edition and looks at various kinds of effects of college focused on the same six questions that were posed in the 1991 version. These questions deal with change during college, the net effects of college (which deals with how changes in students can be attributed to the college experience), between-college effects, within-college effects,

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conditional effects of college (which deals with how the effects of college vary among different types of students) and the long-term effects of college. However, provided that higher education has changed since 1991, the focus of the research in the second volume has also been adjusted; key among those changes is the composition of the student body in undergraduate education, which has become more diverse. Research was also done focusing on aspects such as teaching and learning; and how students' out-of-class involvement impacts on their development, and this is reflected in the second volume.

It would be impossible to discuss the wealth of knowledge contained in the book. Generally speaking, the book provides an expanded view of how student learning takes place within higher education and is therefore invaluable. Within each chapter, the authors provide a brief summary of the findings in the 1991 work and thereafter provide the new findings, which is helpful to the reader as it assists both in making comparisons and identifying how trends have changed since 1991. Each chapter ends with a summary dealing with the six questions mentioned above and places the new findings in context.

In particular, chapters 1 and 2 provide an introduction, conceptual framework and overview of the volume. Chapters 3 to 9 address student outcomes, whereby each chapter focuses on a specific college outcome. The outcomes that are addressed include students' personal growth and change; their cognitive skills and intellectual growth; verbal and subject matter competency; moral development; career and economic impacts; psychosocial change during college; educational attainment and persistence; as well as attitudes and values. These chapters focus on students' overall development as well as the interconnectedness of students' in- and out-of-class experiences as part of this development. One of the most important conclusions drawn from these chapters is that students have to be fully engaged in college life in order to gain the most benefit from the college experience. This engagement refers to ways in which students are involved in various activities during the undergraduate experience, especially the time and effort they put into their education; it deals with how they interact with their peers and teaching staff and to what extent the university provides a conducive environment. It also looks at innovative teaching approaches that move away from the idea of simply having teacher-centred lectures and instead support active engagement of students in the learning and teaching process. Chapter 10 deals with the quality of life of students after college, while chapter 11 provides a summary of how college affects students. Chapter 12 discusses the implications that there may be for policy, practice and research. It looks at new directions for research, research designs, analytical approaches, as well as to the implications of research for public policy and institutional practices and policy.

There are many sections in this book that are relevant to African higher education. These include diversity issues, new information technologies, access to higher education and programme completion, teaching and learning issues as well as the impact of organisational structures and institutional policy. A number of universities in Africa have started to conduct student engagement/student experience surveys. This volume provides the theoretical underpinning for it while outlining how these theories were arrived at in the first place. However, a potential weak point of the book lies in its organisation. The

book is organised in terms of the different types of college outcomes (such as cognitive development, values and career). Instead, it could have focused on what it is in the college experience that may have an influence on these outcomes, such as a students' choice of major subject or particular sets of activities and best practices. Another disadvantage is that the book focuses on colleges in the United States that offer liberal, undergraduate degrees. Insofar, it is bound to ignore the contextual issues and the fact that the book attracts an audience beyond the borders of the United States where, as is typical in most African higher education, students enrol in career-specific undergraduate degree programmes which do not necessarily offer the same potential for developing the general student attributes and skills mentioned in the book.

Overall, Pascarella and Terenzini's second volume is a key reference for those wanting to learn more about how undergraduate education impacts student development. The findings of a large number of studies are synthesised and discussed and the book thus provides an important contribution to the field of higher education studies and student affairs. Moreover, for professionals involved in student affairs and others responsible for student learning the book provides a starting point to decide how and where to focus their attention and practice in relation to improving the attainment of particular college outcomes.

