

Intro

To support student success, High Impact Practices (HIPs) are integrated into each of my psychology courses. As part of the Spring / Summer 2025 HIPs cohort, my goal was to create a new HIPs project for students in my Intro to General Psychology (PSYC 1101) course. The project was focused on the sleep unit (covered in Chapter 4: States of Consciousness during weeks 4-5) and was designed to give students a taste of undergraduate research (applying “data” to real-world problems). To reinforce learning, students were prompted to make connections to relevant new material throughout the semester (e.g., in Chapter 6: Learning; Chapter 8: Memory; Chapter 15: Psychological Disorders).



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Sleep: Research & Practical Applications

- **Sleep Diary:** A week prior to covering material, students “collect data” on their own sleep habits for a minimum of one week, using the National Sleep Foundation’s sleep diary.
- **Assigned readings:** These readings cover concepts, theories, and research related to 1) Sleep and why we sleep; 2) Stages of sleep; and 3) Sleep problems and disorders.
- **In-Class Film & Discussion:**
 - National Geographic’s (2014) *Sleepless in America*
- **Sleep Project:** Students developed a 5-slide presentation (with APA style citation) that covered:
 - How much sleep is recommended for you, given your age?
 - What does the research say about the physical and mental health benefits of quality sleep, and consequences of sleep debt?
 - What did you learn about evidence-based strategies for quality sleep?
 - Reflect on what you learned about your sleep habits.



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HIPs Elements

A number of HIPs Elements were used to support my instruction and student success:

- Frequent, timely, and constructive feedback;
- Opportunities to discover relevance of learning through real-world applications;
- Periodic, structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning; and
- Significant investment of time and effort by students over an extended period of time.

Sample student reflections:

“This assignment was very meaningful to me because I hadn’t been getting the right amount of sleep and wasn’t too familiar on the ways to improve that...This assignment really opened my eyes up to how important sleep is in day to day life and that it should be talked about more...”

“I really liked this assignment; it helped me to understand the points in my sleep schedule that I need to change and helped me to understand that sleep is actually really important for my mental and physical health.”