

**IOWA**  
**GROW**  
Guided Reflection on Work

**IOWA GROW<sup>®</sup>**  
**PILOT INFORMATION**

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## 2009-2010 Initial Survey and Pilot Details

In 2009, the Division of Student Life created a survey to gather initial data about how student employment may help students make connections to academics and careers or develop key skills for student success and the extent to which employers encourage students to make connections between work and life as a student. We learned that few supervisors were serving as “connection makers” to help students integrate their learning on the job with learning in other aspects of their lives. We developed a pilot of supervisor-student employee structured conversations focused on increasing reflection and transfer of learning across contexts. We identified and recruited a small group of supervisors in the Division to test the intervention for us.

### PILOT DETAILS:

Supervisors from Student Health, University Housing, and the Iowa Memorial Union were recruited to participate in the pilot project. Seven supervisors and 30 student employees participated. Jobs of student employee pilot participants included:

- **Iowa Memorial Union**
  - Campus Information Center: Information Specialist; Special Project Assistant
  - University Bookstore: Student Clerical Worker
  - IMU Business Office: Cashier Assistant
- **Student Health**
  - Health Iowa: Health Promotion Assistant
- **University Housing**
  - IT Support Staff
  - Tutors
  - Residence Hall Desk Staff

Supervisors received one hour of training on the outcomes of student employment, results from the previous year’s Student Employment Survey, and the background on the role supervisors can play in helping students make connections between work and academics. Expectations for the pilot project were also shared. Supervisors were asked to have two structured conversations with each of their student employees during the spring semester. They recorded the student’s answers to five questions and submitted completed questionnaires to the pilot project team.

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## 2009-2010 Initial Survey and Pilot Results

There was a 26% response rate for non-pilot students, and a 45% response rate for pilot students. 77% of non-GROW participants said they “rarely” or “never” had conversations with their supervisors about connecting work to academics.

Outcome *=significant difference for GROW vs. non-GROW; p<.05	% agree/strongly agree		Mean	
	GROW	Non-GROW	GROW	Non-GROW
My supervisor helps me make connections between my work and my life as a student.*	77%	46%	4.1	3.3
My job has helped prepare me for the world of full-time employment.*	54%	43%	3.6	3.1
My job has helped me improve my written communication skills.*	69%	17%	4.0	2.6
I can see connections between my job and major/coursework.*	69%	29%	3.7	2.7
My job has helped me learn about career options.*	54%	30%	3.6	2.9
My job has helped me develop more effective time management skills.*	100%	77%	4.3	3.9
My job has helped me improve my oral communication skills.*	100%	68%	4.8	3.8
My job has helped me develop conflict resolution skills.	69%	59%	3.9	3.6
Because of my job, I am able to work effectively with individuals with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and cultures.	83%	75%	4.3	4.0
My job has helped me use critical thinking skills to form opinions and solve problems.	77%	56%	4.0	3.4

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## 2009-2010 Initial Survey and Pilot Results

**Please describe one specific way your work as a student employee has positively influenced your experience at the UI.**

Themes (most to least frequently mentioned)

<b>GROW Participants</b>	<b>Non-GROW Participants</b>
Forming relationships	Forming relationships
Feeling satisfied with job contribution	Gaining time management skills
Gaining knowledge of self	Earning money
Gaining work-related knowledge and skills	Gaining work-related knowledge and skills

**Please describe one specific skill you have learned as a student employee that contributes to your success as a UI student.**

Themes (most to least frequently mentioned)

<b>GROW Participants</b>	<b>Non-GROW Participants</b>
Communication skills	Time management skills
Specific skills (e.g., software, cooking, etc.)	Communication skills
Time management skills	Relationship skills
General work skills	General work skills
Relationship skills	Specific skills (e.g., software, cooking, etc.)
No skills contribute to student success	No skills contribute to student success
Problem solving skills	Problem solving skills

# IOWA GROW®:

## 2009-2010 Initial Survey and Pilot Results

### What are you learning here at work that is helping you in school?

Themes (most to least frequently mentioned)

Relationship skills
Responsibility
Understand others' learning styles/needs
Problem solving skills
Communication skills

### What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?

Themes (most to least frequently mentioned)

Advance knowledge (content learned in class that can be applied on the jobs)
Teaching methods
Relationship skills
Problem solving skills
Responsibility and time management
Study skills

### Can you give me a couple examples of things that you are learning here at work that you will be using in your future profession?

Themes (most to least frequently mentioned)

Relationship skills
Communication skills
Teaching methods
Responsibility and time management
Problem solving

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## 2010-2011 Initial Survey and Pilot Results

In 2010-2011, the Division of Student Life expanded the project to include additional supervisors and students, with a particular focus on “harder to connect” jobs and testing small group conversations for supervisors with a large number of student employees.

### PILOT DETAILS:

Eleven Division of Student Life supervisors and 209 students participated in the phase two pilot. Jobs of student employee phase two pilot participants included:

- **Iowa Memorial Union**
  - Campus Information Center: Information Specialist; Special Project Assistant
  - Guest and Event Services: Student Custodians: Event Staff (new)
  - University Bookstore: Student Clerical Worker
  - IMU Business Office: Cashier Assistant
- **Student Health**
  - Health Iowa: Health Promotion Assistant
  - Business Office (new)
- **University Housing**
  - IT Support Staff
  - Tutors
  - Residence Hall Desk Staff
  - Marketplace (Food Service) (new)
- **University Libraries** (new)

Supervisors received one hour of training on the outcomes of student employment, results from the previous year’s Student Employment Survey, and the background on the role supervisors can play in helping students make connections between work and academics. Expectations for the pilot project were also shared. Supervisors were asked to have two structured conversations with each of their student employees during the spring semester. They recorded the student’s answers to five questions and submitted completed questionnaires to the pilot project team.

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## 2010-2011 Phase Two Pilot Details

### PHASE TWO PILOT CHANGES:

Group conversations were piloted and found to have the same positive benefits as individual conversations. Dyads, triads, and groups up to eight individuals were piloted.

Students in harder to connect jobs (e.g., custodians, event staff, business office) benefitted from the conversations and demonstrated positive outcomes compared to non-pilot participants.

Attempted a pilot with the UI Libraries, but they did not adequately train supervisors and some supervisors sent the questions out to students as a “survey” rather than having the conversation. This was a lesson learned for us, in the need to ensure fidelity of the intervention.



# IOWA GROW®:

## 2010-2011 Phase Two Pilot Results

There was a 34% response rate for non-pilot students, and a 49% response rate for pilot students. 33% of non-pilot participants said they “sometimes” or “frequently” had conversations with their supervisors about connecting work to academics compared with 62% of pilot participants.

Outcome *=significant difference for GROW vs. non-GROW; p<.05	% agree/strongly agree		Mean	
	GROW	Non-GROW	GROW	Non-GROW
My supervisor helps me make connections between my work and my life as a student.*	60%	51%	3.8	3.4
My job has helped prepare me for the world of full-time employment.*	62%	51%	3.7	3.4
My job has helped me improve my written communication skills.*	16%	21%	2.7	2.7
I can see connections between my job and major/coursework.*	56%	36%	3.4	3.0
My job has helped me learn about career options.*	30%	39%	3.2	3.2
My job has helped me develop more effective time management skills.*	76%	76%	4.0	4.0
My job has helped me improve my oral communication skills.*	78%	72%	4.0	3.8
My job has helped me develop conflict resolution skills.	74%	61%	3.8	3.6
Because of my job, I am able to work effectively with individuals with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and cultures.	82%	77%	4.1	4.0
My job has helped me use critical thinking skills to form opinions and solve problems.	70%	57%	3.8	3.5

# IOWA GROW®:

## Results Across Pilots

### RESULTS ACROSS THE TWO PILOTS FOUND:

- Iowa GROW® participants were more likely to report that their student employment helped them gain work and career related skills, form relationships, improve their time management skills, and enhance their communication skills.
- Iowa GROW® participants were more likely to report that they gain problem solving abilities, communication skills, and general work habits as a student employee.
- Non-GROW participants were more likely to report that they learned no new skills as a result of being a student employee.

### IOWA GROW® PARTICIPANTS WERE ALSO MORE LIKELY TO REPORT THAT THEY HAD THESE GAINS FROM WORKING:

- Forming relationships with other students, faculty, staff
- Feeling they were contributing to their office or the institution
- Learning about themselves
- Gaining work-related knowledge or skills

On the other hand, one of the major benefits non- Iowa GROW® students saw from student employment was simply making money. These students were also more likely to report they their job did not contribute to their student success.

Supervisors in Iowa GROW® also reported that the project improved their relationships with their student employees and provided them with valuable information to use in recruiting and retaining student employees.