SIGNATURE ASSIGNMENTS AND REFLECTION IN GENERAL EDUCATION

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SIGNATURE ASSIGNMENTS

A signature assignment is one that addresses two or more General Education learning outcomes, involves student performance on something other than a test or quiz, and is accompanied by student reflection.

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Essays, art galleries, projects, presentations, lab reports, service-learning journals, websites, posters, creative writing, creative combinations, etc.
SIGNATURE ASSIGNMENTS

❖ Tied to the learning outcomes

❖ Graded in ways that accord with the assessment rubrics that might be applied to them later—and students should know ahead of time how assignments will be graded/assessed.

❖ Well-designed, with detailed supporting information and directions.

❖ Cool—meaning designed to appeal to students’ sense of curiosity, to be relevant to students’ lives, to result in a product that they would want to showcase, and to be enjoyable.
SIGNATURE ASSIGNMENT ACTIVITY

Great Way to Introduce Signature Assignment Design
"Highly productive and creative individuals think about their own thinking while they are thinking. This process, called metacognition, allows people to engage in a valuable conversation with themselves, exploring their background, questioning and correcting their thinking in the process, and pursuing the dynamic power of their minds."

—Ken Bain, *What the Best College Students Do.* (2012)
REFLECTION ACTIVITY

One Volunteer at Each Table
ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALIZATION IN DAVID KOLB’S (1984) EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MODEL

- Concrete Experience
- Reflective Observation
- Abstract Conceptualization
- Active Experimentation
DONALD SCHÖN (1983): TWO MODES OF REFLECTION

- **Reflection on Action** Reflection after an experience is over.

- **Reflection in Action** “Turning thought back on action” while in the process of doing. “It is this entire process of reflection-in-action which is central to the ‘art’ by which practitioners sometimes deal well with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict.”
Reflecting with others:

- Affirms the value of one’s experience.
- Offers alternative meanings, broadening the field of understanding.
- Supports one’s self-discipline and provides a sense of responsibility.
FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE REFLECTION IN YOUR ASSIGNMENTS

- What reflection in action prompts would you use, and where in the assignment would you put them?
- What reflection on action prompts would help students make connections?
- How might you employ reflection in community?
WHY REFLECTION IN GENERAL EDUCATION?

Hint: It’s all about making connections
Connections Across General Education

- Political Science
- Math
- Economics
- American Literature
- Humanities
- Sociology
- History
- American Literature
- Diversity
- Dance
- Biology
- Physics
- Geology
- Composition
- Diversity
- Dance
- History
Connections Across General Education

- POLITICAL SCIENCE
- HISTORY
- MATH
- AMERICAN LITERATURE
- ECONOMICS
- HUMANITIES
- BIOLOGY
- DANCE
- BIOLGY
- DIVERSITY
- PHYSICS
- GEOLOGY
- COMPOSITION
- MATH
- AMERICAN LITERATURE
- ECONOMICS
- HUMANITIES
- BIOLOGY
- DANCE
- BIOLGY
- DIVERSITY
- PHYSICS
- GEOLOGY
- COMPOSITION
Connections Across General Education

- COMPOSITION
- GEOLOGY
- DIVERSITY
- PHYSICS
- BIOLOGY
- DANCE
- HISTORY
- POLITICAL SCIENCE
- MATH
- AMERICAN LITERATURE
- ECONOMICS
- HUMANITIES
- SOCIOLOGY
Connections Across General Education

- Composition
- Geology
- Diversity
- Physics
- Biology
- Dance
- History
- Sociology
- Math
- Economics
- American Literature
- Humanities

Connections and interdisciplinary links are indicated by arrows connecting the subjects.
Connections Across General Education
Connection to Self Over Time
THANK YOU

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