USING EXPERIENCE TO SOLVE BIG QUESTIONS

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BIG QUESTIONS ARE

• Sweeping
• Interdisciplinary
• Contemporary
• Enduring
HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES CAN BE USED TO ADDRESS BIG QUESTIONS!

• Service learning
• First year experience programs
• Linked courses
• Learning communities
• Writing Intensive courses
• Capstone courses
• Study abroad
• Undergraduate research experiences
• Internship
COURSES THAT INTEGRATE BIG QUESTIONS ENABLE STUDENTS TO

- **Integrate** ideas or information from various sources
- **Understand** diverse perspectives
- **Judge** the value of information
- **Connect** course knowledge to real-word issues
- **Discuss** ideas with faculty and peers outside of class

Liberal Education and America's Promise
Develop connections between college learning & post-graduate preparation

Engage with Big Questions & Urgent Challenges

  • **GOAL 4: Social Responsibility**
    Integrative Learning for the Global Commons
  • **AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes**
    Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

**LEAP CHALLENGE**
‘to integrate and apply their learning to a Significant Project with meaning to the student and to society’
CASE STUDY

BIG QUESTION: HOW DO WE LIVE TODAY WHILE MAINTAINING A FOCUS ON TOMORROW?

Academic Courses
• Green Societies & Ecology

Academic Content
• Biology, geography, sociology & sustainability

High impact practice: Service-Learning
• Community gardens & community health
• Ecology & vulnerable species
CASE STUDY
BIG QUESTIONS

Green Societies: How do we produce food that
- Is healthy for humans?
- Is healthy for the environment?
- Can be accessible to all?
- Strengthen our communities?

Ecology: Can a vulnerable species survive
- With limiting resources?
- With existing environmental conditions?
- With encroaching human impacts?
THINKING ABOUT BIG QUESTIONS
PART I: LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Next 5-10 minutes
Write down and share how you integrated big questions

• Course name
• Big-question addressed
• High impact practice
• Example activity or project

http://www.lifes-big-questions.org/graphics/thinkingman4.jpg
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Classroom management
- Scheduling & logistics
- Roles & responsibilities

Student growth & confidence
- Knowledge
- Values
- Attitudes
Reflection prompts

• How will this community garden experience help you think critically about issues of community and environment?

• Now that you have experienced biological research in the field, how will you use your knowledge?
THINKING ABOUT BIG QUESTIONS
PART II: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Next 5 minutes

Describe from your course

Classroom management
• Scheduling & logistics
• Roles & responsibilities

Student growth & confidence
• Knowledge
• Values
• Attitudes

Connection to Big Question
Learning Outcomes

- Content
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Critical thinking
- Problem solving

Assessment Tools

- Content-driven assignments
- Reflections essays
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Presentations
ASSESSMENT

CONNECTION BETWEEN LEARNING OUTCOMES TO BIG QUESTION

Reflection essays

• Paying it forward
• Impact on community
• Pride in plants!
• Sustainable development
• Challenges of working in teams
• Thinking bigger picture
Next five minutes
Describe and share from your course
• Learning outcomes
• Assessment tools
• Connection between learning outcomes to BIG QUESTION
INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT
JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY & BIG QUESTIONS

JU’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)
Experiential Learning: 3 cr. hour academic requirement

Options
Service-Learning,
Undergraduate Research,
Internship, or
Study Abroad/Away
Evaluation of Student Work Products
  • Assessed using AAC&U Value Rubrics

Student Presentations- Annual Student & Faculty Symposium
  • Gathered data from 116 presentations last year

Surveys
  • Based off of AAC&U Value Rubrics
  • Distributed electronically

Interviews & focus groups
  • New addition to our data collection
• 96% of our students felt they made a **positive impact on community**
• 86% reported that the projects **strengthened academic learning**
• Students rate their skill development as **accomplished** (3). This is in the areas of critical thinking, communication, teamwork & diversity skills
• 100% reported increased knowledge of
  • food security/production (Green Societies)
  • how human and social activity impacts gopher tortoises (Ecology)
INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY & BIG QUESTIONS

Student & faculty opportunities

Funding
Conferences
Learning Communities
Clubs

to promote participation in

Undergraduate-Research
Study-Abroad

Service-Learning
Internship
How can YOU encourage a culture of engagement with BIG QUESTIONS among
  • Faculty?
  • Students?
THANK YOU!

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Big Question → Engagement → Content →