Honoring learner-centered teaching activities and supportive teaching environments in a changing paradigm of higher education

Expand your knowledge. Broaden your resources. Spark students’ inspiration.

Volume 2, Issue 10

Many instructors assign student projects in courses. The Six A’s of Designing Projects offers suggestions how to support deep learning for students.

Authenticity
- Does the project emanate from a problem that has meaning to the student?
- Is it a problem or question that might actually be tackled at work or in the community?
- Do students create or produce something that has personal and/or social value, beyond the college setting?

Academic Rigor
- Does the project lead students to acquire and apply knowledge central to one or more discipline or content areas?
- Does it challenge students to use methods of inquiry central to one or more disciplines? (e.g., to think like a scientist)
- Does it help students develop higher-order thinking skills and habits of mind? (e.g., searching for evidence, taking different perspectives)?

Applied Learning
- Does the learning take place in the context of a semi-structured problem, grounded in life, real-world work, and the college setting?
- Does the project lead students to acquire and use competencies expected in high performance work organizations (e.g., teamwork, appropriate use of technology, problem solving and communication)?
- Does the work require students to develop organizational and self-management skills?

Active Exploration
- Do students spend significant amounts of time doing field-based work?
- Does the project require students to engage in real investigations, using a variety of methods, media, and sources? (continued >)
• Are students expected to communicate what they are learning through presentation and/or performance?

**Adult Relationships**
• Do students have an opportunity to meet and observe others in the workplace with relevant expertise and experience?
• Do students have an opportunity to work closely with at least one person in the workplace?
• Does the project lend itself to input of design and assessment of a person in the workplace?

**Assessment**
• Do students regularly reflect on learning using clear project criteria that they have helped set?
• Can other people from outside the classroom help students develop a sense of real world standards for this type of work?
• Will there be opportunities for regular assessment of student work through a range of methods, including exhibitions and portfolios?


With Best Regards,
Becky Pugh, QEP Winter Haven Campus Liaison, rpugh@polk.edu
863 298.6811, fax: 863.298.6814

Dr. Lynda Wolverton, QEP Lakeland Campus Liaison, lwolverton@polk.edu
863.669.2885, fax: 863.297.1034