Bringing it All Together: Examining the Role of Capstone Courses in Cross-Disciplinary Academic Programs

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Capstone Experiences

An experience under supervision by a faculty member during which students synthesize and integrate previous learning experiences, drawing together philosophical, intellectual, conceptual, and application and practice considerations, demonstrating this through a created work.

(Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University, 1998; Gardner and Van der Veer, 1998; Kuh, 2008; McGill, 2012)
Capstone Experiences

- High Impact Educational Practice (Kuh, 2008)
- Important for Creating Connections across interdisciplinary curricula (Wagenaar, 1993; Hauhart and Grahe, 2010; Hauhart and Grahe, 2012)
- Potential for negative capstone experiences (McGill, 2012)
Research Questions

• Do capstone experiences enhance undergraduate students’ ability to make cognitive connections across cross-disciplinary curriculum?

• Does self-perception of satisfaction with capstone experiences affect undergraduate student ability to make cognitive connections across an interdisciplinary minor curriculum?
Methods

- Case Study Approach (Yin, 2009)
- 5 cross-disciplinary academic programs
- Screening Survey
- In-depth, semi-structured interviews
- Analysis with NVIVO
  - Across all programs
  - Within academic programs
- Running a Pilot with one Academic Program
Civic and Community Engagement Minor

Foundations of Civic Engagement Course (3 Credits)

Supervised Field Experience (3 Credits)

Public Scholarship Capstone (3 credits)

Public Issues and Democracy Courses (3-6 Credits)

Related Areas Courses (3-6 Credits)
References

Questions