

Guidelines for Designing a Course as Applied Learning

Applied learning experiences engage students in a variety of real-world situations requiring them to put into action the knowledge and skills they are developing in their coursework. They can be broadly classified as internships, community-based projects, service learning, creative activities, research, practica, simulation exercises, or capstone experience/project. Descriptions, criteria and exemplars for these forms of applied learning experiences are provided below.

A. Internship

Activities in which knowledge and skills are applied in a real-life setting under the guidance/supervision of a mentor with expertise in the area of application. Internships help to provide real world experience to those looking to explore or gain the relevant knowledge and skills required to enter into a particular career field.

Minimum Criteria

- A set of well defined learning objectives and the activities designed to achieve them have been identified to guide and evaluate the learning process.
- The internship is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment.
- Students identify the activities they have participated in and how they have advanced their learning objectives on a weekly basis.
- The intern is evaluated by their supervisor at regular intervals during the internship process and provided with feedback on their performance.
- Students have the opportunity to reflect on their experience in a way that helps to reveal how the learning objectives have been achieved.

Exemplar

- A marketing student designing an advertising strategy under training and supervision of the firm's marketing director.

B. Community-Based Project

Students partner with community organizations in addressing and providing solutions to problems the organization is facing while applying the principles and skills they are learning in their coursework. These projects typically focus on the development of problem solving and critical thinking skills and reflect activities students can expect to address during their professional careers.

Minimum Criteria

In order to meet the minimum criteria, the community-based project must:

- Partner students with an entity outside the classroom, be it a for profit or non-profit organization in the local community, or a department or other entity within the university.
- Be designed to address a problem or issue the entity is facing, with practical outcomes that help to advance their organizational goals.
- Utilize the fundamental knowledge and skills being developed in the course in addressing the project partner's problem or issue.
- Advance the learning objectives for the course.

Exemplar

- A sociology class partners with an orphanage to find a solution to the problem of increased abandonment; then provides educational outreach to area families and resources to promote family unity.

C. Service Learning

Students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs, and reflects on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of curricular content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility. Service learning is distinct from community based projects in that they tend to focus on broader social and environmental issues and the activities may not approximate an activity that they can expect during their professional careers.

Minimum Criteria

- It involves students in community service activities and applies the experience to both personal and academic development.
- There should be a balance between learning objectives and service outcomes.
- Course objectives should be linked to real community needs that are designed in cooperation with community partners and service recipients.
- Course materials must clearly inform students of the role of service in the course and it's relationship to academic dialogue and comprehension.
- There must be a form of structured reflection that ties the service experience back to the specific learning objectives for the exercise and the course.

Exemplar

- Same sociology class partners with an orphanage to beautify a neighborhood (murals, landscaping, trash pick-up) as part of keeping families together.

D. Creative Activities

Involves the application of knowledge and skills in the creation, production, performance and/or exhibition of creative output. This would include a major art exhibit, reading, recital, play, or equivalent performance.

Minimum Criteria

- Course objectives should establish a clear link between knowledge and skills development and the performance of the appropriate creative activity.
- The creative activity should reflect the discipline for which the course was designed.
- The creative activity should be created for public reception or viewing.

Exemplars

- Major art exhibit or creative output (book, portfolio, etc.)
- Public reading
- Public recital or performance

E. Research

Application of knowledge and skills in any research-based endeavors (laboratory, field studies or faculty directed research) that approximate what the student can expect to encounter in the 'real world' in which the field of study resides.

Minimum Criteria

- Course objectives should establish a clear link between knowledge and skills development and the research activity.
- The research activity should reflect the discipline for which the course was designed.
- The research activity should approximate what the student can expect to encounter in the 'real world' in which the field of study resides.

Exemplars

- Laboratory
- Field studies
- Faculty directed research

F. Practica

Practica is a set of supervised practical training experiences in the sequence of professional training within a field that are designed to meet the training goals of the particular program. It promotes the integration of academic knowledge with practical experience by applying and extending the knowledge, skills and attitudes learned in the programs classroom based components.

Minimum Criteria

- Practicum training should be organized and developmental in nature.
- Students should be academically prepared and deemed otherwise suitable for their practicum site by the program prior to and during the practicum experience.
- Practicum experiences should be consistent with the training needs of the students.
- Practicum sites should be consistent with the program mission and goals.
- Written agreements should exist with each practicum site that include site, program, and student responsibilities.
- Programs should maintain consistent contact with practicum sites.
- A minimum percentage of required practicum hours should be accumulated in 'direct service' to the client (patient, students, etc.).
- Practicum students should be provided with the appropriate quantity and quality of supervision for the practicum experience.
- Practicum supervisors should provide feedback to students on regular intervals during the practicum process.

Exemplars

- Nursing Adult Health Care with Practicum
- Psychology Practicum
- Pharmacy Practicum

G. Simulation Exercises

Simulation is the imitation of the real-world operation of a process over time. Simulation exercises involve the application of knowledge and skills to activities or decisions that

are designed to closely replicate those found in a real world setting. These activities can occur both in and/or outside of the classroom.

- Simulation exercises should be closely linked to course learning objectives.
- Simulation exercises should closely mirror problems, decisions, and/or situations that students can expect in the real world as it relates to the discipline being taught in the course. That is, they should be valid in their representation of the real world.
- Simulation exercises should have predictable outcomes, either in terms of process or in product. In that sense, they should be reliable and provide learning and teaching opportunities following decision rounds.
- Simulation exercises should promote the use of critical and evaluative thinking.
- Simulation exercises should provide results for student decisions, both positive and negative, from which they can learn from and base future decisions on.
- Simulation exercises should be coupled with opportunities for reflection and discussion following the exercise.

Exemplars

- Mock job interview
- Administering an IV injection using a dummy
- Making management decisions using an online simulation exercise

H. Capstone Experience/Project

A capstone experience/project is designed to bring reflection and focus to the whole of the college experience and focus on some feature of the student's area of concentration in using the skills, methodology, and knowledge taught throughout the undergraduate/graduate curriculum in addressing problems in the real world.

Minimum Criteria

- A capstone experience/project should occur during the last 45 hours of the students coursework.
- The nature of the academic work should fall within the purview of the student's area of concentration, but should also draw upon knowledge acquired during the entirety of the student's education.
- The capstone experience/project should involve field experience or a real-world component that reflects

Exemplars

- Write a grant
- Create a new business plan/proposal
- Develop new software