What are universities for? Project-based Learning in the New Digital Ecosystem

Randy Bass
(Georgetown University)

WPI Project-based Learning Institute
June 22, 2017
The future of higher education, and indeed the very survival of your institutions, entirely pivots on what you will be doing the next three days.
How do we shape a positive and moral vision for the future of higher education?

“Punctuated Equilibrium”

Source: http://anthro.palomar.edu/synthetic/synth_9.htm
CORE MESSAGE: Project-based Learning

The future of higher education, and indeed the very survival of your institutions, entirely pivots on what you will be doing the next three days.

Unique Purposes

Whole Person

Equity

Positive Change
If we were designing the university for this moment in history what would it look like?
2030: Designing for context not content

What will the conditions of knowledge, technology, learning and work be in 15 years?

What kind of graduate would we want to produce?
iugi
/yoo-gee/
naman delbert esi
WHAT IF GEORGETOWN COULD PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE SYNTHESIS THROUGH COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS FROM DAY 1 TO GRADUATION, INVOLVING STUDENTS, PROFESSORS, STAFF AND PRACTITIONERS?

SYSTEM FEATURES
IUGIS
UNLOCKING MECHANISM
SKILLS-BASED CORE
DASHBOARD
PORTFOLIO
Iugis are project families that reverse the course-centric learning model.
iugi taxonomy

1 2 3 4

GUIDANCE  INDEPENDENCE

SIMPLICITY  COMPLEXITY
If we were designing higher education for this moment in history what would it look like?

The Design Question
How do we make a robust and meaningful education equitably available to everyone?

From unbundling to rebundling

Randy Bass, Georgetown
Bret Eynon, LaGuardia Community College
External Forces of Potential Disruption

Public Funding

Keeping Score: New Iteration and Limitations of the College Scorecard

Accountability

Expanded access

Skill-based Learning
Open Online Courses

Data Analytics / Adaptive Learning

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How it works »
The Onrushing Digital Revolution

Scale
Automate
Reduce instructional costs

Data Analytics / Adaptive Learning
Open Online Courses

Codecademy
lynda.com
coursera
"Unbundling ≠ Equity"
Reactions to a College Alternative: Debating the Merits of MissionU

By Jeffrey R. Young  Apr 18, 2017

Grade Point

Purdue acquires for-profit Kaplan University

By Danielle Douglas-Gabriel  April 27 at 10:44 AM
The great tension of our time in education is between integration and dis-integration.
Two paradigms of education

Disintegrative (unbundled):
- Design of discrete or granular learning experiences
- Elementary and discrete competency-based learning
- Learning decoupled from formal boundaries
- Analytics that track narrow or micro learning

Integrative (bundled, holistic, coherent):
- Curricular & co-curricular conceived as part of a whole
- Knowledge, skills & dispositions
- Connections & integration
- Design of learning experiences for whole person development
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Rebundling: Toward a New Synthesis

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If we were designing higher education for this moment in history what would it look like?

Disintegrative in service to the integrative
How do we make a robust and meaningful education equitably available to everyone?

Randy Bass, Georgetown
Bret Eynon, LaGuardia Community College
Inclusive Excellence

AAC&U: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity (access but experience and outcomes)

- Dis-integrative
  - Startup, disruptors
  - Open access and public institutions

- Integrative

- Exclusive Excellence
  - Best students
  - Rich holistic environments
  - Liberal arts colleges and universities

"REBUNDLING"
Purdue-Gallop Poll on Engaged Work and Flourishing

Two most important predictors of success:

1) Adult mentor who cared about you

2) Sustained project

Life in College Matters for Life After College

New Gallup-Purdue study looks at links among college, work, and well-being

by Julie Ray and Stephanie Kafka

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- When it comes to being engaged at work and experiencing high well-being after graduation, a new Gallup-Purdue University study of college graduates shows that the type of institution they attended matters less than what they experienced there. Yet, just 3% of all the graduates studied had the types of experiences in college that Gallup finds strongly relate to great jobs and great lives afterward.
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64% I had a professor who made me excited about learning.

27% Professor cared about me as a person.

22% A mentor who encouraged my goals and dreams.

14% had all three
Purdue-Gallop Poll on Engaged Work and Flourishing

32% A long term project that took a semester or more to complete.

30% Internship or job where applied learning.

20% Extremely involved in extracurricular activities or organizations.

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Inclusive Excellence

AAC&U: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity (access but experience and outcomes)

Open access and public institutions

"%6 of all graduates"

Selective Liberal arts colleges and universities

Exclusive Excellence

Best students
Rich holistic environments
Where are the “high-impact practices” located?
What makes High Impact Practices high impact?

- Invest time and effort (time on task)
- Accountable talk and thinking
- Get (and give) frequent and meaningful feedback
- Make daily decisions – judgment in uncertainty
- Meet challenges to perspectives and belief, take risks, operate outside comfort zone

NEW ECOLOGY FOR LEARNING

- Opportunity to integrate, synthesize, make meaning
How do we design for this center?

High impact integrative curriculum
- Project-based learning
- Engaging Difference
  - Ethical Judgment
  - Self-Reflection
  - Practitioner education, leadership
- Experiential co-curriculum

Foundational Knowledge
- Some generic and interchangeable expertise
- Some institutionally-distinctive expertise

Local and Identity
- Jesuit and Catholic Mentor-based tradition
- Residential, Diverse

Granular Dis-integrative Massive Online
- Blended interactive online
- Formal undergraduate curriculum

Educating the whole person?

Knowledge + Skills + Dispositions (+ Values)

Dispositions:
- Learning to learn
- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Resilience
- Empathy
- Humility
- Ethical Judgment

“HARD SKILLS”

Striving to cultivate a balanced person, with intellectual, affective, imaginative and reflective capacities.
Matthew Hora, *Beyond the Skills Gap*

“These competencies can be summed up as a combination of a strong work ethic; rigorous technical training; the ability to solve complex technical problems and interpersonal dilemmas, engage in teamwork, and communicate effectively; and the ability and desire to continually learn.”
Matthew Hora, *Beyond the Skills Gap*

“These competencies can be summed up as a combination of a strong work ethic; rigorous technical training; the ability to solve complex technical problems and interpersonal dilemmas, engage in teamwork, and communicate effectively; and the ability and desire to continually learn.”

“These are the habits of mind that are necessary for innovative and competent workers that the business community craves; for citizens who can contribute to a healthy democracy; for thinkers who can creatively solve the environmental, social, and economic challenges of the twenty-first century; and for students to have the best opportunities for securing employment throughout their working lives.”
“The Imprint of Integration”
ePortfolio Initiatives
Make Student Learning Visible

ePortfolio initiatives support reflection, social pedagogy, and deep learning.

ePortfolios help students reflect on and connect their learning across experiences. Advancing higher order thinking and integrative learning, the connective ePortfolio helps students construct purposeful identities as learners.
Addressing the Whole Student

Purposeful Self-Authorship

Formal Academic Curriculum

Connecting w/ Faculty & Students

Learning Across Disciplines

Advisement & Academic Planning

Learning Across Semesters

External Audiences

Co-Curricular & Lived Experiences

Students’ Integrative ePortfolio Practice
ePortfolio as a high-impact practice
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building my ePortfolio</th>
<th>Agree/ Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helped me make connections between ideas</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped me think more deeply about course content</td>
<td>64.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowed me to be more aware of my growth &amp; development as a learner</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My (ePortfolio-enhanced) course engaged me in...</th>
<th>Quite a Bit/ Very Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synthesizing &amp; organizing ideas, information or experiences in new ways</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My course contributed to my knowledge, skills and personal development in understanding myself</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Does it Take to Make a Difference?

Kathleen Blake Yancey defines reflection as the centerpiece of powerful ePortfolio learning.

Reflection is the *bridge* between Inquiry and Integration.

http://c2l.mcnrc.org/
“_________ is helping me become an agent of positive change.”
How might we capture learning beyond the traditional transcript in ways that are meaningful to employers?

Catalyst Badge

The Catalyst Credential reflects the value inherent in a student’s ability to embrace challenge to take action to pursue positive social change, translate ideas into measurable, concrete efforts, and persist towards completion.

A Catalyst is someone who makes things happen, who gets things started, who shows initiative and takes risks -- and does so from a thoughtful and reflective place.
What if these were our graduate attributes?

Students / Graduates will be able to:

1. Embrace challenge
2. Take action to pursue positive change
3. Translate ideas into measurable concrete efforts
4. Persist toward completion
5. Make things happen
6. Get things started
7. Show initiative
8. Take risks
9. Be thoughtful
10. Be reflective
LAR 303 - Impact Seminar: Connecting Knowledge to Choices and Actions (3)

This course will develop students' teamwork and leadership skills to prepare for citizenship or work as they connect theory, practice and experience. Students, drawn from multiple fields of specialized study, will collaboratively analyze a complex real-world problem, develop an empathetic understanding of multiple perspectives needed to comprehend the issue, and propose possible solutions. Students will be engaged through experiential pedagogies selected as appropriate by the LAR 303 instructors. Students will publically present work.
Integration and integrity
The future of higher education, and indeed the very survival of your institutions, entirely pivots on what you will be doing the next three days.

**CORE MESSAGE: Project-based Learning**

**Unique Purposes**

**Whole Person**

**Equity**

**Positive Change**
Three interlocking and inseparable elements of the University:

• Formation of men and women

• Knowledge-creation through scholarship and research

• Public Good and the Common Good
Knowledge of a domain

Knowledge of the world

Knowledge of yourself

Heidi Elmendorf, Ph.D.
Biology, Georgetown
New paradigm for higher education?
The place of project-based learning!

Knowledge of the world

Domain
Knowledge

Knowledge of yourself

The white space of ... formation, transformation and whole student development
The future of higher education, and indeed the very survival of your institutions, entirely pivots on what you will be doing the next three days.

Project-based learning enables colleges and universities to be their best, most authentic selves.
Thank You and Good Luck!

bassr@georgetown.edu