

Capstone Course ePortfolios

Insights Into Community-Based Learning

General Education Outcomes



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Capstones at Portland State

- Culminating General Education Course at PSU
- About 240 Capstones (x 15 students = 3600)
- 6 credits
- Interdisciplinary teams of students
- Actively engaged in the community
- Produce a final product that serves the community partner

Range of 240 Capstone Courses

- Marketing
- K-12 (tutoring/mentoring)
- Hunger/ Homelessness
- Refugee Resettlement
- ESL/ELL
- Public Relation Plans
- Direct/Indirect Service

Goals of the Capstone Program

Communication

Critical Thinking

Appreciation of the Diversity of Human
Experience

Social Responsibility

History of Assessing Capstones

- In 1995 started with 25 Capstones
- Developed paper/pencil course evaluation/student survey
- Over 75 % of students reported growth along the 4 Capstone goals
- BUT we didn't know how (in what ways) they grew along these goals and what teaching practices brought about this growth

Next We Tried:

- Assessing the final products: didn't work
- Using a common assignment: didn't work
- Collecting samples of individual assignments: didn't fully work

WHAT GOAL(S), COURSE(S) OR
LEARNING EXPERIENCES HAVE
BEEN MOST CHALLENGING FOR
YOU TO ASSESS AND WHY?
WHAT HAVE YOU TRIED?

Challenges Assessing Capstones

- Wanted to move beyond self-report
- The diverse range of courses/partnerships
- No common assignment yielded the same level of depth as individually crafted assignments
- The final product is produced to meet the needs of the community partner not necessarily document student learning

What is the Capstone Course ePortfolio?

Course portfolios:

- Focus on the course

- Spotlight student learning

- Scholarly investigation (Hutchings, 1998)

What is the Capstone Course ePortfolio?

Capstone course portfolios include:

- Course syllabi
- Assignment instructions
- Course final products
- Faculty reflection
- Samples of student work

Capstone course portfolios:

- Provide context for the student work
- Allow for variability in assignments

UNIVERSITY STUDIES CAPSTONE

Community Greenworks

This Capstone offers students an analysis of social justice; a framework that promotes successful civic engagement, and an



application of these principles in community settings. Students choose from several projects that best fit interests, expertise and schedules, and complete team projects with community partners addressing a pre-determined need and promoting lasting change in the community. Projects will focus on the three areas of sustainability: social equity, the economy and the environment. Please contact Cynthia Gomez for additional information: gomezcc@pdx.edu.

Learning Goals

- Work in small groups with community partners on a community project;
- Substantiate course-generated ideas and informed action through documentation;
- Research and learn about social justice and sustainability; and,
- Critique and refine civic engagement process and reflect on activities and learning.

Project

Project Title: Community Greenworks

Course Info

Partner

Faculty

Assignments:

-  [Course Assignment Instructions Community Greenworks.pdf](#)
-  [Matrix of Oppression Greenworks.pdf](#)
-  [Identity Wheel Greenworks.pdf](#)
-  [Theory of Knowledge Bertrand Russell Greenworks.pdf](#)
-  [Teaching the Levees Greenworks.pdf](#)

Syllabus:

-  [Community Greenworks Syllabus.pdf](#)

sustainability

technology

teens

more tags

- Critique and refine civic engagement process and reflect on activities and learning.

Project

Project Title: Community Greenworks

Description Of Project:



Fieldwork: Student group fieldwork on community projects involve both direct and indirect service delivery. In-class course work involves a review of sustainability as it relates to the environment, social equity and the economy; democratic dialogue; and social justice and environmental justice theory. The coursework and fieldwork create an experience for students that deepens the understanding of critical issues facing marginalized communities with the hope that more will seek policy reform that leads to increased social and ecological equity.

Project Files:

 [Community Greenworks Sample Project.pdf](#)

Assessment

Faculty Reflection: [Community Greenworks](#)

Student Work: [Community Greenworks](#)

business
children
community
criminal justice
disabilities
education
elderly
environment
families
hispanic
hispanic community
history
immigrant community
international issues
latino community
media
native american community
politics
research
school
schools
students
sustainability
technology
teens

more tags

Multimedia Production



The Multimedia Production Capstone addresses community issues and needs by developing educational interactive media. Continuously taught since 1999, the class has undergone continual adjustment to the changes in technology - from output on CD-ROMs and video to the present, with web pages and blogs being developed entirely by teams of students working completely online.

The first capstone to be offered fully online, each term students completing degrees at PSU attend the class remotely, and learn new skills to combine to their existing skills while building a separate website and blog for a specific community issue. Since the community issue must be addressable and useful in communities where the students live - which may be anywhere and has been as far as Germany and China - we focus on the environment.

Recent work includes the EcoMerge project which focuses upon individual behavioral changes readers can make to improve sustainability and the EcoPol project, which focuses on recommendations for policy changes which can be made to increase sustainable living in local

Course Info

Partner

Faculty

Syllabus:

 [MM Online capstone Syllabus, Bremmer, Fa09.doc](#)



Bringing Awareness to Sustainable Fish Consumption



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2010

Food Network Promoting Consumption of Bluefin Tuna

Foodnetwork.com, the Food Network's website, which includes recipes from TV chefs as well as individual users, currently has on their website 8 different recipes which call for Bluefin tuna specifically.



Three of the recipes are from Emeril Lagasse, including "Crispy Wasabi Potato Crusted Tuna," "Black Pepper Crusted Tuna Loin," and "Seared Tuna Steak Burger on Cilantro and Onion Roll" from an episode titled, "Funky Burgers." Another recipe for "Bluefin Tuna Carpaccio" is posted courtesy of the Katana Restaurant in West Hollywood.

Food Network also offers a Tuna Guide, which describes Bluefin tuna as "moister and fattier" than Yellowfin tuna, which are also endangered but not as critically as the Bluefin tuna. The guide has no disclaimer informing the reader these are endangered species.

Mission:

Our commitment is to bring sustainability to the bluefin tuna crisis. It is our mission to educate others to find balance between the needs of the dwindling tuna species, consumers and the fishing industry.



EcoMerge Sites

- [Comparing Fuels & Costs - PSU Fall 09](#)
- [Farewell2fuel](#)
- [Ecological Intelligence](#)
- [Phantom Energy](#)
- [Greenwashing Awareness - PSU Fall 08](#)

How Much Do You Pay For Energy You Aren't Using?

How Do We Assess Student Learning Using ePortfolios

- Review Capstone e-portfolios annually – one goal per year.
- Reviewers are trained and calibrated and then review the e-portfolios (2 reviewers per portfolio)
- The emphasis is on student learning related to the goal
- Portfolios are rated inadequate, adequate or exemplary

Rating categories: We expect Capstones to address at least TWO of the points listed above

Inadequate: portfolio suggests that students did not have experiences in the course that led to the type of learning described above. Student work, course material, and faculty reflection indicate that the expectation for student learning was met only minimally, if at all.

Adequate: portfolio suggests that students had experiences in the course that led to at least two areas of learning described above. Student work and course material indicate that the expectation for student learning was addressed or emphasized in the course.

Exemplary: portfolio suggests that students had several experiences in the course that led to the type of learning expected. Student work and course material indicate that the expectation for student learning was emphasized consistently in this course. This course provides a good example of how to address ethics and social responsibility in a Capstone.

Social Responsibility Outcomes

Reflect on their personal efficacy to make a difference in lives of others in their local or global community through direct contact with community members (i.e. mentoring/tutoring/ youth, interaction with senior citizens, assisting refugee resettlement, documenting oral histories) or indirect service activities (i.e. grant writing or creating marketing plans for a non-profit organization).

Analyze new insights regarding the root causes of social and environmental issues (such as poverty, homelessness, hunger or environmental degradation) developed as a result of working with and/or learning about community issues.

Consider the impact of their individual choices on broader societal issues (i.e. global warming, homelessness, poverty). This may include an examination of a wide variety of behaviors including everyday decisions, career choices, or political action,

Exemplary - Faculty Reflection

they also examine societal roles within that context and begin to contemplate explanations as to why such practices arose in the first place and continue to this day. Following a thorough examination, the students develop their own ideas further to understand and challenge how such structures and processes can be altered in the future.

The most exciting evidence that ethics and social responsibility has been enhanced within a student's own comprehension occurs when a student reports that the class has changed his or her own world view and that he or she feels that a difference CAN be made starting with a single person and that person is himself/herself.

Exemplary - Syllabus

This capstone allows students to explore the social/cultural dynamics of pet overpopulation, the ethical dilemmas presented by it and the rise of the no kill revolution in the United States.

Students will learn to apply personal energy to meeting community challenges and experiencing enhanced community identification.

Students will develop a personal ethical stance and commitment towards the problem of pet overpopulation.

In service-learning classes like this Capstone, students work in a collaborative partnership with a community organization towards mutually beneficial goals. In this course, you will learn experientially, that is, by doing and reflecting on the meaning this “doing” has for you and for the communities of which you are and will be part.

Exemplary - Student work

before taking this course I didn't understand why some people would devote their time, energy and material resources toward animal welfare when countless humans also experience extreme desperation at home and abroad. But after listening to stories of companionship and moral responsibility from my classmates, I came to understand that serving animals or serving humans should not be a trade off because they are both part of a singular unified cause.

I now recognize that my original sentiments toward animals was a result of my privilege. I've never had to depend on animals for affection or support because I've always had supportive humans fulfilling those necessary functions in my life.

I will continue my human rights oriented activism but I will no longer see the animal welfare cause as a competing movement. After all, solidarity between movements is the key to meaningful change.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Social Responsibility

Students demonstrated learning related to ethics and social responsibility in many ways:

- Reflected on their ability to make a difference through direct and indirect service activities
- Reflected on their role and responsibility as a citizen
- Analyzed new insights regarding the root causes of social and environmental issues
- Examined systemic structures in society that create or perpetuate social problems
- Applied technical skills in order to address social issues and/or serve the common good

Overall Findings

The learning outcomes must be contextualized by connecting them to the community work or issue that students are working on, even in indirect service Capstones.

Meta-cognitive reflection is essential for students to process their Capstone experience.

We expect students to pay attention to the process of their learning not just the project for the Capstone.

When Courses Were Inadequate

Materials compiled did not reflect the type of learning opportunities that were defined

The goal may have been addressed in the course, but not evident in the portfolio

Provided evidence of only one type of learning related to the goal

Did not clearly state the goal as a learning outcome in the syllabus or provide specific assignment instructions related to it.

Use of Assessment Findings

- Better understanding of HOW our goals are defined and enacted
- Identify best practices
- Informed faculty development
- Increased student learning

QUESTIONS??

QUESTIONS?

What part of this process is most useful or interesting to you?

How can this be applied on other campuses?

Need help thinking through any challenges?

General Questions?

Specifics?

For Additional Information

Capstone website:

capstone.unst.pdx.edu

University Studies website:

www.pdx.edu/unst/

UNST Assessment Reports:

www.pdx.edu/unst/university-
studies-assessment-reports

Faculty Reflection on Strategies that Enhance Student Learning Related to Ethics and Social Responsibility

Please e-mail to Rowanna Carpenter, carpenterr@pdx.edu by May 14, 2010.

Expectations for Student Learning: In Capstone courses students apply the expertise learned in the classroom to address real issues in the community. Each Capstone course should further students' sense of social responsibility and ethical reasoning. Through these community interactions, students prepare for public lives as citizens, members of communities, and professionals in a complex society (<http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/civicengagement.pdf>). The purpose of this assessment is to capture the wide variety of ways that students come to learn about social responsibility and ethical reasoning through direct and indirect service to a variety of communities.

Capstone courses will provide students the opportunity to do one or more of the following:

- Reflect on their personal efficacy to make a difference in lives of others in their local or global community through direct contact with community members (i.e. mentoring/ tutoring/ youth, interaction with senior citizens, assisting refugee resettlement, documenting oral histories) or indirect service activities (i.e. grant writing or creating marketing plans for a non-profit organization).
- Analyze new insights regarding the root causes of social and environmental issues (such as poverty, homelessness, hunger or environmental degradation) developed as a result of working with and/or learning about community issues.
- Examine grassroots efforts to change the structures which create or perpetuate social and environmental problems.
- Reflect on how their own perspectives have changed or developed in relationship to the community issues addressed as a result of the capstone experience.
- Consider the impact of their individual choices on broader societal issues (i.e. global warming, homelessness, poverty). This may include an examination of a wide variety of behaviors including everyday decisions, career choices, or political action,
- Reflect on their role and responsibility as a citizen to actively participate in working with others towards a public purpose (common good).
- Apply technical skills (marketing, science research, business, graphic design) in the community in order to address social issues and/or serve the common good. This may include reflections about scientists as engaged citizens, the importance of corporations' responsibility to serve the public good, and/or professional ethics and responsibility.
- Examine the systemic structures in society that create or perpetuate social problems.

Reflection: Please read the Expectations for Student Learning section of this document and the list of learning outcomes listed above. In order to understand how students address and learn about Social and Ethical Responsibility in their Capstone courses, we would like to have you reflect on your course and answer the following questions. Please be as specific as possible. Specificity in your answers allows us to develop best practices which we can share with each other. We anticipate your response will be approximately 3-5 pages, but want you to take as much space as you need to document your teaching practices.

- A. How does the community partnership, the structure of the course, the assignments, the classroom activities and/or the final project provide opportunities for students to learn ethical reasoning and social responsibility (using the definitional components described above)? Please describe the assignments and/or classroom activities in detail so we learn what types of experiences facilitate this learning.
- B. How would you describe the student learning that takes place in your course related to ethical reasoning and social responsibility?
- C. Where is the best evidence of student learning related to ethics and social responsibility in your course?

Capstone Course Portfolio Scoring Instructions

The purpose of evaluating course portfolios is to determine whether students have had the opportunity to meet University Studies learning goals in their Capstone course. We are looking at one aspect of these courses related to ethics and social responsibility. We expect that the portfolios will represent a range of approaches to diversity and some will be more explicit about that than others. As you read the portfolio, it may seem that another area of the course is stronger than ethics and social responsibility, but we are reading for and evaluating only ethics and social responsibility at this time. We will address other goals in future assessment efforts.

We are **not** evaluating teaching or the success of any particular class or instructor. We are not re-evaluating the work of individual students.

We are assessing courses to determine whether students have experiences that allow them to reach our learning outcomes. We will use this review to identify areas of strength related to ethics and social responsibility and areas for improvement in the Capstone program.

University Studies Ethics and Social Responsibility Goal: Students will expand their understanding of the impact and value of individuals and their choices on society, both intellectually and socially, through group projects and collaboration in learning communities.

Expectations for Student Learning: In Capstone courses students apply the expertise learned in the classroom to address real issues in the community. Each Capstone course should further students' sense of social responsibility and ethical reasoning. Through these community interactions, students prepare for public lives as citizens, members of communities, and professionals in a complex society (<http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/civicingagement.pdf>). The purpose of this assessment is to capture the wide variety of ways that students come to learn about social responsibility and ethical reasoning through direct and indirect service to a variety of communities.

Capstone courses will provide students the opportunity to do one or more of the following:

1. Reflect on their personal efficacy to make a difference in lives of others in their local or global community through direct contact with community members (i.e. mentoring/tutoring/ youth, interaction with senior citizens, assisting refugee resettlement, documenting oral histories) or indirect service activities (i.e. grant writing or creating marketing plans for a non-profit organization).
2. Analyze new insights regarding the root causes of social and environmental issues (such as poverty, homelessness, hunger or environmental degradation) developed as a result of working with and/or learning about community issues.
3. Examine grassroots efforts to change the structures which create or perpetuate social and environmental problems.
4. Reflect on how their own perspectives have changed or developed in relationship to the community issues addressed as a result of the capstone experience.
5. Consider the impact of their individual choices on broader societal issues (i.e. global warming, homelessness, poverty). This may include an examination of a wide variety of behaviors including everyday decisions, career choices, or political action,

6. Reflect on their role and responsibility as a citizen to actively participate in working with others towards a public purpose (common good).
7. Apply technical skills (marketing, science research, business, graphic design) in the community in order to address social issues and/or serve the common good. This may include reflections about scientists as engaged citizens, the importance of corporations' responsibility to serve the public good, and/or professional ethics and responsibility.
8. Examine the systemic structures in society that create or perpetuate social problems.

Scoring Instructions:

Rate the extent to which the portfolio demonstrates that course experiences result in the types of learning listed above (points 1 – 8 on the list). Indicate a rating for the overall portfolio based on the categories below. Please also list the types of learning you found evidence for in the portfolio, referring to the list above) and add any notes about the syllabus, assignment, student work and faculty reflection that you believe will be helpful to interpret your score.

Rating categories: We expect Capstones to address at least one of the points listed above

Not enough information: portfolio is missing component(s) and/or evidence provided is insufficient for the rater to determine if course experiences address expectations and students learn what the faculty expects them to learn in a Capstone course

Inadequate: portfolio suggests that students did not really have experiences in the course that led to the type of learning described above. Student work, course material, and faculty reflection indicate that the expectation for student learning was met only minimally, if at all.

Adequate: portfolio suggests that students had experiences in the course that led to at least one area of learning described above. Student work and course material indicate that the expectation for student learning was addressed or emphasized in the course.

Exemplary: portfolio suggests that students had several experiences in the course that led to the type of learning expected. Student work and course material indicate that the expectation for student learning was emphasized consistently in this course. This course provides a good example of how to address ethics and social responsibility in a Capstone.