Creating Coherent Pathways to Develop a Competitive Edge

Johnson, J.H., & Kasarda, J.D. (2008). Jobs on the move: Implications for U.S. higher education. Planning for Higher Education, 36 (3), 22-33. Global job shifts will affect the future shape and function of American higher education. To respond effectively to twenty-first century realities, colleges and universities must diversify their curricula and research, becoming nimble and more entrepreneurial agents for change. Further, to maintain a competitive edge in an increasingly technology-reliant and changing global society, the U.S. needs more people with advanced capabilities in science, technology, engineering, and math, and a ubiquitous acceptance of lifelong learning.

Schneider, C.G. (2008). Liberal education takes a new turn. NEA 2008 Higher Education Almanac, pp. 29-40. Washington, DC: NEA. This article examines the often contradictory perspectives on contemporary liberal education. The author criticizes reform efforts that are limited to a focus on developing marketable skills and job readiness. Drawing on the AAC&U LEAP initiative, the author instead suggests a developmental approach to learning that emphasizes habits of mind, breadth of perspective, and capabilities. This approach integrates liberal education values with the practical focus of professional education.

Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) (2006). Academic freedom and educational responsibility: A statement from the Board of Directors of AAC&U. Washington, DC: AAC&U. This statement clarifies the vital role of diverse perspectives in helping students develop critical thinking skills and enhance intellectual capacities. The authors argue that the college classroom is not a talk show. It is a dedicated and deliberative critical thinking context in which students and teachers intentionally engage in difficult and contested questions with the goal of reaching beyond differing viewpoints to a critical evaluation of the relative claims of different positions.

Critical Thinking Pedagogies

Browne, M.N., & Freeman, K. (2000). Distinguishing features of critical thinking classrooms. Teaching in Higher Education, 5 (3), 301-309. The authors of this article provide guidance for faculty members who are trying to infuse more critical thinking in classroom teaching and learning practices. This article outlines common characteristics of an effective critical thinking classroom: frequent questions, developmental tension, fascination with the contingency of conclusions, and active learning. These attributes reinforce one another to provide developmental stimuli for enhanced critical thinking.

Nelson, C. E. (1999). On the persistence of unicorns: The trade-off between content and critical thinking revisited. In: Pescosolido, B. A., & Aminzade, R. (Eds.), The social worlds of higher education: Handbook for teaching in a new century, pp. 168-184. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. This publication provided the foundation for the development of the QEP and is “a must read” for anyone who desires to understand the central concepts framing the QEP. This chapter summarizes Perry’s model of student intellectual and ethical development and argues that the trade-offs between the teaching of critical thinking and the teaching of content are as imaginary in practices as unicorn’s horns. The author illustrates the model by describing effective critical thinking pedagogical approaches. The central lesson and challenge for educators is that learning to think critically requires an incremental series of major reorganizations in students’ views of knowledge and knowing.

Curricular and Co-Curricular Learning

Fried, J. (2007). Higher education’s new playbook: Learning reconsidered. About Campus, 12 (1), 2-7. The rules that dictate educational practice on most campuses were written long before scientists fully understood learning as an integrated and context-specific process. The integrated learning outcomes include the construction of knowledge, construction of meaning, and construction of self in society. Construction of knowledge refers to creating a system of connected facts, while construction of meaning is concerned with consequences, implications, and application of that learning. Construction of self in society involves ongoing choices individuals make to define their roles in communities. The author argues that educators, faculty and student affairs professionals alike, must develop collaborative ways of defining, delivering, and assessing integrated curricular and co-curricular learning experiences.

Gallien, L.B., & Hikes, Z. (2005). The articulated learning: An approach to guided reflection and assessment. Innovative Higher Education, 29 (2), 137-154. The value of reflection on the learning process has been advanced for decades; however, many educators find it difficult to apply reflective practices in curricular and co-curricular learning activities. This article describes a practical and meaningful learning model that pushes students beyond superficial interpretations of complex issues and facilitates academic mastery, personal growth, critical thinking, and documented demonstration of learning.
ATTENTION
NSU Administrators, Faculty, and Staff

In Preparation for QEP Implementation

2008 Summer Readings

The readings described are on reserve in the Lyman Beecher Brooks Library and are available online at www.nsu.edu/iea. The password is: nsu.