

Nancy Goldfarb, Ph.D.

Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis (IUPUI)

33rd Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience, San Diego, Feb. 16, 2014

Principles of Designing Community Engagement Projects

1. First-Year Student Inertia
2. Law of Conservation of Frustration
3. The Uncertainty Principle – Expect the Unexpected
4. Keep It Simple
5. Clarify Your Learning Objectives & Community Partner's Goals
6. Seek a "Win-Win"
7. Get Students Invested in Advance
8. Prepare Students with What to Expect
9. Shared Human-to-Human Experiences Work Best
10. Include Reflective Assignments for Integration & Application of Knowledge
11. Don't Expect Perfection
12. Each Project Is Unique

Assessment Measures

- Observations/photos of students
- Student written reflections – percentage completing the assignment, specificity, personal connections made, integration and application of knowledge, meaningfulness
- Depth of classroom discussions generated
- Impact beyond the classroom
- Course evaluations

Nuts & Bolts: Planning the Project

1. Find a well organized community partner that values creative problem solving.
2. Meet with community partner in advance to integrate their goals with your learning objectives.
3. Prepare students in advance with detailed instructions of activities and what to expect.
4. Stretch students' comfort zone but not too much
 - a) Assure everyone's safety
 - b) Similar age and life stage
 - c) Consider gender pairing (e.g. For Burmese, Muslim women)