PROPELLING STUDENT R&D FIELD SUCCESS:
TRANSFERRING COLLEGE CLASSROOM MATERIALS to the BOONDOCKS

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Conference/Event

Louisiana Academy of Sciences
96th Annual Virtual Meeting
Louisiana State University at Alexandria
Alexandria, LA

Publication Date

12 March 2022

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Abstract

This presentation is a roadmap with a one-mode transition and subsequent application of selected higher education classroom materials to field research for learning, which has been a challenge for college faculty members for ages. The essential components of such a process are delineated, using the field experience gained by the authors with catastrophic events, covering the 2010 Haitian Earthquake, 2014-2015 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa, and the 2021-2022 Corona Virus (SARS-CoV-2) Pandemic in Illinois. Priority is given to bridging learning gaps. The prime takeaway for college faculties is reinventing rewarding student R&D field projects. An added benefit is the capacity to create new, unique, or novel case studies to promote expanded and challenging student learning experiences. Such R&D case studies have market potential.

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Presentation

The transfer of new or evolving classroom subject materials to field applications, to stimulate new or reinvented student (undergraduate and graduate) research and development (R&D) initiatives – catalyzing vital field projects and original case studies (1), is an ageless challenge for higher education, likewise in the business world. The need to do so continues unabated to stimulate the twins of creativity and innovation, especially to mitigate latent and unexpected threats to public health. There is no, and has not been available to date, an easily workable one-mode process – or universally acceptable paradigm. The essential components to do so are presented here for sharing and discourse. Together the components are equally interdependent and synchronized with research and development activities.

Yet, not all subject material, covering knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom, lends itself ultimately to R&D field applications. Transformation is neither easy nor simple. The latent initiative lies with the purveyors (faculties) of knowledge and skills – to be mindful of transition hurdles and learning gaps for field applications (*i.e.* boondocks) that drive the reinventing of new student learning paths. Many struggle with this challenge. Meanwhile, special tutoring and expert guidance continue to arise and expand in higher education (*e.g.* Tulane CELT (Center for Engaged Learning & Teaching) Program (2) to provide engaged faculty with expert assistance.

Lessons learned with the adaptation of selected academic materials (knowledge and skills) to possible R&D initiatives, designed to mitigate the impacts of catastrophic events, are shared and introduced, including examples from the following extraordinary events:

- 2010 Haitian Earthquake.
- 2014-2015 Ebola Virus Outbreak.
- 2021-2022 Corona Virus Pandemic.

Presentation – Continued

Also, diverse, firsthand experiences with the Illinois State Equity (COVID-19) Vaccination Program are highlighted to help envision, design, plan, implement, monitor, and, ultimately, to create student involvement with the transfer of basic knowledge and skills, as acquired in higher education classrooms, to the boondocks, where application is essential for success with accelerating student learning, both independent (self-study) and mentored.

An added benefit, as previously mentioned, is the creation, adaptation, and testing of new, novel, or unique prototype case studies (1), which have the potential to enhance and advance different avenues of student learning. Some may be copyrighted and chosen to be marketed by supporting institutions, earning recognition for their students and faculty.

The hard-earned insight and hindsight, gathered with the one-step approach, are offered and shared with faculty members thoughtfully seeking to move their classroom materials to the boondocks. The essential components of a one-step approach offered by the authors are:

- Bridging Transfer Gaps.
- Envisioning R&D End Game.
- Defining R&D Necessity.
- Articulating Overall Purpose.
- Delineating Field Principles.

Plus the role and importance of Launching, Executing, and Evaluating Student R&D Field Projects are strongly emphasized. Overall, the five components are equally interdependent and undergird a lucid, coherent, and adaptable one-step model.

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Presentation – Continued

The promising takeaways for involved faculty, all experienced by the authors, are offered and delineated, spanning four interrelated domains:

- Options for Transferring Classroom Subject Matter to Field Venues.
- Articulating Nature, Scope, and Purpose of End Games.
- Designing and Implementing a Field R&D Project.
- Integrating Students into Key Details of Project.

Emphasis is also given to timely Monitoring and Measuring Progress of the Critical Role(s) of the Students enrolled in a R&D initiative. Students remain the foci of learning.

Challenges for designing and executing rewarding student R&D Field Project, seeking to bridge field learning gaps in higher education, are sometimes daunting for faculty members – and continue today. A pragmatic approach to do so with a workable model, is present for for discourse and discernment.

References

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