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Engaging First Year Students in Addressing Global Issues [Business and Technology]

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Narrative:

This assignment was designed as part of LaGuardia Humanitarian Initiative's (LHI) experiential learning assignment focusing on the global issue of education as addressed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4, "Quality Education." LHI is LaGuardia's experiential learning initiative that facilitates a collegewide conversation on a global issue in partnership with local and global organizations to develop sustainable solutions when addressing a global problem. This assignment focused on providing students with the opportunity to apply the skills and strategies learned through participation in LHI workshops by collaboratively designing projects to support their communities and addresses the global learning competency and digital communication ability. The assignment assessed how students were able to communicate effectively, work collaboratively, and apply discrete knowledge and skills to real world situations. This assignment required students from a First Year Seminar (FYS) course to engage with the theme of equitable education. Students get involved in the campus culture of justice and equity. Classroom experience is crucial for FYS students and so are activities fostering experiential learning. Students' involvement in experiential learning-- a requirement for FYS students across CUNY--foster global citizenship. Students attend the LHI "virtual" workshops in which they develop activities aimed at facilitating their ethical engagement with global issues and help strengthen their global awareness. The workshops offered students opportunities to work collaboratively with peers from other disciplines and learn a range of skills including how to design flyers, engage in digital marketing, make digital presentations, and lead advocacy efforts. The assignment is worth 20 % of the total grade.

Abstract

This assignment is a co-curricular assignment designed as part of LaGuardia Humanitarian Initiative (LHI). LaGuardia Humanitarian Initiative is an inclusive platform for students, faculty, and staff foregrounding pedagogical inquiry, civic engagement and academic service learning by facilitating a year-long college-wide inquiry of a global issue as addressed by the United Nations. Through partnerships with local and global NGOs, students gain access to career opportunities and professional development workshops. Ultimately students are mentored on how to translate their classroom learning to advocate, educate, and support their communities. This experiential learning assignment required students from a First Year Seminar (FYS) course to engage with LHI's 2021-22 global partner, Malala Fund and focus on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number 4, Quality Education which aimed to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." Through this work, students develop skills associated with competencies aligned with LaGuardia's General Education requirements: global learning, integrative learning, inquiry and problem-solving core competencies and utilize various communication abilities including written, oral, and digital. While the assignment strengthened student work in all the above competencies and communication abilities, it especially addressed global competency and digital communication ability.

Encouragement and discussion of co-curricular activities on campus and in our communities has long been a part of First Year Seminar practice. The First Year Seminar introduces students to important aspects of their college journey, including habits of success, the college's core

competencies and communication abilities and career paths. As part of these discussions, students are made aware of learning that can be done outside of the classroom, on campus and in their communities. This LHI assignment allowed us to provide an opportunity for students to experience the importance of co-curricular activities while practicing critical engagement, reflection, and application of course content in a real-life setting. Participation in this assignment required that students attend the LHI “virtual” workshops focused on the year’s theme of equitable education. By attending LHI’s workshops, students gained knowledge of how COVID-19, global politics, and climate change affected girls’ education. The workshops offered students opportunities to work collaboratively with peers from other disciplines and learn a range of skills including how to design flyers, engage in digital marketing, make digital presentations, and lead advocacy efforts.

After reflecting on their own educational journeys and reading about the journey of Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai, students were assigned to identify action steps needed to create accessible and inclusive approach to education. With the knowledge they gained they were tasked with developing a project (options included fundraising, digital marketing, and creating videos), to advocate for quality education. The inspiring workshops helped students with designing elements and communicate key points for their digital flyers and PowerPoint presentations as part of their digital assignment.

Upon completion of this assignment, students:---

- Learn about the global problem of inequitable education and its ethical implications
- Consider differences in cultures and perspectives
- Work collaboratively to develop action steps for advocacy and civil engagement
- Become familiar with the global learning, inquire and problem-solving core competencies
- Engage in a process of inquiry and problem-solving of a global issue
- Consider the importance of communication and be familiar with a variety of communication abilities
- Design digital media to communicate their learning and advocate for educational equity

This assignment is worth 20% of the course grade

Assignment Overview

The assignment was approached in three segments developed from LHI’s experiential learning praxis of reflective pedagogy: a) Attend the experiential learning collegewide workshop(s), b) Write a reflection, and c) Create a flyer or a video to raise awareness. The assignment familiarized students with the global issue of quality education as described by the United Nations, introduced them to how social, economic and cultural factors shape education, and provided them with an opportunity to advocate for sustainable solutions to the problem of lack of access to equitable education. By attending LHI workshops, students gained knowledge of how COVID-19, global politics, and climate change affected girls’ education. They also learnt that twenty million girls might never return to school once the COVID-19 crisis subsides. Students utilized this information when designing digital flyers or when creating a PowerPoint presentation as part of their digital assignment. The assignment helped them assess this global crisis in creative and innovative ways.

The assignment assessed students' ability to communicate digitally, work collaboratively, and apply discrete knowledge and skills to real world situations.

Step 1: Attend the workshop and gather information

Please plan to attend the LaGuardia Humanitarian Initiative (LHI) workshops. You will receive opportunities to choose a project that would allow you to apply what you learn in the class. You will also receive opportunities to engage with peers and staff members. These activities will help you enhance your college experience and build the skills needed for your current academic and career interests. During these workshops, you will be joined by students from different disciplines to collaboratively brainstorm strategies of translating classroom learning into actions for social change.

Students read United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>, then explore the theme from their own personal narratives, which include documenting and sharing stories of their own educational journeys.

Students watch a documentary and read the article on Malala's journey through a critical engagement of the following texts:

- 1) Documentary (2015), *He Named Me Malala*
- 2) "Cost of Not Educating Girls": <https://malala.org/newsroom/archive/cost-of-not-educating-girls>

Step 2: Reflection

Write at least one paragraph reflection (6-7 sentences) reflecting on the following questions:

1. What is UN sustainable Goal 4?
2. What do you want to consider to address the UN sustainable Goal 4?
3. How do you plan to discuss the present crisis affecting the global issue?
4. How will you play a role in educating your community?
5. What marketing strategies did you use to raise awareness when reaching out for Malala fund? Remember every dollar counts.
6. What have you learned from this experience that you can bring back to the classroom? Or, in what ways do you see a connection between your classroom and the LHI project that you developed?
7. Photo Prompt – Select one or two photos related to the topic and your LHI work.

Essay

Write a 500 word essay on how gender discrimination impacts the global economy. Reflecting on your own educational journey, state how LaGuardia Humanitarian Initiative's focus on inclusive education helped you to advocate for equitable education.

Step 3: Activity

After you attend a LHI workshop, you will be assigned to work on an activity, such as creating a flyer or a video that shows your involvement in raising awareness. You will design a digital project, for e.g., a digital flyer or a video or a digital presentation to demonstrate your learning in the classroom and LHI knowledge when raising awareness on the global topic of education. Copy and paste a picture of the activity or share the activity in docx/pdf file. If you have created a video presentation, please share the link.

Sample Activities

- South Sudan Water Project - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmJxgyNa72w&feature=youtu.be>
- Tutorial video on how to use a free flyer editing website: <https://youtu.be/RoXyUrWc0qo>

Flyer Guidelines

- Write an interesting title
- Add the global crisis and share compelling ways of contribution
- Focus on the benefits of your service
- Organize your page with boxes, borders, and add colorful graphics related to the topic.

Final submissions of the above student work were posted to ePortfolio.

Final Reflection Paragraph

As a high-impact pedagogical and experiential practice involving ethical engagement with global issues, my students recognized their responsibilities in addressing global problems. They shared their perspectives on ethics and social responsibility, gained empathy which revealed an increase in growth mindset and autonomous learning. Facilitating students inquiry through the lens of LHI's approach towards equity and inclusivity helped students to become humble citizens in shaping a better society. Faculty may implement this global learning assignment in their First Year Seminar course or in any lower level course that requires critical engagement with global issues and finding sustainable solutions when addressing the issue. Upon revision, the assignment could also be incorporated in an upper level course. Assignments such as these, may also provide opportunities for faculty to present their findings at conferences and at journals exploring experiential learning pedagogy and practice. Regardless of involvement, the faculty would be thrilled to learn about how LHI's model strengthens student's achievements and provides an impactful learning experience for students.