

Chapter 12

Co–Curricular Learning Across Campus: Strategies for Breaking Barriers

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ABSTRACT

Prototyping is an essential part of the design thinking process and an important part of imagining the future of design thinking pedagogy. This chapter highlights prototypes of design thinking pedagogy that engage faculty, staff, and students at a liberal arts institution. The authors share the history of the social impact hub and various iterations of curricular and co-curricular collaboration connected to a social innovation pitch competition. The authors also highlight the value of collaboration between innovation spaces and career and life planning offices through meaningful student employment opportunities. Finally, the authors describe modules being piloted to infuse design thinking throughout the curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

Kolb (2014) noted that ‘experiential learning’ is “a particular form of learning from life experience; often contrasting it with lecture and classroom learning” (p.xviii). Kolb continued, “In this view of experiential learning, the emphasis is often on direct sense experience and in-context action as the primary source of learning, often down-playing a role for thinking, analysis, and academic knowledge” (p. xviii). As educators prepare students for a world of work that values what are commonly described as 21st century competencies including information literacy, research skills, and communication (AACU, 2018), experiential learning offers a framework to engage students in critical conversations that increase knowledge and build skills. Drawing from Beligatamulla et al. (2019), the experiential opportunities described in this chapter are conceptualized using design thinking (DT) pedagogical approaches. Specifically,

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this chapter explores strategies for supporting students as they make meaning from curricular and co-curricular experiences using programming that integrates DT strategies. This chapter describes efforts at Rollins College to prototype programs that emphasize DT as a framework for the delivery of curricular and co-curricular offerings. In what follows, the authors highlight the newly launched Rollins Gateway and specifically the work of the Social Impact Hub to break perceived barriers between curricular and co-curricular learning and emphasize the value of DT for students preparing for 21st century careers.

After reading this chapter, readers will (a) be able to identify barriers to co-curricular learning across campus and (b) discover strategies for prototyping programming that utilizes DT. Providing examples of strategies for addressing barriers and implementing design pedagogy across the curriculum provides a prototype for educators as they support students' in making sense of their college experiences.

BACKGROUND

Rollins College is a liberal arts institution located in Winter Park, Florida. Rollins was awarded the Carnegie Classification for the Advancement of Teaching in 2008, and was reclassified in 2015, in recognition of the College's engagement with the community. Rollins was also designated an Ashoka U Changemaker Campus in 2012, and was renewed in 2016. These classifications serve as evidence of the college's commitment to community engagement and social innovation grounded in what Kuh (2008) described as "high impact practices" or "teaching and learning practices (that) have been widely tested and have been shown to be beneficial for college students from many backgrounds" (p. 9). This deep commitment can be seen through the myriad experiential learning opportunities across curricular and co-curricular pathways. Most recently, Kathleen W. Rollins Hall was constructed and opened in 2020 to serve as a hub of programming at the center of campus to energize student changemakers from all majors.

Rollins recommitted to the mission of "educating for global citizenship and responsible leadership to produce graduates who live meaningful lives and pursue productive careers" through Gateway, Rollins College's signature approach to liberal education (Rollins, n.d.-a, para. 1). Gateway is based on four pillars including:

1. Future-proof foundation, which emphasizes the importance of an interdisciplinary, liberal education and a commitment to lifelong learning (Rollins, n.d.-b).
2. Liberal arts in action, which demonstrates the institution's sincere commitment to experiential learning (Rollins, n.d.-b).
3. Mentorship mastered, which highlights the guidance faculty and staff provide students as they navigate flexible pathways to graduation, a meaningful life, and productive career (Rollins, n.d.-b).
4. Rollins results that acknowledge the network of global citizens and responsible leaders that comprise the larger Rollins community (Rollins, n.d.-b).

Although a constellation of programs is connected to the Gateway model, this chapter emphasizes the work facilitated through the Social Impact Hub (the Hub). The Social Impact Hub is a space on campus that offers programming to support students as they explore ways to address local and global challenges (Rollins College, n.d.-c). The Hub engages students in hands-on activities, encouraging them to leverage their disciplinary knowledge from their major and interdisciplinary knowledge from the general education curriculum.

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