Gen Ed Revision and High Impact Practices

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Wednesday, May 14 | 11-11:50AM | Wallace Library, Room 3490

Welcome! Please take a seat.

Revisioning General Education: Developing a High Impact Curriculum

Bright Path University (BPU- go Velociraptors!) seeks to replace an existing General Education (GE) curriculum with a future-oriented, highly relevant, interdisciplinary curriculum that allows students the freedom to explore areas of interest while ensuring that they cover key knowledge and skills. As a part of this curriculum, leadership would like to collect ideas for the following components…

The GE Components

Introductory Course: An interdisciplinary first year course that all students take

Reflective Bookend Course: a culminating course or experience that allows for some customization by major, theme, or interest

Gamify the Curriculum: Opportunities for students to earn badges, "feathers," certificates or others way to "gamify" the curriculum and encourage exploration

Big Questions: A set of big questions for students to grapple with as a part of the curriculum

Core Skills: The knowledge and skills that BPU guarantees for all students

Name It! A new name for this curriculum (not GE!)

Problem Statements

BPU's GE curriculum contains only one common course with little opportunity for shared academic experiences;

BPU's GE curriculum is not exciting; it is called "Gen Ed" while the rest of the university's offerings are more cutting edge;

BPU has lower than average first to second year retention. Students in exit interviews mention a lack of connection to the university outside of their primary major.

Your Task

Your task is to work in teams to brainstorm and develop each of these components. The tasks are big, but see what you can accomplish in 10 minutes.
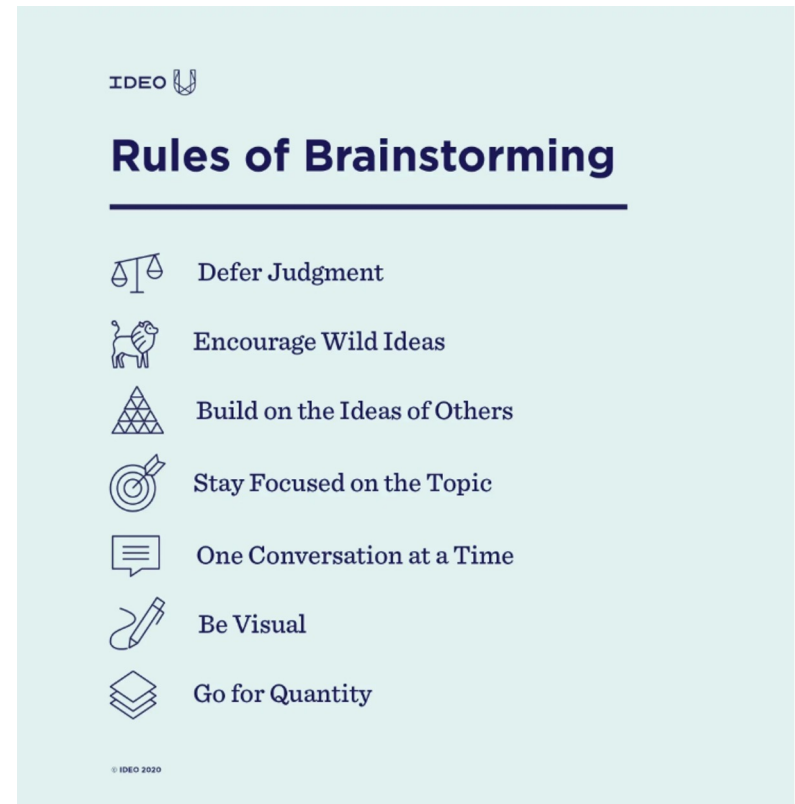
Leave your ideas behind on the template provided. The next team can build on your idea or generate a new idea.

At each station, you will find instructions, brainstorming tools, and a template to record your thoughts.

The Rules

Follow the rules of brainstorming.

KEEP IN MIND: BPU is located in the province of Greatness and must abide by the rules of the governing Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education in the province of Greatness insists that the GE curriculum consist of courses in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Mathematics.

IDEO U

Rules of Brainstorming

Defer Judgment

Encourage Wild Ideas

Build on the Ideas of Others

Stay Focused on the Topic

One Conversation at a Time

Be Visual

Go for Quantity

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# Station 1: Design an Introductory Course

- **Problem**: Students at Bright Path University share only one common first year writing course. The university would like to develop an impactful introductory course that is interdisciplinary in nature and that orients students to college.

- **Task**: Create the description for a course that would benefit students early in their college experience at BPU. Extra credit to teams identifying identify key outcomes, significant assignments, textbooks, and other course details.

- **Guiding Questions**:
  - How can the course engage students in real world problems?
  - How can the course introduce students to interdisciplinary thinking?
  - How can we help students acclimate to BPU?
  - How can we foster a sense of community?
  - How can we help students connect GE and their program?

- **Inspiration**: Look in your folder for a few ideas to get you started!

Station 2: Create a Reflective Experience

- **Problem**: Students at BPU do not have the opportunity to reflect and integrate their GE learning, or tie their GE learning to their major, co-op, research experience, or co-curricular activities. Students may also engage in experiences (e.g., capstone or research projects) that require integration and reflection, but don't connect to the GE portion of their education.

- **Task**: Design a reflective experience that would benefit students in all majors.

- **Guiding Questions**:
  - What types of activities help students make connections between courses and experiences?
  - What elements of GE would you like to see your students connect with one another?
  - How could your students tie GE learning in with their major?

- **Inspiration**: Look in your folder for a few ideas to get you started!
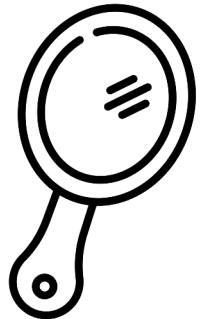
Station 3: Gamification of the Curriculum

- **Problem**: Students at Bright Path University see GE as something they need to "*get out of the way*" before they take "*real classes*." BPU leadership is looking for ways to help students see their GE courses as relevant and exciting.

- **Task**: As a group, please brainstorm ways that that RIT's General Education could introduce *gamification* into the curriculum. Examples on the table are for general education digital badging, certificates, and stackable credentials.

- **Guiding Questions**:
  - What might students want to earn?
  - What knowledge, skills, or competencies does your group value in education?
  - What do the employers in your discipline value?
  - What type of one-credit courses could be developed to encourage exploration for students?

- **Inspiration**: Look in your folder for a few ideas to get you started!

Station 4: Big Questions

- **Problem**: BPU is looking for ways to incorporate critical thinking throughout the GE curriculum. The campus community likes the idea of having students tackle "Big Questions" as part of the GE experience but aren't sure how to do this.

- **Task**: Generate ideas (e.g., course, series of courses, course mapping, experiences, faculty training) that would incorporate the use of big questions AND/OR generate big questions.

- **Guiding Questions:**
  - What activities/experiences support this type of inquiry?
  - What are some "big questions" that would help students build connections between GE and their program?
  - What topics do we want students to explore? What types of problems could they solve?

- **Inspiration**: Look in your folder for a few ideas to get you started!
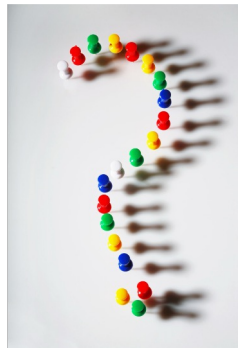
Station 5: Name It!

- **Problem**: Bright Path University calls this curriculum "General Education" or "Gen Ed"- this is not very exciting and does not reflect the courses and experiences students will have at BPU.

- **Task**: Come up with a new name for this curriculum.

- **Inspiration**: Look in your folder for a few ideas to get you started!

Station 6: Core Knowledge and Skills

- **Problem**: Bright Path University recognizes that there are some skills and knowledge that all their graduates should have. The problem is defining them! We don't want to overconstrain students, so this list should be both thorough and concise

- **Task**: Develop a list of sample shared core topics, and prioritize them.

- Guiding Questions:
  - What's the appropriate level of granularity to define the shared core?
  - What shared core should all our students have in order to be critical adult thinkers?
  - What shared core should all our students have in order to be be represent RIT as alumni?

- **Inspiration**: A sample collection, from a variety of sources, is provided as a starting point. Add, edit, combine, or separate to start building!