

Samford's QEP Level-Up: Transformative Learning Through Powerful Assignments

Problem: Evidence suggests students' critical thinking and information literacy skills are not developing as much as should be expected during their time at Samford. The institution is seeking ways to improve development of these skills.

Solution: The assignment is a tool used by practically all teachers, regardless of their discipline. Therefore, it is an ideal platform for enhancing the skills that students need. This project will enable professors to create assignments that lead to the learning outcomes expressed in the QEP.

QEP Goals

Faculty will have opportunities to collaborate to create, design, and assess powerful assignments

Students will be able to find relevant and reliable sources of information

Students will be able to engage in effective thinking when interacting with information

Students will be able to effectively and appropriately use information on academic tasks

Student QEP Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Locate information sources for respective domains and tasks
- Determine the quality and salience of information
- Employ appropriate thinking processes and skills when interacting with information
- Properly interpret information on academic tasks

Faculty QEP Learning Outcomes

Faculty will be able to:

- Develop assignments that empower students to locate and evaluate information
- Design assignments to make core thinking competencies visible and actionable for students
- Infuse assignments with transparent expectations and standards
- Create assignments that help students meet academic degree program and institutional learning outcomes

Mechanism for Implementation

The QEP Director will coordinate efforts that involve the CTLS, the University Library, the Academic Success Center, Core Directors, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, Department Chairs, and Faculty.

Formal efforts will initially begin with core classes, extend to "predictive courses" and then to capstone experiences over the 5-year span of this initiative. However, there will be other opportunities for faculty and departments to get involved at various stages in the implementation process.

Opportunities for students

More engaging assignments that enhance skill-level attainment along with disciplinary knowledge

Improve critical thinking and information literacy skills

Develop transferable skills that can extend throughout an academic program and beyond

Opportunities for faculty

Assignment charrettes: groups of 4-6 faculty working together to design powerful assignments

Powerful assignment workshops: a series of presentations to learn more about assignment design to improve the achievement of learning outcomes

Powerful assignment web site and Moodle course: self-paced learning opportunities

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