

Strategy: Quad Walk

Get your students outside for some kinesthetic learning that might just be fun!

Origin

Farrell, J. (2011). AASHE Sustainability Across the Curriculum Conference, March 22-23, 2011.

McDade, J. (2011). Quad Walk. Retrieved from <http://ilstucivicconnect.com/2011/09/15/todays-lab-quad-walk/>.

Stewart, K. (2011). Up and IN Detroit: Intersection of Google Mapping and Academic Service Learning. American Democracy Project National Meeting, June 3, 2011. Retrieved from <http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=206685756804227263153.0004a3535946cbebdd2e&z=13>.

Application

This activity provides an opportunity for students to explore course content through their immediate surroundings. Students use mobile technology to document their understanding and application of course concepts through a simple walk around the campus.

Students can perform these observations before a lecture to explore concepts and develop prior knowledge, after a lecture to apply concepts and promote information retention, before a discussion to develop their contribution, and/or as a brainstorming activity for an assignment (writing, presentation, etc.) to identify or refine a topic. This strategy can be adapted in many ways, including the following:

“Assigned” Places/Paths

Looking around the campus, consider several places where students could learn about a course concept through observation and discussion. Consider places students could go as individuals, pairs, or groups to perform an observation to explore questions related to the topic. Suggest that students observe and take photos to document their ideas. When students return to class, have students use the photos to describe the events of their observation related to the topic/concept.

Possible concepts to observe: health and wellness, human behavior, sustainability, campus/college culture, influence of art, education, technology, etc., in the following places:

- Busy plaza
- Food court
- Drinking fountain
- Stairwell/elevator
- Parking lot
- Sidewalk
- School
- Fitness Center
- “Smoking” area
- Residence hall lobby
- Campus Health Services
- Academic building

Similarly, the observation could occur in a specific place/building (different rooms, floors, designated spaces, etc.) to compare/contrast: community, culture, people, physical environment, etc.

“Free Choice” Places/Paths

Alternatively, students can take a walk on a path of their choosing to explore a topic related to the course. You may want to consider guidelines for the length of the walk, number of photos, etc., and may also consider having the students explore multiple routes (a campus-based route, a community-based route) to compare and contrast their findings.

This can be used to explore virtually any concept by posing questions for students to consider as they walk. You may want to suggest a particular “lens” through which they should view their surroundings related to the course content.

This can also be used to help students explore and define concepts related to the course or discipline.

Example: *Exploring community, what it is (and isn't)*

You may wish to begin this activity with a pre-reflection involving a discussion (verbal or written) of community. Discussion questions may include:

- What does community mean to you?
- What does it mean to belong to a community?
- What communities do you belong to?
- In what ways do we define community differently?
- What makes communities unique?
- What impact does culture have on a community?

After introducing this topic, have students take a 20-minute walk on a path of their choosing around the campus and use their mobile device to document their path (consider Google Maps) and take photos of:

- Symbols of a community you do/do not belong to
- Boundaries (physical, imagined) of the community
- People in the same/different community as you
- Places that are part of a community you do/do not belong to

After their walk, have students insert their photos into the path and write a statement about each photo that relates to one or more of the pre-reflection questions above.

When students have prepared their maps, have them share the maps in small groups and note similarities and differences that relate to their understanding of community and culture.

As a class, reconsider the pre-reflection questions based on the activity.

Reflection

- How does this compare to what you are already doing?
- How could you adapt this for your course?