# Developing a Faculty-Facing Resource for Experiential, Interdisciplinary, Undergraduate Teaching



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# What skills do students need to be successful in 21st century careers<sup>1,2</sup>?



Critical thinking & problem solving



Initiative



Creativity & innovation

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Leadership



Collaboration



Communication



Social & Cultural Awareness



**Decision Making** 

# Are our students learning these in our courses? If not, what can we do?

#### **Experiential Learning**

"Learning from experience or learning by doing"<sup>3</sup>

- "Occurs when carefully chosen experiences are supported by reflection, critical analysis, & synthesis."<sup>4</sup>
- "Experiences are structured to require the learner to take initiative, make decisions, & be accountable for results."<sup>4</sup>
- "The learner is actively engaged in posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative, & constructing meaning."<sup>4</sup>

But experiential learning is often inaccessible to those with less privilege in higher education.<sup>5</sup>

Let's change that!

#### Playbook + Toolkit = Playkit for creating experiential learning courses

## 1

#### GORP<sup>6</sup>

- Gravity: design the course around a problem or challenge that matters to students
- Ownership: give students ownership of their work and autonomy in the course
- Relationship: the instructor should position themselves as a coach rather than a gatekeeper of knowledge/solutions
- Place: connect the problem or challenge to a location

## 2 Course Planning

- Select a theme or problem that is difficult to solve & can benefit from many disciplinary perspectives
- "Goldilocks"-sized problem: not too big that students would need a whole career to solve or too small that only students in the course are impacted by solutions
- Create learning goals that extend beyond a single discipline
- Consider local or national partnerships to make the projects real and have the potential to make change

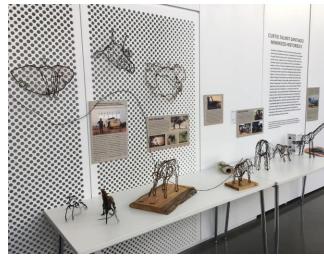
# 3 Assessment

- Student will come into the course with expectations about grading. Challenge those!
- Consider both deliverables and the process for assessment
- Include regular opportunities for students to reflect on their progress
- Consider using written and open-format reflections

## Research related to the course

- Novel methods or theories related to the instructors' disciplines
- Student outcomes
- Changes in student identity or affect
- Research projects we've done:
  - Student and faculty reflections<sup>7</sup>
  - Student response to interdisciplinary group work in experiential courses

#### Prototype courses that informed our Playkit



Snares to Wares (Spring 2019)



Food Waste (Spring 2019)



Wildlife Sanctuary (Spring 2019)

#### What instructors are saying

[The playkit] has been a helpful resource for planning and engaging in interdisciplinary teaching and learning activities.

-Ben and Juliet Instructors of a current course using the playkit

Experiential Learning doesn't have to mean extracurricular opportunities. We're making it part of the standard curriculum and helping faculty design their own experiential learning courses.