

Research-based Learning

Research-based learning can invigorate undergraduate education. Successful implementation requires that attention be directed toward developing students' ability to thrive in this type of learning environment; supporting instructors' exploration of new pedagogical approaches in the classroom and online; and providing institutional resources to transform course curriculum, create learning spaces, and support the collaborations required for sustainability.

Research-based learning:

- Requires a highly interactive and guided environment
- Employs a research-based approach to the analysis, interpretation, formation, and communication of theories, explanations, and understandings
- Allows learners to investigate interests and draw upon their different areas of expertise while also engaging with core concepts of the course and discipline
- Develops learners' information literacy competencies and abilities
- Emphasizes the process of learning as well as the product
- Broadens the learning experience to include various perspectives and interpretations
- Involves critical reflection and dialogue with instructors and peers
- Encourages collaboration and individual contribution
- Requires students to be deeply involved and responsible for their learning

Participants in research-based learning environments have remarked on benefits such as:

- Increased student motivation to engage more deeply with course content
- Greater confidence knowing where to start with the library and research
- Increased sense of inclusion in the class, more interactions, less intimidation
- Higher quality of student work as a result of dialogues and feedback

Possible strategic approaches to institutionalize research-based learning:

- Provide a series of research experiences through various stages of students' academic careers; aim for more than singular experiences such as orientation or capstone
- Initiate conversations with deans and department chairs to identify key courses that may serve as models and instructors who may serve as change agents
- Embed research-based learning approaches in an array of courses, such as required courses and/or breadth requirements
- Create an environment that enables instructors to rethink and redesign courses, preferably in a supportive peer environment and informed by expertise from academic support units
- Ensure librarians are engaged in the development of the curriculum, research assignments, and support for student learning in advance of the term it is taught
- Enhance coordination between campus staff with expertise in pedagogy, library collections, information literacy, educational technology, and assessment
- Create an incentive structure that rewards innovative and effective teaching
- Use products of exceptional student work to inspire other students and donors

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/mellon/>

http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/mellon/overview/2008_EvaluationReport_Mellon_Final.pdf