Leading Questions for Developing Learning Goals

Questions for Faculty

☐ In general, what are the most important things a student gains from your field of study?
☐ What qualities and capabilities do you strive to foster in your students?
☐ What is the most important knowledge that your students acquire from your field of study or from working with you?
☐ How does your field of study or your work change the way students view themselves?
☐ In what ways does your field of study or what you do contribute to a student’s well being?
☐ How does your field or what you do change the way a student looks at the world?
☐ What does your field of study or what you do contribute to the well being of society at large?
☐ How do people in this area of study differ from those in other areas (knowledge, skills, and/or values)?
☐ How do we know the extent to which students are learning what we hope from our field of study?
☐ How do we use information about student learning and development to enhance student learning?

Questions for Students

☐ What is the most important knowledge you have gained from taking courses, minor in or majoring in this subject?
☐ What are the most valuable skills or abilities that have you developed as a result of taking courses, minor in or majoring in this subject?
☐ How has taking courses, minor in or majoring in this subject changed the way you look at yourself?
☐ How has taking courses, minor in or majoring in this subject changed the way you look at the world?
☐ How has taking courses, minor in or majoring in this subject changed the way you think about the future?
☐ How do you know whether these changes have occurred?
☐ How do people in this area of study differ from those in other areas (knowledge, skills, and/or values)?
☐ What changes might be made in course and programs of your major or minor to enhance student learning?

Based on leading questions developed by Prof. C. Ewart, Department of Psychology, Syracuse University, 1998. Reproduced with permission.
Strategies to Improve Student Learning

There is increasing evidence that students learn most effectively when:

- They understand course and program goals and the characteristics of excellent work.
- They are academically challenged and encouraged to focus on developing higher-order thinking skills, such as critical thinking and problem solving, as well as discipline-specific knowledge.
- They spend more time actively involved in learning and less time listening to lectures.
- They engage in multidimensional “real world” tasks.
- Their learning styles are accommodated.
- They have positive interactions with faculty and work collaboratively with fellow students; all learners—students and professors—respect and value others as learners.
- They participate in out-of-class activities, such as co-curricular activities and service learning opportunities, that build on what they are learning in the classroom.
- Assignments and assessments are intertwined with learning activities and focus on the most important course and program goals.
- They have opportunities to revise their work.
- They reflect on what and how they have learned.
- They have a culminating “capstone” experience, such as a seminar, internship, independent study, research project, or thesis, that lets them synthesize what they have learned over the course of their college experience.

Sources:


