Pedagogy for a Wicked World: The *Value* and *Hazards* of a Transdisciplinary, Dialogue-Driven, Community-Engaged Classroom Model

Innovations in Collaborative Modeling Conference
Michigan State University
June 5, 2015
• Detail Pedagogy

• Recommendations & Strategies

• Hazards & Benefits
MESSY
CONFLICT
ISOLATION
HIGH STAKES
EXTREME COMPLEXITY
NO IDEAL RESOLUTION
EXPERTISE IS NOT ENOUGH
HIGH LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY & RISK
Confronting our assumptions

Make the “unthinkable” thinkable

SUGGESTIONS:
- Manageable actions
- Plan incrementally
- Iterate
- Strategic thinking
- Emphasize people
WHAT WE COULD DO...

- Experiential, context bound learning
- Encourage reciprocity
- Emphasis on values
- Iterative learning process
- Stress plurality and creativity
- Need for Empathy
SOFT SYSTEMS THINKING

- Constraint
- People involved
- Transformative Process
- Power
- Weltanschauung
Examine course content/issue through local problem

Analyze issue through 2 + disciplinary lenses

Share and integrate findings

Analyze conclusion

& act
Strategy 2: SPAN BOUNDARIES

INVITE IN  <->

GET OUT  →

Require ACCOUNTABILITY

INTEGRATE in order to GENERATE new knowledge

DISSEMINATE ideas to interested stakeholders
STRATEGY 3:
COLLABORATIVE, & ITERATIVE ISSUE-FRAMING

FRAMING

Wicked Problems

Local Narratives

Interdisciplinary Research
POSSIBLE TIMELINE

1-3: Establish Community & Build Competency

4-9: Develop, Refine, & Implement Action Plans

10-11: Implement & disseminate work

12-15: Reflection & Synthesis
POINT-OF-VIEW PRESENTATION

Demonstrate base-level competency

Motivate integrative action plans

Underscore wide-range of knowl, exp, & values

Expose to the complexities involved

connect across disciplines
The Hungry Games: Tackling *Wicked* Food Problems at Black River Public Schools through a New Experiential Project Term Course

Authors: Timothy Deters, Michael Garnaat, Isabel Gonzales, Megan Kupres, Evelyn Lago, Ashley Mannikmaa, Jose Rivera & Nathan Spencer, Grand Valley State University.

Abstract

Environmental activist and culture critic, Wendell Berry states in “The Pleasures of Eating,” “When food, in the minds of eaters, is no longer associated with farming and with the land, the eaters are suffering a kinds of cultural amnesia that is misleading and dangerous” (Berry 2). The obesity epidemic, mass hunger, the invasion of overly-processed and GMO-contaminated foods are just a few of the frightful consequences of our society’s overall disconnect with the food system. With so many obvious shortcomings, how does one even begin to tackle the wicked problem of food? According to several culture critics, including Michael Pollan, the raising of awareness via the education of students is an excellent starting point (Pollan 2008). Following the vision of The Sprout Society—a Grand Valley State University student project proposed during the winter 2014 semester of LIB 322: Wicked Problems of Sustainability—our LIB 342: Food Matters class partnered with Black River Public Schools to create “The Hungry Games”—a nine day program that can be utilized by the school during their spring 2015 Project Term. The purpose of “The Hungry Games” is to develop food literacy and expose students to the corporate and industrial take-over of the food system.

We have provided an overview of our research, design and collaborative process, a sample curriculum and an idea for the final project that instructors can use to develop, in students, the knowledge and tools to be active and critical consumers of food. “The Hungry Games” curriculum explores the following four themes: 1) Why should we care; 2) Where does our food come from; 3) Nutrition; and 4) Food Waste. Lastly, the program incorporates a variety of hands-on activities including a lesson on making green smoothies and a field trip to Holland’s Eighth Day Community Farm. Time proved to be a primary limiting factor in the development of this program. It is hoped that this program will prove successful enough for a second installment, so that these food issues can be
LIB 322: WICKED PROBLEMS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Submissions from 2014

- PDF Fresh Start Team Project Analysis, Michael Carlson, Andrijka Macko, and Katie Hester
- PDF The Sprout Society, Michelle Haapala, Craig Coolman, and Jamie Groendyk
- PDF Tackling Wicked Food Issues, LIB322 students
- PDF Michigan Medley Project Analysis, Josh Lorenz, Kyle Ramsey, Anna Kathryn Sluka, and Tyler Wiewiora

Submissions from 2013

- PDF Fresh Start: Inspiring our Youth with Knowledge, Experience, Access to Farming, Local Foods, and Life Skills for Healthy and Sustainable Living, Evan Bell, Ross Damon, Dana Eardley, and Jessica Siemen
- PDF Tackling 'Wicked' Food Issues, Grand Valley State University
What is at stake?

What COULD we do together?

What SHOULD we do together?

What WILL we do?
HOW? WHEN?
Recommendations

- Meeting Agenda and Minutes
- 7/7 Action Commit.
- Report out to others
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<th>REFLECTION</th>
<th>ANALYSIS</th>
<th>SYNTHESIS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Learn</strong></td>
<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reflect back 15 weeks</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Experience</strong></td>
<td><strong>Frame Focus</strong></td>
<td><strong>Integrate experience with course content</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Future Direction</strong></td>
<td><strong>Action Plan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Describe difficulties</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Methods</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Application to professional, personal, and civic lives</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Challenges &amp; Recommendations</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Share findings &amp; Celebrate efforts</strong></td>
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Outcomes & Recommendations

- Mastery
- Community Action
- Method/Skills acquisition

- Flexibility
- Understand Assumptions
- Humility
- Tenacity
- Emotional Intelligence
- Cultural Maturity
Require and Reinforce Reciprocity

“All participants — faculty, community organization participants and students — expect that they will receive as well as give, learn as well as teach, and be served as well as serve” (Jacoby, 11).
### MEASURES
(Turnpenny, Lorenzoni, & Jones 2009)

- Frame issue
- Acknowledge conflicts
- Process inclusion
- Types of evidence
- Response to uncertainty
- Perspectives changed
- Impact reality

### MEASURES
(Jacoby)

- Understand interdisciplinary nature of problem
- Learn about the complexity of society
- Learn to be a part of the SOLUTION instead of the problem.
As a result of this course, I am more likely to volunteer or participate in community work.

“...I think that when you open someone’s eyes to these issues though they remain forever open, at least a little.”
Extending Efforts and Bridging Divides

What idea resonated with you in relation to your own work?

How might you integrate any one idea/tool into your own work?