

Course Big Questions (HIPs-Embedded)

INSTRUCTIONS

How do we evoke curiosity among our students for our courses? We tend to start our courses with answers before the students have questions or curiosity for what they will learn. Our courses should be relevant to students beyond fulfilling academic requirements. To get at these, you will need to think about the basic ideas and controversies that can get students to question what they already know or think they know and evoke curiosity to know more. These questions will get students thinking about what they already know and what they can't yet figure out. Not being able to answer these big questions fully creates a readiness to learn and gives relevance to the concepts of your course.

In this design, you will begin to create a visual course framework that will start with the big questions underlying all of your course concepts. Eventually, as you plan your course content and outcomes, you will be able to fill in the concepts that will complete the rest of the visual course framework or "map" that you will start now. Dividing your course content into manageable chunks helps students learn more effectively (Ambrose et al., 2013; Felder & Brent, 2016).

Use the template on the next page.

1. **Analyze:** To get started, try to imagine the big questions that would matter and engage someone on the street. Rather than create questions that are academic, conceptual, or factual, what are the controversies, ambiguities, and open-ended questions that could make them curious about the concepts they later will learn? What would make those concepts relevant? For example, rather than ask academic questions with a "right answer," *What are the main types of social justice?* or, *what are the causes of social injustice*, you could ask, *what is justice?* How do we know when something is unjust? Is justice the same for everyone? Remember the Mona Lisa Smile video. Her basic but important, controversial, and open-ended questions that framed her course concepts were, *"What is art? What makes it good? Who decides?"* Brainstorm a list of questions. Try them out on your colleagues and students and see which get them wondering and make them want to know more. How can you frame the questions to engage students to **consider experiences and circumstances unfamiliar to them?** (HIPs Diverse Encounters)
2. **Design:** Choose a visual format for your course "map." If it helps, try looking at diagrams for your visual course framework in Word under SmartArt.
3. Place only the big, open-ended questions at the **center of your framework for now** as your starting point.

Creating and communicating the overall framework that connects all of the course ideas and concepts together can be challenging for instructors. As "experts," instructors often *have* an organizing conceptual framework but seldom communicate it to students. Students often miss the big picture or struggle to see how the parts all connect, and instructors wonder why they don't connect the dots. They often don't know what the "dots" are and why they are important!

A visual framework helps students to internalize and associate new knowledge together in meaningful chunks and increases their transfer and recall called, "chunking." If you use this visual framework as you begin each new module, students will see how concepts and sub-concepts connect and how the concepts connect to the big questions underlying the course and give relevance and value to your course. Asking big questions before you provide answers or concepts will tap students' prior knowledge, called activating prior knowledge.

1. **Analyze:** What are the really important, open-ended, controversial, and relevant big questions that would to a person on the street? Why should someone take this course or spend time exploring these ideas? Brainstorm here:

2. **Design:** Review the optional framework design templates in Word in Smart Art and select one or create your own! You may need to try several kinds of frameworks before you find one that suits your course. Position your big questions in the center of your initial visual course diagram and upload it to this CIP in Canvas.



Design Big Questions **HIPs-rich** Rubric

	Expert	Emerging	Novice
Clarity and Diversity	<p>All the big questions are positioned at the center of the visual framework; the visual design is appealing, uncluttered, and engages the learner.</p> <p>All learners will be able to engage the big questions without words and images that are culture-bound, and include multiple ethnicities, genders, or identities, and will challenge the learner to consider unfamiliar experiences and circumstances.</p>	<p>The big questions are positioned at the center of the visual framework; the visual design is uncluttered and engages the learner.</p> <p>Some learners will be able to engage at least one of the big questions, but some of the words and images are culture-bound or relate to one ethnicity, gender, or identity. Students may be mildly challenged to consider unfamiliar experiences and circumstances.</p>	<p>The visual image is unclear and cluttered, and/or is not appealing nor engaging.</p> <p>It will be challenging for learners to engage with some of the big questions as they are unclear, and culture-bound for one ethnic, gender, or identity, and do not challenge the learner to consider unfamiliar experiences and circumstances.</p>
Relevance	<p>The big questions are basic, open-ended, real-world questions that are relevant to students and would matter to any person not in the course. They provoke controversy and evoke prior knowledge that students will bring to the question, and challenge students beyond what they already know.</p>	<p>The big questions are basic, open-ended questions that might matter to a human but may be of particular interest to a student in this course. They provoke mild controversy and prior knowledge that students bring to the question.</p>	<p>The big questions are not basic, open-ended questions and are of little relevance or interest to anyone outside of this course. They do not provoke controversy or students' prior knowledge.</p>

Enter a checkmark for the HIPs conditions that are embedded in this course design component.

Eight Key Elements	Embedded in this design
Higher-level Learning	
Interaction	
Real-world Application	
Frequent Feedback	
Time Investment	
Diverse Experiences	
Reflective/Integrative	
Public Competency	