The Impact of an Interdisciplinary Program on Undeclared Students’ Academic Major Choice and Vocation Discernment
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ABSTRACT

While selection of an academic major is pivotal for undeclared students, many lack direction and struggle to understand the meaning of prescribed general education courses. Many students grapple with a sense of purpose among academic choices, future careers, and broader aspects of adulthood. An interdisciplinary curriculum counters the disconnect between compartmentalized disciplines and helps students recognize connections between wider concepts.

RESEARCH METHODS

➢ Qualitative Case Study
➢ Semi-structured, individual interviews - coded for themes
➢ 13 Junior year Core students who began the Core Program undeclared (Discover Arts)

SELECT REFERENCES


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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do UD Core Discover Arts students describe their process of selecting a major?
2. What role does the UD Core Program have in shaping Core Discover Arts students’ academic major selection?
3. What role does Core have in shaping Core Discover Arts students’ vocation discernment?

FINDINGS

Core Integrated Studies Program

- History
- English
- Social Sciences
- Arts
- Philosophy
- Religious Studies

Learning Living Community

INTEGRATION

Academic Navigation
Inter-connections
Cognitive Mindfulness
Advocacy
Relationships

CONCLUSIONS

✓ Core Discover Arts students found Core had varying levels of impact on academic major choice and vocation discernment.
✓ Some students noted a direct link to major choice, while others noted an indirect link.

IMPLICATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Narrow vocation lens
- Further vocational programming
- Core has levels, unique needs
- Student development
- Fosters self-authorship
- High-impact program
- Deeper learning & engagement

- Undeclared anxiety
- Director advising & ASI 150
- Integrated curriculum
- Students make connections

- Longitudinal study of one cohort through all years of Core Program
- Further study on student relationships; study broader range of students
- Insight for best practices & assessment; potential expansion of Core