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How Does a Campus Engagement Series Impact Participants’ Inquiry Mindsets?

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**ABSTRACT**

How can we cultivate students’ awareness of behaviors and attitudes involved in research and creative work? How can we reduce barriers between faculty and students and promote a culture of shared inquiry?

This poster describes our development of a co-curricular panel discussion series that engaged a campus around the sparks, processes, and attitudes that ultimately result in creative and academic accomplishments. Our analysis of the reflections collected from 86 attendees offers insights into how students conceptualize inquiry, and how transparent discussion impacts their thinking about their steps, skills, and attitudes.

**BACKGROUND**

From Concept to Creation: Uncovering the Making of Scholarly and Creative Accomplishments is a panel discussion series launched in 2018. Development of the program was informed by focus groups in which faculty expressed desire for more intra-campus communication around engaging students in academic inquiry.

Motivation and goals:
- Generate conversation and community around processes and skills involved in research/creative work and professional paths.
- Increase transparency of steps, skills, habits, and attitudes important to the process.
- Raise visibility of information literacy and digital literacy skills and concepts.
- Make research experiences and professional paths feel more approachable to students.

Structure:
- 6 panel sessions (2 per semester) since fall 2018 with 2-3 panelists per session.
- Sessions attended by 21-97 students, faculty, and staff, averaging 62.2 attendees per session.
- Panelists select a particular piece of scholarship, project, creative work or a professional path (e.g., entry to college or graduate school) and discuss some aspects of its development.

**RESULTS**

**RESEARCH QUESTION 1:** How do participants characterize their inquiry process?

**RESEARCH QUESTION 2:** How do participants’ reflections on their inquiry process change after participating in the program?

**DISCUSSION**

- Participants articulated the role of failure in new ways after participating in the program, framing it as a natural part of the process and often fruitful catalysts.
- Participants’ reflections reveal heightened awareness of attitudes important to inquiry processes: curiosity, persistence, community, and self-awareness.


**METHOD**

- Using a grounded theory approach, analyzed participants’ worksheets to identify patterns in three phases: independent grounded analysis to identify themes, independent coding for selected themes, normalizing.
- This project has been approved by the Penn State University IRB.