# تجارب متميزة في التعلم والتعليم في جامعة النجاح الوطنية

# Excellence in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

# May 2013, An-Najah National University, CELT, Nablus, Palestine

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| **Excellence in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education** | | | | | |
| **Presentation Proposal Form** | | | | | |
| **Author Name** | Emad Dawwas | **Faculty** | Engineering | **Department** | **Urban Planning** |
| **Presentation Title:** | **AN EARTHQUAKE EVACUATION PLAN FOR NABLUS CITY THROUGH A COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING (CBL) CLASS** | | | | |
| **The purpose behind integrating the new education approach** (Maximum 200 words):  In this experience a GIS class was redesigned and taught as a community-based learning (CBL) class. CBL is a learning approach in which academic institutions and community (organizations) work together in order to meet their common needs. In the CBL approach, a mutual beneficial partnership between academic institutions and community organizations is created by integrating community service into the academic activities. According to this relation, students, under the supervision of the instructor, help communities identify, assess, and solve problems related to their concerns and needs, while, in their turn, the communities provide a means for students to apply their knowledge to real-life problems. | | | | | |
| **Types of intervention in the teaching and learning process** (Maximum 200 words)**:**  The GIS CBL class was redesigned and taught through a framework that allowed students who have variety of skills and learning styles to work together in order to develop and integrate these skills. Simultaneously, the framework allowed students to exercise autonomy in creative project development, and to promote GIS modern techniques throughout their community. Furthermore, the proposed framework presented students with opportunities to tie action, learning activities and outcomes together, which in turn helped enhance the following skills: Critical thinking skills, Team work skills, knowledge management skills, and Conflict management skills. | | | | | |
| **Impact on learners** (Max. 100 words):  The CBL can positively impact students’ learning by providing a rich learning environment in which the community provides authentic learning opportunities. This environment helps students understand the connections between classroom materials and real-world problems. In other words, students have the opportunity to experience how theoretical knowledge from their discipline is applied in practice on real-time cases and projects. In addition, the CBL gives students a chance to learn about the community context, where they will be working in the near future. | | | | | |
| **Challenges during Implementation** (Max. 200words):  An important challenge was that the scope of the orientation sessions held at the beginning of the class was wide which made those sessions less beneficial. Consequently, the sessions were confusing as far as the tools and models were to be applied in practice.  Another challenge some students encountered was that they were overwhelmed initially when they started raw data collection and the data preparation stages. Another related concern the majority of those students raised was that they worked under much pressure as they failed to meet the submission due dates for their weekly field reports and lab exercises. | | | | | |
| **Recommendations for the future** (Max. 100words):  It is recommended that for the future GIS CBL course instructors to expand the orientation period in order to make the activities less intensive, and to prepare clearer orientation agendas with enough explanations of the rationale and purpose for each session.  It is also recommended that two action plans to be incorporated in the next version of the GIS CBL class. The first one is to select smaller study samples which will reduce students’ effort to collect and prepare the data sets. The second one is to include time management training in the orientation sessions. Such training will orient students to implementing effective time management strategies that are essential for such kind of projects. | | | | | |
| **Added Value** (What makes this approach different from other more traditional styles in learning and teaching?) (Max. 100words):  In engineering education, CBL generally matches new approaches of teaching that go beyond the traditional objectives of acquiring and applying knowledge in areas like mathematics, science and system design. CBL emphasizes the importance of the expertise needed in real world problem solving and all related skills such as the ability to function in multidisciplinary teams, to communicate effectively with team members and community representatives, and to synthesize engineering models and applications. Such expertise might include: professional and ethical responsibility, the impact of engineering solutions in a global and societal context, and knowledge of contemporary models and applications. | | | | | |