

Why This Class Matters: From Discovering to Doing

with Marissa Dahari and Scott Cohn

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For many students, school is not an objective in and of itself. Rather, it is a step on the road to their futures. By emphasizing how the class supports those future goals, instructors help students see why their course matters. Students can move from first discovering a new skill or concept to applying it in real world situations. Join a panel of faculty advocates to discuss how teaching with applications motivates students and helps them keep their eyes on the prize.

1. Before we dive in, can you give us a little context? What courses do you teach? And what purpose do those courses serve for your students? Are they gen ed requirements? Something specific to their major?
2. Why is it important for you to help students see connections between your class and their future goals?
3. Let's get to the good stuff! What are some practical ways you help your students see how the concepts and skills in your course apply to the rest of their lives? How do you get a sense of what your students' goals might be? Does your advice change depending on whether it's a course for their major vs a more general requirement?
4. Are there any ways you use technology to amplify that connection to students' futures? For example, are you able to get them started using any tools they might come across in their careers?
5. What advice would you give another instructor who is just starting to explicitly highlight the connections between their course material and student future goals?