



INTEGRATING CONTENT WHEN IT'S CHALLENGING

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SOMETIMES IT'S EASIER TO INTEGRATE

- Some courses are a more natural fit for learning communities due to:
 - More **flexibility** in the course content that needs to be covered
 - More **obvious relationships** with outcomes from other courses
 - More **interest** from faculty to integrate their content with others

SOMETIMES IT REALLY IS MORE DIFFICULT TO INTEGRATE

- Other courses require more work to successfully offer LCs due to:
 - The **amount of content** that needs to be covered during a course term
 - The **sequential nature** of content in one or both courses
 - Less **interest** from faculty who see the likely costs outweighing the likely benefits
- Courses in natural sciences, mathematics, and economics are among those that can be more difficult to integrate

ACTUAL BENEFITS ARE OFTEN GREATER THAN PERCEIVED

- Even in the most challenging situations, taking the time to integrate can provide a high return on the time invested for:
 - **Students**, who can receive:
 - Better preparation for their personal and professional lives in an integrated world
 - A stronger sense of connection with and empowerment in their academic careers
 - **Faculty**, who can engage in:
 - Faculty professional development
 - An opportunity to improve even already strong courses
 - Lifelong learning

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

- What are some of the **areas where it seems more difficult** to offer learning communities and/or other integrative experience for students **at your institution**?
- What **attempts have previously been made** to offer learning communities and/or other integrative experiences in those areas, and **what lessons were learned** from those attempts?

APPROACHES TO INTEGRATING WHEN IT'S CHALLENGING

- **Fully-coordinated** (team taught) learning communities that involve a course that is more difficult to integrate with a course that is easier to integrate
- Example from Skagit Valley College:
 - “*Stats and Fats*”
 - MATH 146: Introduction to Statistics
 - NUTR 101: Nutrition
 - The flexibility of content/sequencing in NUTR& 101 has made this a very successful LC for pre-nursing, business, and other students at Skagit
- Example from Prairie View A&M
 - “Co-Requisite”
 - Non credit Math + College Algebra
 - Non credit Math + Contemporary College Algebra

APPROACHES TO INTEGRATING WHEN IT'S CHALLENGING

- **Fully-coordinated** (team-taught) learning communities that integrate two courses that are both more challenging to integrate
- **Fair Warning:** This approach may require a complete redesign of the courses to effectively align course content and ensure that all course outcomes are met
- Example from Skagit Valley College:
 - “*The Chemistry of Life*”
 - BIOL 160: General Biology with Lab
 - CHEM 121: Intro to Chemistry (Lab)
 - This successful redesign for pre-nursing students is now resulting in the integration of two required Anatomy & Physiology courses in a subsequent quarter

APPROACHES TO INTEGRATING WHEN IT'S CHALLENGING

- **Linked** learning communities (no required team teaching) that integrate multiple assignments based on sharing the same cohort of students
- At Skagit, a linked version of the BIOL 160/CHEM 121 LC is taught on our smaller Whidbey Island Campus
- Example from Prairie View A&M
 - “GRIND” – Getting ready to Initiate a Nursing Degree
 - First stages of redesigning General Biology for Nursing and Anatomy and Physiology

APPROACHES TO INTEGRATING WHEN IT'S CHALLENGING

- **Federated** learning communities include a core course that is federated with a number of courses in a specific area of study
- This approach is particularly valuable for natural science majors and other majors that have **highly prescribed and incredibly busy schedules**
- Example: Because science majors often struggle to meet the humanities distribution requirement at Skagit, there is a rotation of federated LCs including core courses from the humanities distribution area that includes:
 - “*Ethics in Science*” (PHIL 215: Introduction to Ethics)
 - “*Celluloid Sciences*” (ENGL 115: Introduction to Film)
 - “*Muses on the Sciences*” (ENGL 254: World Literature I)
- Example: Since it is highly recommended that Prairie View A&M STEM students participate in undergraduate research opportunities, Intro to Speech is a course that fits the federated model.

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

- Which of the fully-coordinated, linked, and/or federated learning community **options** discussed might work well in some of the more challenging areas you discussed earlier in this session?
- What would be required to make this a reality at your institution and what **strategies** could help with this process?

A RANGE OF OPTIONS TO SERVE STUDENTS


- If one of the previously described learning community structures won't work well in a given situation...
 - Other great integrative options exist including:
 - The creation of integrative **seminar** courses
 - The creation of **co-curricular** integrative experiences
 - Incorporating **college-wide themes** into individual courses

DEVELOPING FACULTY INTEREST AND SUPPORT

- Without **faculty interest and support**, having great learning community and other integrative structures available may not ultimately benefit students much
 - Even co-requisite support courses can be difficult to offer without faculty support
- Rather than attempting to mandate these structures, a more **diplomatic approach** to winning faculty support can result in a more sustainable program
 - This may require beginning with those most willing in a given department
 - Faculty initially resistant to integration are often convinced by the student outcomes and experiences in courses offered by their colleagues

MEETING OUR STUDENTS WHERE THEY ARE

- Even when LCs and other integrative experiences won't work well, including integrative perspectives and more contextualized content in any course can provide significant benefits to students and faculty
 - Makes the content more relevant for students
 - Helps move us out of our silos as faculty members
- Students will likely be best served if our vision for developing integrative learning options is **focused on addressing students needs** from the time they arrive at our institutions until the time they finish (and beyond)



Q & A

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