



# LC 101: Introduction to Learning Communities

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## Let's Talk

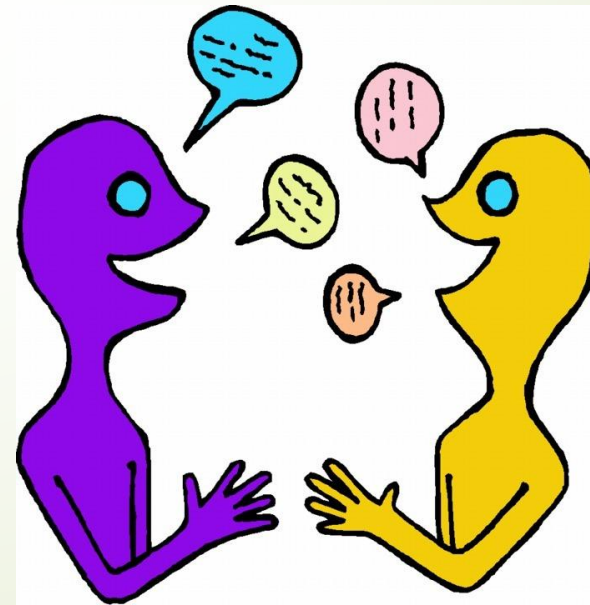
What is the 'climate' on your campus ?

What are the BIG issues that impact teaching and learning?

What are the BIG issues that impact student success?

What's your role/stake in you LC program?

Why Learning communities to address these issues?



# Learning communities refer to ...

Smith, B.L., MacGregor, J., Matthews, R., & Gabelnick, F. (2004).

“a variety of curricular approaches that **intentionally** link or cluster two or more courses, often around an interdisciplinary theme or problem, and enroll a common cohort of students-\*in which they experience *explicitly designed opportunities for integrative learning.*”

They represent an **intentional restructuring** of students' time, credit, and learning experiences to build community, enhance learning, and foster connections among students and their teachers, and among disciplines. At their best, learning communities practice pedagogies of **active engagement and reflection.**”

\*A New Era in Learning Community Work: Why the Pedagogy of Intentional Integration Matters , Lardner and Malnarich, 2008

# Essential Elements of LC's Done Well

## ■ Target Population/Issue/Subject

- Which students –why?
- Is the targeted population aligned with the mission of the college?

## ■ Linked Courses

- Schedule
- Shared Focus
- Integrative experiences and assignments
- Co-curricular activities (out of class experiences)


## Essential Elements continued

- ▶ **Emphasis on Curricular Integration**
  - Engaging Pedagogies-professional development
  - Pre-planning and post reflection
  - Scaffolded/Collaborative projects
  
- ▶ **Inclusion of Support Services and Collaborative Efforts**
  - Advising/ Counseling
  - Tutoring
  - Information and Media Literacy-Librarians
  - Registrar
  - Admissions
  
- ▶ **Program Development**
  - Planning team (coordinator, Champions, etc.)
  - Collaboration with IR (show me the data!!)
  - Administration (Institutional support)
  - Student Voices –design/vision/outcomes
  - Peer Mentors





Three essential elements to focus on now:



Pre planning, Within semester and  
Post reflection utilizing  
Kingsborough Community  
College's Workbook

# Professional Development (PD)

## **Pre-Semester Conversations**

Instructors of linked courses familiarize themselves with each other's student learning outcomes, curricula, and course materials; collaborate to identify a common issue of direct relevance to students' lives that the courses can address; and create at least one shared, integrative, assignment. Teams may also develop a shared syllabus or share a common course site.



# Professional Development (PD)

## **Within-Semester Conversations**

Regular meetings give instructors the opportunity to keep each other up-to-date, making sure their courses stay aligned and increasing integration and coherency in the LC. Regular meetings also give instructors the opportunity to discuss student progress, when warranted, making early intervention more likely.



# Professional Development (PD)

## **Post-Semester Conversations**

When the semester is over, teams assess their students' work and revise their activities and assignments to further strengthen them. Teams might keep an ongoing assessment narrative, so that they are continually closing the loop. Teams might also review their collaboration.





# Learning Community Models at ISU

## ► Freshmen Interest Groups (FIGS)

- Cohorts take **related courses** to fulfill freshmen course requirements. Coordinators (typically **academic advisers**) and peer mentors plan social and service activities, study groups, etc.

## ► Linked courses/course clusters

- Learning communities may involve two or more classes linked **thematically** or by **content** which a cohort of students takes together. In this instance, the **faculty do plan the program collaboratively**.

## ► Residential

- Learning communities positioned within residence halls that are either thematic or connected to a discipline. Students may engage in **varied combinations** of common or linked courses, social and service activities, field trips, industry tours, etc.

## ► Student cohorts/Integrative seminar

- Learning communities can be structured as programs in which a small cohort of students **enrolls in larger classes that faculty do not coordinate**. In this instance, intellectual connections and community-building often take place in an **additional integrative seminar**.

# Q & A

What else would you like to know or share???

