

Designing integrated learning for students

Personally engaging learning

Take some time to reflect on your most powerful experiences of learning (at any age). Based on the experience that first comes to mind, write on your index card what you learned. Share with your team members. Identify key points/common threads and write these down on a large sheet of paper. Choose three points that you would like to emphasize when designing learning opportunities for students.

Passions and aspirations for students' learning

In context with your discipline what questions, issues, inquiry and/or learning do you care deeply about? What enduring learning do you want students to gain from studying and working with you? Write each response on a sticky note (one point per note).

Essential integration of expectations for student learning

Compare your sticky notes with your team members and make new sticky notes if additional ideas come to mind. Cluster and chunk sticky notes on a large sheet of paper and look for meaningful connections (related themes, issues, concepts, expected understanding, habits of mind, abilities, skill sets, etc.). Move the sticky notes around until the clusters make sense to everyone. Label clusters taking time to appropriately describe the expectation for student learning that is common to the cluster. Set aside those notes that just don't seem to fit in any of the clusters. You will use this sheet as a working diagram for designing assignments so make sure it is clear and well organized.

Schedules: Intentional planning

Look at time in two ways: explicitly describe what your teaching schedules allow in terms of curricular integration, do you need to create occasions to bring everyone together? Are you working on a single integrated assignment or a more fully integrated set of assignments?

Another time issue to consider regarding teaching and learning in and out of the classroom: share your ideas on the best uses of students' time—how much lecturing should occur, how much discussion, how many workshops?

Create your weekly schedule for this fall. Include class times, office hours, standing obligations, etc. Share your schedules with each other and find common times when students and faculty can meet face to face as a community of learners. Be very specific about the total time available (one hour on most Thursdays). On a large sheet of paper make a diagram showing this common time. Identify a time each week when you will meet with your team members to plan, assess, and reflect upon your work. Use sticky notes for details.

Assignments as assessments: Designing down for integration

Assessment is the zipper that connects teaching and learning (K. Patricia Cross).

Deep versus surface learning (qualitative versus quantitative learning)

Unpacking or designing down: for students to provide evidence of learning what are the key conceptions, methods of inquiry, abilities/skills, values and habits of mind associated with the intended outcomes? What learning experiences are necessary to prepare the student? What must students be able to do before engaging in this work?

One important goal of a learning community is to provide the opportunity for students to examine fewer ideas in greater depth from the vantage point of multiple perspectives. Using your sticky notes write down what students need to be able to do after they finish your course. What should students learn to be able to do in your course? Intended student outcomes inform curriculum planning teaching and assessment. Well crafted assignments are opportunities to discover what students know and can do and hence what we need to do to better support their personal and intellectual development.

Possession of knowledge versus use of knowledge

The Committee on the Foundations of Assessment, National Research Council argues that assessment on academic knowledge should be based "on how students represent knowledge and develop competence in a domain" (p. 54).

In the context of student work and your passions and aspirations for student learning what stands out as a good assignment? Why? What's been your experience on unsuccessful assignments? Take a few moments to write on your index cards and then share your insights with your team members.

How do you know students have achieved the intended outcomes and what constitutes evidence of learning? Use your sticky notes to brainstorm possible ways in which students can demonstrate learning.

Pair with another team to discuss this question: what are the characteristics of good assignments? Write key points on your large sheets of paper. Read your colleagues' work and use sticky notes to identify five essential characteristics. With the sticky note diagram of shared expectations for student learning in team members' view, brainstorm possibilities for integrated learning using the diagram as a reference. After listing several ideas select one that is most appropriate for the resources (time, facilities, \$\$\$\$) you have available for face to face learning. Invent an assignment where students will be able to provide evidence of learning, where they can "use what they know."

Consider the following:

- Does the assignment foster personal engagement?
- Is the assignment designed with the characteristics of "good" assignments in mind?

- *Is what you care deeply about present?*

Use this method of designing down from the integrated assessment to create a sequence of work/assignments so all students have the opportunity to develop the understanding and required abilities to do well: what themes, issues, and concepts do they need to know and understand? What habits of mind, abilities, skill sets do they need to practice? Highlight these on your diagram.

Recall past students—are there specific abilities they bring to this assignment? What do they really need to work on? Where will this learning occur? During your class time? In time set aside for collaboration? Return to your schedule to review.

At your next planning meeting refine your assignments to fit the circumstances of your work. Decide how you will encourage students' self reflection and articulation of their own learning needs/experiences.

