Mapping Integrative Learning

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What is your higher education context & perspective?

• Institution type?
  • Four-year institution
  • Two-year institution
  • For profit

• Your role?
  • Faculty
  • Assessment professional
  • Academic administrator
  • Student affairs professional
  • ?

What’s your interest in mapping integrative learning?
NILOA’s Reorganized Website: 7 Audience Types

- Assessment Practitioners
- Faculty Members
- Administrators & Campus Leadership
- Government Decision & Policy Makers
- Student Affairs Professionals
- Learners
- Employers & Employer Organizations
CURRENT STUDENT EXPERIENCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
How do things fit together? How should students navigate the college experience?

“I have had many amazing experiences [as a college student], but I didn’t really know what they meant or how they all fit together. Now, I see patterns and themes....The work I’ve been doing actually makes sense. There has been some direction to it all along.”

-- University of Michigan student (AAC&U Peer Review)
HOW DO WE HELP STUDENTS MAKE SENSE OF IT ALL?
Organizing Learning

Institutions tend not to be organized or function towards intentional alignment of student learning experiences. Students learn everywhere, but the institutional organization tends to require students to take the jumble of experiences and organize it for themselves.
An Integrative Model:
The Learning Systems Paradigm

A framework for supporting faculty, staff, and student efforts to create greater coherence among the various learning experiences at a given institution—and among institutions.
An Integrative Model:

The Learning Systems Paradigm

The Learning Systems Paradigm changes the way we conceptualize the organization of the institution, how we work within that organization, and whom we involve in that work. It encourages:

- Working collaboratively across typical divisions
- Intentionally aligning learning experiences
- Addressing needs of the institution’s particular students
- Building transparency for all participants and stakeholders
What does it look like to revise assessment in a Learning Systems Paradigm?

How 2 institutions are mapping curriculum, integrating general education, and re-envisioning assessment
Situation at CSUSB

• Bloated GE Outcomes
  • 154 outcomes
  • Driven by discrete content areas
  • Not being assessed

• Converting from Quarters to Semesters
  • Requires redesign of GE curriculum
  • Inspires departments to "transform" curricula
A Process of Reflection

• What is college-level study for?

• How do we get students there?

• How does GE contribute to that?

• How does the major support that?

• How do we determine how we’re doing?
Tackling the Outcomes Problem

General Education
1. Learning How to Learn/Metacognition
2. Thinking Critically
3. Critical Literacies
4. Diverse Perspectives
5. Global Perspectives
6. Integrative Learning
7. Ethical Responsibility
8. Collaboration
Lesson Learned

Sometimes a small group of select, well-positioned individuals is the most productive way to move work forward.
Addressing GE Curriculum

Inclusive Faculty Conversations about Values

Six Faculty Interest Groups

• 3 Structure Teams
• 3 Assessment Teams

Independently Developed Models

Campus Conversations about Models

Feedback-Driven Synthesis
Lesson Learned

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Campus Conversations about Models

Feedback-Driven Synthesis

Working through those small groups of select, well-positioned individuals, larger, more inclusive conversations encourage deeper engagement across the campus, provide feedback to the group, and make roll-out smoother.
Integrating GE & the Major

Ways of knowing and doing → GE

GE → Major
Comparing Outcomes

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**Department of English: Old Outcomes**
1. Familiarity with writers and periods
2. Understanding of aesthetic forms
3. Understanding of multiple approaches
4. Knowledge of literary diversity
5. Understanding of genre
6. Understanding of linguistic analysis
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(Content Focused)
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**Department of English: New Outcomes**
1. Intertextuality
2. Writing
3. Diversity
4. Theory
5. Semantic Multiplicity
6. Textual Historicity
7. Social Construction
8. Research
Crosswalking Outcomes

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Department of English

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Lesson Learned

A common foundation for thinking about student learning can yield *passively* aligned outcomes that help to harmonize the different parts of the educational picture.
What's Left?

Making the implicit alignment that emerged from passive ideas permeating outcomes explicit so that we see how we're aligned for learning
Four Lenses of Alignment

1. Scaffolding
2. Reinforcing
3. Integrating
4. Embedding
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**Thinking about Mapping**

1. Not a simple task
2. Meaning-making process
3. Collective undertaking
4. Requires time and patience
The work at CSUSB: parallel trails to learning goals

The work at Utah State Univ.: muddled route to objectives

Key takeaway: paths may be messy; focus on principles & practices
USU’s WORK TIED TO UTAH’S STATE SYSTEM

Utah System of Higher Education (USHE)

- Oversees 8 public institutions with 190,000 students
- Since 1992, state-wide discussions of Gen Ed curricula
- Attention to transfer & articulation agreements
- Common course numbering
- Annual “Majors’ Meetings”
  - all institutions in USHE system; 37+ disciplines
- Annual Conference: “What Is An Educated Person?”
  - faculty/administrators/students from all institutions
USU’s WORK TIED TO UTAH’S STATE SYSTEM

USU CITIZEN SCHOLAR DEGREE PROFILE

“A university education prepares students to work and live meaningfully in today's rapidly changing global society. Together, general and discipline-specific education help students master the essential competencies making this goal possible.”
WHAT DID USU & USHE OFFER?

- a framework of structures & goals
- coordination & cooperation
- response to student needs w/ transfer, articulation
- regular, state-wide, face-to-face convenings
- helpful, supportive, responsive leaders

Seems like all you’d need, right?
WHAT WAS MISSING?

- goals and objectives that were thoughtfully coordinated... AND well communicated
- faculty familiar with the language, purposes, and implementation of the initiatives ("learning outcomes" / "mapping" / "alignment" / "scaffolding")
- faculty who could concisely explain a discipline's goals & values
- "competencies" that were concrete & connected
- goals w/"traction on the ground" (embedded in classes and assignments)
- evidence of goals achieved
- clear pathways through programs
- discussions outside a small circle of faculty & administrators
- information widely shared with different audiences
THE GAME CHANGER: 2008-2009

CORE QUESTION:
When students complete a program of study, what should they know, understand, and be able to do?

_Slowly_ shifted the tone and texture of state-wide conversations.
- discipline-specific (where faculty are experts, not novices)
  - work at 10,000’ level \(\rightarrow\) work at “sea level”
- conversations with wide range of stakeholders
- administrative coordination \(\rightarrow\) faculty conversations
- assisted a slow, difficult shift from a focus on:
  
  “my course” \(\rightarrow\) “our curriculum”
  discipline specialty \(\rightarrow\) institutional program
  major \(\rightarrow\) degree
  students in classes \(\rightarrow\) students’ next steps
- provided a clearer “pathway” to reforms
HELPED CLARIFY:

- the *language* of “outcomes-based” reforms
- the informing *logic* of reforms
- what a discipline “produces”
- what a discipline “consumes”
- sequential steps through a discipline
- the intersections among disciplinary goals
- the *connections* among teaching & learning projects

top-down coordination » bottom-up expertise
TAKEAWAY #1

Integrative learning is not just a pedagogical or administrative issue
(few faculty have any expertise -- or even familiarity – in these areas)

**ALSO**

- **a social and cultural process**
  - trust, shifting expectations

- **a linguistic process**
  - becoming conversant in vocabulary of outcomes-based education

- **a therapeutic process**
  - traumatic memory of past assessments

- **a reiterative process**
  - returning repeatedly to basic points
Progress toward integrative learning is itself a learning process

Mirrors the kinds of issues we encounter with our students:
- know your audience (their assets and deficits)
- engage them in active learning
- make the implicit explicit
- demystify the process
- respond to prior assumptions
- scaffold the work: incremental, reinforcing measures
- message, repeat, message, repeat
- clarify incentives

Learning (in a college classroom or in academic reform) is not linear . . . but complex, subtle, nuanced, muddled
To Consider in Your Work:

• What does your learner look like now? Where would you like your learner to be after they interact with your revised, aligned learning experiences?

• Who do you need to make decisions and act on a revised framework? How might you bring these folks together to build consensus on the work?

• How can you ensure your work is student-centered? (responsive to student needs, flexible, transparent)

• To whom and what needs to be communicated?
Resources


ASSESSING CO-CURRICULAR, EXTRA-CURRICULAR, AND STUDENT LIFE ACTIVITIES

SEE:

http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/Assessment_in_Practice_Maryville2.pdf
Mapping Integrative Learning: Questions and discussion