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SOITL Conference Rare and Invigorating Treat

By Ann Chrapkiewicz

A conference devoted specifically to the scholarship of interdisciplinary teaching and learning (SOITL) is a rare occurrence. Indeed, it was a special handful of days late this spring when the Michigan State University Conference on Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning (CITL) took place in East Lansing, Michigan. From May 13-16, more than 60 scholars, teachers, administrators, and graduate students joined together in lively and challenging discussions about interdisciplinarity inside and outside the classroom, as well as across institutions.

Reflecting back on the conference, William Newell, Executive Director of the Association for Integrative Studies (AIS), observed, "The energy level at CITL was invigorating, making for lively discussion." An overall tone of openness and camaraderie allowed seasoned experts and novices to mutually pose questions, proffer answers, and learn a great deal from one another. Indeed, the participants seemed to feed off of each other's enthusiasm and generated an inclusive yet challenging environment. As Jeanne Narum, former director of

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SOITL

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The Inherent Interdisciplinarity of Multimodal Compositions

By S. Andrew Stowe

In her remarks at the opening session of the 2011 AIS conference, Julie Thompson Klein stated that multimodality is inherently interdisciplinary. I agree with Klein that multimodality, or in this case, multimodal compositions are inherently interdisciplinary. Furthermore, I seek to add the notion of multimodal composition as a form of integration, which further supports its study in the field of interdisciplinarity and integrative studies.

The idea of multimodality is used broadly to describe a process in composition. For the purposes of this brief essay the concept of composition transcends alphabetic writing. Instead, this essay argues that composition describes multiple strategies of meaning making, which include conventional writing, and also such efforts as creating images, writing computer code, and composing three-dimensional landscapes. This essay proposes that the concept of integration can provide a path to unlocking the inherent interdisciplinarity of multimodality.

For the purposes of this essay multimodality is defined as that which utilizes multiple modes of creating meaning in a way that "exceeds" any one form of composition (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006; Takayoshi & Selfe,

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Multimodal Compositions

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2007). However, I resist agreeing with Takayoshi and Selfe's notion of multimodal composition as merely "exceeding the alphabetic." Multimodal composition does not need to contain alphabetic writing at all, but rather any collection of compositions from which meaning can be construed.

Taking composition to an interesting extreme, Haynes (2010) argues that trees are in fact multimodal compositions, from the carvings in the bark to the creatures that have bored into its trunk (p. 65). Included in Haynes' example is the notion that in the composition of the tree, there could be, but does not need to be any form of alphabetic writing. "In other words, multimodal composition can be understood as being organic as well as composite, thus broadening our understanding of how meanings can be created in multiple modes using multiple platforms (e.g., soil, software, sound)" (2012).

Repko (2008) provides a definition of integration that is based on the process of "critically evaluating and creatively combining ideas and knowledge to form a new whole" (p. 116). Composition can be understood as a kind of rhetorical invention, wherein a composition is used for persuasive purposes. With this understanding, multimodal composition is an integration of different compositions and semiotic codes (means of conveying meaning) in multiple platforms. As in the example of the tree, the different elements that go into creating this tree (soil, the carved image, etc.) are integrated to form the whole multimodal composition. This serves as an interesting way of understanding integration in praxis, creatively integrating elements into a composite composition. Integration is evidenced not only in the composition of the tree, but also in the interpretation of the tree by the viewer. Where multiple means of understanding meaning are needed, the perspectives of different disciplines must be drawn on.

Taking composition to an interesting extreme, Haynes (2010) argues that trees are in fact multimodal compositions, from the carvings in the bark to the creatures that have bored into its trunk (p. 65).

Klein believes "multimodality and interdisciplinarity are linked because working with different media/modes means crossing the boundaries of different technological forms and traditions" (Klein, March 7, 2012). While digital forms of media production certainly provide vast opportunities for multimodality, multimodality need not be limited to the digital. The multiplicity of different compositions that can be produced by combining any types of composition and variously layering them gives multimodality a certain freedom from disciplinary confines. Once a composition contains elements encoded by its inventor; any given audience can view this same composition radically differently. This effect is magnified when multiple elements of composition form a multimodal composition.

As compositions are integrated, they create new and evolving structures that allow multimodality a kind of freedom from compositional and disciplinary limitations. Therefore, multiple compositions can be viewed as a single multimodal composition as opposed to a mere collection of different pieces. The combination of sound with a clay sculpture that would create sort of a compositional pastiche still has the potential to exist as a single multimodal composition.

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EMERGING SCHOLARS FORUM

This installment of the Emerging Scholars Column offers yet another example of the way the process of integration can be applied to complex problem solving in a wide variety of contexts. Here, Drew Stowe explores the subject of multimodal composition. Compositions involving multiple modes of expression have an inherently holistic property. In order to fully appreciate the composition, the viewer must creatively synthesize its various facets into a whole greater than the sum of its parts. Multimodal composition is not only an inherently interdisciplinary subject, but offers another avenue for investigating the integrative process. Drew Stowe is a doctoral student in the Rhetorics, Communication and Information Design program at Clemson University. He received a master's degree in Professional Communication from Clemson in 2012 and a bachelor's degree in communication from the University of South Carolina Upstate in 2009. His interests include composition, pedagogy, technology, and electracy.

—JW

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Interdisciplinarity and Learning Communities, Part 2

By Joan B. Fiscella

In the December 2011 issue of *Integrative Pathways*, Part 1 of this series reviewed three of the monographs published out of the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education, dealing with learning communities and student services, service learning, and assessment. The role of interdisciplinarity in the monographs included explicit discussion of integrating curriculum, cooperative work across departments or divisions of the higher education organization, and partnerships between the college or university and other community organizations. It also included mention of or allusion to such integration. Because the three monographs reviewed here provide fairly lengthy discussions of numerous schools and programs as well as shorter snapshots of other programs, a third part to the series will be published separately to focus on the relation of developmental education and libraries to learning communities.

Part 2 focuses on learning communities in community colleges, liberal arts colleges, and research universities. These monographs also address the role of interdisciplinary or integrative education both explicitly and implicitly. Specifically, Part 2 reviews the following:

- Spear, K., with others. 2003. *Learning Communities in Liberal Arts Colleges*. National Learning Communities Project Monograph Series. Olympia, WA: The Evergreen State College, Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education, in cooperation with the American Association for Higher Education.
- O'Connor, J., with others. 2003. *Learning Communities in Research Universities*. National Learning Communities Project Monograph Series. Olympia, WA: The Evergreen State College, Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education, in cooperation with the American Association for Higher Education.
- Fogarty, J., L. Dunlap, and others. 2003. *Learning Communities in Community Colleges*. National Learning Communities Project Monograph Series. Olympia, WA: The Evergreen State College, Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education, in cooperation with the American Association for Higher Education.

To set the context, *Learning Communities in Liberal Arts Colleges* questions the value of liberal education before it portrays how a number of colleges incorporate learning communities into liberal arts education. One

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

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section focusing on colleges looks at four institutions in depth, while another provides brief overviews or snapshots. Describing the goals of liberal education is complex, given the pressure to reduce classes in the humanities and liberal arts in favor of a more vocational or professional education. Karen Spear, in her introductory essay, points out "that as the purpose of liberal learning keeps drifting out of focus within the very institutions that are singularly devoted to providing it, learning communities are a powerful site for preserving the spirit, values, and goals of a liberal education" (p. 4). She refers to the 2000 findings of the Policy Center on the First Year of College survey showing that a greater number of research universities than liberal arts colleges develop intentional structures or curriculum for first year students to encourage closer connections between faculty and students (pp. 4-5). At the time of the survey it is likely that the liberal arts colleges took such connections for granted, as might be concluded from findings of the 2000 survey of first-year curricular practices: their emphasis on small classes taught by senior faculty, on responsibility of senior faculty for advising, and one or more required courses offered to first-year students at these colleges (Betsy O. Barefoot, *National Survey of First-Year Curricular Practices Summary of Findings* [2000]. Most recently downloaded Aug 16, 2012.) Drawing on the writing of Martha Nussbaum, Spear offers this (not necessarily uncontested) description of a liberal education: It ". . . cultivates a free and flexible mind, able to think on its own, informed by tradition and convention but not governed by them, prepared to engage in criticism of past and present, but sensitive and responsive to individual and cultural points of view that differ from one's own" (p. 6). What this means for an undergraduate education is characterized by a relatively small organization in which students and faculty are able to work together in the context of an integrated curriculum common to all, with the aim of educating for democratic participation.

Spear's brief history of learning communities in liberal arts college begins with the development of Dewey's work, to Meiklejohn's experiment at

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Learning Communities

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Wisconsin, to Joseph Tussman's experiment with themes at Berkeley, and Mervyn Cadwallader's "Tutorial Program" at San Jose State and the coordinated studies at The Evergreen State College. This development led to a focus on practices, rather than content: ". . . interdisciplinary study, intellectual integration, collaborative learning with the democratic values and behaviors that are at the core of community engagement, and active learning to connect theory with practice" (p. 11). No matter how high the quality of many experimental programs, their continued existence requires being incorporated into an organization's structure with a budget line, full-time faculty, degree requirements, and support for faculty. The challenges surrounding these requirements include the relation of traditional departments to the newer programs, the experimental faculty's view of themselves, and the strength of the organization's identity as a liberal arts college. In addition, there are a myriad of external pressures on liberal arts colleges, among them the push toward standardization, increased mobility among students, and the economic push toward growth. Both the in-depth studies and the snapshots that follow Spear's introduction are designed to show that within the context she describes, learning communities enable liberal arts colleges to be successful in accomplishing their missions.

In-depth studies of learning communities include four colleges: St. John Fisher College, St. Lawrence University, Wagner College, and Marymount College Tarrytown. According to J. David Arnold, St. John Fisher College developed its learning community program as a way to recruit students for their first year of college, and not simply as transfers after two years in a community college. The program began as writing skills-linked courses. Over several years, custom-designed community learning programs developed around themes, scholarship cohorts (community service, first general scholars, and science scholars), and an added freshman seminar, including peer advisors. That the programs continued to evolve helps account for their positive assessment both by participants and outside reviewers.

Spear's brief history of learning communities in liberal arts college begins with the development of Dewey's work, to Meiklejohn's experiment at Wisconsin, to Joseph Tussman's experiment with themes at Berkeley, and Mervyn Cadwallader's "Tutorial Program" at San Jose State and the coordinated studies at The Evergreen State College.

Arnold highlights 10 lessons learned, six of them having to do with faculty roles, leadership, collaboration, and support. Although the linked courses suggest implicitly that they are inter- or cross-disciplinary, by means of ongoing faculty collaboration throughout a course, theme-based courses, and problem-based activities, one lesson specifically mentions interdisciplinarity: warning that such programs are examined internally more closely than are regular departmental offerings. Drawing on Dewey's notion of reflective experience, St Lawrence University focuses on student experiences in its learning communities that are available in both first-year and upper-class programs. The First-Year program builds its residential colleges around "interdisciplinary, team-taught courses" (p. 29). Two other examples are based on intercultural studies and environmental studies.

In their essay describing each program, authors Grant H. Cornwell and Eve Walsh Stoddard detail problems the programs were designed to address. For example, the First-Year program brought together (formerly unrelated) faculty and student-life staff to help students adjust to college while taking challenging courses and integrating communication skills. Changes have been made to strengthen the programs in response to student needs and external evaluation. The Intercultural House attempts to offer the student body a small number of diversity studies that promote a better understanding and appreciation of cultural differences in the U.S. In addition to experiences in living together, Intercultural House students take an interdisciplinary course in Intercultural Studies drawing on literature, history, philosophy and film, and an outdoor studies program that utilizes immersion techniques in studying sustainable relations between nature and humans. Courses focus on understanding a local place through multiple disciplines (p. 34); workshops focus on skills related to the ability to live in remote regions. The students' own transformations have led changes in the program. Cornwell and Stoddard conclude: "Critical reflection and

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NLCC in Indianapolis Nov. 8-10

The National Learning Communities Conference 2012 will be November 8-10 in Indianapolis, Indiana. This year's theme is "Creative Communities: Inspire, Innovate, and Invigorate." More information can be found on the conference website, http://nlcc.uc.iupui.edu/nlcc2012

Reforming The Curriculum: The Hong Kong Experience

By Susan Fiksdal

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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Beginning in September 2012, all eight Hong Kong public universities will offer four-year degrees in order to include General Education (GE) in the curriculum. Interdisciplinary courses will be part of GE in some institutions. This unprecedented and massive change from a three-year to a four-year curriculum has been in the planning stages for some time. High schools have been reformed with the length of study reduced from seven to six years, and they now include liberal arts studies. This is a government-mandated, top-down reform, organized by the University Grants Committee (UGC). It has been refreshing for me to be part of this unprecedented reform just as we are hearing calls in local legislatures for universities to reduce the length of their degrees in the U.S. As one might imagine, there are all sorts of repercussions to these changes, both useful and obstructive.

As part of a team of Fulbright scholars in Hong Kong universities, my roles have included preparing faculty to teach General Education courses and assessing both pilot GE courses and newly proposed interdisciplinary ones besides teaching a course. Because of my long-term background in interdisciplinary teaching at The Evergreen State College, I have been more than eager to assist in enhancing this component of GE education.

GE is a feature of American universities, and, increasingly, of universities in Canada, China, and other Asian countries. Liberal arts is usually seen as housed primarily in U.S. institutions, but the liberal arts are valued in other countries as well; for example, the University College Utrecht in the Netherlands, European College of Liberal Arts in Berlin, and United International College in Zhuhai, China. In June a conference on GE in Hong Kong showcased programs around the world: http://www6.cityu.edu.hk/edge/conference2012/index.htm

At Hong Kong Baptist University, which is hosting me, the GE director is promoting interdisciplinary GE courses as a signature aspect of the program, and for two years he has been offering pilot courses. I observed one of these recently—Biotechnology, Nature, and Being Human—a pilot course integrating philosophy and biology to respond to big questions, such as what is life, and whether or not euthanasia can be condoned. This was a very effective, team-taught course taught by experienced professors who are also friends. I also reviewed eight proposals for new interdisciplinary courses and worked closely with a neurobiologist to develop Music, Brain, and the Human Mind.

Even though these courses sound intriguing and clearly attractive to students, we can still ask, why did the Hong Kong government mandate this change? First, there have been questions about the value of university education in Hong Kong for some time. Students here are known to be excellent test-takers and very passive in the classroom. Once in the work force, they are not prepared to suggest creative solutions, work collaboratively, or respond to changing conditions. Besides pressure from local companies, the UGC also wanted to respond to the lack of ethics training and discussion of moral values. They listed a number of changes that they wanted, which fall under the idea of Whole Person Education. These include preparing students for a knowledge-driven society (rather than manufacturing), developing generic and transferable skills, closer links to the workplace, service learning, and aligning Hong Kong education to other countries.

Of course, the existing Hong Kong system is closely aligned with the British and Australian educational systems. With the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997, there has increasingly been a drive to move beyond the old colonial educational system. Some of the changes, such as an increase in Chinese-medium high schools, have not prepared students well for the public English-medium universities. However, the change to a four-year undergraduate curriculum is not wholly based on American pedagogy. In China since the early 2000s, universities have been reformed to include GE. They have been influenced by recent changes at Harvard, and by a real need to improve their university curricula. Hong Kong wants to provide similar educational opportunities. Probably the biggest driver for reform in Hong Kong is the government and big business, and, there is also a desire to make Hong Kong the educational hub of Asia just as it is the financial hub. The competition from Singapore is very strong.

In September the universities will open their doors to two cohorts of first-year students: those who have completed the seven-year high school curriculum and those who have completed the new six-year curriculum. The UGC has poured money ($5.84 billion HK) into the universities with most of the funding spent on new buildings to accommodate more students, and fewer dollars ($550 million) to hire more faculty and create

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SOITL Conference

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Project Kaleidoscope and founding principal of the Learning Spaces Collaboratory, observed during her presentation, learning is most robust when it is social. And indeed the CITL was a space of social, interactive learning. All of the panelists, including longtime AIS leaders and other well-respected leaders in the scholarship of interdisciplinarity, welcomed feedback and seriously considered audience perspectives—even when the audience members were "mere" graduate students like myself.

One of the features of the conference that I believe contributed to this ambience was the structure of the conference, which was organized to allow for maximum participation. Five plenary sessions (and corresponding workshops) covered the following topics: (A) The Roles of Disciplines in Interdisciplinary Curricula; (B) The Contributions of Specific Pedagogies to Interdisciplinary Learning; (C) Global Engagement in Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning, (D) Assessing Interdisciplinary Curricular/Learning Outcomes; and (E) Meeting Administrative and Institutional Challenges.

Immediately following the plenary talk and expert panel on each topic and the attendant question-and-answer session, the participants—including the panelists—broke out into workshops. These were held in separate small rooms and retained the same membership for the entire conference. These workshops included facilitated questions, discussion, and thought-provoking activities. In this way, participants were able to build closer and sustained relationships with a small group, in addition to relationships that developed through the networking that took place in the larger conference room. Lively interactions and a truly open spirit—which I feel is key to interdisciplinary collaboration—ensued.

Elizabeth Simmons, Dean of MSU's Lyman Briggs College, started off the conference by reminding the audience of Michigan State University's system of residential colleges, focusing on the mission and the curricular logic of Lyman Briggs (the main sponsor of the CITL). She spoke of the "bridge" that the Lyman Briggs environment creates and facilitates—a bridge linking the sciences and humanities and providing discipline-connecting opportunities for faculty and students alike. It was refreshing—although probably not unfamiliar or surprising to the experienced interdisciplinarians among the conference attendees—to hear about how math and physics might be connected in one course, chemistry and biology in another, and science and philosophy in yet another.

Session A's plenary talk, given by Marci Sortor of St. Olaf College, introduced a wonderful set of questions about the changing nature of knowledge that comes with digital technologies, and how higher education can make the appropriate organizational space for these changes.

Dean Simmons' introduction reminded me of my recent interest in two of the multiple meanings of the term "interdisciplinary": first, a discipline-focused meaning, in which discourse about integration among fields, subjects, and paradigms reigns, and second, a meaning in which habits of mind, cognitive development, and integration of insights and first-hand experience are more central. Certainly the two threads of meaning are not separate, but one can observe ways in which the discourse of interdisciplinarity can favor one thread or the other. It was this issue that I brought with me to the CITL and that followed me throughout the three days of panels and workshops. Each time the word "interdisciplinary" was uttered, I tried to assess whether it was being used in relation to the disciplines or in relation to cognitive development and experiential learning—or both.

Session A's plenary talk, given by Marci Sortor of St. Olaf College, introduced a wonderful set of questions about the changing nature of knowledge that comes with digital technologies, and how higher education can make the appropriate organizational space for these changes. She called for creative ways to structure organizations in such a way as to facilitate serendipity, collaboration, and distinctiveness. Barbara Bekken of Virginia Tech focused on the idea that this important quality of serendipity need not be in opposition to institutional stability or financial security. Bekken described some of the responses discovered during assessment of graduates of the Earth Sustainability general education program at Virginia Tech; over half of these students noted that the interdisciplinary courses they took gave them the ability to embrace complexity and use holistic approaches.

Karri Holley of the University of Alabama spoke of her experiences teaching the graduate seminar for students at Alabama's PhD program in Interdisciplinary Studies. She offered two key recommendations: 1) that conversations about

interdisciplinarity should begin with the disciplines but not end with them, and 2) that interdisciplinarity as an add-on is generally ineffective. Jeanne Narum gave an informative talk about the National Science Foundation's recent methods for approaching organizational change. Using a cloud model to solicit input from faculty in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences, NSF received almost 500 papers from all over the United States and, from those, generated the SBE 2020 report entitled "Rebuilding the Mosaic: Fostering Research in the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences at the National Science Foundation in the Next Decade." One of the exciting takeaways from this process, according to Narum, is that the NSF is not acting unilaterally in defining these innovative directions of research. As an institution, the NSF is organized like a campus, suggesting that this model of soliciting new directions in research could be implemented on college campuses as well.

Session A's Workshop followed up on the themes of the session with the following questions: How do disciplinary ways of thinking and knowing contribute to developing interdisciplinary ways of thinking and knowing? How can universities enhance interdisciplinary inquiry though existing disciplinary structures?

Session B opened with Doug Luckie's discussion of Lyman Briggs College's NSF-funded BRAID study (Bridging the Disciplines with Authentic Inquiry and Discourse) in which assessment revealed that high doses of exposure to an interdisciplinary environment (i.e., weekly seminars with three faculty of different disciplines) led to only very small gains in critical thinking skills. While the learning outcomes were less impressive than expected, the retention of students participating in the regular BRAID seminars was significantly higher than in the general Lyman Briggs student population, leading to speculation that the BRAID students enjoyed their Lyman Briggs experience more than the non-BRAID students. A question—and perhaps a more difficult one—then arises for those of us interested in assessing the effectiveness of various interdisciplinary modes in inquiry: How can we research students' enjoyment of and passion for their topics of study, and how does that enjoyment itself affect the learning process? This issue, which seems to fall under the cognitive-experiential definition of interdisciplinarity, raises yet another major question for me: How is interdisciplinarity in its discipline-bridging aspect related to the development of integrative skills and interdisciplinary habits of mind?

William Newell of Miami University followed Doug Luckie's talk with an excellent long-term view of interdisciplinary studies—from its birth in the 1960s, when rebellion against the hegemony of the traditional disciplines was the focus, to the founding of AIS in 1979, to the 1990s, when "best practices" could be articulated and a consensus on the definition of interdisciplinarity was established. In the first decade of the 2000s, Newell argued, there was not a lot of focus on pedagogy, but he added that there is now an opportunity to embed the study of interdisciplinary pedagogy in the study of interdisciplinary processes and habits of mind.

Tobin Craig of Michigan State University's James Madison College urged us to be aware that multiple modes of interdisciplinarity are necessary, and said that curriculum designers must recognize this. The practical, problem-based interdisciplinarity should not brush aside what Craig described as pre-disciplinary interdisciplinarity. This pre-disciplinary form, he noted, is based on seeing disciplines naively, and on seeing disciplines' value in the ways they are put to use. It is grounded in a belief in living well, in a spiritual and liberal tradition, and in a cultivation of naiveté. Assessing learning in this type of environment could come from a spontaneous student comment such as, "I had no idea I could ask this kind of question." I found this description to be a compelling argument for the cognitive-experiential dimension of interdisciplinarity, and I wondered how the development of this dimension could be reflected in assessment and outcomes research. Indeed, the questions posed for the Session B break-out discussions led us down that path. Conference participants, armed with Bill Newell's very helpful list entitled "Interdisciplinary Habits of Mind," tackled the following questions: "What pedagogical techniques are useful in promoting each core habit of mind? How do they work?" The discussions of these techniques and their applications have been skillfully organized and elaborated upon in a white paper by Luckie and Newell, available on the CITL website.

The Session C presentations focused on global learning. Rick

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Karri Holley of the University of Alabama . . . offered two key recommendations: 1) that conversations about interdisciplinarity should begin with the disciplines but not end with them, and 2) that interdisciplinarity as an add-on is generally ineffective.

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Vaz of Worcester Polytechnic Institute described his institution's Interactive Qualifying Project, an off-campus and usually international semester that is required of all students. Interestingly, by the end of the Session C workshops, the CITL participants seemed to move toward the sense that the experience characterized as "global learning" need not take place very far from campus at all. It was a delight, again, to have such candid discussions and challenges to our own expectations and definitions.

Laurie Thorp led us through an incredibly moving PowerPoint presentation about her founding and continuing leadership of Michigan State University's Organic Pig Project, which takes place just a few miles from MSU's central classroom buildings and dormitories. (It was so mesmerizing, in fact, that this observer stopped taking notes altogether and was compelled to full absorption in her voice and her message.) Thorp's invited paper, as well as her talk, epitomized for me the ideal blending of the epistemological-disciplinary and the cognitive-experiential aspects of IDS. On the one hand, she described the typical isolation of disciplines—in this case the tension between sustainability-oriented departments (including their students) and agriculture departments dominated by corporate monoculture interests—and the productive ways in which these lines have been blurred and crossed in both the project's initial funding and the shared act of caring for animals (mother and baby pigs, in this case) in meat production. She noted the "moral community of care" that developed among the Organic Pig Project's participants, and the ways in which the student participants no longer saw the problems as having one definitive answer.

Not only an exercise in using multiple perspectives of various disciplines, this version of a global learning experience seemed to be a successful experiment because it also integrated physical, bodily experience (staying awake all day and night, in shifts, to protect baby piglets) and emotional connection (development of empathy for animals and fellow students). This presentation highlighted for me the potential—on both institutional and personal levels—for dramatically perspective-shifting experiences at the undergraduate level.

. . . as "interdisciplinary" becomes more and more of a buzz-word, . . . we may benefit from continuing to rigorously describe each instance of our own use of the term. Clarifying our meaning to each other, to scholars, and to the public seems an important task if interdisciplinarity is to gain viability at the institutional and national level.

Following the presentations by Vaz and Thorp (and two others by Kevin Hovland of the American Association of Colleges & Universities and Bruce Magnusson of Whitman College) the Session C workshops generated very lively discussion and critique. The following two problems were offered for open discussion: 1) Students' perceptions of academic disciplines are often nascent, and it is unlikely they perceive and experience interdisciplinary learning as distinct from other learning in the way that faculty do. Given the inherently interdisciplinary nature of global learning, might it be easier (or more natural) for students to engage the interdisciplinary nature of global learning than it is for faculty? 2) Embedding global learning across the curriculum can engage students with interdisciplinary thinking at multiple points in their intellectual development. Can early and regular exposure to global learning change the way students perceive and make connections between the disciplines?

Much of my small group's conversation was spent in trying to define the unique aspects of "global" and "interdisciplinary" learning. A tentative, two-part conclusion was drawn: firstly, that interdisciplinary learning emphasizes integrative abilities and epistemic competence, and global learning emphasizes social and contextual competence; and secondly, that these competencies could ideally come together in an overlapping, global-interdisciplinary learning situation.

Session D focused on assessment, learning outcomes, and writing. Bernie Madison of the University of Arkansas gave a thought-provoking plenary talk about the recent development of Common Core Standards for K-12 Mathematics, a process in which he took part. He made a strong argument that if the mathematics standards were achieved, and graduating high school students acquired the listed competencies, they would be ideally prepared to be interdisciplinarians. To me, this perspective challenged the logic that employing multiple disciplines is necessary—or at least ideal—for facilitating students' cognitive development. Madison's talk challenged me to think that as "interdisciplinary" becomes more and more of a buzz-word, with the

potential loss of potency that any term can suffer, we may benefit from continuing to rigorously describe each instance of our own use of the term. Clarifying our meaning to each other, to scholars, and to the public seems an important task if interdisciplinarity is to gain viability at the institutional and national level

The panel following included Tanya Augsburg of San Francisco State University, who displayed examples of e-folios for the evaluation of Liberal Studies graduates. Next, Colleen Tremonte of Michigan State University's James Madison College, spoke convincingly of the need to view student assessment as a dialogic process, incorporating student work as data in a SOTL research process, and problematizing teaching as a serious object of study. This would allow faculty to draw on their own habits of mind, and increase not only the visibility of interdisciplinary classroom settings, but also the rigor of the dialogue among faculty themselves. Carolyn Haynes of Miami University reminded the group of the common avoidance of assessment. Her first words were, "It's like bringing a skunk to a birthday party!" She also stressed that we must keep in mind the multidimensional nature of learning—not only as a cognitive process, but also as an intrapersonal and interpersonal one.

Following these rich examples of assessment techniques, the Session D Workshops included the following questions: What are some of the outcomes you have identified for assessment of interdisciplinary learning? Why is writing a useful vehicle for assessing outcomes? What are some examples of writing assignments or activities that have been particularly effective in assessing students' interdisciplinary learning? How might interdisciplinary writing be affected by changing cultural practices and new technologies?

Julie Thompson Klein of Wayne State University began Session E with a plenary on administrative and institutional challenges to interdisciplinary programming, a subject developed further by expert panelists Paula J. S. Martin of Kenai Peninsula College, Phyllis Larson of St. Olaf College, and Wendy Wenner of Grand Valley State University. Klein and Martin have since prepared a white paper for posting on the CITL website, "Meeting Institutional and Administrative Challenges of Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning." In it, they draw on the CITL workshop sessions to note barriers and disincentives to interdisciplinarity and (more importantly) ways to overcome such difficulties. Concluding their paper on a future-oriented note, they identify three needs for the creation and sustenance of robust interdisciplinary teaching and learning environments: 1) openness to innovation and tolerance for risk, 2) recognition across, but also beyond, campus, and 3) "capitalizing the abundant wisdom of practice before us."

Indeed, the presenters and participants at the MSU Conference on Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning embodied the openness and tolerance recommended, and together represented much of the "wisdom of practice" mentioned by the white paper authors. All agreed that one of our most important tasks going forward is to continue strategizing ways to increase recognition of and support for interdisciplinarity in its many forms.

For more detailed information on the Conference on Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning, including the invited conference papers and post-conference white papers, please visit the MSU CITL website at http://lbc.msu.edu/CITL/. ■

CONFERENCES

AAC&U Annual Meeting in Atlanta Jan. 23-26

"The Quality of U.S. Degrees: Innovations, Efficiencies, and Disruptions—To What Ends" is the theme of the 2013 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U). The conference is scheduled for January 23-26 in Atlanta, Georgia. More information can be found on the AAC&U Website, www.aacu.org

AGLSP Conference Oct. 18-20

The Crisis of the Book: Worlds of Opportunity, Worlds of Change" is the theme of the 2012 Annual Conference of the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs (AGLSP) October 18-20 in Portland, Oregon. The conference is hosted by the Reed College Master of Arts in Liberal Studies Program. More information can be found on the AGLSP Website, www.aglsp.org

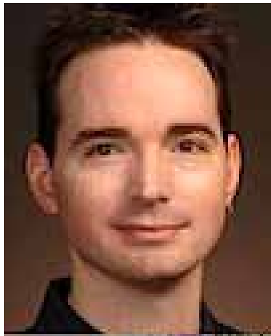
AAAS Sets 2013 Meeting

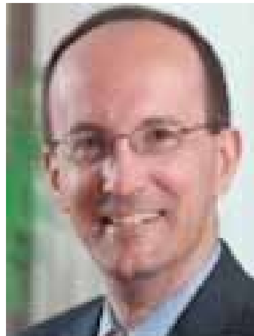
The American Association for the Advancement of Science will hold its 2013 Annual Meeting February 14-18 in Boston, Massachusetts. The theme is "The Beauty and Benefits of Science." More information can be found on the AAAS Website, www.aaas.org

HERA Is Accepting Proposals

Humanities Education and Research Association (HERA) is accepting proposals for its 2013 Conference, March 20-23, in Houston, Texas. The theme of the conference is "Sacred Sites, Secular Spaces: Scenes, Sounds, and Signs in the Humanistic, Artistic, and Technological Culture." The deadline to submit a proposal is December 15, 2012 (or until all places are filled). More information can be found on the HERA Website, www.h-e-r-a.org

AIS CONFERENCE


Torin Monahan


Jeff Williams

Dan W. Butin

See You in Rochester Oct. 11-14

Oakland University and its Bachelor of Integrative Studies program will welcome attendees to the 34th Annual AIS Conference October 11-14, 2012, in Rochester, Michigan.

The theme is "Public Policy and the Promise of Interdisciplinary Dialogue," and the keynote speakers are Dan W. Butin, associate professor and founding dean of the school of education at Merrimack College and the executive director of the Center for Engaged Democracy; Jeff Williams, chief executive officer of Public Sector Consultants; and Torin Monahan, Associate Professor of Human & Organizational Development at Vanderbilt University.

Butin will speak on "The Engaged Campus" on Thursday evening. His presentation will explore avenues for fostering dynamic modes of teaching, learning, and research, and examine different models of community engagement.

Williams is scheduled to address attendees Friday evening on "Public Policy and Interdisciplinarity." His talk will focus on how public works and policy questions cannot be solved by one discipline alone. Williams serves as a senior consultant to his firm's clients in the areas of K-12 general education and special education policy, information technology, public finance, large-scale program implementation, and evaluation and survey research. He is also the project manager for Michigan SAVES, a multimillion-dollar statewide energy efficiency project.

Monahan will give the keynote address on "Mediating the Surveillance State" during lunch on Saturday. His recent books include *Surveillance in the Time of Insecurity* and *Schools Under Surveillance: Cultures of Control in Public Education.* His main theoretical interests are in social control and institutional transformations with new technologies, and his current research is on the social implications of surveillance and security systems. He is an associate editor of the academic journal *Surveillance & Society.*

Attendees will be staying at the Royal Park Hotel, a luxury hotel on the banks of Paint Creek. It is within walking distance of downtown Rochester and its 350 shops, salons, restaurants, and professional businesses. Scott L. Crabill is the conference planning chair.

For more information about the conference program, or to register, visit the conference website, www.oakland.edu/2012AIS ■

Learning Communities

(continued from page 4)

analysis are placed in dialogue with experience within the discourse community created by a shared living environment to create transformative learning experience for participants" (p. 34).

Wagner College, located on Staten Island, identifies its curriculum as practical liberal arts in relation to its urban location. Richard Guarasci describes the requirements of Wagner's students: "They will need very specific competencies in oral, written, technical, visual, and cross-cultural communication; and most important, they must be skilled at integrating knowledge and responding to real-world unscripted problems" (p. 36). This interdisciplinary sensibility is carried out through learning communities, along with experiential learning. Field experience is an integral part of the programs. Almost all faculty are involved with learning communities. Wagner College has been able to assess its approach through accreditation processes and data regarding admissions and faculty hiring (p. 40).

Roberta S. Matthews frames the discussion of learning community at Marymount College Tarrytown in the context of combined faculty and student learning, a concept that is less prominent, though present, in learning communities of other colleges. For example, in its learning community focused on pairing of courses, students proposed a Latino course that was eventually paired with one on oral history. Although the curriculum proceeded in fits and starts, in part because of student uncertainty about entering into a learning community, nevertheless faculty and students together developed the curriculum for the Latino literature and oral history of a local Latino community.

While the two faculty members

had expertise in Spanish language and literature and history and oral history, neither were members of the cultural groups addressed in the courses. Furthermore, most of the students in the original courses came from various Latino cultures, while the remaining were ethnically non-Latino. Course activities included students interviewing each other in preparation for interviewing community members to record their oral history. The students also arranged an event to which they invited members of the community. As a result, all students, both Latino and non-Latino felt that they gained great insight into the richness of the diversity in the cultures. Matthews notes: "There are significant professional lessons as well, ones that have important implications for small colleges with limited resources who cannot hire new faculty to provide students with the kinds of courses they wish to take and academic experiences they value" (p. 46). The lesson shows that faculty have skills and knowledge that they can transfer and use to collaborate, cross boundaries and creatively develop courses and programs needed by students. Matthews, as well as Cornwell and Stoddard, acknowledges the interdisciplinary dimensions of intercultural study.

The four brief snapshots of this monograph include The Evergreen State College, Augsburg College, Stonehill College, and The College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University. At its various campuses, The Evergreen State College works with underrepresented peoples and offers five public service centers; it works closely with local community colleges. Interdisciplinary study is central, but implicit, to its programs. Augsburg College is a church-related (Evangelical Lutheran) college focusing on service learning. The curriculum is integrative, utilizing linked courses with learning communities elected by students in their first year. Stonehill College (Roman Catholic) puts its full-fledged learning communities in the sophomore year, with two courses drawn from different disciplines along with a third seminar designed to be integrative. St. Benedict/St. John's relies on the collaboration among administrators, faculty and other staff, as well as community members to develop theme based cross-disciplinary courses and a shared learning community with students. Authors Barbara Leigh Smith, Frankie Shackelford, Susan Mooney, and James Poff, respectively, highlight interdisciplinarity, curricular integration, interdepartmental collegiality, and college/community partnerships. Even with these related themes of integration, each of the colleges puts its own stamp on these dimensions of the learning communities.

Learning Communities in Research Communities (John O'Connor and others) is structured similarly to the liberal arts monograph; that is, there are in-depth discussions of five universities with snapshots of seventeen. As noted previously by Karen Spear, universities have a greater number of learning communities than do smaller colleges, and they have the resources to support them. It is also true, however, that there are numerous conditions in large research institutions that challenge learning communities such as less flexible organizational structures. In his introductory essay, O'Connor gives a sense of the variety of approaches to learning communities in research universities. For this monograph he uses the term "learning communities ". . . to refer to the purposeful restructuring of the curriculum by linking or integrating two or more courses during an academic term, often around an interdisciplinary theme, and enrolling a common cohort of students" (p. 3). These courses are designed to develop communities not only among students themselves, but also among students, faculty, and staff. He notes, however, that research university learning communities tend not to break open the ongoing departmental structures, resource allocations, and administrative bureaucracy. Thus many learning communities take place in the students' first year, linking general education with skill courses such as English composition. Strong linkages are often based on interdisciplinary themes (p. 4); alternatively, some universities use co-enrolling in the same cluster of courses. Residential colleges provide yet another model, although collaboration among academic and housing staff members is harder to initiate (p. 5).

As noted in other essays, Meiklejohn's and Tussman's earlier work was seminal in developing learning communities. The more recent attention to learning communities arises out of contemporary concerns for coherence of undergraduate education, community on campus, student retention, and interest in faculty development for teaching and learning. Undergraduate education can be integrated in learning communities through explicit course linkages and interdisciplinary themes. A campus community that supports undergraduate education can be cultivated by developing relationships among students themselves, among faculty and students together, and among the faculty themselves as well as with student services personnel. A healthy campus community can also aid in overcoming social issues that rise out of widely diverse student bodies (age, social and economic differences, and ethnic backgrounds, for example) that often make up large research institutions.

Learning communities can provide opportunities for faculty development, working across disciplinary, specialty, and departmental lines and with

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Learning Communities

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other faculty, graduate students, and nonacademic staff. O'Connor makes a particularly valuable contribution in articulating the necessary involvement of formal and less formal campus groups in setting up learning communities, identifying where the focus of leadership may be, and noting problems of cost to be addressed (p. 16).

In-depth discussions of learning communities in research universities include North Carolina State University, Temple University, University of Maryland, University of Michigan, and New Century College of George Mason University.

James A. Anderson focuses on the centerpiece of NC State's learning communities, its Inquiry-Guided Learning Initiative (IGL). The aim of IGL is to develop learning communities with students "who share a commitment to four broad learning outcomes: critical thinking, habits of independent inquiry, responsibility for one's own learning, and intellectual growth and development" (p. 27). One goal of IGL is to help students participate in research. The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) supports participating faculty with training, assistance in developing resources, and getting faculty to needed information.

Multidisciplinary Studies applies the goals and principles of IGL to the major. Students design their own majors and shape the questions that they study. Faculty assess the student outcomes using the student's application, an essay on interdisciplinary questions using methods from more than one field, and the final project.

In her discussion of Temple's learning communities, Jodi Levine Laufgraben focuses on faculty development. Temple's learning communities are based on theme-linked courses. Faculty integrate the courses and foster collaborative learning. Summer workshops that support faculty development incorporate planning time for the learning communities. A faculty handbook contains resources for developing and implementing the communities. Putting the resources online allowed faculty development to continue throughout the year.

The University of Maryland began developing learning communities to support recruitment and retention of students. One approach is the College Park Scholars, directed at students in their first two years of college. This program is composed of 12 living-learning communities, each based on an interdisciplinary theme. Students may choose from a wide variety of courses, allowing faculty to match available courses with distribution requirements. The curriculum is designed to be interdisciplinary and coherent (p. 40) to address real-world questions. Nancy S. Shapiro points out that the program's colloquium course is a "focal point for examining cross-disciplinary texts, lectures, and research" (p. 40). These courses also provide a way for students to explore fields that interest them as they decide on their majors. Thus the College Park Scholars programs bring together general education with the strengths of a major research university.

David Schoem points out that the University of Michigan Learning Communities (MLC) date back to the early 1960s in the residential colleges and that the College of Literature, Science and the Arts (LS&A) along with the Housing offices have been the primary sponsors for MLC. Schoem describes the 11 MLCs, suggesting that the variety of learning communities is a testament to the wealth of resources and opportunities at a research university such as Michigan.

The final in-depth discussion of learning communities at research universities comes from Karen Oates, of New Century College (George Mason). In contrast to Michigan's, New College's learning communities are a recent development, dating only to the mid-1990s. New College was an experimental college within the university with the goal of developing new curriculum. At the time of writing there were three programs: one for any student interested in collaborative learning; one for adult returning students, and one for honors students. In addition, there was a degree-granting program in Integrative Studies with the following characteristics: 1) A first year cohort experience for students to build community, with faculty who team-taught, participated in shared governance, and were assessed for tenure and promotion, e.g., by a Boyer model. 2) Courses and learning communities in specializations or pre-professional concentrations. 3) Competency based education, in areas such as communication, critical thinking, group interactions, etc. 4) Community, team-building and leadership experiences through projects in the community and service-learning. 5) Experiential learning, which may include service learning, internships, co-op programs.

In contrast to the longer essays, the brief snapshots are one-paragraph overviews of the learning community program in each school, including its focus, distinctive feature, and contact information a the time of writing.

Learning Communities in Community Colleges takes a somewhat different tack than the monographs on liberal arts colleges and research universities, one that highlights the varying mission and student needs of two-year institutions. Six individuals, who serve as administrators and/or faculty in community colleges, are named contributors to the monograph:

Edmund Dolan, Lynn Dunlap, Julia Fogarty, Maria Hesse, Marybeth Mason, and Jacque Mott. The first essay highlights the community college's flexible role in higher education, being adaptable even as it is dealing with contradictory pressures. The challenges these colleges face include a wide diversity in their students' background, abilities and goals, with a large population of commuter students. This essay looks at three challenges: the pressure to provide both general education and education for technical or vocational purposes; to provide an "equal education" for a diverse population; and the pressure to provide a quality education while limiting costs. "Learning communities" are described in much the same way as in other monographs in this series: a way to restructure the curriculum by linking or clustering courses with a common cohort of students (p. 5). As in other types of higher education, the degree of integration varies. Yet learning communities are a way to bridge some of the contradictory pressures faced by community colleges. By structuring the curriculum to integrate general or liberal education with professional or technical education, learning communities bring a context and coherence to the students' education. Where available, team teaching allows faculty from different disciplines to demonstrate the connections across their specialties. Students can see how societal issues make a difference to technical work, and vice versa.

Given the highly diverse population of students in community college, it probably comes as no surprise that standard indicators, such as graduation rates, are inadequate ways of gauging success of the students. More finely grained statistical analyses can be helpful. Even so, the authors note studies showing that learning communities are positive forces in helping students reach their goals by providing a sense of belonging and finding peers in situations similar to their own. Developing connected courses also encourages faculty to initiate pedagogies that engage the students. Learning communities also foster teaching as a collective enterprise as they engage in frequent conversations about linked courses and approaches to teaching them. The growing commitment of faculty to the college and to their students helps retain good faculty; professional development is an ongoing project, and ultimately helps reduce costs. (See pp. 21-23.) The authors conclude by noting that learning communities are not only serving a location (a regional community) but also a community of civic participation for students, faculty and other personnel.

The essay on learning communities in practice addresses the same issues with brief examples of how individual community colleges are solving them. A number of community colleges, for example, Daytona Beach (FL) Community College and Collin County Community College District (TX), use learning communities as just one option for meeting general education requirements in a coherent way. Others, such as Metropolitan Community College District (Kansas City, MO), North Seattle Community College (WA), and Skagit Valley College (WA), require students to participate in a learning community in order to meet general education requirements.

Some community colleges use learning communities to meet the needs of students in technical or professional fields, such as Chandler-Gilbert Community College (AZ), Lane Community College (OR) and Moorpark College (CA). In addition community colleges may use learning communities to support basic skills and language education. Examples include LaGuardia Community College (NY), Kingsborough Community College (NY), Parkland College (IL), De Anza College (CA) and Grossmont Community College (CA). Still others have developed bridge programs to support the transition between high schools and early college programs or between two-year and four-year colleges. Examples of the latter include Tacoma Community College with Evergreen State College-Tacoma and Northwest Indian College with Evergreen State College (both WA). Finally, some community colleges use learning communities to connect students to their communities, through research projects in the community (LaGuardia Community College) or service learning (Collin Community College).

The monograph ends with a brief but helpful discussion of ways to initiate learning communities. The authors point out the dangers of simply adopting or adapting another college's program, although a lot can be learned from other such programs. Most important is to have a clear understanding of the home institution's mission and goals and how curricular innovations such as learning communities contribute to that mission. They recommend several principles for the development of learning community programs: a clear understanding of the institution's mission and goals and how a proposed learning community supports the specific curriculum, understanding the specific audience for the program, and the needs of the college. In addition it is important to understand the culture of the faculty and administrators, because learning communities require a great deal of collaboration which may or may not be familiar to them. As a program develops, it will be important to set up a specific means of assessment that will provide data to show results or lead to necessary changes.

The authors also point to several consortia that enable working among institutions; these are

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Learning Communities

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often regionally based groups. These consortia "can facilitate conversation, stimulate innovation, reflect on developments, encourage new leadership, and build a strong community of faculty and administrators" (p. 51).

The three monographs reviewed here represent similarities and differences in how colleges and universities initiate, make use of and provide for learning communities. Supporting the mission of the institution, integrating courses, encouraging faculty and other academic or nonacademic personnel to work together, and addressing specific student needs are common dimensions of learning communities. The extent to which the organization changes its structure, carries teaching and learning activities to an outside community, and how it redistributes resources for learning communities differs greatly among the types of colleges and among the specific universities or colleges. These monographs show a number of models and specific examples that will help other institutions develop their own learning communities.

It is worth noting that while these learning community monographs are almost 10 years old, they speak to a question that has crept into the current political discourse: Is higher education worth it? The discussions help suggest that whether students are seeking technical skills, a liberal arts education that incorporates education for critical citizenship, or specialization in one or more disciplines, learning communities can help engage these students in their own educations and help them to continue learning in fast changing business and social conditions. They can also provide faculty and academic staff ways to expand their own knowledge, pedagogical repertoires, and assessment strategies. ■

Reforming the Curriculum

(continued from page 6)

new administrative systems. Faculty development has been offered by the teaching and learning centers as well as the new GE centers. As part of that effort, over 20 Fulbright scholars well versed in GE teaching and administration have come from the US over the past four years. This Fulbright program was wholly funded by Po Chung, a well-known Hong Kong billionaire, who received a liberal arts education in the U.S.

What do the faculty think about these changes? I have met with heads of departments, faculty in those departments, in the English department where I teach, and those who attend GE workshops across the city. As one might expect, faculty who studied in the U.S. and experienced GE education are more open to it while those who were trained in Europe, Australia, and Britain remain mystified. It is surprising to me that so little has been done to reach out to these teachers to help them understand the reason for this change. Understandably, many see it as one more demand from the UGC to make more work. This reform follows upon the heels of another: outcome-based teaching and learning. All GE workshops are well advertised, but teachers are not offered any extended time with remuneration for preparing new GE classes, or helping them adapt their teaching practices. There are few opportunities to discuss best practices.

Currently, teaching practices across the universities in Hong Kong are predictable: Give well-practiced lectures on PowerPoint followed by structured tutorials. Teaching well is not a priority; the priority is research. Research is well funded, and it drives the ratings of universities, which is all-important in Asian educational circles. Producing journal articles is tied to faculty salaries. For me and my Fulbright colleagues, this lack of attention to teaching is problematic. The primary purpose of the university is to teach well and produce strong critical thinkers who can adapt to a changing world and respond to old and new issues and problems with creativity. Most importantly, of course, is preparing students for life in a democracy with all of the responsibilities that requires.

I have given over 20 workshops at the universities, and my colleagues have done the same. Only two universities have asked for workshops on interdisciplinary courses. One of those is my host institution, Baptist University. The faculty members are enthusiastic when asked to create an interdisciplinary course in 20 minutes, but they talk about the obstacles. How can they meet people in other disciplines? How can they work together effectively? In my last workshop on team-teaching, I provided scenarios of potentially difficult situations and asked groups to come up with compromises. These were both novel and useful. Of course, the people attending this and other workshops are those who are open to change. And, some attend nearly every one. Finding the time to plan interdisciplinary courses will be their biggest challenge in the years to come.

It is not only the faculty who need to adjust to the reform, of course. Students and parents have big questions. Will devoting 25%-30% of their undergraduate career to GE achieve the goals that have been set for these students? Will the cost of an additional year at university be worthwhile? Will students become more creative, more flexible, more collaborative, and more able to solicit and evaluate multiple perspectives? In Hong Kong, where the economy is king and business "tycoons" effectively run the government, most students just want a well-paying job. Will GE and interdisciplinarity help them meet their personal goals? This is the challenge ahead. ■

Multimodal Compositions

(continued from page 2)

A discipline is a particular branch of learning or body whose defining elements distinguish it from other knowledge formations (Repko, 2008, p. 4). In the case of multimodal communication, I translate the idea of "disciplines" as semiotic codes or methods of constructing meaning. As various media (photographs, writing, audio etc.) have diverse qualities, defining elements, and modes of production, it seems appropriate to treat them as analogous to different disciplines.

Integration involves, among other things, invention. The action of creating a multimodal composition necessarily involves integrating different compositions that are borne of different means of knowledge construction. Whether one integrates by synthesizing different insights that are drawn from various disciplinary perspectives or by combining different compositions, both function as appropriate uses of the term integration. As various forms of composition can be thought of as "disciplines," their integration is inherently interdisciplinary.

Multimodality and integrative studies can be used as interesting metaphors for one another. The diverse perspectives used by integrative studies allow for a rich understanding of a phenomenon. When composing, the ability to freely mix media and use multiple methods allows for the creation of complex compositions using even the simplest techniques. Where interdisciplinary methods are typically used for complex phenomenon, so too are multimodal compositions typically used to create multifaceted compositions. Overall, in addition to multimodality being inherently interdisciplinary, an understanding of multimodality can enrich one's understanding of integrative studies.

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JOBS IN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

Grand Valley State University has two openings for assistant or associate professors in the Liberal Studies Department of Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies. The successful candidates will teach and develop courses for the Liberal Studies major, maintain an active research program, supervise students in research and scholarly activities, and have a strong commitment to excellence in interdisciplinary teaching. The appointments begin in Fall 2013.

Look for more information on these position openings in the Jobs in Interdisciplinary Studies section on the AIS Website, www.muohio.edu/ais. ■

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Members Will Consider Name Change

The AIS Board of Directors notified members in the May 2012 edition of *Integrative Pathways* of a proposed constitutional amendment to change the name of the association to the Association of Interdisciplinary Studies.

Any amendment needs to be discussed at a conference, and then put to a vote of the membership after the conference.

This amendment will be discussed at the 2012 conference during the Thursday afternoon business meeting. All members are invited to attend. It is the AIS Board's intention to then use electronic voting shortly after the conference.

The amendment, if approved, will change "integrative" to "interdisciplinary" everywhere the organization's name is mentioned in the constitution. It will also employ the phrase "integrative and interdisciplinary" on several occasions where only one of these appears at present. The AIS Board thus wishes to maintain an emphasis on integration.

The subcommittee report and the proposed constitutional amendment (and this article) are accessible from the What's New section of the AIS Website www.muohio.edu/ais. ■

About AIS

The Association for Integrative Studies is an international professional association for interdisciplinary teachers, scholars, and researchers. The use of "integrative" in its name emphasizes the key feature of interdisciplinary activity, namely integration of insights from narrow disciplinary perspectives into a larger, more encompassing understanding. AIS serves as an organized professional voice and source of information on integrative approaches to the discovery, transmission, and application of knowledge. Founded in 1979, it is incorporated as a non-profit 501(c)3 educational association in the state of Ohio.

ON THE WEB:

www.muohio.edu/ais

■ WHAT'S NEW
Find the latest news about the Association and integrative studies.

■ CONFERENCES
34th AIS Conference gets underway this month.

■ PUBLICATIONS
Find current and past editions of *Integrative Pathways* *Issues in Integrative Studies*, and other publications.

■ RESOURCES
Resources include the 2nd edition of *Intentionally Interdisciplinary*: *Master's Interdisciplinary Program Directory,* SOITL section, Peer-reviewed Syllabi, and more.

■ MEMBERSHIPS
Members can renew for 2013 starting in October.