

Editor's Comments

This number of *Issues in Integrative Studies* is the kind of journal I'd hoped to publish when I took this job. It has articles on pedagogy, assessment, theory, and resources; something, maybe more than one thing, for most people interested in interdisciplinary studies. All it lacks is the keynote address for 2001, and that was due to technical problems with a PowerPoint presentation; however, we do have a thoughtful response to that presentation.

The three pedagogy articles are all models of approaches that seem to me and to our reviewers to be worth imitating. Our lead article, by Floyd-Thomas, Gillman, and Allen, is an excellent example of good writing about teaching; the three authors explore their experience in both narrative and expository ways. Individual perspectives and voices are preserved while producing a well-integrated whole that represents their shared vision and experience. People reading this article can, I think, learn some things that will help them generate interdisciplinary courses, build a teaching team, avoid some pitfalls, and consider the structure of their own courses. The second article, by Nikitina, is based on a useful model of research: the author attended the classes she wrote about and conducted lengthy entry and exit interviews with her sample of students and faculty. In doing so, she sheds light on student expectations and insights as well as faculty goals and experiences in the teaching of complex, seemingly disparate interdisciplinary material. The third article, by McDonald and Tolley, focuses on the critical assessment of student work and their own pedagogy by way of what is sometimes called "authentic assessment," i.e., the use of real life problems as settings for determining student learning and revealing the extent of faculty teaching success. This is useful to teachers seeking practical and interesting evaluation and assessment methods and is an exemplar of some of the ideas discussed in the Eder/Stowe article below. It is also an argument in favor of using outcomes-based learning as the basis for constructing an interdisciplinary teaching team from seemingly unrelated disciplines.

The next pair of articles makes the assessment of interdisciplinary courses and programs seem much more useful and palatable than usual. I recommend these to readers who think they hate assessment as well as those who seek to develop an assessment design for their own interdisciplinary program. The first, by Vars, is focused on a particular kind of assessment, called *connoisseurship*, and applies it to the sticky problem of assessing synthesis. I think this article will be self-validating for old interdisciplinary hands. The second, by Eder and Stowe, looks at a variety of approaches, outlining

ways to make interdisciplinary assessment applicable to many kinds of programs, yet simple enough and productive enough to interest the most reluctant of faculties.

The theory paper by Szostak is an attempt to synthesize the complex discussion that we published last year. It uses ideas Szostak developed—in the last two *IIS* numbers and in at least two books—to create a set of broader, more inclusive steps to doing interdisciplinary work. Naturally, he doesn't escape critique. Mackey argues that interdisciplinary work is far more intuitive than Szostak allows, and that the steps or rules are limiting and thus inadequate. Szostak replies. This is a discussion that I hope will continue at conferences and in these pages to keep us from settling too easily for our own preferences.

The article that Klein and Newell produced lays out not only many resources for interdisciplinary work in K-16 settings, but also suggests strategies for using them appropriately. They cover print and electronic resources that will be useful for some time to come and can be added to and kept up-to-date by developing what they call a “portfolio of strategies.”

Miller's response to Allen Hammond's engaging keynote address on globalization at the Roanoke conference is clear, appreciative, and critical. Naturally, we wanted to publish Hammond's address here or on our Web site, but we could not; however, we hope to develop the technical capacity to provide online versions of PowerPoint presentations in the future. Even without the original, Miller's response serves as a brief but insightful review of Hammond's views and most recent book.

This will be the last number of *IIS* under my editorship, but next year Roslyn Abt Schindler and Stuart Henry will edit a special number primarily based on the twenty-fifth anniversary conference, which will be held in Detroit, October 9-12, 2003. Please prepare any conference manuscripts to reflect your desire to be part of this anniversary number. Then the journal will pass to more permanent co-editors Joan Fiscella of the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Francine Navakas of North Central College in Naperville, Illinois.

My thanks to these folks for making leaving easier and to the many people who sent work to the journal while I was editor. The job of the new editors will be aided, as has mine, by the terrific *IIS* Editorial Board. I'm grateful to all of the members. Finally, I wish to thank colleagues who, at least partly because of their role in this editorship, are now cherished friends: Bill Newell for seeing something in me that I did not see and supporting my editorship with generosity and patience; the AIS Board for support in hard times as well as friendship all the time; David Sebberson for his

excellent editorial work and for jumping in when I really needed him; Amy Hudnall for being a professional copy editor and perceptive advisor; Denise Brothers-McPhail for first-rate publication preparation and guidance; Pete Montaldi for his work as our “Webster”; and my mentor, Stanley Bailis for being Stanley Bailis. Of course I want to thank each of you who read the journal; you, after all, are the point of all this love and labor.

Jay Wentworth