Using Student Artifacts to Enhance Coherence in General Education and Transfer

2009 AAC&U Conference: General Education, Assessment, and the Learning Students Need
Workshop Presenters

- Michael Gress: Vincennes University
- Bob Broad: Illinois State University
- Linda Adler-Kassner: Eastern Michigan University
- Barry Alford: Mid-Michigan Community College
- Joan Hawthorne: University of North Dakota
- Tom Steen: University of North Dakota
- David McGuirk: Miami Dade College
Workshop Themes

1. Articulation and transfer structures are stuck in and perpetuate the Instruction Paradigm; systems thinking and CQI principles suggest these structures need to shift to the Learning Paradigm.

2. Institutions should, ideally, commit to the values and structures of the Learning Paradigm before entering into system-wide articulation discussions.

3. Higher Ed. should recognize and promote the benefits of communal assessment in an effort to improve institutional assessments and shift transfer discussions to the Learning Paradigm.
Instruction Paradigm Structures

- 50-minute lecture
- 1 faculty
- 3 credits
- Admin. & Physical Structures
- Pedagogy & Faculty Structures
- Transfer Structures
Instruction Paradigm Transfer Problems

1. “The credit hour has become the standard not because it means anything about educational value, but because it allows for the easy translation of instructional information within and between institutions.” John Tagg, *The Learning Paradigm College*
#1, Continued—Diminishes General Education Value

Instruction Paradigm Transfer Process:

- Shoenberg—Drives out the concern for learning values and goals that can’t be easily equated
- Shoenberg—Treats all social science, science, and humanities courses as if they are equal
- Limits course discussion to details that administrators and registrars can easily and quickly manage
Instruction Paradigm Transfer Problems

2. “Any community college that tries to mount a general education program that is not ‘plain vanilla’ is asking for trouble with getting its students’ courses transferred.”

Robert Shoenberg, General Education and Student Transfer
#2, Continued—Limits Teaching and Learning in 2-Year Colleges

**Instruction Paradigm Transfer Process:**

- Limits the development of integrative or multi-disciplinary general education classes
- Forces 2-year faculty to choose between learning values and successful transfer
- “…the transfer process controls the academic program”

Schneider and Shoenberg, *Contemporary Understandings of Liberal Education*
Instruction Paradigm Transfer Problems

3. [T]he demands for transfer efficiency not only push general education programs to the lowest common denominator but they also tend to conflict with the demands of educational accountability.” Robert Shoenberg, *General Education in the Age of Student Mobility*
#3, Continued—Diminishes Assessment Value

Instruction Paradigm Transfer Process:

- Focuses on the “atomistic” structures of credit hours and final grade

- Encourages exams that test memorization and discourages “authentic” assessments—the lecture is more important than the learning

- Ignores the potential faculty development benefits of shared assessment activities
To Shift Transfer Structures into Learning Paradigm Structures, Institutions Need To Commit to Learning Values and Processes
Structures Affect Our Thinking, But Our Thinking Can Affect the Structures

Instruction Paradigm

Learning Paradigm
#1 Using Multiple Perspectives
- Ability to analyze and synthesize
- Ability to critique and compare source material
- Self-reflection
- Critical Literacy

#2 Application
Theoretical:
- Use of appropriate terms, theories, formulas, data
- Ability to put material into the context of the course
Direct:
- Use of appropriate tools, formulas, procedures, material
- Satisfactory outcomes

#3 Communication
- Performance criteria
- Ability to cite and document material
- Ability to organize
- Editing
- Performance

Information Literacy
- Finding Academic Sources
- Using Appropriate Information
- Citation Documentation

Audience
- Organization

Critical Thinking
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric for Critical Literacies</th>
<th>Using Multiple Strategies in Reading, Writing, and Listening</th>
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<td>-has no trouble identifying primary and secondary sources</td>
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General Education Measures
Dynamic Criteria Map

Goal 1
Multiple Perspectives
Measurements:
- Eng 111 Portfolio
- Presentations
- 200 Level Course Projects
- Computational Skills

Goal 2
Application
Measurements:
- Eng 111 Portfolio
- Presentations
- 200 Level Course Projects
- Computer Skills
- Math Skills

Goal 3
Communication & Presentation
Measurements:
- Eng 111 Portfolio
- Presentations
- 200 Level Course Projects
- PowerPoint
- Service Learning
- Word Processing

Source use
Research

Information
Literacy

Summary
Interpretation

Citation

Choice of Method

- Analysis
- Synthesis
- Research

Text Editing
- Group Presentation
- Rubric

Organization
- Summary
- Quality of Application
Goals for General Education: Using Multiple Perspectives

**Using Multiple Perspectives**

**Commitment to learning**
- Taking responsibility for learning
- Contributing toward a learning environment

**Critical literacies**
- Finding appropriate sources
- Using multiple strategies in reading, writing and listening
- Flexible textbook skills
- Audience awareness and analysis

**Problem posing and problem solving**
- Conceptualizing a problem
- Willingness to use multiple approaches to a problem
- Pattern recognition
- Using critical reasoning
Commitment to Learning

- Taking Responsibility for Learning
  - curiosity and commitment to inquiry
  - setting goals and personal standards
  - developing autonomy as a learner
Commitment to Learning

- Contributing toward a Learning Environment
  - thoughtful participation in class
  - respectful behavior toward faculty and fellow students
  - a peaceful and violence free classroom to contribute ideas without fear
  - sobriety to reduce distractions
  - no cell phones or pagers inside the classroom
Critical Literacies

- Flexible Textbook strategies
  - different disciplines and discourse communities
  - learning terminologies and concept structures
  - different organizational approaches used in textbooks
Problem Posing and Problem Solving

- Willingness to use Multiple Approaches to a Problem
  - learning to see conflict as productive
  - willingness to engage a problem from more than one viewpoint
  - willingness to see value and credibility in divergent viewpoints
  - respecting alternative views