Crafting Learning Outcomes & Identifying Common Ground: A Strategy for Faculty Consensus-building

Cynthia Bair Van Dam, Jessica Waters, & Brad Knight
Session outline

1. Context
2. Generalizability
3. Case Study
4. Group Activity
5. Discussion
Our timeline

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Buy-in</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Launch</td>
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Slow down!

Take the time to build consensus and buy-in for your new program. And to get it right.
The Core is rooted in AU Values

- Curiosity
- Flexibility
- Diversity
Typically taken in the first year.

FOUNDATIONS
- AUx 1 & AUx 2
- Complex Problems
- College Writing (W1)
- Mathematics or Statistics (Q1)

HABITS OF MIND
- Creative-Aesthetic Inquiry
- Cultural Inquiry
- Ethical Reasoning
- Natural-Scientific Inquiry
- Socio-Historical Inquiry

INTEGRATIVE COURSES
- Writing & Info Lit. (W2)
- Quant. Reasoning (Q2)
- Diverse Experiences
- Capstone
Prior to graduation, students must take a course from all 5 habits.

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Taken in the major

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INTEGRATIVE COURSES

• Writing & Info Lit. (W2)
• Quant. Reasoning (Q2)
• Diverse Experiences
• Capstone
• 5 AU Core University-Wide Town Halls/Coffees
• 3 Drafts Circulated to University Community
• 3 Reports to Full Senate
• 22 General Education Committee Meetings
• 18 AU Core Implementation Task Force Meetings
• 5 All-Faculty HoM Panels
• 3 University-Wide Complex Problems Information Sessions
• 2 University-Wide AUx Information Sessions
• All-Faculty Call for Complex Problems proposals (90 submitted)
Presentations to
- Board of Trustees
- Academic Deans (multiple)
- President and President’s Council
- Provost’s Operational Council (multiple)
- Faculty Senate Executive Committee (multiple)
- RiSE Task Force (multiple)
- Admissions (multiple)

Monthly updates to
- Associate Deans
- OUR
- Advising Leads
Stakeholder meetings:
- Student focus groups
- School guidance counselors
- Study Abroad office
- Center for Teaching, Research & Learning
- Career Center
- Library
- Living-Learning Communities

- Housing and Dining Program
- Office of Campus Life
- Orientation Team
- Athletics
- Center for Diversity and Inclusion
- CAS faculty clusters: Arts, Humanities, Social Scientists, Natural Scientists
Curriculum vs. Resources
Curriculum vs. Resources and
Curriculum and Resources

- University-Wide Town Halls/Coffees
- Student focus groups
- General Education Committee Meetings

- Reports to the full Senate
- Monthly updates to the Associate Deans
- Focus groups with guidance counselors
Faculty Senate Meeting, February 1st...

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED!
Phases of buy-in

Design  Framework  Outcomes  Pedagogy  Assessment
Our Consensus-building Project
HABITS OF MIND

- Creative-Aesthetic Inquiry
- Cultural Inquiry
- Ethical Reasoning
- Natural-Scientific Inquiry
- Socio-Historical Inquiry
"From Learning History to Doing History"

Inquiry-based Learning (IBL)

- Students inquire into the nature of an authentic problem or question
- Blends epistemic knowledge with epistemic practices
- Active learning: thinking with knowledge, not just about knowledge
Q: What skills, habits, and ways of knowing are essential no matter who is teaching a course in Cultural Inquiry?

Well-honed questions should:
1. Be written in direct response to an insight
2. Describe the problem at just the right level of specificity
3. Focus outward
4. Feel optimistic and exciting
• Awareness of one’s own socio-political positioning and how that creates a relational dynamic of power (i.e. “othering” everything)
• Think about knowledge production: how, by whom, from where
• Question self-reflective positioning in the world
• Pay attention to directionality (and developing that as a skill)
• Recognize that there is a canon and there is resistance that comes from form or geography or language
• How do you act on experience? How do you reject or transform your beliefs?
• Listening with understanding and empathy
• Learning how to interact with others and the dangers of “academic tourism”
• Boundaries and barriers—where are they, how do we see them?
• Take a student to a different epistemology, and in doing this, do not just talk about, but talk from

Seven Tips for Successful Brainstorming:
1. Defer judgement.
2. Encourage unconventional ideas.
3. Build on the ideas of others.
4. Stay focused on the topic.
5. One conversation at a time.
6. Be visual.
7. Go for quantity.
Upon completion of a Cultural Inquiry course, students will be able to:

• Articulate insights into their own cultural rules and biases and recognize the limitations and implications of one’s positionality

• Ask complex questions about other cultures’ [values, ideas, thought systems, cultures, politics, experiences, histories, legacies, dynamics, etc.] and seek answers to those questions that consider multiple perspectives

• Recognize and examine the complexity of cultural contexts and relationships, including awareness of when, where, how, why and by whom knowledge is produced and how that awareness places you in relational positions of power.

• Identify and respect cultural differences by seeing an issue or problem from the perspective of another worldview “(thinking within and across difference”.

STEP THREE: REFINIDEAS

Instruct participants to:
1. Identify what matters most (either from the existing list or adding to it)
2. Set aside, for now, all concerns about verbs or assessable language
STEP FOUR: FACILITATE FEEDBACK

Multiple Means of Conversation
In Person, Email, Google Documents, WordPress
Upon completion of Cultural Inquiry courses, you will be able to:

- Articulate insights into your own groups’ norms and biases and recognize the implications of one’s positionality
- Examine how power shapes knowledge production
- Demonstrate cultural competency by asking significant questions about other cultures and seeking answers that consider multiple cultural perspectives

(March 24, 2017)

Ask participants to consider whether the student learning outcomes:
1. Describe the appropriate level of cognitive complexity or sophistication
2. Work across disciplines
3. Safeguard flexibility for faculty
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Ask participants to consider whether the student learning outcomes:
1. Describe the appropriate level of cognitive complexity or sophistication
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STEP FIVE: ITERATE

Upon completion of Cultural Inquiry courses, you will be able to:

- **Articulate** insights into your own groups’ norms and biases and **recognize** the implications of one’s positionality
- **Examine** how power shapes knowledge production
- Demonstrate cultural competency by **asking significant questions** about other cultures and **seeking answers** that consider multiple cultural perspectives

(March 24, 2017)

STEP FIVE: ITERATE

Ask participants to consider whether the student learning outcomes:
1. Describe the appropriate level of cognitive complexity or sophistication
2. Work across disciplines
3. Safeguard flexibility for faculty
Upon completion of Cultural Inquiry courses, you will be able to:
• Identify your own or other groups’ norms, biases, or forms of representation, recognizing their implications
• Examine how culture intersects with power relationships and shapes knowledge production, ideas, or behavior
• Ask significant questions about a culture or cultures, and seek answers that include multiple perspectives and take into account cultural dynamics

Summary of changes (April 20):
• Edits to #1 add “or forms of representation” to the list.
• Edits to #2 replaced “how power shapes” with “how culture intersects with power relationships and shapes”
• Edits to #3 struck “broadly defined” (as it related to culture or cultures)
• Edits to #3 add “and take into account cultural dynamics”

STEP FIVE (AGAIN):
ITERATE
Your turn!
At your table, list the skills, habits, and ways of knowing that are essential no matter who is teaching a course in Ethical Reasoning.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 2</th>
<th>1. Identify the ethical issue or dilemma</th>
<th>9. Role of constraints within decision making</th>
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<td>2. Identify and examine your own ethical perspectives (exercise ethical self-awareness)</td>
<td>10. Understand what it means to have an ethical system</td>
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<td>3. Identify and practice decision-making models for ethical reasoning</td>
<td>11. Pay attention to different frameworks in different cultures (within and across cultural contexts)</td>
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<td>4. Application of frameworks/concepts to a field of study or discipline</td>
<td>12. How ethical reasoning has evolved over time</td>
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<td>5. Uncovering the source of ethical issues</td>
<td>13. Practice social responsibility</td>
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<td>6. Weighing consequences of decisions</td>
<td>14. Moral relativism is not allowed—you have to give reasons, have to be open to being wrong</td>
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<td>7. Teach students the differences between a normative and descriptive claim</td>
<td><strong>15. Point of contention:</strong> do issues of compliance or professional ethics meet muster with our expectations for teaching ethical reasoning?</td>
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<td>8. Recognizing that there is more than one system of ethics</td>
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In your same groups, decide what are the 3 or 4 most important items on the list.
| 1. | Identify the ethical issue or dilemma |
| 2. | Identify and examine your own ethical perspectives (exercise ethical self-awareness) |
| 3. | Identify and practice decision-making models for ethical reasoning |
| 4. | Application of frameworks/concepts to a field of study or discipline |
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| 13. | Practice social responsibility |
| 14. | Moral relativism is not allowed—you have to give reasons, have to be open to being wrong |
| 15. | **Point of contention:** do issues of compliance or professional ethics meet muster with our expectations for teaching ethical reasoning? |
Upon completion of *Ethical Reasoning* courses, you will be able to:

- **Identify and differentiate** ethical perspectives or questions
- **Demonstrate** ethical awareness by critically discussing and analyzing moral presuppositions
- **Recognize** the origins or structures of complex ethical issues
- **Apply** ethical concepts and frameworks
Upon completion of *Ethical Reasoning* courses, you will be able to:

- Identify and differentiate ethical perspectives or questions
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- Recognize the origins or structures of complex ethical issues
- Apply ethical concepts and frameworks
STEP ONE: DEFINE A CHALLENGE

STEP TWO: GENERATE IDEAS

STEP THREE: REFINE IDEAS

STEP FOUR: FACILITATE FEEDBACK

STEP FIVE: ITERATE

STEP FIVE (AGAIN): ITERATE
Thanks!

Any questions?

You can find us at:
Cindy: cbair@american.edu
Brad: bradly@american.edu
Credits

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

- Presentation template by [SlidesCarnival](#)
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- Diagram featured by [Slide Model](#)