

## Integrated/Interdisciplinary Courses Best Practices

- 1) Start with a great idea –
  - a. Themes, problems or comparisons
  - b. Selecting faculty to participate
- 2) Planning
  - a. Allow sufficient time for planning and division of responsibilities
  - b. Objectively assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of participating faculty
  - c. Decide on a decision-making process (consensus vs majority)
  - d. Have faculty experienced in team teaching act as mentors
  - e. What are common learning goals and outcomes
  - f. How will students be assessed
    - a. How will assessments address the course goals
    - b. Who will write the assessments
    - c. How will the various components of the course be represented and weighted d in assessments
    - d. Who will grade the assessments
  - g. How will you structure the course and sequence the topics
  - h. How will the content from different instructors be integrated
  - i. What materials will be used
  - j. What teaching strategies will faculty use
- 3) Collaboration and Learn to Teach as a Team
  - a. Avoid competing for student approval and applause
  - b. Model respect for differences, interdependence, and conflict-resolution
  - c. Engage with the different perspectives that team members bring to the course.
  - d. Come prepared – completing readings, participate, know when to speak and when to listen.

- 4) Be prepared for potential reaction of students to team-teaching classroom and help students adjust
  - a. Remind students about purpose of experience
  - b. Have a set of expectations for students
  - c. Encourage students to seek help if needed and clarify from whom to seek help
  - d. Reassure students that the exams will reflect the entire class and not just the lessons of a particular instructor

#### References

David, J. (1995). *Interdisciplinary courses and team - teaching: New arrangements for learning*. Phoenix, AZ. The American Council of Education and The Oryx Press. Provides a complete guide for structuring and delivering interdisciplinary teaching.

Haynes, C. Ed. (2002). *Innovations in Interdisciplinary Teaching*. Phoenix, AZ: The American Council of Education and the Oryx press. An excellent collection of issues and answers on all aspects of interdisciplinary teaching.

Sibley, I.. (2006). Interdisciplinary Team Teaching: Negotiating Pedagogical Differences. *College Teaching*, 54(3), 271 – 274.

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