

## **Collaborative Teaching Types**

### **Learning Communities**

Evergreen State College's Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education lists three general types of learning communities (LCs):

1. **Coordinated Study LC:** Coordinated Study LCs are team-taught and usually focus on a particular issue or theme. The title of the LC should reflect this issue or theme in a creative manner. A single cohort of students enrolls in the LC and must remain enrolled in all courses (i.e. dropping one course would mean dropping all of the courses in the coordinated study LC). Instructors link course content and assignments through an integrative learning approach. This approach emphasizes connections to real world experiences, relations between disciplines, and application to new and relevant situations. (For more information on integrative learning, search the Association of American Colleges and Universities' website for "integrative learning.")
2. **Linked Course LC:** A single cohort of students enrolls in two separate courses (not team-taught) that are linked either thematically or by contact. Instructors plan connections or outside social activities collaboratively.
3. **Student Cohort LC:** A small cohort of students enrolls in several larger classes together (where the rest of the students in these classes are not participating in the learning community). They usually meet weekly for integrative seminar training or mentoring.

Ideally, any of these types of learning communities should invite an array of pedagogical approaches that address the needs of twenty-first century students, including

- collaborative and experiential learning, which may include labs, guest speakers, and/or field trips
- discussion groups and seminars (peer teaching)
- writing and speaking across the curriculum
- reflection activities (self-evaluations, metacognitive activities)

### **Other Collaborative Teaching Models**

In addition to LCs, you might want to consider other types of collaboration with your colleagues who teach either the same or related courses that you teach. Here are some examples:

- **WR 227, Technical Writing (hybrid):** two colleagues meet before the term begins to develop virtually identical syllabi. One instructor meets with her registered students face-to-face on Tuesdays, and the other instructor meets with her registered students on Thursdays.
  - **Benefit to faculty:** weekly meetings and collaboration on all assignments and lectures.

- Benefit to students: the opportunity (in an emergency) to attend either TTh session
- **Fall Outdoor Leadership Cohort model:** Students are registered in all the same courses, which are the introduction/"first year" courses for the Outdoor Leadership focused AAOT or AS degree, creating a collaborative and community building experience for OL students. During this term, professors teaching the cohort have regularly scheduled meetings to discuss scheduling, assignments and events, and students' progress.
- Use of **digital sharing:** Programs such as Dropbox, Evernote, and Google Docs are used to allow for the sharing of documents between professors (and sometimes students). The Outdoor Leadership program uses Dropbox , submitting all course work and documents for continuity of courses being taught by different professors. We have also linked and shared Blackboard space, as to monitor what and how information is being shared with students. The HHP part-time instructors hired for OL courses have access to the OL Dropbox account.
- **Mentoring Experiences:** OL 273 (Outdoor Recreation Leadership) and OL 255 (Outdoor Living Skills): OL 273 is a "second year" course, while OL 255 is a "first year" pre-requisite course for all advanced OL courses. These courses are scheduled at the same time during the terms both are taught. OL 273 mentors OL 255 students, acting as the trip planners and guides for the OL 255 students on weekend backcountry expeditions.
- **Service Learning across programs:** The Culinary and Dental programs requested facilitation of teambuilding activities from the Outdoor Leadership program, which most often is fulfilled by students. This gives the OL students a chance to practice their skills, as well as students in the other programs an opportunity for community building within their cohorts.

For more information about Learning Communities at COCC, visit the LC website

<http://www.cocc.edu/learning-communities/>

(Handout provided at Learning Community Session at COCC on April 11, 2014)