Interrogating Integrative Learning

By: Kevin Hovland, Chad Anderson and Ann Ferren

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In light of economic and political pressures—cited by practically every media source covering higher education—the nation is deeply engaged in a common conversation about the goals of an undergraduate education and what it takes to achieve them. A particularly challenging task for many institutions of higher education is clarifying for all stakeholders that in order to get the most out of an undergraduate education, students need to connect, reflect on, and apply learning so that "the whole becomes more than the sum of the parts." This task of integrating learning is especially challenging for the many students who complete their education at more than one campus and over the course of more than four years, and who may not have structured opportunities to mentally connect their myriad experiences and reflect on the whole. Many faculty recognize that just counting credits and leaving it to students to make connections on their own does not lead to high-quality education. Even small residential campuses—often known for transformative educational experiences—recognize that their students can benefit from more intentional curricula rich with integrative and applied learning.

With funding from the Teagle Foundation, AAC&U launched a multiyear project with nine liberal arts colleges to explore both the various forms of integrative learning and the leadership strategies faculty use to advance and sustain this curricular and pedagogical work. With funding from the Mellon Foundation, five additional campuses joined the project at the midpoint. This issue of *Peer Review* chronicles some of these teams' work and offers insights about the central role of faculty in galvanizing the necessary experiences that cross disciplines, units, and campus boundaries to promote integrative learning.

At the outset of the project, integrative learning was broadly described as a type of learning that cultivates essential student capacities, skills, and values; engages students with significant questions through multidisciplinary lenses and methodologies; fosters strong connections between academic learning and community-based and cocurricular learning; strengthens the connections between educational outcomes and career expectations; and uses assessment tools that provide evidence of applied integrative learning. Over the course of the project, however, our lively conversations revealed that integration is more complex than just countering disconnects between general education and the major, between academic affairs and student affairs, or between theory and practice. The student experience, more than curricular structures, came to

frame our inquiry, expectations, and questions. What problem-centered experiences challenge students' intellectual and personal capacities without overwhelming them so that they become resilient, adaptable, creative, and confident about their futures? What types of interactions with faculty, advisors, or professional staff provide students with guidance but do not usurp agency? Are our practices of integrative liberal learning inclusive and supportive for all students? While this group of short case studies emphasizes change processes and faculty roles, their major theme is student success.

Inventories of Curricular Practices

The Faculty Leadership for Integrative Liberal Learning (FLILL) project began with participants conducting a campus inventory of the integrative learning practices at their institution. Each campus had several exciting examples of integrative learning to share but soon realized that (1) many of the practices had grown up organically and relied on the interest of a few faculty, (2) in many cases not all students participated, and (3) to a large extent, standard quality assurance processes such as assessment, program review, and accreditation had limited impact in evaluating and/or strengthening the integrative learning experiences.

Strategic planning and faculty interest were noted as the most important impetuses for creating courses with a multi-disciplinary lens or strengthening the connection between classroom and community. However, as participants reviewed where integrative learning experiences were anchored, they noticed that most of the integrative learning was front-loaded into first-year seminars and general education requirements before it tailed off in subsequent years with faculty being less explicit about integrative outcomes in either the major or in capstone work. As a result, several projects addressed the importance of understanding integrative learning as foundational. The Wagner College case study highlights its effort to provide additional follow-up to their strong First-Year Experience, thus filling a gap in what is a carefully constructed, longstanding four-year program. Spelman College joined the project midway, just as the college was preparing to implement a four-year developmental curriculum called My Integrative Learning Experience (MILE); Spelman's case illustrates the importance of preparing all faculty in order to help them empower the whole student.

Even though the project teams identified missed opportunities, the inventories were also reassuring because they revealed many positive, previously established curricular elements that fostered integrative learning and only needed strengthening or connecting rather than requiring an entirely new initiative. The Wheaton College case study describes the college's work to refresh its signature interdisciplinary program, Connections, by providing students with additional structured opportunities for applied work and experiential learning to cultivate their capacities for analyzing and acting in a complex world. The Bard College team members describe their intention to connect five powerful core experiences, in which all students and all faculty already participate, through a cumulative portfolio that will strengthen reflection on academic and personal

growth. Of particular note is the value placed on faculty guidance so that students are more aware of their own goals and progress and consequently take greater responsibility for their education.

As the FLILL project progressed, our discussions moved from a focus on the forms and process of integrative learning to an exploration of integrative outcomes. What began as an effort to create more coherent curricular designs and assignments that emphasize interdisciplinary work and progressively challenging opportunities to practice skills in diverse settings, for example, was enhanced by a growing appreciation of education as a creative experience for each student. These experiences allowed students to draw upon previous learning to address complex problems and develop new insights. Any formulaic list of structures, outcomes, assignments, and pedagogies intended to promote integrative learning cannot fully capture the spirit of inquiry, discovery, and personal connections that are necessary for deep and meaningful learning. In short, to advance integrative work requires a shift in emphasis from what faculty can do to what students can do.

Collaborative Faculty Leadership

In addition to developing a better understanding of the forms and approaches to integrative learning, the FLILL project focused on how this work is initiated and nurtured. Faculty leadership is key to curricular change processes, and we assumed that small campuses had an easier time of engaging their faculty in conversations that would connect their work. Despite surface similarities among the participating institutions, context, campus culture, and timing emerged as critical variables. In some instances, new administrative leadership prompted intensive rethinking of the undergraduate experience as part of a new strategic plan, whereas for others, the stability of the administration and curriculum called for a strategy to overcome inertia. The Mount Holyoke College curriculum-to-career case study describes a well-developed strategic process for engaging all stakeholders in the future of the institution and its students. Thoughtful braiding together of multiple conversations created momentum to institutionalize integrative learning and rebrand its liberal arts curriculum.

For some campuses, a long history of faculty learning together was already in place to support a new conversation, whereas for others creating new formal and informal learning spaces would be necessary for their projects. Clark University and Allegheny College represent two different approaches and contexts for making visible the time and place for faculty learning. Indeed, a careful reading of all of the cases reveals important lessons about the role of administrators, how faculty take ownership of projects, and the importance of a supportive faculty community. Many of the “lessons learned” can provide guidance to all types of campuses, especially the recognition that faculty cannot do this work alone. The Reality Check by Skidmore College participants highlights several strategies to establish common ground so that administrators and faculty—who by definition operate with different perspectives—can work together.

Although faculty typically claim sole ownership of the curriculum, the initial campus inventories also pointed to important roles for professional staff in connecting classrooms to cocurricular requirements, community projects, and work experiences—all opportunities for integrative learning. As campus teams shared their work over the course of this project, the traditional definitions of "curriculum" and "faculty" changed significantly. Almost every article in this issue suggests that an inclusive community of faculty, staff, and administrators modeling integrative work is an essential foundation for students' integrative learning. Equally important, participants concluded that not only do students need more experience with synthesizing knowledge, addressing complex problems, reconciling contradictory points of view, and engaging in personal reflection, but, also, so do those who educate and support them. Yet, as noted in the Carleton College case study, learning together, sharing expertise, questioning assumptions, and constructing creative approaches takes time, trust, and risk taking. While there are no shortcuts, both the Spelman and Clark cases demonstrate how shared texts and tools can facilitate collaborative faculty work.

Approaches to Developing and Sustaining Faculty Leadership

This project revealed some of the challenges in both extending integrative learning as well as developing and sustaining faculty leadership. Whereas hundreds of campuses have adopted some version of the AAC&U LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes—knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, intellectual and practical skills, personal and social responsibility, and integrative and applied learning—somehow, integrative learning often lacks the specific curricular frameworks, centers, or leadership needed to make it evident on campuses.

In addition, there are some invisible barriers that do not exist for implementing the other outcomes. First, despite having been identified as institutions where integrative learning was taking place, participants in this project realized that the term at best had multiple meanings on their campus and at worst had no meaning at all. Faculty were more comfortable with terms such as interdisciplinary, connected, and experiential. Several of the cases demonstrate the importance of clear communication and common language. Second, it was not clear who "owns" integrative learning, and participants often questioned whether they had the authority to cross boundaries of disciplines and units. And yet boundary-crossing is essential for extending integrative learning beyond a few isolated initiatives. Ultimately, the faculty in the project saw themselves not as leaders but as facilitators or co-learners in working with their colleagues, and consequently they were able to promote collaboration outside of traditional hierarchical and department-bound relationships.

When describing their collaborative approach, several of the cases reveal the value of diverse membership in work groups. Broad participation, however, calls for skilled leadership or facilitation to encourage careful listening, negotiate differences of opinion, and support relationship building in order to accomplish designated tasks. The case

studies illustrate how essential personal relationships are for introducing new ideas and creating safe spaces for faculty learning in addition to the more formal professional development opportunities designed to build faculty capacities. Furthermore, as the participating teams move forward with their respective projects, they understand the need for their institution and their colleagues to adapt—including by developing clearer communication strategies and more innovative faculty leadership—because the challenge of sustaining the work is just as great as getting it started.

Ultimately, we learned that providing more opportunities for more students to understand their education as a whole does not mean campuses have to start from scratch. Institutions that are built on the enduring premise that liberal education prepares students for active and meaningful citizenship, careers, and lifelong learning often have strong foundations of integrative learning already established. What is crucial, however, is what administrators, faculty, and staff do with what they have, and how they see themselves in relation to the students they serve. One key lesson is that faculty should model integrative learning for students in order to define it and sustain it across the institution. Developing faculty's capacity for leadership in integrative learning, then, is not just about working with other faculty for institutional change, but also demonstrating for students what this form of leadership looks like: adaptive, collaborative, inquisitive, reflective, and boundary-crossing. The process of implementing integrative learning on a campus becomes a teaching tool, a means of modeling for students how to engage thoughtfully and actively in their communities toward a common purpose.

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Peer Review

Creating a Culture Conducive to Integrative Learning

By: Louis E. Newman, Scott Carpenter, Nathan Grawe and Susan Jaret-McKinstry

Over the past decade, Carleton College has fostered several interdisciplinary, integrative curricular initiatives. This article will focus on three initiatives, past and present, and will provide recommendations to help faculty develop and sustain similar programs.

Visualizing the Liberal Arts (Viz), a three-year initiative that culminated in a national conference in 2012, aimed to foster the distinctive skills needed to create, interpret, and employ visual images, media, and models across the curriculum. Viz succeeded in integrating visual learning throughout the curriculum and influenced new initiatives.

QuIRK (Quantitative Inquiry, Reasoning, and Knowledge) aims to cultivate numeracy in students by fostering the use, analysis, and communication of quantitative evidence. QuIRK faculty have collaborated on the creation of learning goals and detailed rubrics for assessing quantitative literacy. Students are required to take three QRE (Quantitative Reasoning Encounter) courses in order to graduate. More than two hundred such courses are offered each year.

The Carleton Global Engagement Initiative (GEI) encourages awareness of global issues and facility in thinking across boundaries (both geographical and metaphoric). It integrates foreign language study, area studies, and off-campus study through interdisciplinary capstone projects, internships, and civic engagement opportunities in global contexts.

An Increasingly Complex and Interconnected World

Despite their external differences, these three initiatives sprang from similar motivations. Most fundamentally, our educational mission is to prepare students to understand and contribute to a world that is increasingly complex and interconnected. The range of skills they need to navigate that world includes competence in analyzing quantitative data and using that data to construct arguments; the ability to understand, create, and interpret visual representations of knowledge; and an appreciation for cultural diversity and comprehension of issues that transcend national borders.

But there have been pedagogical motivations, as well. The intellectual skills at the heart of a liberal arts education must be developed in, and then applied across, multiple contexts—in different courses, in a variety of disciplines, using a range of modalities. Just as students do not learn to become effective writers by taking a single “first-year comp” course, they will not learn to be numerically, visually, and culturally proficient unless these skills are modeled and reinforced throughout the curriculum. Students will not really appreciate the power of quantitative reasoning if they think it only matters in their math classes; so too, if they think visual learning is only for the artistically inclined and cross-cultural literacy only for those studying foreign languages. These exercises in integrative learning encourage students to reflect on how and why they should learn these skills, as well as how they might apply them in novel contexts.

A Sense of Community Among Faculty and Staff

There are some factors specific to Carleton that have spurred this work and contributed to its success. Carleton has a robust and highly respected learning and teaching center (LTC). The LTC sponsors weekly lunch programs and occasional book groups at which faculty and staff gather to learn with and from one another. Faculty members involved

in Viz, QuIRK, and GEI have all presented at LTC sessions, which served to inform colleagues of their work and promoted further involvement. In general, the LTC fosters a sense of community among the faculty and staff that encourages people to take an active interest in one another's work and nourishes a sense of common purpose.

For many years Carleton's extended December break has been a time when we have held multi-day faculty development workshops. This is the venue where much of the work associated with Viz, QuIRK, and GEI has been planned and where faculty and staff have become engaged. Faculty participation in these workshops is extremely high; well over half of all regular faculty members attend at least one workshop each December, and many attend two or more.

Creating Powerful Integrative Learning Experiences

Each of these initiatives has been successful—as measured by the assessment of student work, the diffusion of quantitative reasoning and visual learning throughout the curriculum, and the extent and depth of faculty engagement. Collectively they highlight certain aspects of the faculty culture that are both preconditions for and fruits of this integrative learning. Overall, Carleton faculty see themselves as responsible for providing a liberal arts education, not solely for teaching their specific disciplines. The late Shelby Boardman, professor of geology and former dean of the college, said he had the privilege of teaching the liberal arts in the context of geology. That perspective underlies the desire to create powerful integrative learning experiences for our students. It also reinforces three activities that we regard as essential to successful integrated learning.

Collaboration. Integrative learning depends on integrated teaching. Each of these initiatives began when colleagues across disciplines talked with one another about what and how they were teaching. Strong administrative support and a willingness of faculty to view staff members as collaborators have been essential.

Risk-taking. Every new curricular initiative is experimental; not every creative assignment or interdisciplinary project succeeds. Faculty must be willing to see some failures as the price of trying new pedagogies and charting new curricular terrain. In workshops, faculty are encouraged to move out of their comfort zones. It is the willingness of faculty to stretch that has made each of these initiatives possible.

Modeling. We cannot ask our students to do what we are not willing to do ourselves. This sometimes means modeling something less than mastery and so positioning ourselves genuinely as co-learners with them. It also means that we cannot simply send them off to another course or expert to gain skills and then expect them on their own to integrate what they have learned in different places.

The Challenge Ahead

We are proud of these initiatives, but we are keenly aware that sustaining this work remains challenging. First, this sort of creative and integrative work is very time-intensive for both faculty and staff. Integrative initiatives do not simply remain in motion after they are launched; they must be nurtured over time.

Moreover, we need to remain nimble and responsive—to changing student needs, evolving educational goals, developing technologies, and personnel changes. Integrative learning projects are thus inherently unstable insofar as they depend upon particular configurations of people with particular interests and commitments and particular institutional structures.

Finally, assessing the educational outcomes for these integrative projects is especially difficult. No one metric would completely capture the combination of reflective, applied, cross-disciplinary, creative work that we identify with integrative liberal learning. How and where we measure the success of these efforts remains somewhat elusive.

Our experience has reinforced one overriding lesson: integrative learning is as much about pedagogy as about curriculum, as much about the culture of learning and collegiality as about specific programs. At Carleton, integrative learning thrives when faculty and staff working collaboratively and with strong administrative support see themselves as collectively responsible for the learning of their students in ways that transcend specific courses, departments, or programs. The distinctive practices of integrative learning are not self-sufficient or easily transferable from one institutional setting to another. They thrive only in a context where collaboration, risk taking, and modeling are actively fostered and rewarded.

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Peer Review

Creating "Connections 3.0"

By: Linda Eisenmann, Jennifer Brumberg-Kraus, Lisa Gavigan and Kathleen Morgan

Participation in the Faculty Leadership for Integrative Liberal Learning (FLILL) project both recognized Wheaton College's past strengths in integrative learning and prompted us to deepen our approach. Currently, our faculty is revisiting our twelve-year-old Connections curriculum by adding the option of a three-point curricular/applied learning Connection that would include two courses from different disciplines and a connected integrative experience (i.e., internship, service learning, research, cocurricular activity).

This idea has been dubbed "Connections 3.0," following a much smaller change ("Connections 2.0") in 2011.

We believe a revived and re-envisioned focus on integrative learning combined with applied learning suits Wheaton's innovative curricular history while advancing the potential to inspire faculty, staff, and students. At the same time, Connections 3.0 has proceeded slowly while we build support from the ground up, changing an ongoing curricular structure rather than crafting a wholly new effort. As such, it offers an example of how to support faculty as they initiate and develop a new idea.

Origins of the Connections Curriculum

In 2002, dissatisfied with traditional curricula that failed to integrate general education with the major and electives, the Wheaton faculty crafted the Connections curriculum to help students explore how different disciplines create knowledge and use it to identify and approach problems. Situating itself across the curriculum (rather than simply in the first two years), Connections links introductory or advanced courses across any two of six academic areas: creative arts, humanities, history, math and computer science, natural science, and social sciences. Through Connections, students experience a more integrated curriculum, where elective and major courses connect to each other more intentionally.

Students must complete two sets of Connections before graduating, offered in two ways. The first, faculty-created Connections, organizes courses around a common theme. For example, the *African Worlds* Connection links *Anthropology 225*(African Cultures in Transition) with several possibilities, including *English 245* (African Literature) and/or *Music 212*(World Music: Africa and the Americas) and/or *History 143*(Africans on Africa) and/or *Political Science 203* (African Politics).
The second type is the student-initiated Connection, created through a student's proposal in concert with the professors of the two courses. Student-initiated Connections must be approved by a faculty curriculum committee. Although most students complete faculty-created Connections, we have discovered that inviting students to discover their own linked courses and write a proposal produces an intentional, reflective exercise that strengthens students' understanding of the Connections philosophy and outcomes.

Current Issues

Over the last dozen years, the Connections curriculum has become a major focus of Wheaton's identity, providing fertile ground for faculty conversations, organizing curricular thinking, distinguishing the institution to prospective students, and gaining attention from our peer institutions. Yet, as new challenges face liberal arts education, we wonder whether we are doing enough to prepare students for the world they will encounter, and whether Connections is as effective as we have hoped in supporting students' integrative learning. Data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) demonstrate some strong results for students' interdisciplinary critical thinking,

but we would like to see those results outpace our peers to a greater extent, given the strong commitment to Connections.

Recently, students have begun to raise questions about Connections, suggesting that their peers' understanding and appreciation of the program is less strong than faculty assumed. In 2012–13, the student members of our Educational Policy Committee brought results of their brief survey of their classmates' understanding of Connections and its goals. Their data suggested that first-year students did not evince deep understanding of the value of Connections, tending to view it simply as a requirement. Upper-division students, too—who presumably had fulfilled one or both Connections—failed to articulate cross-disciplinary learning and application. These findings struck a chord with faculty who worry that Connections may have become stale, turning into "just a requirement" rather than an organizing principle for the way we want students to experience and analyze the world around them.

Concurrent with this reexamination is a growing interest in enhancing students' opportunities for applied learning, whether as internships, practica, or individualized experiences. Applied learning has a long history at Wheaton. In the late 1990s, Wheaton created the "second transcript"—an official record, parallel to the curricular transcript, of students' applied learning experiences. Officially called the Wheaton Work and Public Service Record, this document allowed students not only to chronicle their applied learning experiences, but also to engage in guided reflection on them. The second transcript was an excellent complement to classroom work, but after several years, it foundered under the weight of administration, lack of commitment by some students, and failure of deep integration with classroom learning.

Although the college continues to value applied and integrative learning, the cocurricular aspect of students' work has become increasingly distanced from the classroom experience. In fact, participation in the AAC&U project on integrative learning has revealed on our campus a frequent separation between the work of faculty and staff, even when they are both working on applied and integrative learning.

Connections 2.0

The original Connections curriculum was created in 2002 and a small revision in 2011 produced Connections 2.0. Recognizing some dissatisfaction with Connections' results, the provost initiated a call for proposals that would expand Connections with curricular or programmatic innovations that could prompt deeper integration. A few strong projects resulted. For instance, a new Peace and Social Justice minor brought the opportunity to apply classroom learning to an external social justice issue. A multidisciplinary center called the Wheaton Institute for Interdisciplinary Humanities helped students apply their classroom-based knowledge to professional fields, which provided deeper connections with experts. A cross-disciplinary "makerspace" provided a technology playground where students (and faculty and staff) could apply their own

problem-based learning skills. Yet, while these projects have added creative integrative elements to the campus, they have not deeply affected Connections as a whole.

The Genesis of Connections 3.0

Although a few faculty members took up the challenge of fortifying Connections 2.0, others sought additional ways to enhance the integrative power of Connections. In 2012, a senior faculty member partnered with career services on a workshop exploring various ways that academic departments were preparing students for life beyond the classroom. Their mutual goals were, first, to show how integrative learning was already happening across campus, even when it was not explicitly framed as such, and second, to help faculty learn from each other. The sharing of ideas at that workshop sparked discussions about integration throughout the next year, coinciding with participation in the FLILL project.

The Wheaton FLILL team decided to build on the enthusiasm generated by the workshop, even as we observed several disconnected ideas about integrative learning being discussed around campus. For instance, we saw growing attention to how career services can help students enhance their liberal arts educations. This observation led to an idea for Faculty Fellows to work with career services. Simultaneously, faculty debated the question of whether to grant academic credit for internships—an issue that provoked considerable disagreement. Even when faculty valued internship outcomes, they differed on whether participation in these experiences always merited academic credit.

As the FLILL project played out, our team undertook discussions across campus, both officially and unofficially, hoping to bring together the ideas around integrative learning. We visited the Educational Policy Committee to discuss the project, and later presented it to the entire faculty. We coordinated efforts with a faculty/staff group that had been convened by our dean of Spirituality, Service, and Social Responsibility to discuss AAC&U's civic responsibility initiative, and together we sponsored a faculty/staff lunch to brainstorm ideas. Out of these efforts came an important recognition: our campus has frequently presumed that learning occurs only in classrooms under the guidance of faculty members, often ignoring the contributions of staff who support students in cocurricular and applied settings. This recognition prompted another May workshop in 2013 to explore building applied learning more intentionally into the curriculum, using staff as partners. That workshop produced the idea now called "Connections 3.0."

The proposal for Connections 3.0 asserts the value of applied activities in expanding the learning potential of connected courses. In doing so, our team recognized the Wheaton faculty's preference for building on its strengths; so, rather than create a new structure, Connections 3.0 takes advantage of the power of the extant Connections curriculum and the faculty's commitment to it. The proposal would create a new type of Connection with a third element added to connected classroom courses: a related applied learning activity.

To spark the project, the provost provided seed money in summer 2014 for six projects planning to build applied Connections. For instance, a Connection course titled Race as a Social Construct will pair traditional courses with dialog groups on race conducted at the Multicultural Center. Exploring the Human–Animal Bond will add an internship at an animal sanctuary to the connected religion and psychology courses. Student leadership experiences as resident advisers, team captains, or student government leaders will become the applied element in the Modeling Leadership in Theory and Practice connection.

Bringing Connections to Fruition

Connections 3.0 is a work in progress on the Wheaton campus. Although the project was initially sparked by our FLILL participation, we realized we were engaged in something bigger: efforts to influence campus culture and to model new Wheaton-appropriate strategies of leadership around integrative learning. Curricular ideas at Wheaton succeed best when they develop organically from the faculty, rather than being presented through administrative recommendation; because this idea was developed outside the usual committee structure, the FLILL team has had to move deliberately. We do have some recent successes: the faculty voted to grant Wheaton internship credit for certain applied experiences, and six Connections 3.0 proposals are moving forward. Even so, the larger discussion about experiential learning continues. Because of our experience in this climate, Wheaton's story may offer lessons for other campuses where curricular change faces structural challenges. Thus, we articulate here our best practices and principles for implementing curricular change.

Lessons Learned

Lesson 1—Develop Your Idea out of Campus Experience

Although there are times when a completely new idea can invigorate people's thinking, our campus finds that initiatives succeed best when they resonate with campus values and past experience. In this case, the addition of an applied learning experience to Connections harkens back to the "second transcript," which recognized the value to students of practical work related to classroom learning.

Lesson 2—Embed Your Idea within Existing Structures

Applied learning is easily fostered by service learning offices, internships through career services, undergraduate research with faculty, and other settings. At Wheaton, joining applied learning to the mainstay of the curriculum—Connections—gives it an integrative force and a curricular prominence that bodes well for its strength and continuity. Embedding applied learning in the curriculum encourages faculty oversight, even as it invites staff colleagues more formally into the teaching role. Yet, the new idea will succeed only if it is vetted and approved by appropriate faculty committees.

Lesson 3—Build Consensus for Your Idea

Each campus understands the variety of settings and structures needed for vetting new ideas; curricular innovators must attend to each of them. Repeated iterations of the

conversation—although clearly an impediment to quick success—will improve both the effort and the product, enhancing the chance of adoption and support.

Lesson 4—Empower as Many People as Possible to Contribute to the Idea

On a campus that values grassroots initiatives, the team must allow others to explore, alter, and expand the idea. At Wheaton, athletics staff, junior faculty, and student affairs deans all contributed widely to our integrative learning reforms. If a curricular idea truly represents integrated learning, it can be owned by many people and enacted in different but complementary ways.

Lesson 5—Recognize Staff as Co-Educators

Since a liberal education philosophy stresses that students learn in many settings, faculty must recognize that potentially everyone on campus is an educator. Students rarely isolate learning that occurs for them in the classroom, on the field, in the work–study job, or in the practicum. When staff as well as faculty stand ready to respond to students' puzzles and inquiries, integrative learning occurs more easily and widely.

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Peer Review

Integrative Learning Pathways at Bard College: Connecting Core Experiences

By: Susan Merriam, Eric Trudel, Simeen Sattar, Maria Sachiko Cecire and Michelle Murray

In the early stages of working with the concept of integrative learning under the auspices of the Faculty Leadership for Integrative Liberal Learning Teagle grant, our team quickly recognized that a number of integrative learning practices were already in place at Bard College. Perhaps most important among these is Bard's set of core experiences, all of which incorporate or are defined by integrative learning practices, and all of which are required of all students and involve almost the entire faculty at least at some point in the process. Given this rich environment, we were struck by the lack of awareness about integrative learning and by the extent to which the concept is unknown or misunderstood on campus. Integrative learning practices had emerged over time either organically, by virtue of individual faculty initiative, or from the top down—from an administrator who wished to develop a particular aspect of the curriculum. Given that our goal was—and remains—to develop both integrative learning and faculty

leadership, we realized that the most effective approach to the Bard situation would be to work with the set of core experiences that involve almost the entire college.

Even though this approach is tied to Bard's particular set of core experiences, the possibility that integrative learning can be found in existing practices, and then teased out or foregrounded, offers other institutions an elegant and economical approach to building a more integrated curriculum and a more informed and engaged faculty. In other words, all changes do not need to involve re-thinking the curriculum from the top down, but may come from change generated in smaller, more incremental ways.

The Bard Core Experiences

All Bard students engage in five fundamentally important core experiences during their undergraduate career:

(1) Three weeks before the academic year begins, first-year students arrive to take Language and Thinking, an intensive course in textual analysis and writing. Central to this program is a series of lectures, performances, and workshops designed to resonate with the material students encounter in class.

(2) Once the regular semester begins, first-year students begin the first of two semesters of First Year Seminar, a course centered on close reading and discussion of canonical texts. Students participate in two symposia in which they present work they have prepared with a group of faculty mentors to the public.

(3) In January, first-year students spend about three weeks on campus engaged in Citizen Science, a program designed to involve students in the practice of science through intense focus on a particular problem (currently infectious disease). Additionally, the entire first-year class is involved at that time in a civic engagement project in which they teach science literacy in local K–12 schools.

(4) Second-semester sophomores participate in "Moderation," a transitional process by which Bard students enter their chosen field of study. Students are required to write two short papers (one retrospective, one prospective) reflecting on their academic career and choice of major and post-graduation plans, as well as prepare an academic paper (the topic of which is selected by the individual program), a performance, or an exhibition. Students then meet with a board of three faculty members to discuss their past work and plans for the future.

(5) The capstone experience, the senior project, takes place over the full senior year. Depending on the discipline, the senior project is an academic paper about 60–150 pages in length, or a performance or exhibition.

These core experiences are both forms of integrative learning in themselves, and incorporate forms of integrative learning. Thus, the core experiences offer a rich and

underutilized opportunity to be more intentional about integrative learning and to connect the practices of integrative learning. We believed that by using a portfolio to connect the five core experiences on campus, we could strengthen the student experience and raise faculty awareness about the concept of integrative learning. We imagined a developmentally driven series of assignments, each of which would function as a link in a chain to those experiences preceding and following it. The assignments would require students to reflect on their academic and personal growth at each stage of the five core experiences, and would function cumulatively. Seniors, for example, would have the opportunity to look back on four years of reflective assignments and measure the extent to which they had been transformed; administrators and faculty could use the portfolio for assessment purposes.

The Portfolio

Once we committed to working with our core experiences, we began developing future plans for a portfolio that will provide a deeper and more integrated four-year arc for students, and simultaneously will generate a conversation among the faculty about integrative learning. Any faculty member involved in one of the core experiences (and that would be the majority at Bard) will necessarily be involved in a discussion of integrative learning. Given Bard's culture, we believe that this level of faculty involvement will generate more interest in integrative learning and lead to individual faculty initiatives. Even though the portfolio is not yet in place, a number of conversations about integrative learning have begun to occur, both at the level of faculty to faculty and at the level of programs. Additionally, early discussions about the portfolio with faculty and staff have generated interest from the staff of the writing center, which has led to a discussion about workshops involving faculty in reflective writing practices. From our experience, it seems evident that one way to generate faculty interest in, and therefore engagement with, integrative learning is relatively simple: develop ways to encourage conversations about the subject to take place.

In response to our suggestions, the directors of each first-year experience (Language and Thinking, First Year Seminar, and Citizen Science) now work together to devise a series of prompts, each of which links their program to the others and emphasizes the continuity of the core. These assignments should help students connect their experiences; therefore they are distinct from writing assignments that students normally complete in class.

The Moderation process, we thought, could be strengthened by sharpening the questions given to the students as they prepare their short retrospective and prospective essays. The senior project experience/portfolio should be an assignment asking the student to reflect on the process of researching and writing or creating the senior project. All senior projects are reviewed by a three-member faculty board, which offers another opportunity for the faculty to be involved in a discussion of a student's portfolio as it nears completion.

Engaging the Faculty

Last spring, we presented our plan to create the portfolio to a number of faculty members, including, most importantly (and formally), the four directors of the first-year experience, and the Blended Learning Committee. It quickly became apparent in conversations with the directors of the first-year experiences that they were onboard—important "early adopters" whose engagement was crucial to our plan.

The Blended Learning Committee comprise about ten faculty and staff commissioned by the dean of the college to create a white paper about blended learning at Bard, and it is in this context that we presented the portfolio. The committee was receptive to our portfolio plan, and gave us advice about portfolio programs we might adopt once we move forward. Additionally, simply by virtue of explaining the portfolio to the committee, we increased the number of faculty at Bard who are now conversant with integrative learning.

Before the start of the fall 2013 semester, we talked to the entire fall First Year Seminar faculty (roughly thirty-one people) about the portfolio project at their semester orientation workshop. In this meeting the faculty review their plans for the semester, which include looking over the common syllabus, planning the symposia, and preparing for the first few weeks of class. Our aim was to initiate the portfolio in First Year Seminar, and to ease it in over the course of the next year by engaging Citizen Science and Language and Thinking. We explained the concept of integrative learning, and emphasized that one of the key aspects of the portfolio in this context is the importance it places on reflective writing since our main goal is to help the students develop a sense of the relationships between the discrete experiences. Faculty members, some of whom had worked with this type of writing before, were receptive to the concept and developed a portfolio for use in their classroom.

In addition to formal discussions with the first-year directors and the Blended Learning Committee, we have talked more informally with a number of faculty members about the portfolio plan. This more informal discussion has generated interest among the faculty about integrative learning—specifically, how Bard might be more deliberate about the practice. This emphasizes the extent to which cultural change might be generated by creating discourse.

Progress and Problems

At different moments we have encountered problems, the biggest of which was determining the type of portfolio that would be best for Bard. Currently, a variety of portfolio platforms are available, ranging from simple to complex. We considered whether it might be worth adopting a sophisticated platform that would allow students to curate their own portfolios, but ultimately decided to stay with our original idea to use a basic blog program or cloud-based service. We recognized that our relatively straightforward and inexpensive plan was easy to implement, distinctive, and would have much greater personal meaning for the students. We are convinced that the

portfolio gains its value because it is driven by students' reflections on their experiences at a specific moment—by their progression through the series of events that shapes their four-year arc. It is therefore distinct from many portfolios, which are intended to function as archives or presentation tools.

Another problem we have struggled with is how to develop sufficiently high stakes so that the students will be invested in the portfolio. A number of people who have been engaged with portfolios at other institutions have noted that the portfolio fails if students see it as a series of assignments, merely to be completed or checked off. Keeping their experiences in mind, we will choose the prompts with extra care and solicit input from students as to whether the questions motivate them. Some of this work is currently under way.

We also encountered difficulties in our discussion with the First Year Seminar faculty, who raised concerns about students' privacy and access to the portfolio. We decided that a simple resolution would be to make the portfolios available only to those faculty and administrators who have ordinarily had access to these materials. Even though the discussion raised a few red flags about the portfolio, about fifteen faculty members agreed to do a "test" portfolio in their class. This pilot program was launched in fall 2014 with a limited number of students.

Conclusion

Our efforts to implement the portfolio are facilitated by the centrality of the core experiences to Bard. Both the students' and the faculty members' time is shaped by these five processes. We believe that we made the right decision to work with what we already have—to bolster and more clearly define one of the institution's strengths in terms of integrative learning. We are also helped by the fact that faculty recognize that although the core experiences are important, they can be reinvigorated. As they take up such a tremendous amount of faculty time and energy, it is crucial that they fulfill their intended purpose.

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Peer Review

Collaborative, Faculty-Led Efforts for Sustainable Change

By: Rebecca Dolinsky, Ann Ferren and Heather McCambly

As higher education institutions respond to numerous challenges and opportunities—from new technologies to changing student demographics—their efforts to adapt depend on faculty and staff collaborating across departments and divisions. In this shifting environment, some faculty focus solely on what is under their immediate control: their own courses and research. In contrast, other faculty recognize that, in an inevitably evolving environment, their front-line perspective can influence campus change efforts as a shared responsibility. As the projects described in this issue of *Peer Review* unfolded, we identified several theories of organizational change that help explain why the campus initiatives took root: collaborative leadership, team-based learning, social network theory, and resilient capacity. These themes are also evident in a number of other projects carried out as part of AAC&U's Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative over the past decade. Understanding and applying these interconnected theories can guide faculty as they help shape and lead the transformation of higher education.

Collaborative Leadership across Departments and Divisions

Much of the research on effective leadership focuses on positions of authority—the university president or company CEO, for example. Because colleges and universities are relatively flat organizations, somewhat fragmented by departmental boundaries, leadership is distributed. As such, top-down change has limited appeal for faculty and is often unsustainable. Faculty who want to make a difference often find it challenging to accomplish institutional change without formal leadership authority, sometimes facing colleagues' resistance or indifference. Formal governance structures framed by committees and by-laws are generally inflexible and offer meager ground for innovative change. Instead, institutions need informal, inclusive processes, such as working groups and faculty learning communities, to enable those without formal authority to shape new initiatives. Establishing "collaborative and participatory" relationships may take more time than top-down mandates, but it allows for the iterative process through which ideas are tested and refined, group trust is established and membership is expanded, and initiatives become embedded and sustainable (Watson and Watson 2013, 45).

Faculty leaders often emerge because they have a good sense of common interests and work well with colleagues. For instance, change efforts typically start with "high-participating faculty"—those who actively engage in initiatives to strengthen student learning and connect with other equally invested faculty (Rutz et al. 2012, 42). Knowing how and with whom to start a change process "in order to make the greatest impact and build the most momentum" pays off during implementation (Watson and Watson 44). Although it is easier and safer to start with more experimental faculty who are

familiar with the work and who are willing to try something new without a guarantee of success, including skeptical faculty too can bring a productive tension to the effort and potentially better results. Once "high-participating faculty" begin to establish the work, engaging skeptical faculty can help change leaders "identify patterns of concerns" ahead of implementation (Duffy 2010, 11). It takes both types of faculty to effect institutional change.

An inclusive process that is not only open to but actively seeks out diverse practitioners is also essential to building a collaborative process. Research on creativity, innovation, and problem solving describes the importance of exploring, experimenting, and including a diverse group of outsiders who can ask questions, provide different perspectives, and offer additional expertise (Lehrer 2012, 112-135). Not only are assumptions tested, but also "the benefit of such horizontal interactions—people sharing knowledge *across* fields—is that it encourages conceptual blending, which is extremely important to the insight process" (Lehrer 2012, 37). Business leaders often cite office products—such as masking tape and post-it notes—that resulted from failure while pursuing another goal: due to collaboration and sharing, individuals with no stake in the original goal saw the potential of the "failed" initiative. In this way, inviting a diverse group of participants into change work not only creates a more inclusive campus culture, but also creates opportunities for repurposing "failed" or unlikely ideas from a fresh perspective.

Initiating and Diffusing Change through Social Networks

In any change endeavor, faculty leaders rely on a foundation of social capital and a broad network of expertise built over time through other successful projects. Social capital here can be defined as the goodwill and trust that faculty accumulate across campus relationships. This broad network creates "expertise transparency," or an environment in which faculty know about and can leverage expertise and connections across campus networks (Daly 2010). For example, particular departments or campus leaders may be highly skilled in community engagement, while multicultural centers, student affairs offices, and race or gender studies departments may have valuable expertise in creating an equitable and inclusive environment for student and faculty success—but are campus leaders collaborating across a full range of expertise?

In higher education, leaders often believe that if faculty are faced with evidence from an external reform expert, they will support change, when in reality "new strategies are more likely to be adopted from a trusted colleague than from an unfamiliar expert" (Daly 2010, 2). But how strong are the links within and across departments, campus divisions, and even institutions that share students, problems, and funding streams? If Daly's (2010) reading of organizational change is correct and "informal webs of relationships are often the chief determinants of how well and quickly change efforts take hold, diffuse, and sustain," then campuses may have some work to do.

Change built on durable social networks "can persist over time, even when specific funding is exhausted," with the establishment of an institutional culture that centers faculty work, student learning, and "the development of skills that support reflective teaching based on observations of student learning" (Rutz et al. 42, 47). Sustainable change in higher education must be built on meaningful, collaborative projects that fosters a common language and a shared vision for student learning through repeated, intentional, formal and informal interactions. This collaboration among faculty and professional staff creates lasting communication channels and interpersonal trust, and builds expertise transparency (Lengnick-Hall and Beck 2005). Without trust and collaborative work that crosses departments, divisions, and institutions, new initiatives will not take hold.

Team-Based Learning for Innovation and Action

Ultimately, lasting institutional change requires faculty to adjust their practices. Leaders can tap both current expertise and build additional institutional capacity through team-based learning aimed at generating new ideas, perspectives, and skills. Many curricular design projects, relying on working groups or task forces, flounder because participants do not realize that they are having dissimilar conversations due to their different disciplinary training and previous experiences (Stark et al. 1990). Communication requires more than just using the same vocabulary; change leaders must create rich team learning experiences that support the formation of shared meaning and the clarification of unintentional distortions or misunderstandings within and across divisions and departments (Hill 2006).

To develop as a team, faculty can invest time together to set collective goals, determine processes for collaboration and conflict management, and meet regularly to move from ideas to action. Creating this "shared sense of purpose makes a group a team as opposed to a collection of individuals." Highly developed teams become self-directed, capable of adapting to new challenges, recruiting new members, and sharing their knowledge with the potential for real innovation (Adams, Kayes, and Kolb 2005). But competing demands, ineffective leadership, and traditional views about inclusion keep many projects from achieving significant change.

Efforts to identify faculty facilitators for team-based learning primarily lead only to tenured and tenure-track faculty. Campus change leaders understandably are concerned that contingent faculty are unavailable to participate in such efforts, since many hold multiple and/or disparate employment positions. Additionally, contingent faculty are often disconnected from institutional and departmental learning goals and relevant professional development opportunities (Kezar, Maxey, and Eaton 2014). Yet, it's becoming increasingly unrealistic to keep contingent faculty on the margins of sustainable campus change efforts. They are the new faculty majority, and their commitment to student success is evident in their determination to teach under primarily insecure employment circumstances.

Research on faculty development programs provides some insight on the value of including contingent faculty in sustainable change efforts. Rutz et al. (2012) found in their assessment of faculty development programs that faculty off the tenure track were deeply engaged, especially at a campus with a significant number of contingent faculty. Yet, faculty with secure positions more willingly implemented lessons from the professional development programs than faculty with insecure positions, "and that freedom to experiment" equated to "more learning for students" (Rutz et al. 2012, 44). These findings may help debunk a widely held assumption that contingent faculty are unavailable to engage in change efforts. Incentivizing the work, however, may be critical to their participation and sustained engagement.

Resilience in the Face of Disruption

Carefully planned and systematic change has long been characteristic of higher education, but it is insufficient given today's highly dynamic environment where disruptions abound, such as new learning technologies, diverse student needs, changing faculty roles, and unremitting public attention. Indeed, the public has criticized higher education for not changing fast enough. A new theory of change might frame these "disruptions" as critical moments for faculty to reassess the purposes and processes of their work. For example, rather than resist the call to increase completion rates and close achievement gaps, many campuses implemented useful, evidence-based practices for enhancing both completion and student learning. Institutions and faculty reframed this disruption as an opportunity to deepen understanding and reassert a shared vision of equitable learning for successful individuals, citizens, and employees. This response demonstrates resilience in adapting to change.

Resilience *is not* the capacity to withstand disruption in order to stay the same. Rather, it is the capacity of a community or organization to adapt or transform its structure and processes to sustain its most fundamental purpose (Brand and Jax 2007; Adelman and Taylor 2003). The first step an organization must take to act and think resiliently is to separate its fundamental purpose from the entrenched processes that have traditionally supported it. For example, in response to climate change, a community might decide to adapt food production practices in order to ensure food security (McCambly and Brown 2014). In response to the many disruptions facing higher education institutions, campuses must reimagine higher education in order to deliver learning experiences that lead not only to degrees, but also to proficiencies all students need to succeed and thrive. Defining and committing collectively to a shared vision is a key asset to resilient behavior, including rapid and long-term responses for change (Kimberlin, Schwartz, and Austin 2011).

As institutions and faculty adapt in the face of disruptions, they experience a variety of challenges. Effective educational innovations tend to remain in small and even temporary "islands" of change. Despite initial enthusiasm, faculty work groups are not always harmonious, reflecting some of the messiness of working out the implications of any new initiative. The implementation phase for a new curricular design can be further

destabilizing when the work is publicly scrutinized. Most faculty have been part of a project that lost steam as a result of staff turnover, the end of grant funding, or "initiative fatigue." Even a strong, evidence-based campus initiative can quickly dissolve, "becoming yet another layer of sediment in the sea of change" (Daly 2010, 2). Skilled faculty leaders understand the phases of change and attend to building and maintaining relationships as well as accomplishing the task and adjusting their behavior as the situation demands.

Conclusion

Collaborative leadership, social networks, and team-based learning are important assets for organizational resilience. Higher education's capacity to adapt relies on each institution's capacity to mobilize its faculty as critical sources of both expertise and resources. Ultimately, transformation will require strong bonds and commitment beyond individual institutions and extend to external stakeholders, including accreditors, legislators, and policy makers, as essential partners for sustainable change.

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Peer Review

Facilitating Campus Leadership for Integrative Liberal Learning

By: Nancy Budwig, Sarah Michaels and Lisa Kasmer

One of the key goals of Clark's Liberal Education and Effective Practice (LEEP) initiative is to help students be more reflective, intentional, and self-directed about their learning. Aligned with AAC&U's commitment to integrative learning, we believe an important outcome of a Clark undergraduate education involves students learning to draw connections at four levels: (1) within coursework in their major, (2) between their Program of Liberal Studies courses and their major courses, (3) among their curricular and cocurricular activities, and (4) across disciplines and contexts (often beyond the campus gates).

As we have spent the last half decade designing college environments that help students integrate their learning, we also have been designing environments that instill in Clark undergraduates the increasing capacity to make such connections on their own. The aim of this developmental framework is to ensure that by graduation Clark undergraduates demonstrate the ability to engage in integrative learning for themselves across multiple levels.

While our aims have not changed much over the past five years, the nature of our work has. In asking that students learn differently, we have come to realize that faculty, staff, and administrators will not be able to facilitate this change without learning to be more intentional and integrative themselves. New kinds of *professional learning* need to take place, and *new structures* and *tools* are required to guide this process.

In this case study, we share aspects of Clark's efforts to undertake the most significant curricular reform effort our university has ever initiated. This work has transitioned from the use of standard faculty governance and ad hoc committee structures to the more intentional and sustained use of learning communities (Brown 1984). In charting out this course, we have drawn significantly from the learning and developmental science literature. While it is well known in the literature that learning communities are powerful sites for professional development (Del Prete 2013; Lave and Wenger 1991), we have come to see the need for a strategy for scaling the work and a core set of resources that are necessary to drive and sustain authentic change. The primary lesson we have learned is that without significant attention to thinking freshly about mechanisms of campus leadership for this work, and without significant attention to professional development in support of campus leaders learning to be more intentional and integrative*themselves*, these important initiatives will fail.

Initiating a Major Review

In 2008, Clark's faculty decided to undertake a major review of its undergraduate curriculum, something that had not undergone substantial review for several decades. A faculty task force on undergraduate education was formed to rethink what it means to be liberally educated in the twenty-first century. The task force recommended a set of five university-wide learning outcomes. Four of these outcomes were adapted from the AAC&U's LEAP Essential Outcomes. A fifth learning outcome focused on what we call "capacities of effective practice," including creativity, self-directedness, resilience, adaptive expertise, and the ability to collaborate.

In addition to shared learning outcomes, the Undergraduate Task Force proposed a new model of learning that draws upon Clark's distinguished history in the learning and developmental sciences. The Undergraduate Task Force report proposed shifting the relationship between general and specialized education. Instead of taking breadth and depth as two relatively separate aspects of the undergraduate experience (and something separate from cocurricular activities), the aim was to see academic progress over time as a single arc of development. This holistic view of student learning identifies three phases. A first *orientation* phase marks entry to college; a second phase invites *growth and exploration*; and a third phase, *enactment*, calls on students to show their progress by enacting and demonstrating what they know (see Budwig [2013] for a fuller description of this work). The task force's work was presented to the faculty assembly and by 2009, the five learning outcomes were adopted by a vote in the Faculty Assembly. With a nod to the acronym for AAC&U's signature initiative LEAP, we call Clark's framework LEEP—Liberal Education and Effective Practice.

New Models for Campus Leadership of Integrative Liberal Learning

Our early work on implementing the LEEP Curricular Framework drew upon existing structures and faculty governance channels, such as our Undergraduate Academic Board and Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, but this work did not fully live up to the goals articulated by the Undergraduate Task Force. These efforts were primarily organized at the level of individual courses, and were hardly integrated into larger

structural units beyond individual faculty, which led to minimal curricular or institutional-level change. To implement this curricular framework beyond the individual course level, we realized faculty learning communities, as well as tools and templates to guide these communities, needed to be established.

Novel Forms of Campus Leadership: The Important Role Learning Communities Play

The Effective Practice Faculty Fellowship. Recognizing the need to create a shared vision for weaving integrative learning and effective practice into the undergraduate curriculum, we sought a process that would be transparent, inclusive, iterative, and sustainable. This led us to form the Effective Practice Faculty Fellowship, a group of approximately a dozen volunteers who came from various disciplines. The fellowship faculty met regularly as a learning community and planned a semester-long salon series open to all faculty that took place once a month. The goal of the salons was to generate ideas from a large group of faculty on campus who worked in breakout groups over lunch around a series of topics, such as building a collective faculty vision for LEEP, developing shared goals, and shaping curricular strategies for integrative learning and effective practice.

As the effective practice work moved forward, faculty deepened their knowledge of curricular work beyond their major and gained a noticeable sense of community. Nevertheless, faculty outside the fellowship had a more difficult time thinking about models that offered bold solutions for integrating Clark's curricular elements beyond a set of classes or the major.

There were three takeaways from the Effective Practice Faculty Fellowship efforts. First, we came to recognize the power of learning communities for breaking down university silos. Second, we realized that in order for students to learn differently and in an integrative fashion, faculty, staff, and administrators need to be organized and have professional development to do the same. Third, we received a suggestion from the faculty Undergraduate Academic Board that encouraged leadership to begin work in the major, given that these curricular units were where faculty felt most comfortable. While counterintuitive at first, this turned out to be a powerful recommendation.

The Exemplar Learning Communities Project. This project was designed to foster professional development, bringing together faculty representing several distinct majors, with each exemplar group including five to ten faculty, staff, and one academic administrative leader responsible for the LEEP Curricular Framework efforts. Through iterative cycles of working with membership from different majors on campus and staff from cocurricular units, each exemplar group works as a learning community to support the efforts of individual departments and programs. The goal of the Exemplar Learning Communities Project is to develop department plans for implementing two of the five LEEP learning outcomes, including consideration of the developmental pathways of (1) expected student behaviors at each of the three developmental phases—orientation,

growth and exploration, and enactment; (2) the foundational learning and high-impact experiences provided to help students meet these expectations; and (3) plans for assessment of the selected outcomes.
Over the past eighteen months, two iterations of exemplar learning communities have taken place with a third community—focused on our First Year Intensive seminar courses—having started in fall 2014. The first community worked with four different majors (biology, economics, music, and screen studies), while the second group includes four other majors (computer science, cultural studies and communication, English, and management). Clark's new LEEP Center—a support structure on campus integrating all academic support services and providing students with LEEP advising—also has participated in the learning communities to help foster discussion of linkages between the majors and the academic support services and cocurricular activities available on campus.

While currently the first two learning communities have focused on the major, and this work will continue iteratively, our newly formed third learning community brings together faculty and staff involved with the first-year experience to consider ways first-year programming can assist students not only transition into college, but also help them link their first-year experiences to other curricular elements. To help ensure learning is transferred between work going on in the major and the first-year programming, cross-membership between the second and third learning communities was set up. Each learning community spends a semester or more working together formally, though an aim is made to recognize the need for ongoing reflection and iterative cycles of improvement back at the department level for this work.

A second important goal of the exemplar learning communities has been to develop a set of professional tools and public resources that help guide learning that goes beyond simply participating with other peers in the learning community. Building off learning and developmental research (Budwig 2013, Windschitl et al. 2012), we believed that these tools could have a particularly important role to play in our LEEP initiative in that they not only might build individual capacity, but also could be a great resource in making departmental thinking visible—public and available (to self and others)—facilitating organic change in ways that support institutionally agreed upon goals.

Novel Forms of Campus Leadership: Tools and Artifacts to Guide and Share Learning

At Clark we came to realize how challenging it was for departments to think intentionally and specifically about the separate learning outcomes and how they each linked up with expected student behaviors and high-impact experiences. It also was difficult for departments to focus their work on developing pathways of expected student behaviors across time. This led to the creation of a *learning outcomes template*, which helps departments systematically inquire and reflect on these issues. Another important tool has become the *poster template*, a device that assists departments in

sharing work on their learning outcomes template with other curricular units in a public way. The poster template allows units to share information about the department, two of the learning outcome templates that describe developmental pathways, and gives insight into department plans for next steps. What is critical is that these tools guide inquiry—both at the level of the individual unit, as well as facilitating cross departmental conversations. These tools do not prescribe. The templates allow units to create unique plans and outcomes.

The tools and artifacts are deeply connected to the work of the learning communities. The templates are provided to augment the work, with each learning community not only utilizing these tools, and seeing the results of others' use of them, but also contributing to their further development. A Moodle site houses the work of each of the learning communities, organized longitudinally. A section of the Moodle site also holds the most recent poster drafts of each department so each department can work on their own plans but also draw upon the work of others. Members of each individual community provide peer feedback both formally and informally in the context of the learning community meetings. A resource section also holds the latest version of the common templates. We have found that the pace of work of the learning community speeds up with each iteration, largely due to the improvements in the templates and resources supporting their use. In winter 2015 these tools will be available to faculty and staff at Clark as part of a new webpage that describes this work.

The benefit of these learning communities then lies not only in developing professional leadership for intentional integrative learning, but also in strengthening this leadership through the process of rich documentation. The posters provide a mechanism to share the work of learning community members with departments that have yet to participate. This past spring, Clark's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning hosted an afternoon session that allowed departments to share posters with faculty and staff. These sessions both inspire future work and also show the diversity of ways departments across campus are implementing integrative learning and effective practice, countering any concern that a one-size-fits-all model is expected.

What We Have Learned

While there is general consensus on campus that integrative learning and effective practice are critical to liberal learning, implementing the ambitious goals of Clark's LEEP initiative has been more complex than we originally thought. Clark's Undergraduate Task Force Report created a general buzz of excitement. Much of the reform efforts were designed to ensure that all students experienced the best of what undergraduates found transformative. Instead of developing completely new curricular elements and experiences, much of the proposed curricular change involved more intentionally organizing student learning. One of the key findings of our work related to implementing the LEEP framework is that *faculty and staff also need to become more intentional and integrative in their efforts*. Helping students coordinate pathways that integrate their learning across curricular and cocurricular experiences, and allowing

students to take on increasing agency and intentionality for their integrative learning, require faculty and staff to do the same.

Learning communities have been central to the professional development work we have described. They provide an open and supportive environment that facilitates professional development. Faculty and staff feel comfortable in professional learning environments designed to allow members to co-create integrative learning pathways for students. But we have found that learning communities do not simply develop organically. They need strong support and nurturing. Significant design goes into their formation, and continuous leadership that scaffolds learning is imperative. In such contexts, tools and artifacts become powerful resources that foster enhanced professional development. We have found two features that have improved the success of learning communities: first, the individual learning communities need to be networked or linked together over time in planned and sequenced ways; second, learning communities depend on tools and artifacts that serve as important scaffolds that encourage disciplined and collaborative inquiry.

One challenge for our community has been a tension in this work between totally organic work on the part of faculty and staff and significant leadership from the academic administration—individuals who typically carry broader institutional vision and time commitment to the LEEP implementation initiative. We have landed in a spot that is neither top down nor bottom up. Drawing from literature in the developmental and learning sciences, we have coined a term,*guided emergence*, to characterize this approach (see Budwig 2013; Budwig and Elsass 2013). Guided emergence sees the role of campus leadership as one that designs environments and provides and assists with the creation of tools and artifacts that allow individuals and broader learning communities unique opportunities for authentic engagement and the chance to flourish. We believe guided emergence provides a conceptual tool for rethinking the role of faculty and academic leadership in facilitating new forms of campus leadership for the integrative liberal learning we know is central to the educational outcomes we desire for our students.

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Peer Review

Our Beloved Journey: Using Storytelling to Foster Faculty Community

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“After situating herself on a huge flat-sided rock, Baby Suggs bowed her head and prayed silently. The company watched from the tree. They knew she was ready when she put her stick down. Then she shouted, ‘Let the children come!’ and they ran from the trees toward her.

"Let your mothers hear you laugh,’ she told them, and the woods rang. The adults looked on and could not help smiling.

Then, ‘Let the grown men come,’ she shouted. They stepped out one by one from among the ringing trees.

'Let your wives and your children see you dance,’ she told them, and groundlife shuddered under their feet.

Finally she called the women to her. ‘Cry,’ she told them. ‘For the living and the dead. Just cry.’ And without covering their eyes the women let loose. It started that way: laughing children, dancing men, crying women and then it got mixed up. Women stopped crying and danced; men sat down and cried; children danced, women laughed, children cried until, exhausted and riven, all and each lay about the Clearing damp and gasping for breath.”

—From Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*

In response to changing higher education landscapes, as well as our perceived need to develop a signature program, members of the Spelman College faculty have been undergoing an extensive re-imagining of our general education and major curricula as well as our approaches to teaching. Our emphasis has been on experiences that promote integrative learning and the Association of American Colleges and Universities' LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes. Broadly conceived, we call our core initiative the Spelman MILE (My Integrated Learning Experience).

The Spelman College MILE was developed to address the difficulties that students encounter in knowledge transference between disciplinary contexts. The MILE includes initiatives designed to strengthen the extended orientation for first-year and sophomore students; develop interdisciplinary and "Free-Thinking Woman" seminars; promote quantitative literacy, service learning, and writing across the curriculum; and implement research-based capstone experiences within each major. It also implements the electronic portfolio (SpEl.Folio) assessment tool that permits each student to assemble artifacts and reflections from courses over time, thereby creating a "story" of her academic and personal progress throughout her years of college study. Ideally, the electronic portfolios provide students with improved understanding of their own learning processes and a mechanism for establishing greater clarity about how their skills and abilities fit with their goals.

The Spelman MILE emphasizes integrated learning as a key component to improving student learning outcomes and assessments over the next decades. However, in order to bring more students to a place characterized by integrative and critical thought, some of the faculty realized that we would need to invite teaching scholars to come along the same path. It was necessary to create structures that would allow faculty to engage in conversations that were not limited to teaching tasks, academic production, and advancement in our discrete disciplines. We needed to rediscover what had originally brought us into the academy—curiosity, surprise, and connection. Below, we share our experiences of using storytelling as means to build an intellectual commons among our faculty, which in turn supports integrative learning in our students.

Stewardship and Leadership

In 2008, Spelman was awarded a Mellon Foundation grant that emphasized interdisciplinarity, integrative learning, and the incorporation of quantitative reasoning throughout the core curriculum and across disciplines. One outgrowth of this grant was the establishment of the Teaching Resource and Research Center (TRRC) as a site of interdisciplinary faculty development and activity. The TRRC offered the programmatic and physical space to intellectually engage faculty across disciplines. It also provided a steward for our efforts. Instead of relying on charismatic leadership with its top-down structure as a driving force toward the goal of commons-building, Ella Baker's philosophy of "group-centered leaders" best characterizes the TRRC director's approach (Carson 1981, 30). Group-centered leadership, in our case, involved marshalling small

groups of faculty with common interests, who then organized their own structures and purposes through participatory democracy with little hierarchy (Carson 1981, 30).

A summer workshop steering committee formed, which included faculty members from English, sociology, psychology, and art. This steering committee engaged in wide-ranging discussions on interdisciplinarity and ways to engage faculty in interdisciplinary approaches to integrative learning in their teaching methods. These free-wheeling meetings were the first steps in creating our intellectual commons. Our first strategic decision was to use storytelling as a common pedagogy. The members realized that storytelling could ground our affiliation and offer a common framework for advancing the realization of integrative learning at Spelman College. We understood that integrative learning is heavily dependent on the use of storytelling to create informative narratives that weave personal, community, and academic frames of meaning. As such, this use of story is adaptable to any discipline and essential to addressing far-reaching questions. Given its suppleness, story operates through multiple languages of narration—text, numbers, maps, the arts, and digital rhetoric. Importantly, then, story allows us to integrate reflection, technology, collaboration, and interdisciplinarity in ways that are both focused and open-ended.

Since 2011, storytelling has provided an axis for developing summer workshops designed to build an intellectual commons among our faculty by engaging colleagues from diverse disciplines in cross-disciplinary conversations and interdisciplinary projects. We theorized that these workshops would facilitate new collaborations and raise questions that would lead to the adoption of integrative practices. We envisioned the intellectual commons as an artifice that, like a good story, would engender its own conversations, excitements, and revelations. As a model articulation of an intellectual commons, these workshops offered occasions for exchanges of ideas that would suggest new pedagogies. As an extension of their involvement, we anticipated that workshop participants would move logically toward interdisciplinary approaches by modifying existing courses, developing new courses, and restructuring student-learning outcomes.

The 2012 and 2013 workshops applied a multi-disciplinary approach to the re-reading of Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, bringing together modes of inquiry from several disciplines. Set during the 1870s, *Beloved* imagines the psychic, physical, and spiritual journeys taken by a formerly enslaved community. The novel's investment in the lives of those seeking renewal through different ways of knowing and being provided a context for examining community formation among a diverse constituency, approaches to leadership in the character of Baby Suggs, and surprisingly robust language for communicating the nature and process of such work.

The Clearing and the Commons

In reviewing the Beloved workshops, the TRRC steering committee decided that the 'Clearing' (described as an intellectual and experiential space in Beloved) would serve as a metaphor for an intellectual commons on our campus. Morrison's Clearing is a place

that stands apart from other spaces. It is a space reserved for communion with members of the community, with oneself, or with the intangible. It is a space of self-affirmation, discovery, and challenge. We realized that faculty needed to create such a space, and needed (like Beloved's Baby Suggs) to enact pedagogy that could translate and engage students in the possibilities of their own intellectual space (the Spelman MILE). Over the years faculty had been focused on the business of teaching and producing work. What we missed were those conversations with our colleagues that made the "groundlife shudder under [our] feet" through shared intellectual exchange (Morrison 1987). We realized that in order to bring more students to a place characterized by integrative and critical thought, faculty must travel the same path and join one another in our Clearing.

Summer workshops gave participating faculty undistracted time and space; they brought unusual conversation partners into a common space; they disrupted the faulty premise that we were engaged in tasks designed to teach students who need "fixing." The workshops re-situated the liberal arts tradition in the foreground of our work and muted the significance of disciplinary boundaries. The organic, creative sharing of ideas and exchanges of teaching practices cleared a space for free-flowing ideas, collegiality, and mutual respect for our different "eyes."

The inaugural Digital Storytelling Workshop in summer 2011 presented technologies as story modes. We discussed the power of story to transmit academic content as well as the use of one's experiences in intellectual sharing with students, and the relevance of faculty members' research and professional identities. Faculty members from several disciplines worked to capture the "stories" or narratives within their own lives and to look for the significance of those narratives in their teaching practice. In doing so, participants created and shared autobiographies using digital media (in our case, Microsoft Photo Story). Later, many participants reported gaining insights from this workshop that benefited their teaching and scholarly practice.

Fostering Engagement

The workshops, mentioned earlier, proposed a common question focused around Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) as an anchor text. The use of an anchor text was not meant to be a weight or a restriction, but an intersection—a proposed meeting at the crossroad of disciplines. In our *Beloved* workshop series, faculty participants brought their specific disciplinary perspectives and pedagogies to the reading of Morrison's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel. This novel was selected as an anchor text given the many themes it raises in relation to biography, history, migration, literary and spatial analysis, and quantitative reasoning.

One of the benefits of using *Beloved* as described above is that it presented an opportunity for interdisciplinary engagement with the numerous ways we confront catastrophe and change as humans, as citizens, as victims, as perpetrators, and as scholars.*Beloved* as anchor text suggested the broad theme of "Documenting Moments

of Crisis and Change" as the center of the workshops' conversations. Pedagogically speaking, the idea of crisis and change informed our ultimate interest in helping students understand processes of social change in relationship to narratives within the scope of the African Diaspora and the United States. We explored the significance of letters and numbers in *Beloved* as well as other relevant stories. We incorporated multiple digital visual technologies and archival sources into our approaches to story. We shared our own intellectual journeys, told through these multiple languages. This series of workshops resulted in several faculty members discovering that introducing *Beloved* as a text, or other uses of story, into their syllabi exposed opportunities for their students to deepen their own practice in the social and natural sciences, the arts, and humanities, and also fostered engagement across disciplines and the college's divisional structure.

Then, as we worked for two years on our project, we discovered that *Beloved* offered alternative ways for us to name and contemplate the project itself. The characteristics that Morrison assigns Baby Suggs suggest a model of leadership that resists dictatorial mandates, rejects a demand for organization that forecloses on the possibility for flux and fluidity to occur within communion, and refuses to belittle the needs or devalue the contributions of those gathered. Through a metaphoric consideration of Baby Suggs's leadership, we recognized the enactments of our faculty workshops. We found communion with the invitation to engage one another through an array of expressions. Beyond learning new pedagogies, we learned to make connections across disciplines and within ourselves; we learned that commons-building is most effective when it is organic, when the focus is on faculty community rather than 'development,' when ideas, creativity, and expertise are valued, and when faculty embrace a generative model of intellectual stewardship.

A Culture for Sustainability

Our project has affirmed the importance of maintaining a rich and engaged faculty culture (through interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary engagements) as requisite to integrative teaching–learning strategies and of fostering a culture of curiosity among students. Journeying beyond disciplinary boundaries has enhanced faculty relationships and respect for work being done within the disciplines, and for diverse methods. Our modeling of intellectual exchange contributes in important ways to the expression of faculty leadership as shared commitment to student learning, as well as the emergent properties of an organic, self-organizing system primed for explosive creativity.

Even as we join with other faculty in our Clearing, those gathered must work seamlessly with campus administrators and technology units that comprehend the value of interdisciplinary work and the subtle yet meaningful changes that result. Marshalling resources—both financial and human—that support gathering in these 'clearings' is an important part of this effort. Faculty incentives and workshop funding are critical to sustainability, of course, and are primarily funded through grants such as those sponsored by the Mellon Foundation. However, equally important is a shared vision of community that will withstand potential disruptions such as changes in administrative

leadership or gaps in grant funding. Only with this vision shared by all stakeholders can efforts such as this thrive.

As we have taken this path, we have learned much about our community and the nuances of the language of leadership when building intellectual commons among our peers. We believe that faculty who model integrative learning influence how students embrace its spirit and practice. As we move forward through the proverbial Clearing, we are confident that we will continue to lift our voices together and do so in the spirit of inquiry that embraces its delight.

References

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