Using integrated course design principles to promote meaningful learning in an innovative applied social psychology course

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Goal

- By the end of this session, I hope you will take away...
  - A model of course design to use as a tool
  - An appreciation for the value of self-evaluation
  - Ideas for teaching an applied social psychology course for learning
  - A new insight or inspiration
  - Some other useful idea

It’s called “Special Topics.” Go.

- Psyc 208: “Contemporary topics in Social, Developmental, Personality, and Clinical Psychology”
  - My background: social/personality
- Enrollment up to 180 (typically 100-130)
- 13 week semester, meet twice a week for 80 mins
- No prerequisite courses
- Geared toward 2nd year non-majors
  - Open to anyone
  - Can satisfy a requirement for psych minor
  - Mostly 1st and 2nd year students
- Class mean 63-67%, SD ~14%
- 2 Teaching Assistants (96 hours each)

Psychology in your life: How social psychology can help you succeed

Term 1 2009/2010 attempt #1
Term 2 2010/2011 large overhaul
Term 2 2011/2012 minor tweaks
Term 2 2012/2013 minor tweaks... and ready to re-evaluate

Integrated Course Design

Learning Goals
Teaching and Learning Activities
Feedback and Assessment
Situational Factors (Context)

Significant
Active
Educative
Integrated
Pink (2003)
Key Resource


Evaluating Learning Goals

1. Discuss, compare and contrast, and relate to your life experiences a variety of major theories from social psychology (e.g., group dynamics, self processes including self-control, motivation).
2. Apply research and theory from social psychology to enhance your learning experience and personal growth.
3. Analyze how social psychological theories that have been applied to a sport context (e.g., attention control, flow, team cohesion) can be reapplied to a learning context.
4. Locate, evaluate, and synthesize research from social psychology or a related discipline to inform a challenge you and your teammates face while learning.
5. Collaborate effectively with teammates to produce high quality, creative deliverables that meet deadlines.
6. Choose to participate in your learning process by being mentally and physically present in class-related and team activities.
7. Appraise your own and others’ team contributions and deliverables in a balanced, growth-directed way.
8. Be a lifelong learner.

Bloom’s Taxonomy

- Knowledge
- Comprehension
- Application
- Analysis
- Synthesis
- Evaluation

Fink’s Taxonomy of Significant Learning

- Learning How to Learn
- Foundational Knowledge
- Application
- Integration
- Human Dimension
- Caring

Toward Significant Learning Goals

1. Understand, remember, and apply research and theory on teamwork and the self. (Foundational Knowledge)
2. For self and when advising others, use psychological literature to thoughtfully re-interpret past experiences, to effectively address current challenges, and to make informed decisions about the future. (Application, Integration, Human Dimension)
3. Connect course material across units to ultimately form a research-based model of a good life. (Integration)
4. Appreciate (acknowledge?) the value of consulting psychological literature to inform your understanding of life (e.g., well-being, self-control, team-building, etc.). (Caring)
5. Demonstrate competence in life-long learning skills such as giving feedback, teamwork, finding research articles in psychology, studying from traditional and non-traditional texts. (Learning how to learn)

Integrated Course Design

- Active
- Integrated
- Educational
- Teaching and Learning Activities
- Feedback and Assessment
- Situational Factors (Context)
Teaching and Learning Activities

- Various “active” techniques: think-pair-share, minute papers, small group & large group discussions, team quizzes, demonstration
  - but mostly lecture.
- In-class learning objectives largely low-level
  - “list, describe, define, compare and contrast, generate an example of…”
  - Dis-integration with course Learning Goals
  - Dis-integration with exams (application focus)

How can I use class time more effectively to reach my learning goals?

Team Based Learning (TBL)

- Students read before start of unit
- Individual and team quiz
  - Mini-lectures as needed
- Class time: problem solving, application

Building Educative Assessments and Feedback

- Existing team assignment well integrated
  - Supports course goals 2-5
  - Consistent with use of other active learning methods
Existing Assignment Integrates Well

Component 1: Foundations
What’s your team’s biggest learning challenge? How will you work as a team?

Component 2: Annotated Bibliography (Individual)
What can we find out about your learning challenge?
• to understand it
• to deal with it
• Research, interviews, popular media

Component 3: Abstract (Team)
Synthesize your team’s annotated bibliographies in 600 words. What have you learned? What are your recommendations?

Component 4: Creative Advertisement
Given what you learned in Components 2 + 3, advise other students about this learning challenge.

Building Educative Assessments and Feedback

- Existing team assignment well integrated
- Midterm and Final Exam
  - Reduce emphasis on minor details (MC)
  - Use in-class application activities as basis for open-ended exam questions
  - Communicate high expectations
  - Replace one “content” class with whole-class feedback after midterm and project Phase 2 returned

Integrated Course Design

Learning Goals
- Significant

Teaching and Learning Activities
- Active
- Integrated
- Educational

Feedback and Assessment

Situational Factors (Context)

Fink (2003)

Conclusions

- Integrated Course Design model helped me
  - Refine learning goals for significant learning
  - Prepare to adjust teaching & learning activities to support learning goals
  - Recognize strong integration of current team project with other core elements
  - Prepare to adjust exams and feedback to reflect other core elements

Resources

  - New revised and updated edition forthcoming August 2013

What is your take-away message? Insight or inspiration? Resource to investigate further?

I invite you to write it on a card, take it with you, or hand it in.