

Mixing It Up! Collaborating Across the Disciplines

Disciplinary Diversity in the Classroom

- **Arvidson, P.S. (2008). *Teaching Nonmajors: Advice for Liberal Arts Professors*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.**

Providing practical examples and brief anecdotes drawn from a variety of disciplines in the liberal arts and sciences, the author describes simple ways to break up lectures, how to stimulate the best discussions, the art of assignments, how to improve student ratings, and successful strategies for engaging nonmajors and for handling problem students.

- **Evans, E., Tindale, J., Cable, D., & Mead, S. H. (2009). Collaborative teaching in a linguistically and culturally diverse higher education setting: A case study of a postgraduate accounting program. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 28(6), 597-613.**

This paper reflects on the project's interdisciplinary and collaborative approach to diversity in the classroom by tracing its growth and development and describing the way in which it is supporting the integration of professional communication skills and discipline-specific content within the Master of Accounting program. The paper demonstrates that discipline specialists working in a continuous and collaborative relationship with English language specialists, to integrate and assess communication skills and enrich the curriculum, leads to better outcomes for students and staff. The paper contributes to a growing literature on approaches that integrate particular graduate attributes into programs with diverse student populations, rather than bolt-on interventions by language specialists that have limited outcomes.

- **Hertzberg, J. (2012). *Unlikely Partnerships: Engineers and Fine Arts Students*. Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning. Accessed May 25, 2012: <http://www.cirtl.net/index.php?q=lttda/collection/case/hertzberg>**

Hertzberg teaches a course on flow visualization that brings together fine arts photography students with engineering students to capture images of fluid mechanics on film. From this unlikely partnership of artists and engineers, the most significant learning outcome from the course is a shift in students' perception of the world. One of the goals of engineering education is to help students see the world as engineers. This course, because of its emphasis on visually capturing and recording science in action, effectively accomplishes this task. For engineers, it also builds their capacity to "use creativity for the sake of creativity and beauty," which she believes makes them better, more well-rounded engineers. For the art students, Hertzberg finds that the course helps them perceive science in the world.

- **Kirkpatrick, S. (2010). Teaching the material and teaching the students: Reflections on introductory courses for non-majors. *Teaching Theology & Religion*, 13(2), 125-136.**

Teaching a required introductory Bible course to non-majors at a church-related college presents a number of pedagogical challenges. The author reflects on authority understood as a developmental issue, an educational issue, and a religious issue. In each case, the author seeks to use his discipline and the primary and secondary materials of the course as occasions for the development of capacities that will contribute to the life of students as critical thinkers, creative problem-solvers, and responsible global citizens.

- **LaGuardia, C., Williams, H., Oka, C., & Zald, A. (2003). Teaching across the divides in the library classroom. *Managing Library Instruction Programs in Academic Libraries* (Nims, J.K., & Owens, E., eds.). Ann Arbor, MI: Pierian Press.**

Changes in pedagogy, technology, and resources have forced tremendous change in library instruction over the past few years. One educational factor has changed even more than learning theory or the technology we use to apply and explore it: the characteristics of our user populations. Increasing diversity in students' age, ethnicity, and academic preparation, added to the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of academic curricula, makes it vital for us to question our assumptions about who and what we are teaching in libraries, and how we are teaching it. Today's students have a wide spectrum of backgrounds and library experiences, ranging from novice to expert, from first-year to returning adult, from non-native English speaker to under-represented ethnic group. This paper discusses recent statistics, and experiences at Harvard University, Northeastern University, and the University of Washington libraries.

- **Rutledge, M. L. (2008). Effectiveness of elements of a diversified instructional approach in an introductory biology course. *Bioscene: Journal of College Biology Teaching*, 34(1), 24-29.**

Students enrolled in a large-lecture, non-majors biology course employing a diversified instructional approach featuring instructor-centered and student-centered techniques. Students indicated that the instructor-centered approach was more effective than student-centered instruction in fostering knowledge of biological content and of the nature of science, making the course meaningful, and promoting interest in biology as a discipline. Student-centered instruction was perceived to be more effective in engaging students in the learning process, helping students construct their knowledge, and making the course interesting. Students indicated they preferred a diversified instructional approach, noting that the varied instructional environment helped to keep the classroom atmosphere engaging.

- **Yang, M. (2009). Making interdisciplinary subjects relevant to students: An interdisciplinary approach. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 14(6), 597-606.**

This paper examines issues relating to the design/redesign of the pedagogy of interdisciplinary undergraduate subjects. Examples include: (a) law subjects for students in Business Management or Building and Surveying; (b) "English Communication for Business" for students in English; and (c) "Information technology in Business" for students in Business. Interdisciplinary subjects often frustrate teachers because of their marginal status within the programme, low student interest and difficulty of creating a balance between the subject's double facets (e.g. the balance between the business and language facets in the above-mentioned Subject b). The concepts of interdisciplinary and disciplinary culture and their pedagogical implications are explored. Theories about outcome-based approaches and constructive alignment for designing curriculum and pedagogical design for undergraduate courses are then discussed and their implications for implementing the interdisciplinary approach are examined.

Links

- **Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning**
 - Learning-through-Diversity Action Collection: <http://www.cirtl.net/ltda/collection>
 - Developmental Framework: <http://www.cirtl.net/files/LtDframework.pdf>
- **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Resource Hub:** <http://diversity.ubc.ca/>