Designing an Integrative Assignment

1. Start by working individually, setting your syllabi aside at first. What do you most want students to learn from your course (or discipline)? Write each outcome on a separate sticky note. Then, prioritize. First, identify what are the most enduring understandings you want students to gain from your course; second, determine what is important for them to know and be able to do; and third, determine what is simply worth their being familiar with.

2. Next, share your goals with your learning community team and lay out your sticky notes on a table. Try to form groupings of similarly-themed outcomes.

3. What is the public issue or question? How will students apply what they are learning to actual problems or questions in the world? Working together, arrange and rearrange your notes, drawing out key ideas and meaningful connections. Using this material, identify one or more provocative questions, or overriding theme(s), that might engage students’ interest and help focus the inquiry and learning in your learning community. Be sure to select someone to take notes.

Here are a few examples:

- How do photography, television, film and video affect how we feel and act?
- How might we minimize the impact of corporate greed and fraud?
- What does it mean to be an American in our highly diverse and multicultural society?
- Whose responsibility is the cleanup of toxic waste?

4. Based on the questions and activities you have developed, now create ideas for an integrative assignment
   a. What are students being asked to integrate from each course? (What specific "big ideas," key practices, or intellectual traits are being brought together for this assignment?)
   b. What will each teacher do within their own course to help students develop the idea, practice, or intellectual trait they identified as important? What will be done to reinforce students’ learning of what the other teachers identified?
   c. What co-curricular resources can you use?
   d. How might you invite students to reflect on their work?

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