

**Sixth Annual  
Curriculum Development Retreat**

**April 26-27, 2013  
Kellogg West - Pomona, CA**

**An Overview of Disciplinary  
Understanding:  
A path toward interdisciplinary integration**

**Presentation by  
Kimberly Rosenfeld  
Cerritos College**

# Why Start with Disciplinary Understanding?

- Good integrative assignments proceed from a deep and clearly articulated understanding of the **disciplines** involved
- Good integrative assignments integrate knowledge, skill or modes of thinking from two or more disciplines.
- Assignments should have a clear **purpose** that (1) addresses a relevant public problem or current issue and (2) benefits from disciplinary insights
- This is done to solve problems, create products, or offer explanations for the world around us in ways that would not have been possible through single disciplinary means (from Boix-Mansilla & Gardner, 2001).

# Dimensions of Disciplinary Understanding



**PURPOSES**

**METHODS**

**KNOWLEDGE**

**FORMS**

Source: Veronica Boix-Mansilla

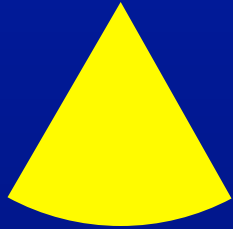
# Purposes of a Discipline



## PURPOSES

What are the possible uses of this kind of disciplinary (not course) knowledge?

# Purposes of a Discipline



## PURPOSES

- History
  - *Identify continuity and change over time*
  - *Define and justify the nation*
- Communication
  - *Look at and understand messages and perspectives*
  - *Train students to synthesize information, recognize perspectives, and present convincing arguments*

# Methods Used by a Discipline



## METHODS

How does one build and validate knowledge in this discipline?

In other words, what are the various **processes** the discipline *uses to build knowledge*.

# Methods Used by a Discipline



## METHODS

- History
  - *Analyze documentary evidence from multiple perspectives*
  - *Construct narratives to explain cause and effect*
- Communication
  - *Qualitative: ethnography, interviews, analyses of texts and recorded speech acts*
  - *Quantitative: questionnaires, surveys*



# Knowledge Produced by a Discipline



## KNOWLEDGE

What do we know as a result of the work of this discipline?

In other words, identify **the end result** such as concepts; accepted findings; corrected misconceptions

# Knowledge Produced by a Discipline

**KNOWLEDGE**



## ➤ History

- *Conflict over slavery led to the Civil War*
- *Paid labor and increased control over reproduction caused women to demand equal rights*

## ➤ Communication

- *Everything is symbolic; meaning is separate from the symbol*
- *Meaning manifests through acts*
- *Perception plays a role in how we understand and produce messages*

# Forms Deployed by a Discipline



**FORMS**

How is the insight of the discipline typically communicated to the world?

For the arts, what are the forms and genres of the art?

# Forms Deployed by a Discipline



## FORMS

### ➤ History

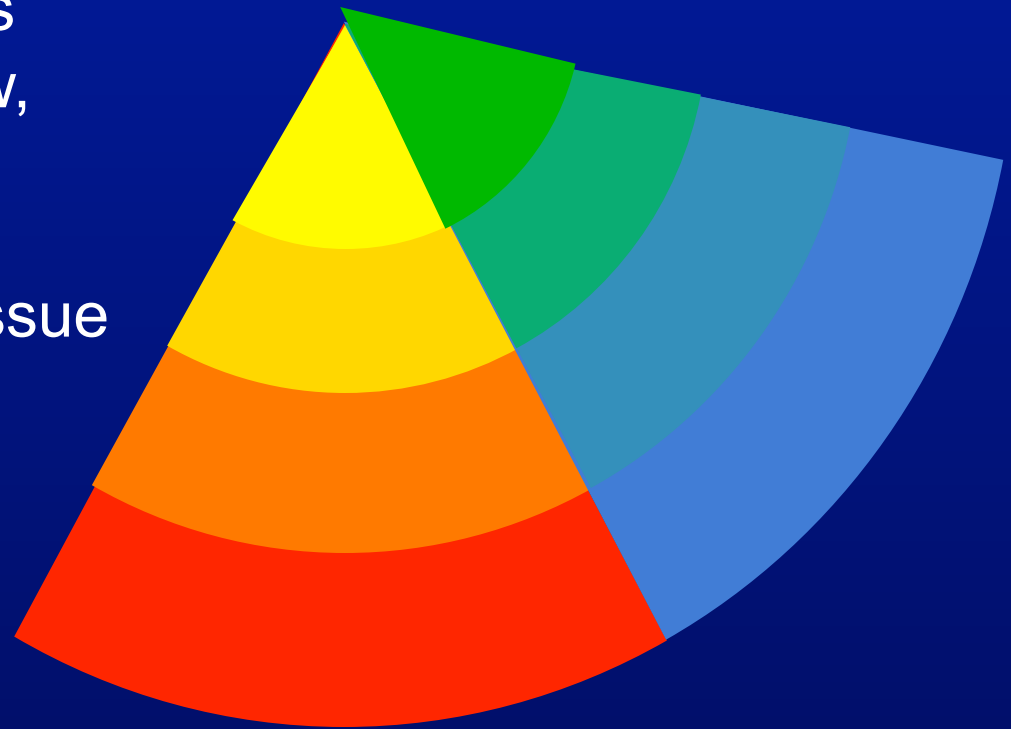
- *Monographs, journal articles, conference papers*
- *Archives*
- *Documentary films*
- *Museum displays*

### ➤ Communication

- *Oral performances (literary interpretation, debate, etc.)*
- *Consulting, training, coaching, facilitation*
- *Monographs, journal articles, conference papers*

# Integration

Individuals bring insights from different disciplines together to produce new, deeper, broader, more nuanced or effective comprehension of the issue examined.



Source: Veronica Boix-Mansilla