
WASHINGTON CENTER

V O L U M E T H R E E N U M B E R O N E

Director's Letter

As we begin the fourth year of the Washington Center's work, this issue of the NEWS offers an overview of two important aspects of our effort to improve undergraduate education in Washington. We take a more detailed look at the rationale underlying learning communities and collaborative learning, and we report on some of the projects funded by the Washington Center's seed grant program.

Learning community programs are now underway on eighteen different campuses in Washington state. Although the specific curricular models and subject matter emphases vary from school to school, all the learning communities have been built around common interests in student involvement, faculty development, and curriculum coherence. In this issue of the NEWS, Jean MacGregor's article on "Learning Community Models" presents an overview of these curricular design approaches, and outlines

Though the three of us had not co-taught before, we were dedicated enough to the common theme, and open-minded enough to have our idols besmirched in a good-humored way.

Denny Konshak
Yakima Valley Community College

the educational needs and concerns that learning communities can address.

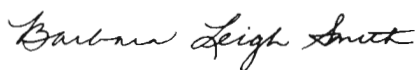
The Washington Center's conferences this year will focus on "Collaborative Learning" in the fall, and "Involvement in Learning" in the spring. We see our large annual conferences as an opportunity for presenting our theory base, as well as providing useful information about practice and applications. Our

presenters are generally a mix of educational leaders drawn both from Washington state and around the nation. The Washington Center will also continue its tradition of offering small, modest working seminars and conferences specifically tailored to the interests of faculty teaching in collaborative learning community programs.

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And, we will continue to provide "kibitzers," our home-grown term for informal helpers and consultants, to travel between our institutions offering technical assistance or feedback on issues related to teaching or curriculum planning.

The past three years have been stimulating ones for us in the expanding Washington Center community. The faculty members and administrators who have become active in this consortium effort continue to inspire us with their talent, their enthusiasm, and their commitment to learn from one another.



Barbara Leigh Smith

What's Happening: Learning Community Programs and Faculty Exchanges at Participating Institutions

Bellevue Community College is offering a coordinated studies program for developmental students Fall Quarter called "Quests: The Search for Knowledge in Different Cultures" The program will be taught by Sharon Felton (multicultural services), Jerrie Kennedy (English), Linda Leeds (English), and Ronna Randall (anthropology).

Centralia College will be presenting a clustered set of courses along the lines of a federated learning community during each quarter this year; this effort is supported through one of the Washington Center's seed grants. The Fall offering is titled "Allied Health Science Foundations," linking work in biology, study skills, English and math with Lynette Rushton (biology), Blake English (study skills), and Randy Johnson (writing).

Eastern Washington University is offering its second year of freshmen interest groups, or "FIGs." The program will be enlarged from one to three thirty-person groups and enhanced by a wide range of projects and activities to foster curricular integration. The three Freshman Interest Groups will also coordinate with Eastern's on-going "Gender Balancing Project," an effort to integrate women's perspectives into course offerings. This is another effort supported by the Washington Center's seed grant program.

The Freshman Interest Group faculty are literature/biology/sociology with Paulette Scott, Heather McKean and Jeffers Chertok respectively; economics/physics/art with Lisa

Brown, Robert Gibbs, and Tom Pitts; and geography/humanities/history with Jois Child, Grant Smith, and Bill Young.

How effective are Freshman Interest Group's? Eastern reports that the students in the FIG program last year did better academically, stayed in school in larger numbers, and registered higher levels of satisfaction than their non-FIG counterparts.

Edmonds Community College is gearing up for a Winter Quarter coordinated studies offering, "The Right Stuff," which will focus on American values.

Everett Community College is initiating a major expansion of its "Women on the Move toward a Four-Year Degree" program. This re-entry program for adult women reflects a partnership between student services staff and faculty to offer a year-long set of clustered courses. The planning/teaching team includes Joan Tucker (Director of Women's Programs), Laura Hedges (Women's Center Manager), English instructors Kristi Francis, Marcia Mixdorf, and Anne Jackets, counselors Julie Buchholz and Wadiyah Nelson, Joyce Mansfield (mathematics), Sally Van Niel (environmental studies), Connie Veldink (sociology), and Richard Brigham (psychology). Everett is also launching its first coordinated studies program, "Ourselves Among Others," with faculty members Lolly Smith (English), Darlene Fitzpatrick (anthropology) and reference librarian Ann Masnik.

Green River Community College continues to develop learning community programs after a successful first year in 1987-88. This past summer Green River offered a coordinated studies program, "Apocalypse Now: Moral Dilemmas of the Twentieth Century" for academically-talented high school students. Green River faculty members Trish Barney (humanities), Ed Eaton (journalism), and Jim Craven (economics) joined three public school teachers Susan Jio (social science, Auburn High School), Mark Casey (humanities, Kentwood High School), and Bob Rogland (science, Puyallup High School) to teach the program.

This quarter Green River is initi-

ating its first federated learning community model program. Ted Smith (sociology) will join Ron Smith (music) and Vic Aquino (English). An interesting feature of the program will be inclusion of a 1-credit outdoor challenge course at the beginning of the quarter taught by Chris Miller and Larry Turnball (physical education). All students and faculty will participate in the Green River "ropes course," which stresses team-building, trust-building, and developing self confidence.

Additional plans for learning communities at Green River include linked courses in abnormal psychology and sociology of deviance taught by Ted Smith (sociology) and Carsh

Wiltner (psychology); linked courses around a problem-solving theme with Bob Filson (geology) and Marv Nelson (physics); and modifying and repeating the successful "Technology, Culture and Environment" coordinated studies program taught by Richard Garrick (environmental science), Crisca Bierwert (anthropology) and Bruce Haulman (American studies). Finally, Green River faculty member Ted Smith is working with Nancy Finley (psychology) at Seattle Central to plan a coordinated studies program that can be offered at each institution.

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Members of the Everett Community College "Women on the Move" planning team (from left, Kristi Francis, Julie Buchholz and Wadiyah Nelson) confer with kibitzer and Evergreen faculty member Sandie Nisbet. Photo: Margaret Colerick, Evergreen.



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Lower Columbia College is beginning a second year of their Integrated Studies Program, with a Fall Quarter program titled "Biology and Nature" taught by Carl Roush (biology) and Joe Green (English).

North Seattle Community College's coordinated studies program this fall is "Revolutions and Reactions: Ideas and Individuals in Times of Change." This exploration of the French and Industrial Revolutions is being taught by Elroy Christianson (art), Jim Harnish (history and philosophy), and Elaine Travenick (English). North Seattle Community College is also planning new learning community efforts in two vocational areas (business and early childhood education) and in developmental education.

Seattle University will offer a special ten-week non-credit (but required) orientation to university life. Learning specialist Dick Johnson will coordinate this program, called "Learning Landscapes." Seattle U. students played a crucial role in designing this program with faculty and student services staff. Second-year students will also play a central role in leading the program.

Seattle Central Community College is offering six learning community programs this quarter. An accelerated pre-college math and English program will be taught by Valerie Bystrom (English) and Bobby Righi (math). Caryn Cline (basic studies), Gilda Sheppard (sociology), Carl Waluconis (English) will be joined by **Evergreen** exchange faculty member Llyn De Danaan (anthropology) to teach an 18-credit program titled "The Televised Mind: History and Values." We hear the teachers are kicking off the program with a televised introduction of themselves!

This past year Seattle Central piloted several learning community programs in new divisions. Several of these will be repeated in the 1988-89



North Seattle's Fall Quarter learning community team (Elroy Christianson, Elaine Travenick and Jim Harnish) churn out their "Revolution and Reactions" syllabus at the Curriculum Planning Retreat. Photo: Margaret Colerick, Evergreen.

academic year, but with different faculty members cycling into them. Basic studies faculty members Andre Loh and Verna Penland will offer "Coordinated Studies for Transitional Level 1" for ESL students. "Cross Cultural Perspectives in American History" is another basic studies offering with instructors Rochelle Dela Cruz, Tracy Lai, and Lynn Sharpe. In the business area, "Business, Society and the Individual" will be offered by business faculty members Liz MacLennan and Steve Soderland and English instructor Minnie Collins. Finally, "The Health Connection: Learning for Success" will be offered by faculty members Meri Sinnitt (allied health) and Cheryl Morse (humanities) for students in the allied health area.

Shoreline Community College will continue to offer its successful "combined class program" which links two classes together. Five sets of "English 101 PLUS" combined classes are being offered Fall Quarter: geology and English with Richard Conway and Dennis Peters; home arts and English with Venus Deming and Alex Maxwell; business and English with Sharon Benson and Louise Douglas; history and English with Lloyd Keith and Amy Mates; and geography and English with Howard Vogel and Beldon Durtschi.

Spokane Falls Community College is offering a Fall coordinated studies program, "The American Character: The Beginnings" with Tom McLuen (history), Steve Reames (literature), and Ed Reynolds (English). Two kibitzers at Spokane Falls will drop in periodically to observe the program and get tips to prepare for Winter quarter when they teach in coordinated studies. The Fall Quarter's kibitzers are Dexter Amend (psychology) and Sharon Wilkins (art).

Tacoma Community College will initiate a full year of learning community programs on its main campus this year. Fall Quarter's coordinated study is "Modern Times" with English faculty Paul Clee and Richard Wakefield, and philosophy faculty member John Kinerk. The program will explore themes in 20th century art, philosophy and literature.

Supported with a grant from the **League for the Humanities**, TCC is planning 10-credit learning communities for part-time students. **Evergreen** faculty member Lucia Harrison is acting as the project coordinator for this inter-institutional effort. The Winter Quarter program will explore themes of "Success, Heroes and Heroines," linking composition, literature and myth. Faculty will be humanities faculty members Violetta Clee and Richard Wakefield. The Spring program is still being developed, but will include the fields of literature, film, and drama with Marlene Bosanko and Charles Cline. Humanities Division Chair Gael Tower is the overall coordinator of the League for the Humanities project, which is funding similar curriculum reform efforts at twelve schools around the nation.

Tacoma will also begin the third year of the successful BRIDGE program it co-teaches with **Evergreen** on the Evergreen-Tacoma campus. For the '88-89 academic year Evergreen faculty member Richard Brian (math-

science) will join TCC faculty member Jerry Schulenbarger (psychology) to teach this year-long program for older adult students. Rita Phipps (North Seattle Community College) and Sally Riewald (Evergreen) will assist with the writing instruction for this program.

The University of Washington will expand its Freshman Interest Group program with ten Fall clusters of three courses in a wide variety of fields. The Fall FIG's include offerings in business, engineering, the sciences, the humanities, pre-law, foreign languages, the social sciences and humanities, and the arts. Claire Sullivan is the coordinator of UW's Freshman Interest Group program, under the leadership of Fred Campbell, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education. The University's Center for Instructional Development and Research conducted a modest but very fine evaluation of last Fall's Freshman Interest Group effort. "Assessing Learning Communities: The University of Washington FIGs Experience," by Donald Wulff presents a good overview of the research effort. You can obtain a copy by contacting Don at CIDR, 206-543-6588.

The Evergreen State College will be enriched by the presence of a number of exchange faculty this year. Astrida Onat (anthropology, Seattle Central Community College) joins Evergreen faculty members Rob Cole (physics), Janet Ott (biology), and Ryo Imamura (psychology) in the "Human Health and Behavior" program. This program will have the company of other visiting faculty during Winter and Spring Quarters. They include anthropologist David Jurji (anthropology, Bellevue Community College), Jan Kido (speech communications, University of Hawaii-Hilo) and Jan Ray (mathematics, Seattle Central). In Fall Quarter Ratna Roy (dance instructor at South Seattle Community

College) will join Bud Johansen, musician Ingram Marshall, and new Evergreen faculty member Rose Jang (theatre) in the "Interaction in the Performing Arts" program. Stephanie Kozick from Western Washington University's School of Education will journey to Evergreen on a long-term assignment in the joint Teacher Education program as Western faculty member Sy Schwartz returns to Bellingham. Political scientist Eileen Lynch (from Brookhaven Community College in Dallas, Texas) will spend Fall and Winter Quarter at Evergreen teaching in the "War" program with Mark Papworth and Gil Salcedo. Eileen is planning to learn enough of the in's and out's of teaching in coordinated studies to take the model back to Texas. A Burlington Northern Foundation grant to the Washington Center has provided critical support for these exchanges, by supporting the costs of housing relocation.

Whatcom Community College faculty members Sue Webber, Alan Richardson and Sarah Julin have been team-teaching during the past two years with Fairhaven College faculty at **Western Washington University**, and Julin has also spent a year on the Evergreen campus teaching in the physics/chemistry "Matter and Motion" program. This is leading to some further discussion of learning community models through a series of faculty seminars at Whatcom.

Yakima Valley Community College will offer two different sets of linked courses Fall Quarter with Mildred Stenhjem (Speech) and Bernal Baca (ethnic studies) heading up one team and Judy Moore (biology) and Dee Tadlock (learning skills) the other.



Robert McKim, Stanford University

Spring Presentations and Seminars

“Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines” was the Washington Center’s major conference in Seattle this spring. The keynoter was Elaine Maimon (formerly the associate dean at Brown University, and now dean at Queens College in New York), noted for her pioneering work in writing and thinking across the disciplines. John Beam (Director of the Writing Program at Seattle University) led off the conference with an interactive session: participants were asked to share their views of critical thinking and its implications for effective college teaching.

The conference workshops took a broad view of approaches to the teaching of thinking, and were a mix of theory and applications sessions. Presenters included Robert McKim (Stanford University) with a workshop on “Visual Thinking;” Bob Young (University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley) on “Problem Solving;” Edward Morante (New Jersey State Department of Higher Education) on New Jersey’s assessment effort and its plans to develop a statewide thinking skills test. Rita Phipps (North Seattle Community College) presented a research seminar on “What We Know and Don’t Know about Cognitive Development;” and Evergreen Provost Patrick Hill offered his latest thinking on “Interdisciplinary Critical Thinking;” Don Finkel (Evergreen) led a workshop on his method of designing small group tasks that build thinking skills. An exploration of Native American perspectives on cognition was offered by Terry Tafoya (Evergreen).

Leading a session on the teaching of ethics were Seattle University’s Governor’s School faculty dean Anne

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MacGregor

Design and Implementation of Four Learning Community Models

by Jean MacGregor

For the past three years, a central mission of the Washington Center has involved developing learning communities as a way of restructuring the curriculum and the teaching environment to improve learning. This brief overview develops the rationale for learning communities and describes four of the models commonly used in Washington and other parts of the United States.

Why Learning Communities?

“Learning community” is a broad term for any one of a variety of approaches which horizontally link together several existing courses—or actually restructure the curricular material entirely—so that students have opportunities for increased depth and integration of the material they are learning, and more interaction with one another and their teachers as fellow participants in the learning enterprise.

Those of us involved in learning community work in Washington State—students, faculty and administrators at about 19 institutions now—are convinced that learning communities present many compelling and exciting answers, all at once, to many of the challenges which confront undergraduate education today:*

* These points are drawn in part from Evergreen Provost Patrick Hill's October, 1985, speech, “The Rationale for Learning Communities,” a transcript of which is available from the Washington Center.

1. The need for students to be engaged in more active learning, and to have greater intellectual interaction with one another and with their faculty: Learning communities restructure the time and space so that students are engaged in active and interactive learning processes around over-arching themes and important questions.

2. The need for faculty to have greater intellectual interaction with one another: Many learning community structures invite faculty from diverse disciplines to collaborate on creating curricular offerings; several of the model approaches have faculty actually team-teaching in the same classroom.

3. The need for less fragmentation, and greater coherence for students in the general education curriculum: By linking together course work around themes or questions, or related content areas, learning communities provide opportunities for multiple reinforcing foci in a given quarter or semester and students build a sense of connection between ideas and disciplines.

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4. The need for our college curricula to address issues which cross subject matter boundaries: Learning communities can be designed to address issues or ask “the questions of our times” from a variety of disciplinary perspectives—from issues of war and peace, to plagues and AIDS, to bio-ethics, to liberation theology.

5. The need for students to explore and understand diverse perspectives: Learning communities stress interactive and collaborative learning and explicitly ask students to listen and respond with sensitivity to other students’ experiences, perspectives, and ideas.

6. The need to stem the tide of student attrition in our institutions: Learning communities create an engaging, and socially reinforcing learning environment: students build new friendships around the ideas and the team work of these programs. Learning communities can provide a tangible social reason to stay in school; they usually have high retention rates.

7. The need for creative and low-cost approaches to faculty development: Learning communities provide a social structure wherein faculty can collaborate both around intellectual and pedagogical matters. For faculty members, curricular planning and teaching in an interdisciplinary context can provide a deep, extended stretching into new territory that is completely unlike more typical involvements in discipline- or profession-based associations, or brief faculty development presentations.

8. The need to address all of the above problems in times of fixed or shrinking budgets: Learning community models can generally be carried out at little or no additional cost.

We are convinced that learning communities present many compelling and exciting answers, all at once, to many of the challenges which confront undergraduate education today.

Jean MacGregor
The Evergreen State College

Learning Community Models

Most of the learning community models with which we are involved in Washington state share the features listed above, but at each institution where a learning community program has been launched, the actual model and the way it is carried out is slightly different. Each model has been developed and tailored to institutional and faculty members’ needs, interests and resources; this is crucial to their success and long-term sustainability. Nonetheless, the four major approaches described here present a range of generic approaches, a learning community typology with which curriculum planners can invent their own institution-specific applications.

Course-Linking Models

The simplest form of learning community simply involves pairing two courses, and listing them so that students co-register for them. The two faculty of the linked courses still teach individually, but they may coordinate syllabi and/or assignments. A pioneer in linked courses has been the University of Washington, with its nationally-recognized Interdisciplinary Writing Program. Students are invited to take their

freshman composition course linked to any one of fifteen general education offerings. The English composition instructors generally work closely with the teacher of the linked course and, at first, may even audit the course. Then the writing in the composition course is designed specifically to develop writing skills in the discourse of art history, psychology, chemistry—whatever the discipline of the linked course is. Usually the students in the smaller composition class are only a portion of the students in the larger linked course, but they become a small community with a sense of identity.

Learning Clusters

Clusters create a larger learning community by linking three or four courses at a time in a given quarter, semester or year. Again, they are scheduled and listed so that students are invited to register for the whole cluster. The faculty still teach the clustered courses as discrete courses, but again, they plan the general emphases of their courses together, and may coordinate assignments or project work. LaGuardia Community College has been a pioneer for this model; it requires all daytime-enrolled



Evergreen's year-long coordinated study, "Human Health and Behavior," was planned and will be jointly taught by this seven member team: left to right, Astrida Onat and Janet Ray (Seattle Central), Jan Kido (Hawaii-Hilo Community College), Janet Ott, Robert Cole, and Ryo Imamura (Evergreen), and David Jurji (Bellevue Community College). The group met as a whole for the first time at the Annual Curriculum Planning Retreat. Photo: Margaret Colerick.

students in its liberal arts A.A. degree program to take English Composition in an 11-credit cluster which includes English 101, Writing the Research Paper, and coursework either in social science or humanities. Here the cluster size is twenty-six students, the ceiling number for the English 101 offering; these twenty-six students travel as a group to all the courses in the cluster. Faculty are committed to planning the cluster offerings collaboratively, and to making explicit to students that building of connections between their courses is essential. Each faculty team involved in clusters meets throughout the quarter to discuss how the learning cluster is proceeding. Learning clusters at LaGuardia have demon-

strated strong rates of beginning-to-end-of-quarter retention—well over 90% for several years now—impressive for an urban community college.

FIGs and Federated Learning Communities

FIGs (Freshman Interest Groups) and FLCs (Federated Learning Communities) also involve linking three courses together, but in these models, the cohort of students travel as a smaller group to larger classes and the faculty are not expected to coordinate their syllabi at all. These two models were invented at, and are appropriate to, large college or university settings. Freshman Interest Groups began at the University of Oregon, and the Federated Learning

Community model was developed at State University of New York-Stony Brook.

The Academic Advising Office at the University of Oregon conceived of Freshman Interest Groups as a vehicle for building social and academic community among freshman students during their first semester at college. The office simply chooses sets of three courses that are typically taken by freshman, sets which have some curricular coherence. During the summer, all incoming freshmen receive an attractive announcement of the fifteen "FIGs" and an invitation to register in any one of

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them. FIGs are built around such themes as pre-law, health sciences, education, American studies, and art and architecture. In addition to attending three courses together, each group of 25 students in a FIG is assigned a peer advisor by the academic advising office. This older student convenes the FIG during the semester. The FIG may use these times together simply for social gatherings, or it may meet to explore issues of student life at the university, or to form study groups. Adaptations of the FIG model are developing at several universities in Washington state.

The Federated Learning Community is a more complex and academically-ambitious model. Invented by Evergreen provost Patrick Hill when he was a philosophy professor at SUNYStony Brook, the FLC links or “federates” courses around an overarching theme. For example, “Social and Ethical Issues in the Life Sciences” at Stony Brook linked a biology course (General Genetics), a history course (The Healer and the Witch in History), and a philosophy course (Philosophy and Medicine). Students register not only for the three federated courses but also for an additional 3-credit discussion seminar. The seminar is led by a Master Learner, a faculty member whose teaching schedule has been completely cleared to join the learning community. She or he becomes a learner with the students in the three federated courses and, in addition, convenes the seminar. As with the FIG model, faculty in the federated courses are not required to coordinate their offerings. It is the Master Learner’s job to assist the students in discovering and exploring the integrative or disparate threads of the three courses. Faculty who have been Master Learners consistently report that it is a highly illuminating experience, not only to be a learner in an undergraduate setting

again, but to engage with students in a very immediate and tangible exploration of how disciplines differ in their assumptions and approaches.

Coordinated Studies

Coordinated studies models offer the most radical restructuring of the curriculum. Here, the learning community—both faculty and students—are engaged full-time in interdisciplinary, active learning around themes. Faculty members generally teach *only* in the coordinated study, and students register for it as a total package, their entire course load for the quarter or semester. This is the model around which the curriculum of The Evergreen State College was developed. Coordinated studies programs are generally *team taught* by three or four faculty members, but offerings at several community colleges in Washington state involve as few as two faculty offering 10-credit coordinated study packages. These programs are diverse in their emphasis: “Matter and Motion” is a year-long program of study in college calculus, chemistry, physics and lab computing; “Science Shakes the Foundations: Dickens, Darwin, Marx and You” is a one-quarter, freshman-level offering in English, physical anthropology, history of science and economics.

The team teaching and generally full-time nature of coordinated studies breaks open the traditional class schedule with infinite possibilities for scheduling longer blocks of time for extended lectures, discussion, field trips, and workshops. This opportunity to restructure the schedule, coupled with the team teaching by the faculty, make possible a powerful climate for active, and interactive, learning. An additional hallmark of coordinated studies programs is the “book seminar,” the extended discussion of primary texts in seminars which are usually held twice a week.

Learning Community Implementation

With the exception of Evergreen, where the curriculum is built totally around these kinds of curricular models, learning communities generally live alongside the college’s regular course offerings. The particular model and the way it is implemented varies from college to college. The beauty of these models truly is their infinite adaptability.

The Washington Center consortium works to build and strengthen learning community work in several ways. It brokers faculty exchanges between institutions with learning communities so that faculty have an opportunity to meet and work with new colleagues at a different institution and to acquire deeper perspectives on learning community approaches. The Center also offers conferences, seminars, retreats and informal helpers or consultants (called “kibitzers”) so that curricular approaches, pedagogical ideas, and implementation strategies can be shared. The Center has also embarked on building a state-wide network to evaluate the outcomes of the learning community efforts.

By design, learning communities stretch students, and shake them out of too comfortable patterns of “doing school.” The same could be said for institutions as well: implementing learning community efforts cannot help but stretch the usual patterns of doing things. As with any educational innovation, building and sustaining learning communities requires leadership and patience, a willingness to take risks and experiment, and perhaps most significantly, a commitment to collaborating across typical organizational boundaries.

Washington Center Conferences 1988-89

Collaborative Learning: Theory and Practice

November 10: Eastern Washington University's Higher Education Center in Spokane

November 11: at the Doubletree Inn at Southcenter, Seattle

Fourth Annual Curriculum Planning Retreat

Weekend of April 28-29

A co-sponsored conference with the Washington Association for Developmental Education

May 4-5

Involvement in Learning

May 18-19 in Seattle



At the Center's Curriculum Planning Retreat, Evergreen president Joe Olander acknowledges the pioneering work of member schools in the Washington Center consortium. Photo: Margaret Colerick.

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Stephens and James Wichterman, dean of faculty at Lakeside School. Anne McCartney (Shoreline Community College) offered a session on how to develop an institution-wide commitment to critical thinking. Faith Gabelnick (Western Michigan State University) led a session on using the work of William Perry in assignment design. Jim Harnish (North Seattle) and Virginia Darney (Evergreen) co-presented a session on "Book Seminars as a Strategy for Developing Thinking Skills."

The Washington Center's **Annual Curriculum Planning Retreat** brought more than 100 faculty and administrators together at Camp Don Bosco to develop curriculum offerings for this year. Terrific food, evening music and an inspirational address by

Evergreen's President Joe Olander embellished the two days of intensive work. Observers were on hand from Hawaii Community College (Hilo) and Miami-Dade Community College in Florida. "Kibitzers" who assisted planning teams included Marcia Barton and Tom Kerns (North Seattle Community College faculty members), Jerry Zimmerman (Lower Columbia College), Barbara Sylvester (Director of Writing at Western Washington University) and Evergreen faculty members Bill Aldridge, Lucia Harrison, Paul Mott, Sandie Nisbet, and Byron Youtz.

Washington Center learning communities were well represented at the national **Student-Centered Learning Conference at Western Washington University** in May. A panel on the Measure of Intellectual Development instrument was presented by Carolyn Brewer (Eastern Washington University), Bill Heid (Western Washington University), Carl Waluconis (Seattle Central Community College) and Jean MacGregor (Washington Center). Jean also led a workshop on Learning Communities. Barbara Smith and Evergreen student Nancy Koppelman together delivered a keynote on



Rita Phipps, North Seattle Community College

Student-Centered Learning; Nancy stole the show! Other learning community-related presentations were made by Jerrie Kennedy and Julianne Seeman (Bellevue Community College), Brinton Sprague (North Seattle Community College) and June Gordon, Bill Heid and Dan Lerner of Fairhaven College at Western Washington University.

1987-88 Seed Grant Projects: A Report

A major thread of the Washington Center's work has been the offering of small seed grants to institutions in the consortium to support work in curriculum and faculty development. The Center is especially interested in boundary-crossing efforts—between both disciplines and institutions. In the 87-88 academic year the Washington Center funded seven seed grant projects. Five of these projects are now completed.

Critical Thinking Work at Shoreline Community College

Shoreline Community College initiated an institution-wide critical thinking program organized around a series of weekly faculty seminars. Thirty-eight faculty from twenty-four disciplines participated during Winter and Spring Quarters. The faculty met weekly for eight weeks in small groups to discuss readings on the thinking process, and to develop guidelines for teaching approaches that encourage students to engage in abstract thinking. Faculty participants had high praise for the program, and observed that it was one of their most engaging experiences in many years. They reported that the program encouraged them to look closely at their teaching approaches. According to Ann McCartney, project coordinator, faculty members reported many modifications to their teaching as a result of the seminars and a renewed sense of commitment and purpose. Because of their strong impact on faculty and, in turn, on an estimated 2500 students, the faculty seminars will be continued at Shoreline this year.



Students at Monroe Reformatory participating in the Antioch University pilot class in social philosophy. Photo: David Lovell, Antioch University

Antioch Courses at the Monroe Reformatory

An Antioch University seed grant supported the development of a pilot upper-division course in social philosophy at the Monroe State Reformatory in Spring 1988. Antioch hopes to develop a bachelor's degree program to build on the lower-division program offered by Edmonds Community College. David Lowell taught the course and found it an "invigorating experience" that he looks forward to repeating. He said that at any moment the class could go right or wrong. "The task was neither to make them behave properly or to sympathize with them, but to discover the truth... Inmates have to tolerate loads of unreal discourse, from each other and, too often, from those exercising authority over them; so I felt a constant pressure to listen closely to what was really being said and to respond without ducking issues: in short, to practice what I preach."

Students reported that the value of the course far exceeded the three credits earned toward a B.A. degree. One inmate commented that the course helped him "find his footing on who he is and where he fits in society." Perhaps the most poignant commentary about the course came from a prisoner who described the difference between the role of student and prisoner and how the course heightened the distinction.

"The two roles, prisoner and student, have a certain amount of exclusivity in them," he remarked. "The prisoner role is one of controlled behavior and environment with a long list of evident and readily-imposed negative sanctions that result in self-limiting thinking and acting. The student role requires something opposite, a need to shift mind sets, throwing open windows and doors in pursuit of what makes sense in an established context and making questions as important as answers. It re-

quires that one grant himself a freedom in one role that subjectively doesn't exist in the other. Academic study is an act of unbinding oneself. Within the two roles of prisoner and student, responsibility and commitment is summed up in doing what is required to maintain a distinction between the two."

University of Washington's Nursing Conference

Anne Loustau at the University of Washington School of Nursing reports that the Washington Center-funded conference in March to bring together faculty from two- and four-year nursing programs schools was a big success. All the nursing programs in Washington were represented and additional nurse educators from Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia came as well.

The conference was held at Shoreline Community College and co-sponsored by Shoreline, the University of Washington and the Washington Center. Eighty-six nurse educators attended the all-day conference on curricular outcomes. The conference featured Verle Waters, a nationally recognized leader in the area of differentiation and articulation of associate degree and baccalaureate degree curricular content, and the certification of competence of graduates of both degrees. Two themes for future conferences emerged around the issues of appropriate utilization of graduates and deeper probing of specific content areas.

Physics Education Work at Green River Community College

Another of the seed grants enabled Green River physics teachers Marvin Nelson and Rebecca Hartzler to develop new approaches to physical science teaching which required a high degree of student involvement. Nelson and Hartzler built on the research of their colleagues at the University of Washington, Smith Col-

lege and Tufts University to design and evaluate specific lab experiences in the areas of kinematics (the study of motion), electricity and optics. This not only involved the development and testing of several laboratory exercises, it required close observations of how students conceptualized a variety of phenomena before and after their learning experiences. Furthermore, they designed and offered a physics course for non-science liberal arts students at Green River, which not only filled to capacity but enjoyed a retention rate above 90%.

"The foremost outcome of this research," report Nelson and Hartzler, "is that students must be active participants in their own learning." A major unexpected discovery, they added, was the impact "a good teaching module can have on both the student and the instructor. This project allowed us to better understand student ideas and difficulties, and enabled the students to see us as

tutors and problem solvers." These two faculty members will be reporting their experiences at both regional and national physics education gatherings in the coming year.

Critical Thinking Program at Yakima Valley Community College

"If I wasn't having so much fun, I wouldn't be working so hard!" commented biology faculty member Eric Mould, in the midst of Yakima Valley's Spring Quarter coordinated studies offering, "The Nature of the Beast." This learning community effort was supported in part through a Washington Center seed grant, enabling YVCC to explore a new type of learning community model in addition to the course-linking "triads" also underway last year.

"The Nature of the Beast" was a 15-credit package, uniting evolutionary theory with English composition and literature, and a new critical

The student role requires something opposite, throwing open windows and doors in pursuit of what makes sense in an established context and making questions as important as answers.

Monroe State Reformatory prisoner

So I felt a pressure to listen closely to what was really being said and to respond without ducking issues: in short, to practice what I preach.

David Lowell
Edmonds Community College

thinking course. Mould teamed with Denny Konshak (English) and Dee Tadlock (learning skills) to design and teach the program. Its common focus revolved around teleology—from a biological, evolutionary stance as well as a humanistic literary stance.

Denny Konshak commented afterwards, "Discovery—about oneself, one's discipline, and one's teaching methodology— became a major motif for the instructors. Though the three of us had not co-taught before, we were dedicated enough to the common theme, and open-minded enough to have our idols besmirched in a good-humored way." The students were largely excited by the program and did fine work, Konshak noted. Even though critical thinking was not formally taught in the program, the class moved on the Watson Glaser

Test of Critical Thinking from the 55th to the 85th percentile by the end of the quarter. Yakima's associate dean Delma Tayer hopes that the successful coordinated study will become a model for assisting other instructors who are searching for effective and innovative methods for teaching critical thinking skills.

Centralia College and Spokane Falls Community College have also been recipients of Washington Center seed grants for development of learning community programs on their respective campuses; we'll be reporting more fully on those in the winter issue of the NEWS.

Seed Grant Awards for 1988-89

The following seed grant projects were funded for the 1988-89 academic year:

Eastern Washington University: \$3000 to support and evaluate the continuing development of Freshmen Interest Groups, a course clustering learning community model. Jeffers Chertok (sociology faculty member) is the project director.

Eastern Washington University: \$3000 for expanding EWU's "gender balancing across the curriculum" effort, which assists faculty in building female perspectives into existing undergraduate courses. Lee Swedberg (Director of Women's Programs) is the project director.

Everett Community College: \$3000 for developing and launching a new "Women on the Move Toward a Four-Year Degree" program. This project is a learning community of clustered courses over a full academic year, specifically targeted for returning adult women. English faculty Marcia Mixdorf and Kristi Francis are the project directors.

Seattle Central Community College: \$3,000 to develop a new core curriculum in the allied health program built around a learning community model. Myrtle Mitchell (associate dean of instruction) is the project director.

Seattle Pacific University: \$800 to support an annual, regional conference to foster interdisciplinary scholarship in European languages and literature and provide an inter-institutional forum for addressing issues common to language faculty members. Thomas Trzyna (Academic Dean) is the project director.

The Evergreen State College:
\$2,585 to support a series of inter-institutional working seminars and a conference on library teaching practices and library pedagogy. Sarah Pederson (Dean of the Library) is the project director.

University of Washington:
\$3000 to support the transfer of a successful department-based writing center model to other departments at the University of Washington. Deborah Hatch (Center for Instructional Development and Research) is the project director.

Washington State University:
\$1,812 to explore and evaluate the intellectual development of students enrolled in a variety of different English composition courses at WSU. Susan McLeod (director of composition) is the project director.

Seed Grant Proposals for the 1989-90 academic year will be reviewed in the spring of 1989. To receive a copy of the proposal guidelines, call the Washington Center, (206) 866-6000, extension 6606, or SCAN 727-6606.

Other Conferences of Interest

Association for General and Liberal Studies

October 13-15

Wilkes College, Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania

Contact: Michael O'Neill, Wilkes College: (717) 824-4651, ext 415.

POD Conference (Professional and Organizational Development Network)

October 13-16

Keystone, Colorado

Contact: Laura Broder, University Learning Center, University of Colorado: (303) 492-5474

Community College Humanities Association: Western Regional Meeting.

November 3-5, Stouffer Madison Hotel, Seattle.

Contact: Jeff Clausen, Green River Community College: (206) 833-1282

The Freshman Year: Western Regional Meeting

January 29-31

Irvine Hilton and Towers, Irvine, California

Contact: The Freshman Year Experiences Conferences, University of South Carolina, Columbia 29208 (803) 777-3799

"4 C's" Conference on College Composition and Communication

March 16-18

Sheraton Hotel, Seattle

Contact: National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801

American Association for Higher Education

April 2-5 in Chicago

Contact: AAHE, One Dupont Circle, Washington D.C. 20036: (202) 293-6440

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The Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education

■ established in 1985 at Evergreen as an inter-institutional consortium devoted to improving undergraduate education. The Center focuses on low-cost, high-yield approaches to educational reform, emphasizing better utilization and sharing of existing resources through inter-institutional collaboration. Established with funding from the Exxon and Ford Foundations, the Center is now supported by the Washington state legislature.

■ includes 36 participating institutions: all of the state's public four-year institutions, 23 community colleges, and seven independent colleges.

■ supports and coordinates inter-institutional faculty exchanges, the development of interdisciplinary "learning community" programs, conferences, seminars and technical assistance on effective approaches to teaching and learning.



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