

1984-1994

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Learning Communities Taking Root

The dissemination of the learning community approach began here in Washington exactly 10 years ago. In the spring of 1984, Seattle Central Community College sent instructors Valerie Bystrom and Jim Baenen to The Evergreen State College for a quarter-long immersion experience in coordinated studies teaching with Evergreen faculty member Thad Curtz. The following fall, they returned to Seattle Central to launch their own team-taught interdisciplinary program. Their teaching team included Evergreen faculty members Susan Aurand and York Wong, who were exchanging places with other Seattle Central instructors teaching with new colleagues at Evergreen. Almost immediately, other campuses in the Seattle area learned of the excitement that this interdisciplinary program was generating, and of the budding faculty-exchange relationship between Evergreen and Seattle Central. A year later, seeing the widening interest in learning communities and the opportunity to foster greater dialogue and collaborative work among Washington colleges, Evergreen created a new public service initiative, the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education.

Continued next page

Participating Institutions: Antioch University, Bellevue Community College, Bellingham Technical College, Big Bend Community College, Central Washington University, Centralia College, City University, Clark College, Columbia Basin College, Eastern Washington University, Edmonds Community College, Everett Community College, Gonzaga University, Grays Harbor College, Green River Community College, Heritage College, Highline Community College, Lower Columbia College, North Seattle Community College, Olympic College, Pacific Lutheran University, Peninsula College, Pierce College, Saint Martin's College, Seattle Central Community College, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle University, Shoreline Community College, Skagit Valley College, South Puget Sound Community College, South Seattle Community College, Spokane Community College, Spokane Falls Community College, Tacoma Community College, The Evergreen State College, University of Puget Sound, University of Washington, Walla Walla Community College, Washington State University, Wenatchee Valley College, Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, Whitworth College, Yakima Valley Community College.

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Taking Root 1984-1994

In the decade since, the learning community approach has spread and has begun to take root. Thirty-four campuses in Washington have offered learning community programs, and about 20 of these colleges have made learning communities an established feature of their undergraduate curriculum. Variation among these programs is the norm. Some learning community offerings are quite similar to Evergreen's ambitious coordinated studies approach, which involves students and a team of faculty in full-time interdisciplinary study. Other programs do not involve team teaching, but enroll students in a program of courses clustered around a common theme, sometimes with an added integrative seminar. Still, all these programs share common intentions: to rearrange the curricular time and space of both students and faculty to foster community, coherence and connections among courses, and more sustained intellectual interaction between students, between students and teachers, and between teachers.

Different Intentions, Different Models

Radiating from Evergreen's coordinated studies model and several course clustering models that sprang up on the eastern seaboard in the late 1970s, learning communities are, today, diverse in design and purpose. Many initiatives are designed for beginning students to provide both a socially and academically engaging experience in the critical first term in college. Others provide thematic clusters of courses for specific cohorts of students, such as the underprepared, second-language speakers, returning women or community college transfers entering junior level university classes. Still others link writing or speech classes to various general education classes in order to teach communication in the context of a discipline. On many campuses, learning communities provide a way to fulfill general education requirements in a rich, interactive setting. Learning communities vary in size, from 10 quarter or 6 semester hours of credit all the way to full-time, year-long programs of integrated study.

Many learning community programs are designed to enhance student success, or provide a challenging, substantive context for the teaching of reading and communication skills. Others pursue these objectives, while at the same time, focussing on larger societal issues, and bringing varying disciplinary perspectives to bear on them. In the past decade learning community programs across Washington have examined poverty, world hunger, AIDS, gender issues, cultural pluralism, the roots of the 1991 Gulf War, environmental problems, and the power and role of mass media. It is often these programs that students (and their teachers) describe as unforgettable, and transformative.

Proliferation

We believe the learning community approach spread rapidly because it swiftly captured the imagination of energetic faculty members, administrators and students. At first, the idea of the learning community, with its connections to course work and connections among people, seemed a powerful and positive counter to the drumbeats of negativity about undergraduate education that were appearing in national reports in the early 1980s. Learning communities couldn't resolve all of undergraduate education's ills, but they might make significant inroads into the problems of fragmented undergraduate curricula, students' lack of involvement and their high attrition rates, and the need for the professoriate to refocus its attention on teaching.

Operatively, learning communities have lived up to their promise. Varieties of course-linking and course-clustering models have begun to remap the territory of isolated departments and lists of general education course requirements, and to help students and faculty see and chart connections among undergraduate course offerings. Both small- and large-scale studies consistently reveal positive student responses to most learning communities. Indeed, all types of learning communities have been found to increase student involvement in both the academic and social activities on campus. Students who enroll in learning communities complete them at high rates, and are more likely to stay in college after their learning community experience. For first-year students, learning community programs are especially effective at enabling students to develop a network of supportive peers within and beyond the classroom. In those programs that explicitly emphasize the examination of ideas from

Continued on page 4

The Washington Center Receives Hesburgh Recognition

The Evergreen State College's Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education won one of the nation's most prestigious awards in higher education February 21 when the Theodore M. Hesburgh Award recipients were announced during the annual American Council on Education conference in Washington, D.C. Judges presented a Certificate of Excellence to the Washington Center in recognition of its cost-effective, comprehensive approach to teaching through learning communities. Barbara Leigh Smith, director of the Washington Center, accepted the award.

Hesburgh awards recognize innovative faculty development programs that enhance undergraduate learning. This is the second year for the awards, named for the widely respected president emeritus of Notre Dame University. The 1994 award was presented to Alverno College for its Faculty as Scholars of Teaching Program, and to Miami University for its Teaching Scholars Program. Five of 13 awards made the last two years have been won by campuses in Washington state — an impressive achievement in view of the fact that colleges and universities in all 50 states are eligible.

"This is a good time to create a national award recognizing outstanding faculty development and a commitment to teaching," comments Barbara Leigh Smith. "A tremendous amount of attention has been focused on the quality of teaching for undergraduates over the past several years, especially for freshmen and sophomores. This is just the second year this award has existed



Washington Center associate director Jean MacGregor and director Barbara Leigh Smith with the Hesburgh Award certificate, and Evergreen President Jane Jervis with the letter of recognition from President Bill Clinton.

and already it has garnered considerable prestige among institutions across the country. People are looking for validation that the quality of their faculty development programs and their commitment to teaching are exceptional."

The Washington Center was recognized for building a consortium of 44 Washington public and private, two- and four-year institutions, by coordinating faculty exchanges, and providing guidance for the development of innovative approaches to curriculum reform and teaching at member schools. Also recognized with Hesburgh Certificates of Excellence this year was the faculty development effort initiated by the consortium of Highline, South Seattle and Skagit Valley Community colleges. Last year, the Hesburgh Award program recognized Heritage College, Seattle University and the University of Washington.

The Hesburgh Awards are sponsored by the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association/College Retirement Equities Fund, based in Bethesda, Maryland. Hesburgh Award winners are featured in a

booklet that provides extensive detail about them. "Sharing your success story with the leaders of colleges and universities should encourage others to dedicate their institutions to helping faculty aspire to teaching excellence," says Diane Oakley, the award program coordinator.

President Bill Clinton also recognized the winners of the Hesburgh awards with personal notes, including one to Evergreen President Jane Jervis. "I am delighted to recognize The Evergreen State College as a winner of TIAA/CREF's 1994 Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for Faculty Development to Enhance Undergraduate Teaching," wrote President Clinton. "America's colleges and universities depend upon our teachers, not only to provide sound academic foundation for our students, but also to develop leadership and instill civic responsibility. I applaud Evergreen's contributions to the field of collegiate instruction, and I hope the success of your program will inspire other institutions to strengthen their emphasis on teaching at the undergraduate level. Best wishes for every future success."

Merely linking up courses or team teaching to an interdisciplinary theme does not ensure an integrated whole — or the creation of a community.

diverse perspectives — generally those that are team-taught — students attain a level of intellectual development typically found in small elite residential colleges. The most thoroughgoing learning community studies to date, conducted by Vincent Tinto and his colleagues at the National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment (and cited in Learning Community Resources on pages 26-27 of this issue of the *NEWS*) indicate that the more thoroughly integrated the learning community model, the more powerful the results in terms of impact on students.

Learning communities have touched teachers as well. For many faculty members, team teaching in an interdisciplinary program or jointly planning syllabi for a linked class has provided the opportunity to invent something new. Many of these teachers came to this work mid-career, and well established in teaching their disciplines, yet bored by the repetitiveness of their courses, and eager for new stimulation and fresh perspectives. Learning community programs have created extended conversations and working partnerships among faculty across disciplinary boundaries. Faculty members repeatedly tell us how exhilarating it is to pursue interdisciplinary ideas with new colleagues, to gain windows on other disciplines, and to gain new perspectives on their own. Team teaching, particularly, creates an arena to embrace new content, and to confront tough teaching issues as well. Reaching students with diverse backgrounds and quite diverse styles of learning; striking a balance between breadth and depth of content; discovering differing perspectives regarding program content and delivery; clarifying how evaluation and grading should work; all these issues and more come up for negotiation as faculty members join together in learning community teaching teams.

Challenges

While these early results are impressive, and interest in learning communities continues to grow, we feel that this reform effort has just gotten started. The learning community idea is simple to conceive of, but actually complex and demanding to carry out. Whether learning communities are in their earliest experimental phase on a campus, or are becoming predictable features of the curriculum, they face continuous challenges.

The challenges of team teaching. Although both students and faculty have been energized by most learning communities, especially those programs that involve team teaching, these results have not been uniform across the board with all learning communities or students. Merely linking up courses or team teaching to an interdisciplinary theme does not ensure an integrated whole — or the creation of a community. While there are no simple formulas, what works in general in undergraduate classrooms also seems to work in learning communities: high degrees of student involvement and active learning, engagement of students in ideas and projects that are personally meaningful, high expectations of student work, and timely and detailed feedback on that work. These programs work when both faculty and students pay attention to both the academic and social connections that the learning community structure invites. They work best when there are explicit efforts at integration and synthesis relative to program themes, and careful attention to building community in terms of inclusion, communication, participation, responsibility and reflection on the part of all learners.

There's no question that such programs require extensive collaborative planning and conscientious work. Colleges committed to team teaching models (and, as well, course clusters that are planned but not taught together) must find ongoing ways to support faculty members in this work. This means making continuous efforts to attract faculty members new to learning communities, building teaching teams so that experience and wisdom are passed along, and encouraging both planning and reflective time so that teams can learn the most from their partnerships.

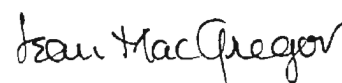
The challenge of situating learning communities relative to the larger curricula of the college. Are learning communities supplementary to prescribed curricula, and do they therefore live alongside it? Or, do learning communities incorporate prescribed courses? Or, do they take the place of sets of courses or prescribed content? Put another way, can required courses or general education outcomes be included in learning community designs? How, then, are these programs described to students? The point here is not that learning community efforts need to become large-scale, or situated in only one arena of the college curriculum. Indeed, many learning community offerings are modest in size but are neither marginal nor ephemeral. No matter what scale they take, healthy learning community efforts must have a clear rationale in terms of their curricular purposes and student clientele, and in terms of the larger curricular landscape of the campus.

A thousand learning community flowers have bloomed, not only in Washington but beyond. However, the challenge now is to sustain and improve what has begun.

The challenge of administrative support. Administratively, learning community structures call for communication and collaboration across many campus units. Deans and division or department chairs, librarians, admissions recruiters, academic advisers, the registrar, designers of the course schedule, schedulers of classroom space, residence life staff, service learning offices — all might be involved at various stages of learning community planning and implementation. To strengthen cross-campus communication about learning communities and share administrative details, many campuses have created learning community steering committees. Additionally, several colleges have given a faculty member a part-time assignment as a learning community coordinator. Whether learning communities are just starting on campuses or long established, these programs are almost always unfamiliar to students and go against the grain of established procedures. Therefore, healthy learning community enrollment depends critically on academic advisers and savvy ways of marshaling appropriate administrative support.

The challenge of assessment. What distinguishes learning communities as an innovation is their great flexibility. They present a structure that teachers can take in myriad directions to engage different student audiences, to examine academic content and issues from a variety of perspectives and to realize diverse educational goals. A thousand learning community flowers have bloomed, not only in Washington but beyond. However, the challenge now is to sustain and improve what has begun. We need to harvest more of the fruits of learning community efforts and continue to disseminate them, while at the same time strive to understand more deeply how to improve our work. Assessment must play a critical role in understanding and improving learning communities.

Just as there is no single learning community model, there is no single approach for meeting these challenges. Each of your campuses is addressing these needs in your own way. We in the Washington Center are uniquely situated to learn from your progress as well as your problems, and to pass the wisdom along. In this issue of the *NEWS*, we feature five exciting learning community efforts in Washington as well as a fairly complete list of print resources on learning communities. We also share some insights and challenges offered by the four “kibitzers” at our February conference on learning communities. These nationally recognized leaders in higher education spent two days looking in on our efforts, and have some important advice for us. Happy reading!



Jean MacGregor
Issue Editor
and Associate Director

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Introducing new Students to College Learning:

North Seattle Community College's Beginnings Program

What does the beginning student need to be successful in college? That is the question faculty members at North Seattle Community College use in shaping curriculum content and skills for a regularly offered, team-taught, 10-credit coordinated studies program called "Beginnings."

Instead of focusing on an introduction to a particular academic discipline, the faculty ask how can

"Because of the nature of the theme, almost any faculty member can meld their expertise or disciplinary perspective into a program."

they introduce students to college-level learning by exploring how different people understand the concept of beginnings. In one quarter this meant exploring the creation stories from peoples of different cultures (Barbara Sproul's *Primal Myths*) and those of modern Western science (Stephen J. Gould's *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle*); the beginnings of religions, reading the Upanishads, Hesiod, and the Hebrew Bible; or the beginnings of ethical systems, reading Confucius, Plato, Sophocles, Griaule's *Conversations with Ogotemeli* (a description of West African Dogon culture).

Because of the nature of the theme, almost any faculty member can meld their expertise or disciplinary perspective into a program. Since the fall of 1990, this theme of beginnings (with different subtitles, such as, An Introduction to Diverse Peoples, or Cultures and Values) has been used by six different faculty teams from such disciplines as English, history, linguistics, business, anthropology, geography, philosophy, Asian studies and women's studies. The teaching teams have ranged in size from two to six, with a faculty-student ratio of about 1:20. Program enrollment (geared to the size of the faculty team) has varied from 60 to 120 students. Students receive credit for two regular five-credit transfer courses such as English Composition 101, and an introduction to philosophy, history or science, depending on the mix of faculty that quarter and the content they choose.

"Each faculty team encourages students to see themselves as beginners in their academic career," reports Jim Harnish, one of the program's founders, "and provides a step-by-step process to help students develop the skills necessary to be successful in college. One quarter that meant beginning with the book *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, to teach students how to read a text and prepare a paper for a seminar. This also helped to develop students'

confidence in their ability to read a whole book and discuss it with others. The next book was the *Odyssey*! Welcome to higher education! Students were not deterred, as evidenced by what one reported: 'This format [reading good books and discussing them in seminars] pushed me to strive for deep intellectual thought I had been under-utilizing prior to the "Beginnings" program.'

By the end of the quarter another student realized, 'I no longer require my subject material to be glossy and attention grabbing. I can maintain my attention on important and complex topics because now seeing the author trying to piece truths together is what keeps me involved.'"

College-level academic skills, such as critical reading, notetaking, writing and discussion skills, which are built directly into the curriculum, aid the mastery of the content in "Beginnings," rather than taking time away from it. For instance, Harnish reports, "After a lecture in the first week, students were asked to exchange lecture notes to learn different methods of notetaking, but in the process, they were reviewing and re-enforcing the lecture material. In preparing for book seminars, students are taught how to discern different levels of information or knowledge, from the purely factual to more complex concepts and finally on to hypotheses. They prepare questions from the readings, lectures and seminars which helps them for both writing essays based on sources and developing test-studying and test-taking abilities. A student said, 'My thinking has become more critical. This is a result of learning what kinds of questions to ask and not take things at face value.'"

Over the past nine years, North Seattle has established a substantial array of different learning community offerings each year, now involving 20 faculty members in teaching teams and about 300 students annually. "Beginnings" has become a regular offering in the curriculum, especially in fall quar-

ter, to attract students new to college learning. For the advising staff it's an obvious choice to suggest for new students, especially returning students who haven't been in school for many years. Students find the transition to college easier because they are not only presented with high college-level expectations but also specific, context-rich ways to develop the academic skills they need to succeed. Not only that, they have a peer group whose members support each other in the process.

For more information about the Beginnings program, contact Jim Harnish, North Seattle Community College, 9600 College Way N., Seattle, WA, 98103; (206)528-3826.



After her experience in the "Beginnings" at North Seattle Community College, returning student Diane Moore (r.) became a leader in a subsequent coordinated studies program. Sharing and critiquing papers with her in a writing workshop are Valerie Kiesel (l.) and Elizabeth Denson. (Photo: David Gronbeck)

"Instead of focusing on an introduction to a particular academic discipline, the faculty ask how can they introduce students to college-level learning by exploring how different people understand the concept of beginnings."

Winter 1993 Reading for "Beginnings"

(listed in the order of reading)

Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*
 Lao-tse, *Tao Te Ching*, Stephen Mitchell (ed.)
 Confucius, *The Sayings of Confucius*, James R. Ware (tr.)
 Tsao Hsuehchin, *Dream of the Red Chamber*
 Marcel Griaule, *Conversations with Ogotemmel*
 The Bible (any edition)
 Homer, *The Iliad* (Robert Fagles' Translation)
 Plato, *The Republic* (Hackett publication)
 Jack Weatherford, *Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World*

Fall 1992 Reading for "Beginnings"

Willis Nutting, *The Free City*
 Barbara Sproul, *Primal Myths: Creation Myths Around the World*
 Stephen J. Gould, *Time's Arrow Time's Cycle*
Buddhist Scripture, Edward Conze (ed.)
 Herman Hesse, *Siddhartha*
 Lao-tse, *Tao Te Ching*, Stephen Mitchell (ed.)
 Confucius, *The Sayings of Confucius*, James R. Ware (tr.)
 The Bible (any edition)
 Homer, *The Odyssey*, W. H. D. Rouse (tr.)
 Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*
 Sophocles, *Three Theban Plays*
 Aristotle, *Selections*

“Teach a Person to Fish”:

Spokane Falls Community College’s Paired Biology and Study Skills Class

At Spokane Falls Community College, Introductory Biology has traditionally been a challenging class for science as well as nonscience majors. Many beginning and returning students are confronting, for the first time, the challenge of having to learn a great deal of technical material at a rapid pace. In response, biology instructor Diane DeFelice and English/reading instructor Jan Swinton have paired Biology 101 with a Study Skills class in two modes. Though the makeup

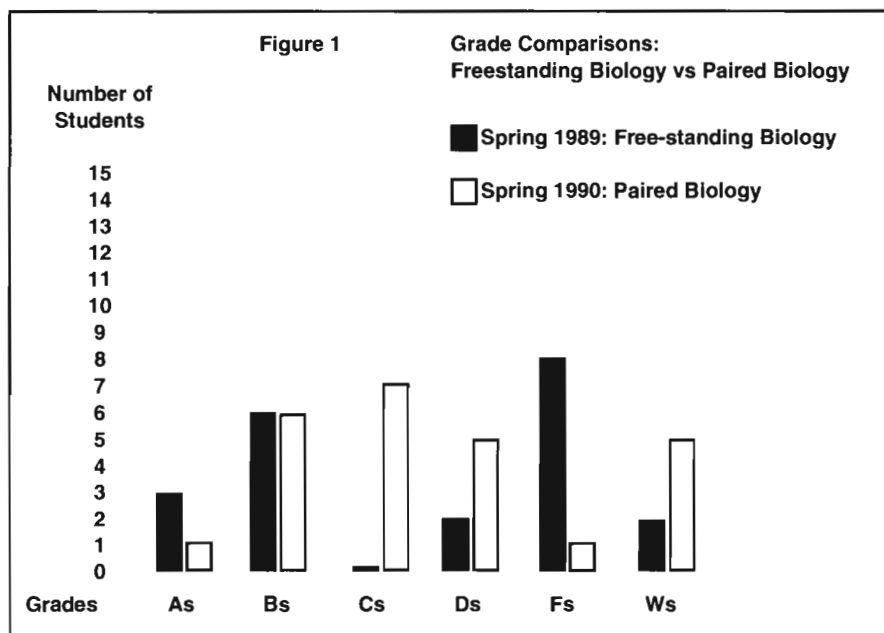
and format of the two differ somewhat, the goals have been the same: to help students learn biology and pass the course with a C or better; to help students learn study strategies that they could use immediately in the biology course as well as in other classes; and to help students develop more personal responsibility for their learning. “I was taking a ‘teach-a-person-to-fish’ approach in this project,” says Jan Swinton. “If we could teach the students HOW to learn the biology, and not just the biology, they could take this approach to other classes. I wanted the students to recognize that learning is their responsibility, no matter how tough the textbook and no matter how complex and fast-moving the lectures are.”

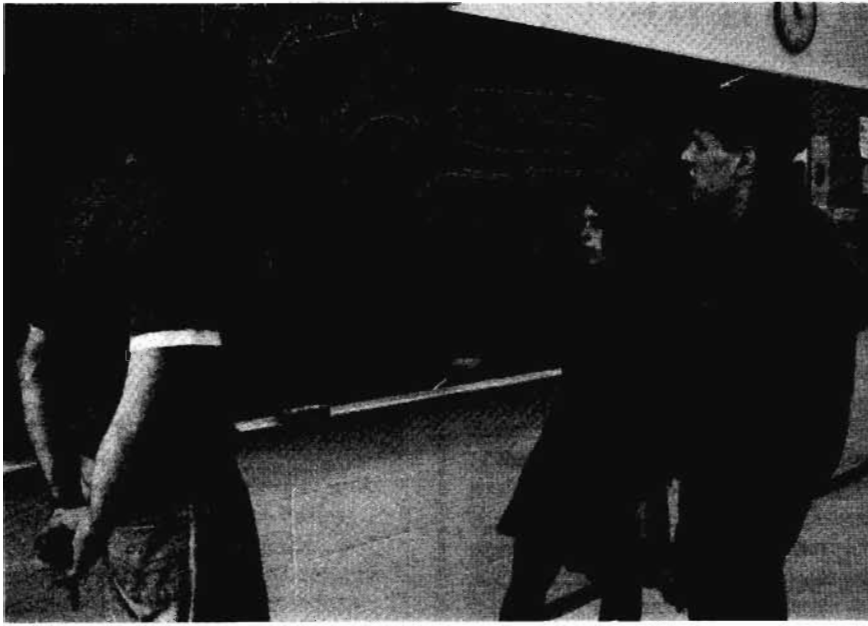
Under the auspices of a seed grant from the Washington Center, DeFelice and Swinton first offered introductory biology and developmental-level study skills as a paired class spring quarter of 1990. This augmented a variety of learning community paired class and coordinated studies programs already being offered at the college. The program had capacity for 25 students and was open only to freshmen

and sophomores who had scored below average on the reading and writing assessment tests. The class met with both instructors present for a two-hour block each day, and there was an additional biology lab component. At the end of the quarter, the students and instructors agreed that the study skills component was rigorous enough to warrant transfer credit, and to be made available to all students, not just ones who had tested at developmental levels. In the fall of 1993, DeFelice and Swinton offered a double section of Biology 101 paired with a five-credit, transfer-level study skills course. Approximately 50 percent of the 40 students were developmental as determined by their Asset placement test scores.

With both paired classes, the students’ final grade distribution differed significantly from the grades of students who had taken regular free-standing sections of Biology 101 from DeFelice in previous quarters. The major difference in the spring 1990 paired class was the reduced number of Ds and Fs compared to a free-standing class (Figure 1). DeFelice comments, “Typically, a significant number of students

“If we could teach the students HOW to learn the biology, and not just the biology, they could take this approach to other classes.”





Biology/Study Skills paired class students at Spokane Falls Community College Jim Goforth, Tanya Schulz and Dan Gwynne compare aerobic and anaerobic respiration. (Photo: Steve Navratil)

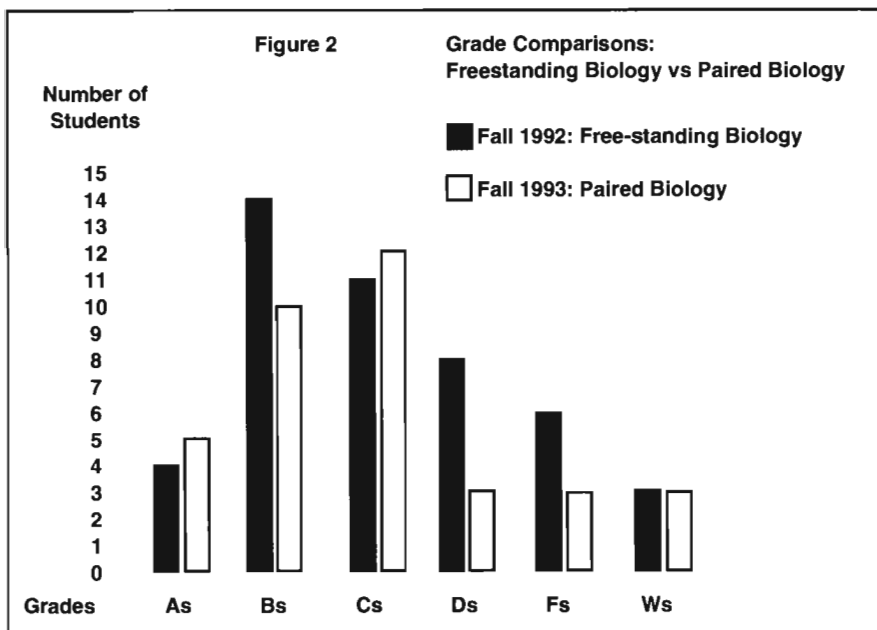
receive As and Bs, a significant number earn Ds and Fs, and only a few are in the middle [Cs]. This creates an inverted curve, which isn't unusual in beginning science classes." The more bell-shaped grade distribution in the first paired class is particularly noteworthy in that all of the students were developmental students. Likewise, fewer students

in the fall 1993 paired classes received Ds and Fs than students in a regular free-standing double section of Biology 101 taught by DeFelice during the fall quarter of 1992 (Figure 2).

Other evidence of learning included the students' lecture and textbook notes, which reflected a variety of study strategies learned

during the quarter: The faculty team observed these notes were more organized, readable and complete than those of students not enrolled in the paired class. While the traditional biology text (Starr and Taggart's *Biology: The Unity and Diversity of Life*) was required, each student created his or her own resource notebook of study strategies, hand-outs and materials relating to time management and test-taking instead of purchasing a "study skills" textbook. Also, students monitored their learning by completing weekly journal assignments on topics such as their study habits and attitudes, learning difficulties and successes. It was enormously rewarding to both instructors, then, to hear Joe, a 40-year-old nursing student who had failed biology the previous quarter, say, "The thing about it is that by using all of these methods and doing the group study, I *know* I learned biology." Practicing new and various study strategies, students were better able to learn biology; likewise, a difficult-to-master content provided students with extra incentive to try new strategies and learn about themselves as learners.

For the faculty members, the rewards were not just the students' success. "Participating in another instructor's class, preferably in a content area foreign to one's own discipline, is one of the most powerful faculty-development activities available to instructors," comments Swinton, who also serves as the faculty development coordinator for Spokane Falls. "I hadn't taken a life science course since my freshman year of high school! Pairing my course with another course forced me to reassess the most critical elements of the study skills curriculum. I found that some study strategies that I usually taught in my study skills course simply weren't efficient or effective for learning biology. What an eye-opener! I'm now convinced that it's far more meaningful to teach (and learn) study skills in the context of a demanding course."



DeFelice concurs. "It's been a wonderful experience to work with Jan. She showed me and the students so many ways of learning biological concepts. I didn't think this was possible, but these approaches work! Also, the two-hour block of time enabled us to do some things I never could have fitted in otherwise. In Biology 101 we mostly emphasize cellular biology (genetics and reproductive biology) but don't always have time for other areas of biology, such as ecology, that are very much part of our lives. At the end of the fall 1993 quarter, the students read *The Naturalist in*

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Alaska by Adolf Murie, and then, in groups, researched and reported on various species of animals that live within the wolf's environment. They got to know animals they weren't familiar with, and they got interested and excited. This project gave them a chance to do library research, to integrate information, and to produce something understandable and sometimes entertaining. I have now begun to try out some of these things in my stand-alone biology classes. I'm asking my students to communicate more about what and how they are learning."

For further information (including a 10-minute video of students discussing the merits of taking this pairing), contact Jan Swinton, Spokane Falls Community College, M.S. 3050, W. 3410 Fort George Wright Drive, Spokane, WA, 99204; (509)533-3603.

"Prior to taking the combined course, I had no thought of taking any more science classes than were absolutely required of me to gain an associates degree, and get on to a more palatable field of study. As a returning student, I had a biased view of the sciences, anyone who achieved in them, and anyone who pursued them. I had the distinct notion that the sciences were for a certain breed of people — namely those with extraordinarily high I.Q.s or photographic memories. As a high school student (12 years ago), I was only required to take one science class — and I can say I learned nothing there. While participating in Jan Swinton and Diane DeFelice's class, and through their teaching methods and combined efforts, I not only came to terms with my biases regarding the sciences, I also came to terms with myself. I discovered that I was capable of achieving in the sciences ... biology became fascinating to me, and breaking my old self-image opened up new avenues for me. After completing this combined course, I signed up for more science courses (even more than required!) It was only a matter of time before I decided to change to a major requiring a significant science background: nursing ... I feel so very strongly that what Jan and Diane are trying to accomplish could be revolutionary in terms of teaching the sciences. I owe them much for my experience with them and for cracking a terrible myth for me that I know many others are struggling with."

— Excerpts from a letter from Spokane Falls Community College student Regina Corkery to the Spokane Falls Community College Board of Trustees

Embedding Collaboration in Student Experience:

Skagit Valley College's New General Education Requirements

Five years ago, the faculty and administrators at Skagit Valley College began discussing the college's general education requirements with a view toward reform. They found that recurring themes in the conversation were the commitment of the college to active and collaborative learning, and the desire that students and instructors experience more integration during their college experience. What resulted was an ambitious new general education plan that addresses not only what students learn but also how they learn, that

identifies not only outcomes for general education but some of the processes by which those outcomes might be realized.

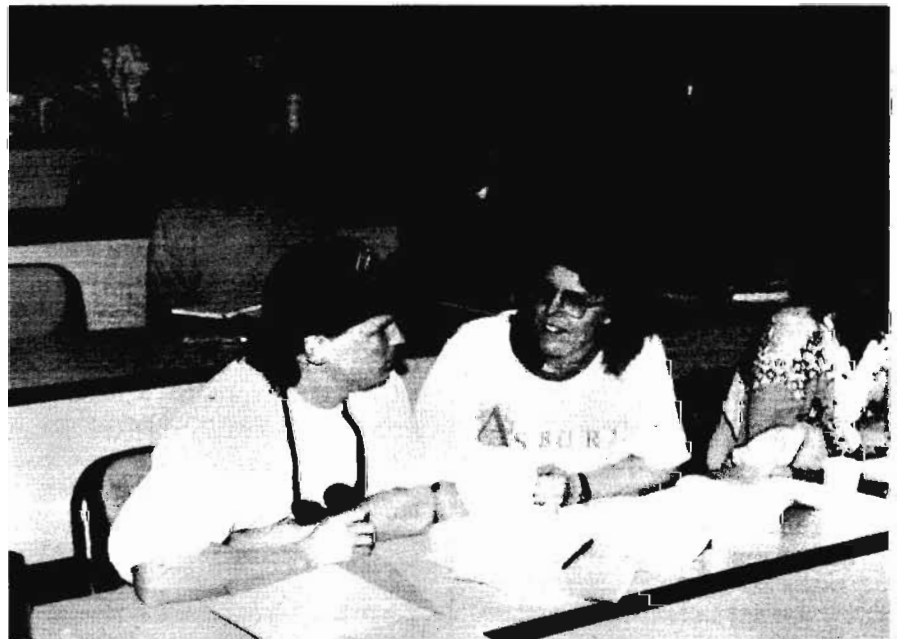
One of the most significant aspects of the new general education program is the degree to which students are required to participate in collaborative learning experiences. Students seeking a college transfer degree must take one course in each of the areas of science, social science and humanities as a learning community with a course from another area. To meet this requirement, students may take two learning communities: a biology/psychology learning community like "Darwin, Freud, and You," for example, and an ethnic studies/art learning community, "Neighbor Nations." Or students can take one learning community that includes perspectives from all three areas: a social psychology/fiction/statistics learning community, for instance, in which the theme is poverty. In addition, Skagit Valley's general

education program also requires writing to be learned in the context of other general education classes. Students will take each of their two transfer English composition courses linked to courses in other disciplines. The extent of this change can be seen in next year's schedule: 31 learning communities and 52 writing linked classes are slated for the 1994-95 school year. These programs will enroll about 2,500 students at a college that serves about 4,000 full-time equivalent students each year.

Out of the implementation of these requirements, both anticipated and unanticipated challenges have emerged. One of the first is limited physical facilities. "Learning communities are scheduled in lecture rooms with immovable furniture because we have only one classroom for a full coordinated studies program [70 students] with both adequate space and movable furniture," reports Trish Barney, chair of language and literature.

Because of the intense planning

"What resulted was an ambitious new general education plan that addresses not only what students learn but also how they learn, that identifies not only outcomes for general education but some of the processes by which those outcomes might be realized."



Immovable furniture notwithstanding, student groups in the learning community, "Prejudice, Poverty, Population, Pollution" at Skagit Valley College discuss social issues in James Welch's novel, *The Death of Jim Loney*. (Photo: Skagit Valley College)

required for team-teaching, workload issues are looming large. Several Skagit Valley faculty members constitute one-person departments, whose usual course offerings must be rearranged or jettisoned if the instructor wants to teach in a 10- or 15-credit learning community. Typical of most community colleges, Skagit Valley employs many faculty on part-time appointments, and there aren't ways to compensate them adequately for the extra meetings and planning time involved in learning community work. In addition, advisers are concerned about student perception of the new requirements.

Yet the most often heard student complaint, "I've never worked so hard," is usually followed by "but I learned to think ... or to value the experiences of others ... or to apply ideas from this course to my life." And faculty members report that students seem now not only to expect active and collaborative experiences in the classroom but also to demonstrate more proficiency in interpersonal communication skills.

Along with students, faculty members are not only experiencing the increase in workload but also the excitement and the distress of challenges to assumptions about the world. "Team teaching has forced me to see not only my discipline but others in a new light," reflects Barney. "As an English teacher teaching with instructors in the social and natural sciences, I have found my understanding of the scientific method expanding and have spent time reflecting both on the value and the limitations of this mode of inquiry."

Psychology instructor Mike Witmer adds, "After 20 years of teaching, I've been rethinking many of my assumptions not only about my discipline but about the ways that we teach and students learn."

Nevertheless, each quarter more Skagit Valley faculty members are becoming involved in the learning community effort. The college has dedicated substantial resources (through professional development funds, the state's assessment allocation, and a federal Title III faculty development grant) to support faculty in their new work, and to assess progress as well. The college's general education committee continues to meet and discuss what's working and what isn't, and to identify next steps. A year-long schedule of learning community offerings was developed this spring so advisers and students can get a complete picture of curricular options. Adviser workshops involve both counselors and faculty who do academic advising.

Brinton Sprague, vice president of educational services, attributes the growing faculty involvement in the learning community effort to the five-year preparation process and the power of collaborative teaching. "The power of learning communities lies in their ability to transform the professional experience of teachers as well as the student's education," Sprague declares. "Learning communities are changing the rules and expectations of the general education — both for teachers and students — from a collection of course requirements to the experience of collaboration, and the sharing of knowledge and experience. And the structure creates further support to help the student succeed."

For more information about the general education requirements and collaborative learning at Skagit Valley College, contact Trish Barney, 2405 College Way, Mount Vernon, WA, 98273; (206)428-1129.

“Faculty members report that students seem now not only to expect active and collaborative experiences in the classroom but also to demonstrate more proficiency in interpersonal communication skills.”

Creating Coherence and Community in the Minor:

Gonzaga University's Ethics and Fiction Linked Class.

In 1991, a core group of faculty established a women's studies program at Gonzaga University, a 5,000-student liberal-arts Jesuit institution in Spokane. From the outset, the faculty group envisioned the Women's Studies program as a learning community. Its design would express this emphasis in every aspect of the program, including its structure of leadership (with co-directors from different disciplines), its sequence of courses and curricular priorities, a pedagogy based on collaborative learning,

“Our ideal vision for Women's Studies is that students will experience cross-discipline conversations, and will begin to see themselves as belonging in these conversations.”

ongoing faculty development and co-curricular dimensions. “The Women's Studies Program depends upon a lively, multidisciplinary conversation within courses in the university core curriculum,” comments one of its co-directors, Rose Mary Volbrecht. “Our ideal vision for Women's Studies is that students will experience cross-discipline conversations, and will begin to see themselves as belonging in these conversations. To that end, we designed a formal learning community, a linked course in Ethics and Fiction, to model with verve and energy the many-faceted dimensions of women's studies. Our goals in this linked course were two-fold: to integrate women's studies scholarship into the core curriculum; and to inspire students to take the 21-credit minor, or “concentration,” in Women's Studies. We were *not* disappointed.”

In spring of 1993, Rose Mary Volbrecht taught Ethics (a 300-level philosophy course) and Mary Jo Bona taught Studies in Fiction (a 200-level English course) as linked courses. A common cohort of students enrolled in both classes. The faculty members taught the classes separately, but planned them collaboratively. “We coordinated syllabi, assignments and topics (see table for selected themes), and actually ended up sitting in on most of each other's classes,” reports Bona. “Through literature and philosophy the course explored the ways in which gender organizes ourselves and our relationships. For example, in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, both male and female characters' development into morally mature adults was inhibited by the limited definitions of masculinity and femininity. Through their shared activities and conversation, the friends in the novel showed one another how to remake their lives — they co-mentored each other.”

“The collaborative pedagogy of this learning community gave students an active role in shaping the classroom dynamic and fostered commitment to mutual, active exploration of course themes both within and outside the classroom. During our intense and lively conversations about such novels as Walker's, our students made a serendipitous discovery: they had become mentors to one another, helping one another to remake their assumptions about learning and gender.”

The faculty team felt that their approach to Ethics and Fiction highlighted the fruitfulness of collaborative learning and the inherently multidisciplinary nature of women's studies. The linked-course format modeled for students this cross-disciplinary dialogue. “Students were liberated from a traditionally passive learning role,” observes Bona. “They joyously took responsibility for their own learning as they integrated both conceptual and affective responses.”

However, Gonzaga's new linked class was not without tensions. The faculty team developed and taught their linked class with no change in an already heavy teaching load. In addition, they experienced the common tension in collaborative learning between the devotion to disciplinary content and the time-intensive demands of the cooperative learning process. “We think this is especially a problem in core-level courses that introduce students to the fundamentals of the discipline,” comments Volbrecht. “One simply cannot cover as much material with collaborative teaching methods where students are asked to deepen their understandings and build connections between ideas. In this linked course, we faced the added demand of integrating the two courses. At midterm we rearranged our syllabi to alleviate the pressures of these multiple demands, and to enable the students to make more direct links between the two courses.”

Looking back a year later, Volbrecht and Bona are looking forward to teaching Ethics and Fiction in the linked-class format again. “Teaching is usually a rather lonely, private experience. Working together on this linked course was stimulating, stretching and affirming. Also, minor concentrations are too often just collections of courses, with no apparent connections, and no conversation between faculty or students. The Ethics and Fiction linked class provides an exciting opportunity — for students and faculty — to foster both the connections, and the conversations.”

For additional information about the linked classes in Ethics and Fiction, contact Mary Jo Bona, (509)328-4220, Ext. 3281, or Rose Mary Volbrecht, (509)328-4220, Ext. 3342 at Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA, 99258-0001.

“Minor concentrations are too often just collections of courses, with no apparent connections, and no conversation between faculty or students.”

Selected Themes from the Studies in Fiction & Ethics Linked Class at Gonzaga University

FICTION	ETHICS
“The Story of an Hour,” Kate Chopin “A Rose for Emily,” William Faulkner “I Stand Here Ironing,” Tillie Olson	Role and status of women
<i>The Great Gatsby</i> , F. Scott Fitzgerald	<i>On Her Own</i> , Ruth Sidel The role of women in the American Dream
“Jasmine,” Bharati Mukherjee	Acquaintance rape
“This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen,” Thadeus Boroski “The Shawl,” Cynthia Ozick	Kantian ethics and autonomy
<i>The Color Purple</i> , Alice Walker	Character ethics Carol Gilligan’s care ethics Friendship/moral development
“The Yellow Wallpaper,” Charlotte Perkins Gilman	Cultural myths: domesticity and beauty
“The Way We Live Now,” Susan Sontag	Homophobia

Professional Preparation for Under-represented Students:

Fairhaven College's Law and Diversity Program at Western Washington University

With support from a three-year grant from the Fund for Improvement in Postsecondary Education, Western Washington University's Fairhaven College has launched a multidisciplinary major designed to facilitate admission of selected students to law school and to enhance their likelihood of success in school, in legal practice and in public life. The two-year learning community program is open to any student who has a self-identified interest in the issues of law, diversity and legal representa-

tion for under-represented groups. The program's students are chosen based on an assessment of the extent to which the program would aid them in accomplishing their goal of work in the legal profession. Minority candidates are actively recruited.

The Law and Diversity Program addresses a pressing national problem. In 1987, a special task force on minorities and justice, created by the Washington state Legislature, found that people of color "have little faith in the legal process and in the court system" and that "the low representation of minorities in the legal profession ... is strikingly apparent to most minorities when they observe our state court system." While whites are over-represented by legal professionals, all other racial groups have fewer lawyers and judges than you might expect for their population size. To be on a par with the majority population, the number of African American lawyers must double, Hispanics triple, and Native Americans increase by four times. In half the counties of Washington State, there appear to be no minority lawyers available.

Without intervention, this gap is likely to increase. The minority population in Washington state has increased at a rate three times greater than the population as a whole over the last decade, with the most significant increases seen in the Asian and Hispanic populations.¹ Additionally, other populations, such as working class whites or gays and lesbians, often find the legal profession unresponsive to their needs. Access to the legal system will become increasingly important for these groups as the demographics of the United States shift away from a white majority to a "minority majority" society. "Ours is a litigious society, and like it or not, lawyers, courts and legal concepts greatly structure and determine how we seek to resolve social conflicts," observes Marie Eaton, director of the project.

Rand Jack, a Fairhaven College faculty member and Bellingham attorney, conceived the Law and Diversity Program and developed it with a learning community structure. By happenstance in the spring of 1991, Jack participated in a workshop

"Access to the legal system will become increasingly important for these diverse groups as the demographics of the United States shift away from a white majority to a 'minority majority' society."



Law and Diversity Program students (left to right) Matt Frank, LaShawn Morgan and Lucia Blanco. (Photo: Western Washington University)

on learning communities during the same week that he heard Washington state Supreme Court Justice Charles Z. Smith decry the lack of representation of minorities in the legal profession. He saw an immediate connection. He knew Fairhaven would be an ideal home for a two-year interdisciplinary pre-law curriculum, and, furthermore, that an approach similar to Patrick Hill's federated learning community² would provide a low-cost vehicle for involving departments outside Fairhaven College. In this model, a cohort of students each quarter takes a constellation of classes chosen for their content relationship. In addition, they enroll in an integrative seminar in which they pull together and compare the major themes of the quarter, discuss issues in greater depth, practice learning skills and provide support. For example, fall quarter 1993 included the courses American Government, the American Legal System, and Politics of Inequality, with the integrative seminar emphasizing

“The integrative seminar each quarter has provided a place for students to reinforce their relationships as a cohort, to discuss the conceptual relationships between all their course work, and to work on skill development.”

writing skills. This spring quarter, they are enrolled in Constitutional Law — Individual Rights, Federal Indian Law and Policy and an advanced writing integrative seminar. In addition, they are involved in an intensive LSAT Course, preparing to take the June LSAT. One quarter during the second year will be devoted to experience within legal institutions. In addition to their course work, each student visits bar association meetings, law schools, continuing legal education seminars and courts, and participates in other professional activities.

A pilot group of 15 students graduated from the program last spring. Sixteen students entered the program in fall 1993; they have now all successfully completed two of the total six quarters. They are diverse. There is a rich cultural mix: four African American students, four Hispanic students, one Native American student, four Asian/Pacific Islander students and three Caucasian students. Eleven students are women; five are men. Many are re-entry students and parents with children; their age range is 19-41 years, with the average age being 27.

A few unique aspects of the program should be noted: the cohort enrolled in a learning community, the integrative seminar, and the intensive, individualized support provided to students in the program. Throughout the two years, the students take all their courses together. The first quarter operates as a pure federated learning community, with a faculty member in the program serving as a “master learner”, taking the courses with the students and helping the students integrate the courses and, thus, helping them be more effective learners on their own. For the most part, the students have been able to work effectively as a learning cohort, forming study groups, working on group projects for classes, and generally providing valuable academic and personal support for each other. Marian Rodriguez, last fall's “master learner,” comments, “This shared learning experience has

strengthened each student's abilities as a learner by providing an environment where learning is reinforced by peers both in and outside of class, where connections between classes and concepts become more obvious because opportunities exist to discuss and synthesize material, and because of the trust, confidence and level of comfort that comes from working with a familiar group.”

Though only the first quarter has the benefit of a “master learner,” the integrative seminar each quarter has provided a place for students to reinforce their relationships as a cohort, to discuss the conceptual relationships between all their course work, and to work on skill development. Lorraine Bannai, an attorney and faculty member who helped develop the curriculum for the program, comments that the integrative seminar, “Has provided a forum for students to bond as a group, work out the inevitable tensions that can arise in such an intense, intimate work environment, as well as to develop and examine the interconnections between the themes in the program. As one student commented, ‘One of the beneficial aspects of the program was the way the classes related to one another. Issues that we talked about in one class usually appeared in another. In American Government we would talk about judicial restraint/activism and in American Legal Systems we would reinforce the new information with a case study. I felt as if I were taking one course but from varying positions. This definitely helped with retention of the material.’”

Retention is a significant issue. Although these students show promise for academic performance, many also have personal and academic histories which put them at risk for low grades or dropping out. The program has been designed to provide individualized, ongoing, intensive work on courses and skills. In addition, through the help of their instructors, students have utilized existing resources in the campus

Writing Center (in addition to the Writing Fellow provided by the FIPSE grant, students have received specialized tutorial assistance, including ESL assistance where appropriate), the Financial Aid Office and the Counseling Center. Provided individualized support, the students can experience a positive, rich learning environment where they have the opportunity to work to their potential and develop the self-confidence to tackle a challenging academic program.

"We believe this program has promise for becoming a model, innovative path to professional training for students who may not traditionally view themselves as candidates for a career in the law or other professions," comments Jack. "The curriculum combines academic work focused on an examination of the social, ethical and political bases of justice, skill building and a supportive, collaborative learning environment. The program creates and supports serious academic commitment, builds academic skills, and encourages retention in groups who have often been at risk in postsecondary settings. Although this program is focused on a law-based curriculum, we believe it has applicability for preparation in many other fields."

For additional information on the Law and Diversity Program, contact: Marie Eaton, Fairhaven College, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA, 98225-9118; (206)650-3680.

Footnotes

1. Garcia, S. "Report on the Status of Minority Students and Faculty in Washington's Higher Education System." Washington State Office of Financial Management and Budget, Executive Policy Division, 1990.
2. Hill, P. "Communities of Learners: Curriculum as the Infrastructure of Academic Communities." In *In Opposition to the Core Curriculum: Alternative Models of Undergraduate Education*, Ed. Hill, James W. and Kevles, Barbara L. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982.



Fairhaven faculty member Marian Rodriguez (l.) in a seminar discussion with Law and Diversity Program students Diana Lehman, Jennifer Tran and Shoskana Kehoe. (Photo: Western Washington University)

"There was a time during the quarter when I was tempted to drop a course and following discussions with a fellow student and Rand and Marian [faculty], I decided to stick with it. I received a B in the class, but more importantly I didn't let myself — or anyone else — down by copping out ... I truly feel like a new kind of student; one who doesn't give up easily and is willing to work through the rough spots. This newfound respect I've found for myself will undoubtedly increase my chances for success in the future." Law and Diversity Program student, Fairhaven College, Western Washington University.



The conference opened with a multi-media history of learning communities throughout the 20th century. Here, one of the narrators, Gilda Sheperd (sociology instructor at Seattle Central Community College) describes the pioneering work of Alexander Meiklejohn and his Experimental College at the University of Wisconsin in the 1920s. (Photo: Steve Davis)



The conference featured thirty poster session presentations on outstanding learning community efforts from around the state. This poster describes North Seattle Community College's coordinated studies program, "Reinventing Womanhood." (Photo: Steve Davis)



Angela Gilliam (faculty member in anthropology at Evergreen) joins in a "fishbowl seminar" on what it's like to be an exchange faculty member at Seattle Central Community College. (Photo: Steve Davis)



One hundred conference participants brainstormed interdisciplinary curriculum designs in "Learning Communities 101" with North Seattle faculty member Jim Harnish (standing) and Jean MacGregor. (Photo: Steve Davis)



Speaking on emerging themes in learning communities are Lin Nelson (environmental studies) and Terry Elliott (service learning), both from Evergreen. (Photo: Steve Davis)



Evergreen faculty member Brian Price invites responses to Susan Sontag's provocative essay on photography in a workshop session on book seminars. Kate Reavey (Peninsula College) is to the right. (Photo: Steve Davis)



Learning community pioneer Roberta Matthews (associate dean, LaGuardia Community College in New York City) describes how learning clusters work at LaGuardia. (Photo: Steve Davis)



Seattle Central Community College students comment on their experiences in coordinated studies programs. They are (l. to r.) Sandra Haddix-Hamilton, Ciam Sawyer, Natasha Jetton, Michael Hytinen, Hayoon Chung, and Larry Sims. (Photo: Steve Davis)



Teams from Evergreen and Western Washington University's Fairhaven College described their ground-breaking work with learning communities targeted to students and communities of color. L. to r. are Elizabeth Diffendal, John Washington, and Ophelia-Taylor Walker, all involved in the Tacoma Community College - Evergreen Tacoma BRIDGE program in Tacoma, and Marie Eaton, Greg Sullivan and Lorraine Bannai of the Law and Diversity Program at Western Washington University. (Photo: Steve Davis)

Scenes from the
Washington
Center conference:
"Learning
Communities:
Creating Connections
among Students,
Faculty and
Disciplines"
February 11-12, 1994



Thad Curtz (faculty member at Evergreen) was the first host to exchanging faculty starting learning communities in 1984. He participates here in a "fishbowl seminar" on learning community curriculum design and teaching. (Photo: Steve Davis)

Comments on 10 Years of Learning Community Work in Washington by *Kibitzers* at the February 1994 Learning Community Conference

At curriculum-planning events, it has been a long-standing Washington Center tradition to provide teaching teams with *kibitzers*. These individuals act as helpful onlookers and offerers of fresh perspectives and friendly advice. At our Learning Communities Conference in February, we decided to turn the tables on ourselves: We invited four national higher education leaders to serve as *kibitzers* to us. Ted Marchese, Marcia Mentkowski, Uri Treisman and Jacqueline Woods attended the conference, and in the closing session, commented on our learning community work, placing it against the backdrop of the national issues and debates in higher education, and challenged us to move to next steps. Here are excerpts of their remarks.



Ted Marchese is vice president of the American Association of Higher Education. There, he serves as executive editor of *Change* magazine, and directs AAHE's initiatives in assessment and continuous quality improvement. (Photo: Robert Cole)

“If it could be shown that this approach, ever more smartly done, resulted in a whole different level of learning attainment, the grounds would be there for a whole different way of assigning faculty loads.”

Ted Marchese: We come here as people from other conversations and other states who have had the privilege of joining your conversation for this conference. Everything we say is said with great admiration for what you have accomplished over the past 10 years. I have just four points to make.

The first is that the collaborative forms of learning that you are pursuing strike me, as a visitor, as very much those of an arts-and-sciences faculty. I've seen that many of your ideas are driven by a social constructivist view of knowledge creation: Learning communities begin typically with a book, a film, that is to say, with a *text*. But that's not, of course, the only possible starting point for a learning community. If I were engaged in your work, and looking for next horizons, I'd look to *problem-based learning* which seems to have begun in the late 1960s in medical colleges and nursing schools, but has become stuck in that "other" part of the university for all these years. It has almost no appearances whatever in the arts and sciences colleges. If collaborative learning begins with a text, problem-based learning begins with a task. Well, so what? One reason to be interested in task-driven collaboration is that the learning styles of so many of today's students, as Charles Schroeder¹ described in last fall's *Change* magazine, are not abstract, but concrete. So, consider problem-based learning.

My second point is that the collaborative learning community itself has to more explicitly be a *learning* community. That means that it should more explicitly embrace activities of assessment. The reason you want to assess is not because some state board or accreditor says you should, but because you, as a community of professionals, want to get, on behalf of your students, smarter and smarter in public, knowable ways about what you are doing. And the route to that will be built on systematic information collected over time, reflected upon in a community that enables or permits each iteration to

be better than what came before. I ask you this question: Can you tell me whether the typical learning community of today, whatever that may be, is notably better in outcome than the typical learning community of five years ago? But that is what you want to be able to say, difficult as it is. Stories have a role, and testimony is important, but the road to greater effectiveness, to continuous improvement, is paved with more systematic information.

Third, while the most important immediate outcome of a learning community is *learning*, an important outcome that has to be higher in your consciousness is *persistence*, and especially ultimate student attainment of the degree. Our goal as educators has to be more than "my — or our — better course." It is students' better attainment of life chances, which to me implies two things. The first is that in the next 10 years the focus has to move from better courses to better total curricula. The second is that in the next 10 years the goal should be to increase sharply the overall rates of student attainment within our colleges. Why? I always start with students. The fact is that in today's economy the return on investment of "some college" is low. If there is a student loan in the picture, it can be negative. The return on time in college comes with the earning of a degree. That's our goal on behalf of students. The goal is important because public policy makers increasingly know that rates of degree attainment in our colleges are low. In other states they are 15-30 percent in community colleges, and 30-50 percent in public four-year colleges. Our goal as educators over the next 10 years should be to increase those rates sharply from 20 percent to 35 percent, and then from 35 percent to 55 percent. Now, if learning communities — one more innovation in a crowded landscape — can demonstrate that they make a real, significant difference in

ultimate student attainment (and to do so, as I have said, they will have to be more than stand-alone experiences), then their further persistence will be assured. The trick over the next 10 years is to move from interesting ideas and intriguing innovations to indispensable contributors to the learning productivity of our institutions.

Let me conclude with a small but compelling point that brings us back to a doubt that was expressed by Joe Tussman, in the opening history of learning communities. That is that these programs will never be sustainable because they ask too much of already overburdened faculty members. If it could be shown that this approach, ever more smartly done, resulted in a whole different level of learning attainment, the grounds would be there for a whole different way of assigning faculty loads.

“The collaborative learning community itself has to more explicitly be a learning community. That means that it should more explicitly embrace activities of assessment.”



Marcia Mentkowski is director of research and evaluation and professor of psychology at Alverno College in Milwaukee. Alverno is nationally known for its leadership in learning outcomes assessment, in which Mentkowski has played a central role for nearly 20 years. (Photo: Robert Cole)

“I think we can have this debate nationally, because your work obliterates every single excuse that it can’t be done.”

Marcia Mentkowski: Thank you for including me and providing the opportunity for me to be a learner here. I find myself a bit overwhelmed by the depth of experience and expertise that has been demonstrated across the sessions of this conference. I am deeply moved not only by your history, but by what you have accomplished, and, to quote Meiklejohn, “The courage, wisdom, sensitivity and generosity” to each other that you have demonstrated in this learning community, live. So, perhaps you would like to know what I have learned.

I have had some major insights about why your accomplishments here have already shaped the debate and will continue to shape the debate in higher education. That debate started a decade ago with *A Nation at Risk*, and the 1985 report, *Involvement in Learning*, that called for student involvement in active learning, learning communities, and assessment and feedback. The debate continues this year with *The American Imperative* report, that argues for putting student learning first, taking values seriously, and creating a nation of learners. I think we can have this debate nationally, because your work obliterates every single excuse that it can’t be done, and I’m sure you have heard them all! I will give you a couple of examples of key achievements, and show you how I connect this nationally, based on evidence I have gleaned in the last couple of days here. This road map that I brought with me to describe Washington state doesn’t work any more. You’ve created a learning map where you cross the old boundaries: across the disciplines, across the curriculum, across the perspectives of student, faculty, administrator, policy maker. You have done it by creating a new kind of learning superhighway. You’ve already shown us how to take advantage of the information superhighway. With this learning superhighway, you’ve changed the place for learning and you’ve changed the distance between learners.

A specific example: The public call right now is for faculty productivity and student productivity, but you’ve

set aside that old measure, number of contact hours. Rather, you’ve got a new definition: *Substantive learning sustained over time*. Now, how did you do it? I learned one key to faculty “productivity” yesterday in a “fishbowl” set up as a faculty seminar. Yes, the faculty agreed in the good old arts and sciences tradition that talk in the faculty seminar is about the great ideas, about demonstrating reflection and critical thinking. It’s the heart of faculty interest. It’s what Parker Palmer calls “the knowing community.” And it’s a key element in the transmission of culture that you expect for students. But — and here’s the key — of equal importance in that faculty seminar and at this conference is talk about logistics, scheduling, making the learning work for students. You’ve done what so many are calling for: greater faculty investment and role in educational restructuring. Faculty here are energized by and take responsibility for whether learning works for students. This is where you show your respect for how hard the student has to work to even come to college, for what problems and barriers they have to overcome, by making learning work.

And that is one example of why this learning community experiment isn’t going to fail. There is a shift in the faculty role here from expert in the discipline and transmitter of culture to a role that includes creating the context for learning and restructuring the institution, so that, ultimately our institutions can once again shape our national culture in constructive ways.

What do you have to say about student productivity? Should we — as some people suggest — shorten the time to the degree to three years? Your students have another solution. I heard them yesterday afternoon, live. Here is the key. Quote: “If you engulf yourself in it, if you enjoy it, you lose track of time. The quarter went too fast. Your energy expands time. You have more time. You take more time.” Einstein and Hawking haven’t done it, but your students have expanded the greatest resource, *student time*. You have created some type of causal

link: from peer pressure, to peer motivation, to peer critique, to peer learning, that leads to individual responsibility and self-confidence. That means higher expectations and standards as a result.

Now where are the new challenges? Nationally, we all know that the public wants to be more of a player in educational decisions. That means getting the message out. We need better links between learning outcomes, (i.e., what it means to be an educated person), learning communities, assessment, and public expectations. The proof to the public is in the performance of the graduates. Thus, we do need to find a language to communicate the learning community "difference." We have to communicate nationally. Consider the "Evergreening" of American higher education. Demonstrate the ethic of learning. Show that you can include faculty as professionally responsible for institutional restructuring. Merge the community of learning with the public community of judgment about the quality of higher education. Take values seriously by being more articulate about the values that make this community work. These are a few of the challenges we all face in the next decade.

"You've set aside that old measure, number of contact hours. Rather, you've got a new definition: *Substantive learning sustained over time.*"



Uri Treisman is professor of mathematics and director of the Charles A. Dana Center for Mathematics and Science Education at the University of Texas at Austin. His study of African American students in calculus courses at University of California Berkeley won him the 1987 Charles A. Dana Foundation Award for Pioneering Achievement in American Higher Education. His work revolves around mathematics education and educational policy with a special focus on questions of minority participation in mathematics and related fields. (Photo: Robert Cole)

"We have the tools to push this work much, much further. This is a time when democracy is critical, and we have a pedagogy that addresses the issues of full participation in a democracy."

Uri Treisman: The political side of me notes that there are political people here at this conference. They have to know that the Washington Center is unique, clearly, in the country — the most powerful mechanism I've seen for supporting innovation and importing interesting practices into a region. I travel 200 days a year, and I visit large numbers of campuses and systems. There is nothing like the Washington Center, nothing even close.

Almost everywhere where people attempt to create dissemination vehicles, they fall into this strange trap. They know that they are trying to promote constructivist ideas. They know that if you give them the tools, people have the strength and power to put together knowledge to enrich their lives. They know this ideology, but when they try to spread it, constructivists become rank behaviorists! It is so pleasant to see people whose work with colleagues reflects the educational ideology that they hold. And, thank you for sparing me from two days of baloney about international competitiveness and all that. It's fun to be among teachers who know that *how* we engage students and *how* we engage each other really does affect what students learn in classes, and it affects how we develop as faculty members — that education is a tool for enriching democracy and enriching the lives of people. I saw that theme across all of the sessions that I attended at this conference.

Now, the things that I saw — that I would like to see more of — are the kinds of learning communities that were structured **to really create increased access**: linked courses that link developmental subjects to English as a Second Language, to mainstream pre-professional courses and mainstream academic courses. I have seen very creative doubling up of courses to give students enough time to try on the identity of a discipline. Because of the cost of the needs for access, we need to think very hard about who the beneficiaries are in the learning communities that we create. We need to think about how to focus these programs to bring more people into the system. A lot of this work seems to have an ad hoc character — sort of where the

1960s meet the sea. (I have also learned in this conference that it's also where the late 1920s met the sea!) I know that history, but we have to look to the future. You have developed tools that could dramatically effect the **advancement of students**.

In the sessions about administration of learning communities, I heard a surprising amount of rhetoric about respecting existing structures and exploiting existing structures. This is a sort of reality-based language, but it's a reality from the last 15 years. Working on the Washington (D.C.) scene, we went through 12 years of dealing with mean-spirited attorneys. The focus for many years was outside the United States and external divisions.

Now we are coming again to a period where we are focusing on internal divisions within this country. Cornell West says that democracies are short-lived when poverty exists, and people don't have a vested interest in the system. They are also short-lived when there is racial polarization. People don't feel there's any collective contract. I think the times now will support another period of invigorated energy in creative learning communities. We have the fuel from the late 1920s and those times, and the fuel from the 1960s. I think we do not have to be so restrained by existing realities. I think Ted Marchese's comments about assessment, and the political sensitivities we have tell us that we have the tools to push this work much, much further. This is a time when democracy is critical, and we have a pedagogy that addresses the issues of full participation in a democracy.

“What I would like to see more of are the kinds of learning communities that were structured to really create increased access.”



Jacqueline Woods is vice chancellor of external affairs at the City Colleges of Chicago. In addition, she chairs the executive board of the Black Caucus of the American Association of Higher Education. Her work has involved developmental education, resource development, issues of college administration and governance, teacher certification and testing and assessment. (Photo: Robert Cole)

“We need to look at the multi-tiered jobs that many of our students, and many of us, are going to have to have in the 21st century, and to realize that learning communities are preparing students for this kind of complexity.”

Jacqueline Woods: Like my colleagues, I want to thank you for the invitation to participate in this conference and celebration. Thank you also for making it an enjoyable, exciting learning experience. The four of us have been to enough conferences and meetings in our collective hundred years or so of work in higher education, that we often get bored in meetings. There was absolutely nothing boring about what we have experienced here!

As a community of educators you should be very proud of the collective energy, commitment and innovation that you have brought to the forefront of our higher-education enterprise. I approached my task as an observer with several assumptions in mind. I brought to this role my background in community colleges and urban education, and also in social and public policy activities. I would like to share with you a few assumptions that I think are key to your moving the learning communities process into the next decade.

The first assumption that I came with is that in order to work, learning communities cannot be artificial, closed or stagnant. At the beginning of the conference, I was pleased to hear that *flexibility* is key to your approach. I was also pleased to hear that you do not consider collaborative models as a panacea for all of our educational needs. I want to encourage you to celebrate your diversity as learning communities, to celebrate that the mode of delivery will come in pairs and teams and in clusters and in federations.

I want to challenge you to assess more closely your willingness to foster difficult dialogues. There are a number of difficult dialogues that have to occur, relating to dominance and privilege in the learning community process, relating to the roles or place of diverse cognitive styles in the learning community process, relating to the value of the student's cultural background and experiences in curriculum development and program delivery. There are a great number of programs that were shared in the last couple of days on special populations. Yet, I question if, just because those special popula-

tions exist, they are real or artificially diverse populations. Is it real or artificial diversity you are fostering?

For those of us in the community college sphere, I challenge you, as Ted did, to provide stronger support to the establishment of learning communities in vocational and technical programs. I heard many conversations from the vocational/technical people that they felt left out. I say to both sides of the sphere that one, liberal arts faculty and staff need to work more strongly with our vocational and technical people, but I also say to the vocational technical people, Don't sit back. Join in. You, too, can form learning communities.

I also challenge you to look at how learning communities can work with part-time learners, in continuing education and in other noncredit programs. One of the first times I heard about learning communities was in Europe about 15 years ago. These exciting programs did not exist in the credit sphere. They were thriving in professional and continuing-education arenas. You might want to look at that.

The second assumption that I brought is that I would learn how learning communities were relevant to the real-life work experiences that our students go to. I didn't learn about this in the conference sessions, but, rather, from some of the students. I sat yesterday at lunch with students from Seattle Central Community College and I asked them what impact they felt learning communities were having in their work experiences while in school, and for those that had completed their programs, what impact learning communities might have on real-life work experiences. The best way to describe their reaction to that question, and the story that you should celebrate, is what one of the students shared with me. He said that he now had a multi-tiered view of the world of work. He had three jobs, one working in a barbecue restaurant that was owned by his family, one developing a small music store, and a third job working in a computer shop. Because of his experiences in the learning commu-

nity, he said, he now saw a cluster of commonalities in his complex world of work. His colleagues also noticed how excited he was. He was seeing, in his jobs, ways his school and his work interacted. We need to look at the multi-tiered jobs that many of our students, and many of us, are going to have to have in the 21st century, and to realize that learning communities are preparing students for this kind of complexity.

Finally, you need to extend the call to disseminate your programs to the national associations. Don't let them off the hook! You should be proud of not only the work that the Washington Center is doing, but that you as individual and collective colleges and universities are doing. Your work ought to be talked about very extensively in our national organizations, journals and professional networks. Finally, the difficult dialogues that I have challenged you to have should continue to be encouraged through the learning community process, and should be shared nationally as well.

FOOTNOTE

1. Shroeder, Charles C. "New Students — New Learning Styles." *Change*, 25(4) September/October, 1993.

“There are a number of difficult dialogues that have to occur, relating to dominance and privilege in the learning community process, relating to the roles or place of diverse cognitive styles in the learning community process, relating to the value of the student’s cultural background and experiences in curriculum development and program delivery.”

Learning Community Resources

Rationale

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Learning Community Programs in Washington - Winter/ Spring 1994

Learning communities purposefully restructure the curriculum to link together courses so that students find greater coherence in the courses they take, as well as increased intellectual interaction with faculty and fellow students. The following is a listing of learning communities offered in Winter and Spring Quarters, 1994.

Unless otherwise indicated, the learning communities at community colleges are being offered in college transfer Associate Degree programs. The component subject matter is listed after each faculty member's name. Please be in touch with the colleges and faculty involved if you would like more information about any of these programs.

Bellevue Community College

Winter Quarter

Coordinated Studies

"World Beat: Re-Imaging the New World Order"
Michael Righi / Economics
Woody West / Literature
Michael Meyer / Written Expression

Linked Class

"Stranger In A Strange Land"
Linda Leeds / Written Expression
Leon Leeds / Introduction to Archaeology

Linked Class

"Built and Furnished Environment"
Bob Purser / Environmental Design
Connie Wais / 20th Century Furniture

Linked Class

"Composing Psychology"
Helen Taylor / Introduction to Psychology
Robin Jeffers / Written Expression

Spring Quarter

Coordinated Studies

"Mind Over Matter"
Gordon Leighton / Written Expression
Erick Haakenson / Introduction to Philosophy
Terry Clark / Library

Linked Class

"Composing Environmental Science"
Robin Jeffers / Written Expression
Kathy Steinert / Introduction to Ecology

Big Bend Community College

Spring Quarter

Linked Class

Leslie Michael / English Composition
Cathy Andress / Introduction to Psychology

Centralia College

Spring Quarter

Federated Learning Community

"Women: Writers of Their History"
Laura Siebuhr / History
Susan Hoyne / English

Clark College

Winter

Linked Class

"Cross-Cultural Communication"
Priscilla Martins-Read / ESL
Pat Fulbright / English

Spring

Linked Class

"Women's Language: Women's Issues"
Harriet Levi / Women's Studies
Bev Galvan / Research Writing

Linked Class

"Racism in America"
Kathy Bobula / Sociology
Gerald Smith / English Composition

Columbia Basin College**Winter Quarter****Linked Class**

“Women in Society”
Lisa Aguilera / English
Marie Ramos-Miller / Art and Humanities

Linked Class - Team Taught

“Technical Collaboration”
Curtis Crawford / Technical Mathematics
Ed Hue / Welding

Spring Quarter**Linked Class - Team Taught**

“Problems, Programs and Solutions”
Meg Gamon / Algebra
Gail Sanders / Computer Science

Linked Class - Team Taught

“Succeeding in College”
Chris King / Grammar Skills
Judy Carlson / Writing, Mathematics, and
Study Techniques

Edmonds Community College**Winter Quarter****Coordinated Studies**

“Government: Law and Politics”
Merl Deinhart / Political Science
Mike Fitch / Law

Coordinated Studies

“The Greek and the Roman World”
Dennis Lamb / History
Jim O'Donnell / English

Coordinated Studies

“The Renaissance to the French Revolution:
Story and Deed”
Bruce Reid / English
Eileen Soldwedel / History

Spring Quarter**Coordinated Studies**

“Engineering Problem Solving
with Precalculus Mathematics”
John Rusin / Engineering
Jim Francis / Mathematics

Coordinated Studies

“Examining Environmental Ethics”
Marcia Horton / Philosophy
Holly Hughes / English

Coordinated Studies

“Hands of the Past: The Works of Past
Artisans”
Melissa Newell / Art
Dale Croes / Anthropology

Coordinated Studies

“Myth, Ritual and the Earth Community”
Margaret Scarborough / Humanities
Charles Mish / English

Everett Community College**Winter Quarter****Cluster**

“Women on the Move to a Four-Year Degree”
Dick Brigham / Sociology
Kristi Francis / English
Sharon Wellman / Mathematics

Spring Quarter**Cluster**

“Women on the Move to a Four-Year Degree”
Sally vanNeil / Humans and Their Environ-
ment
Holly Hill / English Composition
Sharon Wellman / Mathematics
or Gary London / Political Science

Grays Harbor College**Winter Quarter****Cluster**

“Making Your Way”
Kathleen Pace / Reading and Study Skills
Trish Dutro / Mathematics
Gary Frey / English and Personal Develop-
ment

Green River Community College**Winter Quarter****Linked Class - Team Taught**

“Ethnic America”
Bruce Haulman / History
Rick Ferro / Ethnic Studies

Spring Quarter**Linked Class - Team Taught**

“American Environment”
Bruce Haulman / History
Roland Vieira / Environmental Science

Highline Community College**Winter Quarter**

Coordinated Studies
"Brave New Families"
Rosemary Adang / Writing
Davidson Dodd / Political Science
Sharon Hashimoto / Literature

Spring Quarter

Coordinated Studies
"People in America: Separate or Connected"
Rosemary Adang / Writing
Bob Baugher / Psychology of Human Relations
Davidson Dodd / Political Science

Lower Columbia College**Winter Quarter**

Linked Class
"Style and Revolution"
Yvette O'Neill / Art History
Rita Fontaine / Contemporary Literature

North Seattle Community College**Winter Quarter**

Coordinated Studies
"Contacts, Conquests, and Revolutions Shaping a Global Society"
Jim Harnish / History
Rick Olguin / American Ethnic History
Nancy Taylor (from Evergreen) / History

Coordinated Studies
"Reinventing Womanhood: Our History, Our Future"
Angela Djao / Asian Studies
Marcia Barton / English Composition
Susan Starbuck / Women's Studies
Fran Schmitt / Psychology

Coordinated Studies
"Global Emergency! Hunger, Aids and Environmental Resources"
Gail Baker / Biology
Tom Kerns / Philosophy
Paul Kidder (from Seattle University) / Philosophy

Spring Quarter

Coordinated Studies
"Journeys"
Marcia Barton / American Literature
Rick Olguin / American Ethnic Studies
Larry Hall / Psychology

Coordinated Studies
"Revolutions Revisited: Through the Eyes of the Russian, Chinese, and American People"
Angela Djao / Asian Studies
Jim Harnish / Russian History
Larry Hopt / Contemporary Law

Coordinated Studies
"Seeing What's There"
Ellie Cauldwell / Biology
Marilyn Smith / English Composition

Olympic College**Winter Quarter**

Cluster
Robert Dietz / English
Imy Klett / Art Appreciation
Jana Wainwright / English

Cluster
Coordinated Studies
"Life on the Edge"
Daniela Assail / Pacific Northwest Geography
Tom Walker / Pacific Northwest Geology
Don Seavy / Pacific Northwest Natural History

Cluster
Robert Ericksen / History (since 1865)
Louis Graham / English
Judith Meyers / English

Pierce College**Winter Quarter****Linked Class**

“Research With Focus on Criminal Justice Issues”
Bob Bohner / Criminal Justice
Margaret Payne / English Composition

Spring Quarter**Linked Class**

“American Literature and Research”
Deb Gilchrist / Library Science
Bill Krieger / English

Pierce College at Puyallup**Winter Quarter****Linked Class - Team Taught**

“Effective Thinking and Writing”
Marian Anders / English Composition
Nancy Bolle / Effective Thinking

Seattle Central Community College**Winter Quarter****Coordinated Studies**

“Women and Men at Work in the USA”
Jim Baenen / Anthropology
Maureen Murphy Nutting / History
Nada Oakley / English

Coordinated Studies

“The Electric Digital Future, The Televised Past”
Angela Gilliam (from Evergreen) / Sociology
Charles Jeffreys / Psychology
Georgia McDade (from Tacoma CC) / English
Carl Waluconis / English & Humanities

Coordinated Studies

“Decomposing Ourselves: The Cycle of Life and Death”
Cynthia Chan Imanaka / Sociology
Marcie Sims / English

Coordinated Studies

“Dynamic Cities, Spaces & Peoples”
Valerie Bystrom / English
Alan Forsberg / Geography

Spring Quarter**Coordinated Studies**

“Speaking for Ourselves: Cross-Cultural Visions and Connections”
John Cannon / Mathematics and Computer Science
Minnie Collins / English
Cynthia Chan Imanaka / Sociology
Carl Waluconis / English

Coordinated Studies

“The Power of Myth”
David Dawson / English
Tatiana Garmendia / Art History
Astrida Onat / Anthropology

Coordinated Studies

“Love, Sex, and the 21st Century”
Dick Burton / Philosophy
Nancy Finley / Psychology
Georgia McDade (from Tacoma CC) / English
Larry Silverman / English

Coordinated Studies

“Eyes on the Prize”
Tracey Lai / History
J. T. Stewart / English

Seattle Pacific University**Winter Quarter****Freshman Interest Group**

Robert Drov Dahl / Dynamics of Christian Formation
Carol Scott-Kasner / Music Arts in America
Michael Caldwell and Larry Metcalf / Visual Arts

Spring Quarter**Freshman Interest Group**

Barbara Korner / Theatre Arts in America
Les Steele / Dynamics of Christian Formation
Kathleen Braden / World Regional Geography

Shoreline Community College**Winter Quarter****Linked Class - Team Taught**

“Civilization & Culture: Historic and Cultural Foundations from Ancient Europe”

Wayne McGuire / Humanities
Mikhail Alexseev / History
Kathryn deBaun / English

Linked Class

“Looking In, Looking Out”

Laurie Kimpton-Lorence / Developmental English

Linked Class - Team Taught

“Food For Thought”

Pam Dusenberry / Developmental English
Gayle Steely / Nutrition

Linked Class - Team Taught

“The Giant Next Door: Canadian Studies”

Lloyd Keith / Canadian History
Amy Mates / Canadian Literature

Linked Class - Team Taught

“Thinking Times Two”

Gary Parks / English Reading and Writing
Shannon Flynn / Algebra

Linked Class - Team Taught

“Making Sense of Education”

Louise Douglas / Speech Communication
Dennis Peters / English Reading and Writing

Linked Class - Team Taught

“You Be the Judge”

Jim Jory / Introduction to Law
Katherine Hunt / English Composition

Spring Quarter**Linked Class - Team Taught**

“Cultural Portrait of the Pacific Northwest”

Lloyd Keith / Pacific Northwest History (since 1850), Sociology of Minority Groups, and Intra-American Studies
Amy Mates / English Composition

Linked Class - Team Taught

“Civilization and Culture”

Wayne McGuire / Humanities
Mikhail Alexseev / Modern World History
Kathryn deBaun / English Composition

Linked Class

“Looking In, Looking Out”

Pam Dusenberry / Developmental Reading and Writing

Linked Class - Team Taught

“Through the Looking Glass”

Ken LaFountaine / Diversity and Communication in US Society
Katherine Hunt / English Composition

Skagit Valley College**Winter Quarter****Linked Course**

“Cinema and Sexuality”

Lynn Fouquette / Introduction to Film
Lynn Dunlap / Human Sexuality

Linked Class - Team Taught

“Constructing Reality: To Be or MC?”

Andy Friedlander / Introduction to Theatre
Jerome Chandler / Physics

Coordinated Studies

“Neighbor Nations: The Future of Northwest Tribes and Neighboring Communities”

Ann Chadwick Reid / Introduction to Art
Ted Maloney / American Indian History

Coordinated Studies

“Poverty in America”

David Muga / Sociology
Phil Green / Statistics

Coordinated Studies

“Search for Self”

Mike Witmer / General Psychology
Linda Moore / College Reading
Trish Barney / English Composition

Spring Quarter**Coordinated Studies**

“Prejudice, Poverty, Population, Pollution”

Trish Barney / Introduction of Fiction
Mike Witmer / Social Psychology

Linked Class - Team Taught

“Work Life 101”

Jovita Lopez / Introduction to Literature
Linda Woiwood / Women's Pro./Career Planning

Linked Class

“Intimations of Immortality”

Lynn Dunlap / English Composition
Larry Sult / Philosophy of Religion

Linked Class

“Writing About Nutrition”

Betsy Whisenhut / English Composition
Silvia Paonell / Physical Education

Linked Class

“Writing About Psychology”

Trish Barney / English Composition
Mike Witmer / General Psychology

Linked Class - Team Taught

“Wordplay”

Jill Fugate / English Composition
Andy Friedlander / Introduction to Theatre

**Skagit Valley College
Whidbey Campus**

Winter Quarter

Linked Class

"In Search of Science and Literature"
Chuck Stevens / Introduction to Physical
Science
Les Stanwood / Introduction to Literature

Linked Class

"The Human Animal"
Richard Doyle / Introductory Biology
Louis LaBombard / Physical Anthropology

Federated Learning Community

"Western Civilization: Art and Culture"
Barbara Moburg / World Civilization
Sharon Hall / Art History

Spring Quarter

Coordinated Studies

"Count Me In/Count Me Out"
Barbara Moburg / Social Psychology
Susan Indorf / Statistics
Les Stanwood / Introduction to Literature

Linked Class - Team Taught

"Drawing from the Sea"
Richard Doyle / Biology
Sharon Hall / Art

**South Puget Sound
Community College**

Winter Quarter

Linked Class

Don Johnson / English
James Strong / Geology

Coordinated Studies

"Asylums and Visionaries"
Steve Dickerson / Philosophy of Religion
Oli Newsome / Abnormal Psychology
Bill Swanson / The Film as Literature

Spring Quarter

Linked Class - Team Taught

"Hungry to Understand Media?"
Lynda Swanson / English Composition
Bill Swanson / Media, Communication and
Culture

South Seattle Community College

Spring Quarter

Coordinated Studies

"Ways of Knowing"
Bonnie Casey / Humanities
Tim Walsh / English

Spokane Community College

Winter Quarter

Cluster

"Murder, She Wrote: Psychological and
Sociological Aspects of Violence and Crime"
Sharon Langford / English Composition
Cecile Lycan / Sociology - Criminal Justice
Joyann Ward / Psychology

Linked Class - Team Taught

"Adrift Alone in the Cosmos II: First Contact"
Jim Roth / English Literature
Lynn West / English Composition

Linked Class - Team Taught

"Making a Living/Molding a Life: Work in
Contemporary America"
Dennis Keen - Literature
Denise Lambert - English

Linked Class - Team Taught

"Computerized Composition: Enhancing
Writing With Technology"
Janece Connor / Computer Applications
Mita Sen / English Composition

Spring Quarter

Cluster

"Earth Trek: An Examination of the
Relationship of Nature and Humanity"
Robert Mir / Environmental Biology
Mike Zoltak / English Composition
Virginia VanCamp / Art

Linked Class - Team Taught

"Ourselves Among Others"
Mita Sen / English Composition
Val Clark / Intercultural Communication

Linked Class - Team Taught

"Media and Messages"
Debbie Kyle / Mass Media
Carolyn Wall / English Composition

Spokane Falls Community College**Winter Quarter****Linked Class - Team Taught**

Lars Neises / Mathematics
Jani Mahoney / English

Linked Class - Team Taught

Tom Versteeg / Literature
Almut McAuley / Literature/Writing

Coordinated Studies

“Leonardo To Voltaire: A Renaissance of Ideas and Images”
Robert Farrar / Western Civilization
Carolyn Stephens / Art
Nel Hellenberg / English Composition
Barbara Fulsaa / Library Studies

Spring Quarter**Linked Class**

Lars Neises / Intermediate Algebra and Computer Tutorial

Linked Class

Klaus Scherler / Mass Media
Jim Barrett / English Composition

Linked Class - Team Taught

Sherry Gaiser / Introduction to Literature
Alexis Nelson / English Composition

Linked Class - Team Taught

Jerry O’Neal / Physical Anthropology
Susan McGrew / English Composition

Linked Class - Team Taught

Jeanette Kirishian / Non-Western Art
Lori Monnastes / English Composition

Linked Class - Team Taught

“Being Human: The Psychology of Literature”
Dexter Amend / Psychology of Adjustment
Steve Reames / Introduction to Literature

Linked Class - Team Taught

“Read, Listen and Respond”
Wayne Smith / Music
Almut McAuley / Literature/Composition

Tacoma Community College**Winter Quarter****Coordinated Studies**

“Food For Thought”
Marlene Bosanko / English Composition
Tamara Kuzmankov / English Literature or General Humanities

Coordinated Studies

“American Patchwork: History and Culture of Ethnic America”
Linda Ford / English Composition and Literature
Bill Packard / Sociology
Mike Allen (from UW-Tacoma) / American Studies

Coordinated Studies

“Family Portraits: Past and Future”
Gwen Overland / Drama and Mythology
Violeta Clee / English Composition

Spring Quarter**Coordinated Studies**

“To The Place of Wisdom”
Debbie Kinerk / English Composition
Richard Wakefield / Introduction to Fiction

Coordinated Studies

“Sexual Personae: The Faces of Desire”
Paul Clee / English and Art
Violeta Clee / English

Western Washington University**Winter Quarter****Linked Class**

"Renaissance and Reformation: The Body, Death and The Devil"
Carol Janson / Art History
Marc Geisler / Literature of the Bible

Federated Learning Community

"Law and Diversity"
Constance Faulkner / Political Economics
Rand Jack / American Government Under the Constitution
Katheryn Anderson and Marion Rodriguez / Integrative Seminar (Oral Communication)
Vernon Johnson / Political Science (Race, Class & Public Policy)

Spring Quarter**Linked Class**

"Analyzing Power in Government and Social Institutions"
Karen Bradley / Sociology: Gender and Society
Vernon Johnson / Political Science
James Hearne / Computer Science

Linked Class - Team Taught

"China Business & International Trade"
Joe Garcia / Business Management
Nancy Jiang / East Asian Studies

Federated Learning Community

"Law and Diversity"
Rand Jack / Individual Rights Under the Constitution
Robert Keller / Federal Indian Policy
Lorraine Bannai and Marion Rodriguez / Integrative Seminar (Advanced Writing)

Yakima Valley Community College**Winter Quarter****Linked Class - Team Taught**

"Speaking of Ecology: Reflections on a Sand County Almanac"
Millie Stenehjem / Speech
Eric Mould / Environmental Ecology

Linked Class - Team Taught

"Conquering Math Anxiety: Overcoming Math Anxiety in Pre-Algebra"
Dan Schapiro / Mathematics
Kathy Calvert / Counseling

Linked Class - Team Taught

"English & Math: Writing by the Numbers"
Shannon Hopkins / English
Carolyn Gregory / Mathematics

Linked Class - Team Taught

"Zen Guide to Voice: Speaking & Singing Your Way To Health"
Scott Peterson / Music
Millie Stenehjem / Speech

Linked Class - Team Taught

"Papers, Pencils, Stones, & Bones: Reading & Writing About People Past & Present"
Eric Anderson / Anthropology
Sue Bickley / Developmental English
Bonnie Labbee / Counseling

Spring Quarter**Linked Class - Team Taught**

"Molecules' and 'Monomials': The Meaning and Language of Chemistry and Algebra"
Kathy Ashworth / Chemistry
Dan Schapiro / Intermediate Algebra

Linked Class - Team Taught

"Talk About Living: Understanding Biology Through Speech"
Judy Moore / Biology
Millie Stenehjem / Speech

Linked Class - Team Taught

"The Music of Life: Biology, Evolution and Music as Co-Metaphors"
Eric Mould / Biology
Scott Peterson / Music

Linked Class - Team Taught

"Mind Over Math: Overcoming Math Anxiety"
Doug Lewis / Mathematics
Kathy Calvert / Counseling

Linked Class - Team Taught

"Speaking of Europe: The Roots of Our Society and Our Families"
Jim Newbill / World History
Chuck Weedon / Speech

Linked Class - Team Taught

"Other Peoples: Fact and Fiction Exploring the Human Condition Through Anthropology & Science Fiction"
Eric Anderson / Cultural Anthropology
David Ripper / Science Fiction Writers

Other large learning community programs in Washington:

The Evergreen State College's curriculum is largely organized around 16-credit, team-taught coordinated studies programs. About 30 coordinated studies programs are offered each quarter, each addressing interdisciplinary themes or questions. For information on this year's programs, write the Washington Center.

Linked Class - Team Taught

"Biomathics' and 'Mathology': Understanding Math and Biology"
Beverly Parnell / Intermediate Algebra
Mike Harves / General Biology

Faculty Exchanges and Washington Center News

Rita Smilkstein, a writing and humanities instructor at North Seattle Community College, is completing her second of a two-year stint teaching in The Evergreen State College's Master in Teaching Program. Her Evergreen teaching team hosts have been **Thad Curtz**, **Sioux Feldman** and **Sherry Walton**. **Georgia McDade** (an English instructor at Tacoma Community College) and **Angela**

Gilliam (faculty member in anthropology from Evergreen) joined Seattle Central faculty members **Charles Jeffreys** (psychology) and **Carl Waluconis** (English) for winter quarter to teach the coordinated studies program, "The Electric Digital Future, The Televised Past." This spring, **Georgia McDade** is teaching with **Dick Burton** (philosophy), **Nancy Finley** (psychology) and **Larry**



At this spring's annual Western Washington Curriculum Planning Retreat, Evergreen faculty member Russ Fox was one of the kibitzers. Here, he works with a team from Bellevue Community College developing psychology/English composition/literature coordinated studies program on "Place: How our surroundings shape our thoughts, physiology, emotions, and actions." L. to r. are Woody West (also kibitzing informally) and the program team, Jeffrey White, Michael Meyer (back to camera), and to Fox's right, Virginia Bridwell-Long. (Photo: Jean MacGregor)

Silverman (English) in "Love, Sex and the 21st Century." Meantime, **Paula Bennett** (English, Seattle Central) has been at North Seattle Community College teaching various English classes.

Evergreen's **Richard Brian** has been teaming up with **Ophelia Taylor-Walker** to teach in the Evergreen Tacoma Community College BRIDGE program on The Evergreen State College's Tacoma campus, while Tacoma Community College psychologist **Jerry Shulenbarger** has been joined the **John Marvin/Richard Cellarius** team this Spring in the coordinated studies core program, "Contexts of Discovery." Evergreen historian **Nancy Taylor** went to North Seattle Community College for winter quarter to teach in the coordinated studies program, "Contacts, Conquests, and Revolutions: Shaping a Global Society" with **Jim Harnish** and **Rick Olguin**. Also at North Seattle winter quarter was Seattle University philosopher **Paul Kidder**, teaching with **Gail Baker** (biology) and **Tom Kerns** (philosophy) in "Global Emergency! Hunger, AIDS and Environmental Resources." **Mike Allen**, an American Studies faculty member from University of Washington's Tacoma branch campus is teaching at Tacoma Community College in the coordinated studies program, "American Patchwork: History and Culture of Ethnic America" with **Linda Ford** (English composition and literature) and **Bill Packard** (sociology).

The Washington Center helps to broker many of these exchanges, which are usually into learning community and team-teaching settings.

Washington Center Receives National Science Foundation Grant for Summer Institutes on Learning Communities in the Sciences

The Washington Center has received a \$216,000-grant from the National Science Foundation's Undergraduate Faculty Enhancement Program for an Interdisciplinary Science Initiative. The project directors are Washington Center Director **Barbara Leigh Smith** and **Judy Moore** from Yakima Valley College. The grant will support four eight-day residential summer institutes in 1994 and 1995. Each institute will involve up to 30 faculty members from two- and four-year institutions in Washington. Each institute will offer a miniature version of a successful interdisciplinary science program in the state. Participants will build an understanding of successful learning community designs and will gain hands-on experience with some of their most important features.

The institutes slated for summer, 1994 are "Rethinking Introductory Biology" and "Reflections of Nature." "Reflections of Nature" will be held on The Evergreen State College campus June 20-27. The faculty, all from The Evergreen State College, will be physicist **Rob Knapp**, ecologist **Robert Sluss**, art historian **Hiro Kawasaki** and librarian **Lee Lyttle**. "Reflections" will examine the natural world as one of the primary inspirations for biology, physics, visual art, literature and mathematics. This institute will engage participants in reflecting on natural patterns and processes through drawing on these five disciplines and the connections between them.

"Rethinking Introductory Biology," slated for September 5-12 at Pack Forest, will involve participants in learning community programs linking biology classes to communications classes, and in work and conversations on bringing a problem-centered focus to introductory science classes. The institute faculty will include Yakima Valley Community College instructors **Judy Moore**, **Mildred Stenehjem** and **Denny Konshak**, University of Minnesota faculty member **Karl Smith**, Evergreen reference librarian **Lee Lyttle**, and **Jean MacGregor** and **Barbara Leigh**

Smith of the Washington Center. Although "Rethinking Biology" will focus on biology, it will be relevant to any teacher interested in exploring new ways to design introductory science courses, and in problem-centered instructional methods.

The 1995 institutes will feature other learning community models: "Challenging the Past: Science Shakes the Foundations: Dickens, Darwin and Marx" (June 23-30) will use the work of Dickens, Darwin and Marx to venture into the intellectual history and controversies that shaped the 20th century. "Chaos, Calculus and Comparative Worldviews" (July 29-August 5) will examine the literature, history and mythology of ancient and modern worldviews, and will conduct explorations of chaotic and nonchaotic systems.

Institute participants will be chosen through a written application process. The NSF grant will support participants' room, board and materials, as well as all instructional costs for the institutes. For applications, write to Barbara Leigh Smith, the Washington Center, Library 2211, The Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA, 98505-0002.



Judy Moore and Millie Stenehjem, faculty members at Yakima Valley Community College, developing the framework for "Rethinking Biology," the National Science Foundation Summer Institute they will teach in September. (Photo: Jean MacGregor)

Washington Center Evaluation Committee Produces Casebook on Collaborative Teaching and Learning

For the past two years, the case writing group subcommittee of the Washington Center's Evaluation Committee has been crafting a set of teaching cases to illuminate issues that faculty and administrators face in developing effective learning communities, or collaborative group work in classrooms. The cases are now in print, as *The Washington Center Casebook on Collaborative Teaching and Learning*.

Long a staple in business and law curricula, teaching cases have recently captured the teaching profession's attention as an intriguing and powerful vehicle for reflecting on curricular issues and teaching practices. Consequently, case workshops and case-writing enterprises are springing up throughout the country. A case is a short story or vignette — a written narrative or, occasionally, a video — which presents a complex, unresolved situation. Participants in the case

discussion are invited to examine the case, take apart the issues, and take the parts of the case's various characters and perspectives. Then, they are challenged to put together strategies for addressing or resolving the problems presented in the case. The idea in case discussions is not to reach consensus or find "the solution," but rather to see problems from multiple perspectives, and deepen everyone's understanding of the choicepoints we all face in muddy and complicated teaching situations.

The center's Evaluation Committee, an interinstitutional working group representing about 20 Washington Center consortium campuses, has been working over the past eight years to share approaches to assessment in and of learning communities. It recently decided to disseminate its work more widely through *The Handbook on Assessment in Collaborative Learning Environments* (forthcoming in fall, 1994), and a casebook. The casebook presents 23 cases dealing with issues both in learning community planning, teaching and assessment, and in free-standing classes that have collaborative learning components. The cases are appropriate for use in faculty and staff development workshops; some cases can be used in classroom settings as well. An extensive introduction, by **Dwight Oberholtzer** of Pacific Lutheran

University, offers advice about facilitating case discussions in professional development workshops. An index to the cases pinpoints different issues that the cases address.

The case writing group members are **Rosemary Adang** (Highline Community College), **Trish Barney** and **Michael Witmer** (Skagit Valley College), **Bonnie Casey** (South Seattle Community College), **Jeff Clausen** (Green River Community College), **Rochelle dela Cruz**, **Margaret Dickson** and **Carl Waluconis** (Seattle Central Community College), **Seth Frankel** (a student from The Evergreen State College), **Katherine Hunt** (Shoreline Community College), **Dan Jacoby** (University of Washington, Bothell), **Don Johnson** (South Puget Sound Community College), **Barbara Moburg** (Skagit Valley College, Whidbey Island campus), **Dwight Oberholtzer** (Pacific Lutheran University) and **Barbara Leigh Smith** (Washington Center).

The Washington Center Casebook on Collaborative Teaching and Learning is available for \$10 (which includes tax, shipping and handling fees) from The Evergreen State College Bookstore, Olympia, WA, 98505-0002.

Washington Center Workshops and Conferences 1994-95

Issues and Approaches to Cultural Pluralism will be the theme of the Washington Center's large annual conference. The conference will bring together six years of work statewide with the Minority Student Success Project (a partnership with the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges) and the Ford Foundation-funded Cultural Pluralism Project, as well as identify new work, challenges and directions. January 26-28, 1995 at the Westin Hotel in Seattle. The conference announcement will be mailed September 1994.

1995 Spring Curriculum Planning Retreats at two Sites

- April 20-21 in Western Washington at the University of Washington's Pack Forest in Eatonville.
- May 18-19 in Eastern Washington at Gonzaga University's Bozarth Center in Spokane.

Institutes on Sciences in Learning Communities

- June 20-27, 1994: "Reflections of Nature" at The Evergreen State College.
- September 5-12, 1994: "Rethinking Introductory Biology" at Pack Forest, near Eatonville.
- June 23-30, 1995: "Science Shakes the Foundations: Dickens, Darwin and Marx" at The Evergreen State College.
- July 29-August 5, 1995: "Chaos, Calculus and World Views" at The Evergreen State College.

Other conferences of interest

The Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication

Sponsored by the Intercultural Communication Institute of Portland, Oregon, this series of three- and six-day institutes assembles scholars and practitioners in the fields of multicultural and international education to work with professionals involved in educational and training work related to diversity and intercultural issues. Summer sessions will occur July 20-22, July 24-29, and July 31-August 5. For further information, call The Intercultural Communication Institute at (503)297-4622.

Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education

Annual Conference, October 20-23, 1994 at the Red Lion Hotel, Columbia River, Portland. The theme: Vision Quest: Dialogues on Dreams and Best Practices in Professional and Organizational Development. For information, contact David Graf, POD Network, 15B Exhibit Hall South, Iowa State University, Ames, IA, 50011; (515)294-3808.

Community College Humanities Association

Annual Conference, October 27-29, 1994 at the Benson Hotel, Portland. The theme: The Humanities Challenged: Threats or Opportunities? For information, call Bernard Knab, Chemeketa Community College; (503)399-5184.

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Seattle University: Bernard Steckler

Spokane Falls Community College: Ron Johns and Steven Reames

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The Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education

■ Established in 1985 at Evergreen as an inter-institutional consortium, the Center focuses on low-cost, high-yield approaches to educational reform, emphasizing better utilization and sharing of existing resources through collaboration among member institutions. Established with funding from the Exxon and Ford Foundations, the Center is now supported by the Washington State Legislature.

■ Includes 44 participating institutions: all of the state's public four-year institutions and community colleges, and ten 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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