INTEGRATED COURSES: EXAMINING THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Expectations Regarding the Levels of Linkage, Integration, Interdisciplinarity (Integrative Learning) Between the Two Courses.

The APTF report sets the following expectations regarding the linkage, integration, and interdisciplinary nature of the pair of EHE courses (all p. 18):

- the instructors “will interact closely to identify conceptual connections around a shared theme”(s).
- not introduce a discipline (a standard 101 survey) but explore a particular topic(s)
- Instructors should “develop syllabi in consultation with each other, in order to intentionally link methods, content, and/or pedagogic delivery (all can be complementary or divergent).
- “with the intention to provide students with an interdisciplinary approach and integrative learning experience.”
- “Instructors will have ownership over their own courses, yet ongoing discussion between the paired colleagues during the semester will ensure the linkage.”

Given these expectations, there is considerable flexibility in the levels of integration and interdisciplinary character that instructors can use in developing EHE courses. The levels of integration, and interdisciplinarity (integrative learning), that will be required for final approval of EHE courses are given below.

Levels of Integration. The EHE subcommittee expects that faculty will provide a description of course integration that is consistent with the descriptions above. The levels of integration in a curriculum have been described and classified by Harden¹, Fogarty²,³ and Kysilka⁴. Examples models (described by Harden⁴) of integration that are consistent with the expectations of EHE courses include:

- **Shared or Joint Teaching** - “The shared planning and teaching takes place in two disciplines in which overlapping concepts or ideas emerge as organizing elements.”
- **Model of Correlation, Concomitant Program or Democratic Program** - The emphasis remains on disciplines or subjects with subject-based courses taking up most of the curriculum time. Within this framework, an integrated teaching session is introduced, which brings together areas of interest common to each of the subjects.
- **Complementary or Mixed Program** - This has both subject-based and integrated teaching. The integrated sessions now represent the major feature of the course. The focus for the teaching may be a theme or topic to which the disciplines can contribute.

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- **Multidisciplinary or Webbed** - Whatever the nature of the theme, it is viewed through the lens of subjects or disciplines. The theme or problem is the focus for student’s learning but the disciplines preserve their identity and each demonstrates how their subject contributes to the student’s understanding of the theme or problem.

**Levels of Interdisciplinarity (Integrative Learning).** One of the expectations of EHE integrated courses is “to provide students with an interdisciplinary approach and integrative learning experience.” Klein and Newell\(^5\) state that in interdisciplinary courses, a faculty team or an individual faculty member “also make(s) a concerted effort to work with students in crafting an integrated synthesis of the separate parts [different disciplines] that provides a larger, more holistic understanding of the question, problem, or issue at hand.” Two levels of integration, as defined by Armstrong,\(^6\) would meet the expectations for EHE courses:

**Level 3** - “...faculty members as well as students become participants in the process of synthesizing knowledge. This implies the attempt to create courses through which the student can address interdisciplinary topics directly and requires the participation of more than one faculty member. ... This process might best be termed ‘serial teaching’ rather than team teaching, since individual faculty participants are not required to make an interdisciplinary contribution of their own; instead they simply bring their disciplinary wares to be displayed in a different context.”

**Level 4** - “The fourth and highest level of interdisciplinarity is marked by the attempt fully to integrate material from various fields of knowledge into a new, single, intellectually coherent entity. ... This fourth and most difficulty level of interdisciplinarity generally requires the involvement of more than one factualization of the course, building of the syllabus, and actual classroom presentations...”

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