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Your English Dept. Agreed to do What? The integration of Agronomy 356 & English
309



Your English Department Agreed to do WHAT?

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Your English Department Agreed to do WHAT?

- **Our work is part of ISU's Learning Community initiative**
- **The Continuum of Communication Intensity**
- **Our Journey**
- **Barriers**



Learning Communities

- *Community* builds peer support and forges bonds between students and teachers.
- *Community* makes learning more engaging and meaningful by enabling students to connect ideas from courses across the disciplines.



Degrees of communication intensity

- **“Let the English Dept. do it!”**
- **Acknowledging responsibility**
 - But what to do about it?
- **Communication intensive courses**
 - Essay tests
 - Communication projects



Degrees of communication intensity

- **Clustered courses**
 - Aside on Learning Communities
 - Student cohorts *without* faculty collaboration
- **Linked courses**
 - Cohorts *with* faculty collaboration
 - Related readings
 - Related assignments



Degrees of communication intensity

- **Integrated courses**
 - Exclusive cohort with maximum faculty collaboration
 - Coordination at the syllabus level
 - Joint assignments
 - Joint evaluation of those assignments



Syllabus coordination exercise

- **Where can you develop links with this course's syllabus?**



The Journey Begins

- **Early 1990s—College of Agriculture**
 - Fundamental and comprehensive curriculum review
- **Stakeholder feedback**
 - Graduates technically competent but poor communicators



The Journey Begins

- **Based on the review, the Ag College established the following communication outcomes:**
 - Be able to speak and write clearly and persuasively.



The Journey Begins

- Be able to prepare effective visual presentations.
- Be able to work effectively with others on complex, issue-laden problems requiring holistic problem-solving approaches (and communicate the solution to an audience).



The Journey Begins

- **The “new era”**
 - Recognizing responsibility
 - Developing a curricular response by:
 - Implementing communication intensive courses
 - Seeking help from English and establishing AgComm



The Journey continues

- **Tom's course, Agronomy 356, carries communications intensive credit**
 - Utilized AgComm consultants from Rhetoric & Professional Communication program



The Journey continues

- **Agronomy 356: Soil, Water and Fertilizer Management**
 - Enrolls juniors & seniors from various curricula in Agriculture
 - Requires students to complete weekly quizzes, each consisting of four essay questions
 - Includes collaborative writing, required revisions, and an oral presentation



The Journey continues

- **Problem encountered in 356**
 - Students understood the agronomic principles in isolation
 - Expectations were not met in:
 - Their problem solving abilities
 - Their abilities to effectively communicate the solutions to those problems



The Journey continues

- **Our Solution:**
 - Integrate Agron 356 with English 309 through common:
 - Students (exclusive cohort)
 - Course objectives
 - Course project
 - Classroom space



The Journey continues

- **English 309: Report and Proposal Writing**
 - Enrolls juniors & seniors from every college at ISU
 - Requires 6-8 projects, about 8000-10,000 words total
 - Requires collaborative writing, revision, and oral presentations



The Journey continues

- **The Integration Process**
 - Building the team
 - Coordinating the syllabi
 - Handling the unexpected
 - Continuing instructor interaction



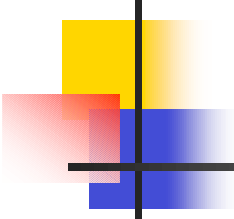
Building the Team

- **We were lucky to have the AgComm network**
- **It takes a common vision . . .**
 - Similarities of commitment among the three instructors to focus on students
 - Opportunity to blend teaching, research and assessment



Coordinating the syllabi

- **Assignments are aligned with the consulting process**
 - Prospective client report
 - Consulting proposal
 - Progress reports
 - Formal oral presentation
 - Final recommendation (farm plan) report
 - Oral presentation to client



Syllabus coordination exercise

- **Discuss your results**
 - Common ground?
 - Hook-up points?
- **Here's how we did it ...**



Handling the unexpected

- **Tom saves the day**
- **Which class is this?**



Continuing instructor interaction

- **Weekly meetings**
 - Fine tune the coordination
 - Trouble shoot
- **Daily collaborations**
 - Attend and actively participate in each other's classes
 - Cross-reference each others' material



Continuing instructor interaction

- **Joint evaluation**
 - PC report
 - Progress report
 - Farm plan



Evaluation exercise

- **Provide students with feedback on the handout**



Examples of joint evaluation

- **Samples from 356/309**



Barriers?

- **Getting Started**
- **Finding collaborators**
- **Course scheduling**
- **Others?**



Barriers?

- **Getting started**
 - Find out what types of communications your graduates do and work some into your course
 - Focus on problem solving
 - Tom found the communications strategies that Dave teaches are also problem solving strategies.



Barriers?

- Require students to communicate solutions to an audience (client, boss)
 - Working with subject matter knowledge
 - Practicing problem-solving strategies
 - Communicating



Barriers?

- **Finding collaborators**
 - Not all English departments are the same
 - Network
 - Where do teachers congregate
 - Colleagues of friends



Barriers?

- **Course scheduling**



Barriers?

- **What barriers might you find?**
- **Brainstorm solutions**