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HUMN 212

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Fayetteville State University
Impact of Integrated Course Design
Report Completed After Course Completion

Name: Jon Young **Semester (revised course was taught):** Fall 2010

Course Title and Description: : Humanities: Music, Arts, and Ideas II - The second part of an interdisciplinary survey course examining works of art, literature, music, philosophy, religious thought, and focusing on major stylistic developments and intellectual movements from the Renaissance to present day.

1. Explain the impact your “In-Depth Analysis of Situational Factors” had on your approach to the course.

The in-depth analysis forced me to think more explicitly about the relationship of this course to the University College (UC) Core Curriculum. Since this course fulfills the Humanities/Fine Arts requirements, I recognized the need to address these core learning outcomes. Two of the outcomes seemed especially important for this course and so I included them among my learning goals: “Interpret insightfully works of art, literature, philosophy, religion, music and other cultural achievements from multiple traditions,” and “Explain continuity and change, tradition and innovation, in the development of different societies, cultures, and political systems.”

Another factor I considered was that FSU’s core curriculum makes it possible for students to complete degrees with only one course in the humanities. Recognizing that this course might be the only time in their lives that students study the humanities in a formal setting informed my consideration of learning outcomes. (See item #2 below.)

With regard to expectations of the course from the university or external groups, the course functions as a history of culture, i.e., “what every college educated person should know about culture.” The course also serves to introduce students to the humanities generally, i.e., how the arts, literature, and music express fundamental human experiences, ideas, and beliefs. The course should help students answer the question, “Why should I care about the arts, literature, cultural works, and the humanities in general?” These two general expectations point to one of the most important dilemmas of the course, namely, balancing the “cover the content” imperative with the need to help students understand the importance and value of the humanities. If I focus on covering the content, the course will not likely engage most students in meaningful ways; though certainly, students should leave with the course with certain essential content. A course focused exclusively on content will not help most students recognize the enduring value of the humanities or make connections to their own lives.

The analysis of the nature of students helped me consider explicitly the fact that it is not likely that many students will have substantial experience in the study of the humanities. Most will be

enrolled in the course because it fulfills core requirements and the time fits into their overall schedule. The course has no pre-requisites, so I could not assume students would come to the class with strong writing or reading skills – and this course is one that requires significant reading and writing. It would be necessary for me to determine ways of helping them improve reading and writing skills as they used these skills. Furthermore, I knew I could not expect students to come to the class with significant motivation or interest; I would have to develop their interest and motivation. With regard to the teacher, I acknowledged that I last taught the course approximately 15 years earlier. In that time period, a wealth of resources – works of art, YouTube videos – have become available on the Internet. One of the instructional challenges of this semester would be to locate and utilize fully these Internet resources.

2. Explain the impact of the Taxonomy of Significant Learning (foundational knowledge, application, integration, human dimension, caring or valuing, and learning to learn) on your development of learning goals.

The review of the Taxonomy helped me clarify the importance of significant learning, that is, learning that will have an enduring impact on students' lives and learning. One of the most important influences of the Taxonomy has been to make me question impact of the course beyond grades. It is reasonable to assume that my students who have earned D or F grades or withdrew gained little from the course that will have an enduring impact on their lives. But what about those who complete a course with me and earned a C or better? Did they do well because they were able to read and write reasonably well and were disciplined enough to complete assignments on time? Do I know that the grade of C or better indicates that students learned anything of enduring value to them? Five years from now, will they be able to apply what they have learned to their lives? Will they have an interest or curiosity about cultural works that goes beyond consumerism? Will they ask questions of music, movies, drama, and the arts that enable them to derive personal meaning from these works? While this is not the first time I have raised such questions about my teaching, the Taxonomy and ICD generally forced me to think in a more focused manner about them.

The review of the Taxonomy made me aware that the many times I taught the course in the past, my primary focus was on foundational knowledge with some attention to application and integration. I was mainly concerned about covering the content. While I cannot ignore the need to cover a sufficient amount of content, it is also clear that it would be absolutely impossible to cover all the content. I considered it especially important to help students develop the 1) ability to apply what they learn to their daily lives and 2) continue to learn about the humanities in their daily lives. My overarching concern was to balance content coverage with ensuring that students will learn some skills, knowledge, concepts, and dispositions that will have an impact on continuous learning. I would like for them to leave the class with critical and interpretive skills that will enable them to derive (discover, construct) meaning in their interactions with arts, literature, music and cultural works generally. Of course, they must also develop the desire to explore these kinds of works.

As a consequence of my review of the Taxonomy, I developed learning goals in all six components and identified them in the syllabus.

From the course syllabus:

1. Interpret insightfully works of art, literature, philosophy, religion, music and other cultural achievements from multiple traditions. (University College core learning outcome.)
2. Explain continuity and change, tradition and innovation, in the development of different societies, cultures, and political systems. (University College core learning outcome.)
3. Define elements of different styles, cultural movements, and historical periods, i.e., Renaissance, Baroque, classical, Enlightenment, Romanticism, Impressionism, modernism, etc.; (Foundational Knowledge)
4. Identify important representatives of specific stylistic periods and cultural movements. (Foundational Knowledge)
5. Analyze important cultural works (visual arts, architecture, music, literature, movies, philosophy, religious writings) as responses to uniquely human questions of meaning, value, beliefs, i.e., "What kind of creature is a human being?" (What is relative importance of rationality, emotions? Are we the crown of creation or highly evolved animal? How does language, the visual arts, music, express and reflect who we are?) "What is beauty?" (How do the visual arts, music, architecture embody different conceptions of the "beautiful?") "What is human happiness?" (How should we live? What is the good life? How should we treat other people? What is/are the ultimate aim(s) and purpose(s) of life? Is happiness just a matter of individual preference or are there common elements of human happiness?) "What is our relation to the forces that govern the universe?" (Is there a loving God that has a plan for our lives? Is the universe indifferent to us?) "What is the significance of death for the way we live?" (Live for today? Prepare for the next life?) (Application)
6. Apply the analysis of cultural works in class to understand more fully the architecture, art, music, drama, movies, intellectual ideas they encounter in their own experience. (Application)
7. Explain how cultural works/stylistic trends both reflect and help to define historical periods. (Integration)
8. Develop the analytical and intellectual skills needed to discover /construct human meaning and relevance in the range of works that comprise human culture, including the arts, literature, music, ethical, philosophical, and religious viewpoints, to include both historical examples and works students encounter in their everyday lives. (Human Dimension)
9. Increase interest in a wide range of culture works and intellectual ideas. (Caring)
10. Increase their confidence in themselves as interpreter of cultural works. (Learning to Learn)
11. Develop curiosity and interest in cultural works and a repertoire of questions that will enable them to explore and discover meaning in cultural works and have a more informed and critical perspective on the cultural world around them. (Learning to Learn)
12. Develop study habits that will be beneficial in all of their classes; students will recognize their academic success is dependent upon active involvement inside and outside of class. (Learning to Learn)
13. Improve writing and reading skills through variety of assignments, tasks with evaluative feedback from instructor and peers. (Learning to Learn)

Reflecting on the course, now that it is complete, I recognize these goals were too ambitious and that I must narrow them substantially the next time I teach the course.

3. **Explain the impact of ICD on your assessment/feedback activities in the course, including the FIDeLity criteria.**

- a. Flash Cards – (to provide feedback) (This was the first time I used flash cards in a substantial manner.) Recognizing that students must leave the course with essential content (foundational knowledge – learning outcomes #3 and #4 from the syllabus), I required students to develop flash cards by finding information from the textbook. The advantage of the flash card format is that enables students to easily assess their own comprehension. This format seems especially appropriate to foundational knowledge; students should be able to find and remember much of this information on their own so that class time can focus more on application and integration. I also thought that the flash cards were appropriate for students who need to enhance reading skills. Students without well-developed reading skills are less likely to be able to read chapters with comprehension without a focus and purpose. The flash cards provide such a focus and purpose. I also encouraged students to use flash cards in all their courses as an effective tool for self-assessment and a few (3 or 4 as I recall) of them reported that they did so.
- b. Class summaries – I required students to write a class summary for each class. (This is a variation of the “one-minute paper.”) I did not collect these writing each day, but did so occasionally. At the beginning of the semester, we developed a rubric to guide assessments of summaries. Students submitted a sample summary for each test. Hence, it was to the students’ advantage to keep up with them. The class summaries assignment is also designed to help students understand the learning process. Classroom learning experiences are largely directed by the teacher; students must also understand the need for them to synthesize what they learn in class so that it becomes their own. In this context class summaries give students the practice in writing which is essential for them to become effective writers. The class summaries help students understand that writing is a tool for learning and thinking. For students in 200-level classes, short class summaries may be much more effective learning tool than writing formal papers. I emphasized to students that they should use these strategies in all their classes. One of the disappointing findings of the class was that the weaker students failed to keep up with the class summaries. The next time I teach this course, I will have to devise strategies to require all to keep up with their writing summaries.
- c. Note: I believe that the flash card assignments and class summaries help students organize their use of time outside of class. We repeat to students frequently, “You must study 2 or 3 hours outside of class for every hour in class.” (While I don’t doubt the need for out of class work, I wonder how many who say this actually did this when they were students.) Rather than speaking in the abstract about the importance of out of class work, we help our student more by giving them specific guidance on how to use their time.
- d. Tests – Student completed five tests, which were primarily auditive in focus. However, as a result of ICD and the emphasis on learning that has an enduring impact on students’ lives, I included some items that we had not discussed in class. I was trying to determine their ability to apply what they had learned independently.
- e. FIDeLity criteria - In all of my classes, I have usually sought to meet the first three criteria: that is, students have frequent opportunities for assessment and feedback; my responses are normally immediate, i.e., by the next class meeting. My comments are discriminating in that I focus on ways that students can improve or what they may have missed. While I cannot be sure

that students perceive my feedback as loving, or supportive, I have received no student comments that suggest that I am harsh or demeaning to them.

4. Explain how ICD influenced your teaching and learning activities.

ICD reinforced my longstanding commitment to what I consider the most fundamental goal of instruction, namely, to engage students actively in thinking about cultural works. I want students to leave the class with analytical skills and a knowledge base that will enable them to find meaning in cultural works they encounter on their own. Their lives will be enriched in the future if they can not only be consumers of culture, but reflective about works as well. To help them develop these skills they must practice these tasks in and outside of class. This approach takes more time – I could tell them the same information much more quickly. I strive to engage them directly in analysis of the works of art and literature instead of simply explaining these works to them. The engagement normally takes the form of a very unstructured question-answer dialogue. Unfortunately, some students will be reluctant to speak out. Hence, it is important to develop a classroom climate that is conducive to discussion (i.e., student know it is okay not to be right all the time.) Even then, some students will be reluctant to speak up. Hence, I will have similar discussions in small groups on occasion.

I completed a Teaching Snapshot DVD to highlight teaching and learning activities that documents this approach.

5. Explain how you sought to integrate teaching and learning activities with learning goals.

My approach to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is representative. How to teach Hamlet in view of situational factors of course? (i.e. possibly the only Humanities course they ever take – not English majors; not part of larger required sequence.) I ignored the substantial history of criticism. (A survey of the historical criticism might be appropriate in an upper division class, but I see no value for a lower-division class.) I took the "To be or not to be" speech as the guiding principles for the discussion. My aim was to help them see that this speech illuminates the basic dilemma that Hamlet faces in the play, but that it speaks to fundamental dilemma of the human condition. We used the "to be or not to be" speech to guide our discussion on the plot. We did careful textual analyses of some important soliloquies and used performances on YouTube to make thee portions more real for students. After the grading the test which included *Hamlet*, I concluded that most students learned the plot of Hamlet; nearly the same number was able to show how the "to be or not to be" speech illuminated the plot; their ability to apply this to their own lives varied greatly from the very trivial to very insightful. I also asked them to watch the *The Simpsons version of Hamlet* (6 minute video) and asked them whether it provides a helpful introduction to Hamlet. The majority of students were able to identify ways the video is helpful and misleading.

6. Explain whether ICD had an impact on your own satisfaction in teaching the course.

I have always derived significant satisfaction in teaching this course. However, ICD enhanced my level of satisfaction. I found ICD to be “liberating” in that it helped me think about the course in terms other than “covering the content.” It helped me clarify and aim to achieve my goals for teaching the course, namely, to have an enduring impact on student learning because I believe that understanding of the humanities and the ability and inclination to apply this knowledge will enrich their lives. ICD helped me clarify the value of classroom engagement which makes teaching more enjoyable for me and for most students. In reflecting on the course, however, I must acknowledge the disparity between my overarching goals for the course and student outcomes (explained below). This disparity will drive further course improvements. ICD provides a useful framework for identifying these further improvements.

7. Summarize any evidence you have on the impact of the re-designed course on student learning.

Of the 17 students who were officially enrolled in the class, 10 (59%) earned final grade of A, B, or C. One would expect a rate closer to 70% based on university-wide data. Three students attended only a few classes and stopped attending; only one of these student responded to my EA warnings. All of the six students who earned final grades of A were adult learners. The highest grade earned by a first –time freshmen was a B; other traditional-aged students earned Cs or Ds. These outcomes suggest that the maturity level of adult learners is especially appropriate for the humanities courses. We should consider enforcing a pre-requisite of sophomore status for entry into the class.

In view of my emphasis on helping students develop skills and knowledge that will enable them to understand or evaluate cultural works in their everyday lives, I included two items on the final exam to address these goals explicitly. One question asked them to evaluate a building on the FSU campus; another question asked them to explain how they will use what they learned in the future. Based on the rubric (see below) , 6 of 13 students (46%) earned at least an “Acceptable” rating for their analysis of building on the FSU campus, while 4 of 13 (31%) earned a rating of “Likely” or higher on their explanation of how they will use what they learned in the class. While these results are disappointing, they may point to a problem of including these questions as part of the final exam, which included a number of questions. I will develop other means for assessing items such as these items in the future that enable student to focus their attention exclusively on these items.

The grades and these assessments help me identify major tasks for the next time I teach the course. I will strive to identify ways to use the assessment strategies to ensure that all students are keeping up with the course. I will continue to strive to promote significant learning by providing an educational experience that will have an enduring impact on students’ lives.

HUMN 212: Rubric for evaluating essay on FSU Building

	1 – Unsatisfactory	2- Acceptable	3 – Excellent
Description of Parts	Cursory attention; Minimal amount of detail description	Substantial description of parts that comprise the building	Thorough description of parts that describe the building; reflects

	provided		class discussions of architecture
Formal Elements	Minimal or no attention to the way the parts or organized	Substantial discussion of the organization of parts	Thorough description of the organization of parts; reflects class discussions of architecture
Beauty	Minimal attention to issues of beauty.	Offers a suggestion about the beauty of the building though not fully developed.	Provides a thoughtful conclusion about the beauty of the building, informed by class discussions.

HUMN 212 – Rubric for evaluating Learning to Learn (How likely is it that students will apply what they learned in the future?)

	1 –Unlikely	2- Likely	3 – Very Likely
Examples from class discussions	Minimal or no references to class discussions	Substantial references to class discussions	Makes meaningful and relevant references to class discussions
Indicates future ongoing interest	Minimal or no evidence of ongoing interest	Some evidence of ongoing interests	Show significant evidence of ongoing interests
Suggests insightfulness	Minimal or no evidence of ability to understand works independently	Shows some ability to understand works independently	Provides evidence of ability to understand works independently