

EXAMPLES OF INTEGRATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

FROM WASHINGTON STATE LEARNING COMMUNITY COORDINATORS MEETING

Names: Anne Martin (Edmonds Community College)
Debra Olson (Spokane Falls Community College)

Courses: Sociology of the Environment & Pre-Algebra

Public Issue: Should I Shop at Wal-Mart?

Assignment: Oral and written team reports that give pro and con evidence within a subtopic (e.g. environment, labor, social class) answering the theme question using qualitative and quantitative evidence

Learning Outcomes:

- Sense of purpose (in the world and in their world) of the math at hand
- Proficiency of “absolutely necessary” math skills
- Sense of perspective in discriminating “math” and “algebra”
- Ability to use general problem-solving skills to approach quantitative problems
- Sociological perspectives, core concepts, and methods – including interviewing
- Scientific method
- Opportunity to gain compassion through appreciation of power and social forces (e.g. race/ethnicity, class, gender and other differences...immigration, etc.)
- Local/global connections in problems, solutions, power dynamics
- Service learning: who is in community and orientation to Wal-Mart

Resources:

- Community partners in labor/environment/business
- Community members (interviews/surveys)
- Readings
- Guest speakers
- Videos
- Math skills building
- Small group exercises
- Class presentations
- Interviews/ surveys

Student Work:

- Present to each other/guest speakers/interviews

Name: Robin Jeffers (Bellevue Community College)
Rhonda Meyers (Lower Columbia College)

Courses: Composition & Human Genetics

Public Issue: Stem Cell Research

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand issues in genetic and stem cell research
- Ev types/ AC discourse types

Assignment #1: Context-setting

Group task: Library research – varieties of evidence
Current research: gene therapies, organ transplants, organ growth, cloning (explain pros and cons of cloning), cloning of endangered species, ethical issues
Genetics: know how to relate genetics to one's family; understand how genetics ties to society
Evidence sequence: claim – evidence – examples of evidence

Assignment #2: Scientific report of 'experiment'

Group task: Isolate own DNA – know structure of DNA
Field trip: Abernathy fish and Technology Center
Varieties of academic discourse: humanities style; scientific reporting of research
Generating your own evidence and using it

Assignment #3: Position paper

Integrating self-generated evidence with evidence from external sources
Basic element of logic
Analytical prose
Applying academic techniques to see what you don't see in your everyday life

Name: Sarah Ryan (The Evergreen State College)
Sara Baldwin (South Seattle Community College)

Courses: Labor Studies & ESL

Public Issue: Work and Immigration in Our Community

Assignment: Oral history project looking at immigration, work, and living wages. Students will design questions. Each would interview on person and photograph her/him. Write and present stories and data. Together they analyze results and what they show about immigration and the history of working people.

Learning Outcomes:

- Research and research-design in oral and local history
- Basic descriptive statistics and understanding inflation
- Speaking, listening, and forming opinions across level of skill and styles of English
- Understand the community/norms in which they live
- Understand different opinions

Resources:

- Media, photo supplies, computer lab

Student Work:

- Think about one's job and compare it to others
- Form opinions about a topic
- Do research evaluation
- Read and understand in a content area (ESL)
- Discuss the topic and make them understood in speaking and writing (ESL)
- To understand what others say and write (ESL)
- Engage in conversations with people outside of class
- Compare work with work done in the past
- Create questionnaire/survey to learn what the jobs and practices are
- Analyze research

Public Presentation: Campus display – speaking at a public event

Name: Jane Lister-Reis (North Seattle Community College)
Catherine Crain (Cascadia Community College)
Bill Moore (Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges)
Courses: Psychology, Communication, & Math (statistics)

Public Issue: Seeking the In-Between in Political Discourse

Assignment: Observing, analyzing, and providing feedback on an example of public political discourse

Preparations: Use of evidence, quantitative reasoning, dialogic listening, psychological perspectives

Learning Outcomes:

- Move beyond fear of tough/fierce conversations
- Deep listening practice – “Dialogue listening”
- Concept of voice – social construct influenced by RCG
- Conflict resolution – “non-violent communication”
- Role of statistics and probability in real-world decision-making
- Use and misuse of data in reasoning
- Interpreting charts/graphs as context of assignments
- How to think critically about sources (especially popular sources)
- How psychologists answer research questions (major research methodology approaches)
- Ethics of research
- How to ask a research question
- Psychological perspectives (multiple)

Resources: Media, legislative hearings

Name: Jenny McFarland (Edmonds Community College)
Mike Gillespie (University of Washington – Bothell)
Courses: Biology & Philosophy

Public Issue: Biology and Morality of Assisted Suicide

Assignment:

- Letter to children (or loved ones) request an outcome: explain biological and philosophical; for specific terminal disease
- Applies discipline to issue; requires demonstrating and relating of decision; links conceptual and feelings in contexts; see relevance of their studies in life
- Research a disease: biology of death – when terminal?; basic ethical approaches; interview – activist, family, or physician
- In class; poster for public area; public art

Learning Outcomes:

- Get better at challenging our own assumptions w/love and fear
- Connect conceptual to feeling response with issue
- Apply biology knowledge and ways of thinking to real/meaningful issues
- Understand that they already know and use science

- Be able to use/apply reading, writing, and skills to learning biology
- Respond with critical writing improve in this over the quarter
- Relate scientific descriptions and theory to public issues
- Respond honestly and with courage – sense of confidence in varying contexts
- Appreciate different dimensions (values) – scientific, philosophical, aesthetic

Resources:

- Readings/speakers: legal, religious, medical, activists; video (e.g. Moyers); Oregon law and responses

FROM COLLEGE READINESS DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION RETREAT

Issue: Payday Loans: Who Wins? Who Loses?

Subjects: English ~ research, collect current data, supplement written presentation of information with charts and graphs, facilitate forum, produce lobby letter and campus info poster, write letters to invite forum guests and shame public figures. **Math** ~ apply appropriate formulas, compare data, chart & graph research, extrapolate and interpret data.

What: To use basic math, reading, writing skills to make informed decisions.

How: Evaluate letters, charts, graphs, research. . .

Creativity – varied modes of response

Assessment – math concepts test, public presentation, written documents

Expectations – written description of issue and assignments (we love rubrics)

Challenge comfort – go to loan shark, public presentation, public “real” letter

Support – calendar of events and deadlines

Collaboration – work in groups w/clearly defined roles

Prior knowledge – topic/ skills, autobiography

Intellectual challenges – bridging gap from “classroom stuff” to real world knowledge

English course:

Purpose: The integrated assignment contributes to learning in this specific course in these ways: 1) helping students define and narrow an issue; 2) Researching it factually without bias or faulty argument and 3) using the information to interpret, publish, write letters of change, discuss, collaborate, etc.

Specific tasks: identify problem, narrow plan research, do research, interpret research, make charts and graphs describing issue/facts adequately, and write letters to politicians.

Math course:

Assignment: Part 1 – Visit a payday loan store to find out what rates they charge. (give a specific amount of money and loan time to work with.) Find out basic rates and any penalty fees. Part 2 – Research other ways to get short-term cash. Part 3 – Calculate how much money you have to spend to get the payday loan. Compare this with the other ways of obtaining money. Purpose: To be able to do the calculations of interest, etc in order to make informed decisions, to judge whether or not payday loan rates are “fair.”

Issue: OIL: What Does it Cost?

Courses: Reading 096, Math 080, ABE Math

Purpose: An opportunity to read and synthesize information from various resources to develop an informed opinion on a social issue. Discover the relevance of statistical data.

Assignment: Research project in groups. Each group will explore some facet of the larger subject of oil.

Specific tasks:

- Brainstorms subtopics
- Identify places to conduct research
- Carefully read articles and evaluate validity of sources
- Collaborate with group members
- Collect quantifiable data from family, co-workers, friends, and acquaintances.
- Aggregate the data – Identify key points to present
- Visually present aggregated data using a table, histogram, stem & leaf diagram
- Apply and present basic measures of central tendency
- Presentation of research, data, and topics to the class

Curricular resources: Library – periodicals, journals, newspapers, government documents/ Energy Outreach Center/ Government Offices/ Voter’s Pamphlets/ Videos/ Intercity Transit/ Bicycle Advisory Board

Learning expectations:

- Gather information from reliable sources
- Understand information gathered
- Apply measures of central tendency/ create an articulate, informed opinion
- Synthesize information for public presentation

Other: Math class and reading class to meet jointly to plan/choose research topic. Create teams that will match qualitative with quantitative.

FROM CAMPUSES**Faculty at American River College**

Courses: Anatomy and Physiology and Reading

Issue: Can students, faculty and staff eat a “heart healthy” diet on campus?

Resources: RDA’s food guide pyramid, journal articles (Am. Heart Assoc.), Health Center, Campus food services, library

Project: Students work in small groups: investigation, analysis, conclusion, and consequences

Preparation: Learn about structure and function of heart, “heart healthy” diet, consequences of a poor diet on the heart/heart disease, structure of text, how to read charts and graphs, crafting questions.

Courses: Chemistry and Biology

Issue/Question: Analyze your personal “footprint” (impression left by your actions) choices

Resources: Suzuki website, compact website, films (Future of food, Supersize me, etc.), Waste Management and Health programs

Projects: Choose 1 of 3: Waste (environment), Diet (body), Consumer (society)

Preparation: Evaluate problem and develop hypothesis; gather data; extend hypothesis 50 years; conclusions/assumptions/validity; group analysis

Faculty at Sacramento State University

Courses: Criminal Justice I & Freshman Seminar

Public Issue: Impact of illegal use of drugs & alcohol on freshman students.

Integrative Assignment:

In the CRJ class, students will read & discuss the legal, social, and educational consequences of the illegal use of drugs and alcohol. The freshman seminar course will focus on the illegal use of drugs and alcohol as it impacts the student's ability to be successful in school.

Describe what students will do in each course to prepare for this project:

Students will work in research groups –

1. Drugs used most on college campuses
2. Drugs used most at CSUS
3. In California, what are the consequences of getting caught with illegal drugs?
4. What are the physiological impacts of drug use?

What learning outcomes does this project support for each of your classes?

- Group work
- Library Research /Information Competency
- Oral Presentation
- Better Understanding of self
- Importance of understanding what they really want out of higher education
- Ability to think critically

How will you invite students to adopt an incremental theory about their own intelligence in the context of their work, with you (individually and as a team)?

As students begin to get new information and develop an understanding of what is important to them, they may begin to change their attitudes about substance abuse.

How will students work become public?

The EOP CRJ learning community students will present a Power Point presentation of their findings and recommendations at the learning community closing event attended by all EOP Learning Community students.