

Appendix A

Univ.	Home	Name	Req/ Elec	Credit-bearing/ Non-credit/ Super-num.	Length	Uniform / Flexible Curric.	Content						Infused / Stand-alone	Emphasis, Primary theme
							<i>Co-curric.</i>	<i>Life Skill</i>	<i>Acad. skills</i>	<i>Research</i>	<i>Trans-discipl.</i>	<i>Deliv. mode</i>		
UJ	Faculty	Citizen ship, Demo cracy & Ethics	R	Credit	Varies	Flexible						Lectures	Varies	Active, critical citizenship
UCT	Centre for Open Learning	Global Citizen ship: Leading for Social Justice	E	Non	2 terms	Uniform	√				√	ICT, Group session tutor-led, reading	Stand-alone	Global citizenship, social justice
UWC	Faculty	Living and Learn. in Science	R	Credit	1 year	Flexible		√	√		√	Lectures Projects	Infused	Graduate attributes
UFH	Centre for Transdis Studies	Life, Know- ledge, Action	R	Credit	1 sem.	Uniform		√	√	√	√	Groups Readings Lecture Films	Stand-alone	Humanising pedagogy, Africanisation
Limpopo	Applied Linguis.	Appl. Lang. Stud.		Credit	Full BA	Uniform	√		√		√	Lecture Communi ty work	Full degree	Language & society
UFS	Student Dev.	UFS 101	R (pilot)	Credit	1 year	Uniform					√	Lecture Discuss groups, Bboard	Stand-alone	Engaged scholarship
Pretoria	Faculty	Communi- Based Project	R	Credit	Open- ended	Projects	√				√	Projects Blog	Stand-alone	Community- Based projects
DUT (Proposed)	Faculty	Funda- mental Learn.	R	Credit	1 year	Uniform		√	√				Stand-alone	
Rhodes (planned)			R	Super	Across 3 years	Flexible					√	Lecture	Stand-alone	Leadership

Appendix B

University of Stellenbosch staff consulted

Dr Ludolph Botha, Senior Director: Student and Academic

Dr Jerome Slamet, Senior Director: Community Interaction

Dr Brenda Leibowitz, Director: CTL

Dr Trevor van Louw, Director: Centre for Educational Leadership and Management

Mr Pieter Kloppers, Director: Centre for Student Communities

Dr Susan van Schalkwyk, Deputy Director: CTL

Dr Francois Cilliers, Deputy Director: CTL

Dr Leslie van Rooi, Deputy Director; Student Affairs

Dr Ansie Loots, Co-coordinator: Undergraduate Studies, Economic and Management Sciences

Dr Munita Dunn, Deputy Director: Centre for Student Communities

Mr John Ruiters, Advisor: First-Year Academy

Ms Michelle Pietersen, Project manager: Maties Community Service

Ms Ingrid Mostert, IMSTUS

Ms Rhoda Malgas, Associate: Indigo Development and Change

Ms Mathilda Rosslee, Legal Aid Clinic

Mr Bradley Greenhalgh, Law Faculty

Ms Melanie Petersen, CTL

Ms Elmarie Constandius, Lecturer: Dept of Visual Communication and Design

Ms Anita Jonker, Language Specialist

Ms Elize Archer, Health Sciences

Ms Ibrezia Johnson, Lecturer: Dept of Private Law

Prof Ed Jacobs, Lecturer: Dept of Chemistry and Polymer Science

Dr Alwyn Louw, Co-coordinator: Extended Degree Programmes, Health Sciences

Ms Wilma Wagener, Co-coordinator: Faculty of Science

Staff consulted at other universities

University of Cape Town: Janice McMillan, Global Citizenship course coordinator

Janet Small, Global Citizenship course administrator

University of the Western Cape: Delia Marshall, faculty coordinator

Birgit Schreiber, student support services

University of Fort Hare Andre Keet, LKA Grounding Course designer

University of the Free State Francois Marais, Director: Centre for Ed. Studies and Dev.

Francois Strydom, Director: Student Development and Success

Durban University of Technology Thengani Ngwenya, Director: Centre for Learning & Teaching

Rhodes University Chrissie Boughey, Dean: Teaching and Learning

University of Limpopo Esther Ramani, Applied Linguistics

University of Pretoria Martina Jordaan, Senior lecturer, Community-Based Project

University of Johannesburg Elizabeth de Kadt, Exec. Director: Acad. Dev. and Support

Duke University Edna Andrews, Director: FOCUS Programme

Appendix C

CONSULTATION SESSION PROPOSAL FOR A SIGNATURE LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

27 July 2011

Attendance

Bernard Taryn Ms

Bezuidenhout Juanita Prof

Blackie Margaret Dr

Bosman JP Dr

Botha Jan Prof

Botha Ludolph Dr

Brown Natasja Dr

Burger Lydia Ms

Burgoyne Mégan Ms

Carolissen Ronelle Prof

Cilliers Charl Prof

De Stadler Leon Prof

Farmer Jean Ms

Greenhalgh Bradley Mr

Jacobs Ed Prof

Jonker Anita Ms

Kloppers Pieter Mr

Leibowitz Brenda Dr

MacMaster Llewellyn Dr

Muller André Mr

Roshochacki Sophia Ms

Ruiters John Mr

Slamat Jerome Dr

Smith Linda Dr

Van Rooi Leslie Dr

Van Schalkwyk Susan Dr

Young Gert Mr

Introduction

Dr Ludolph Botha welcomed those attending. He introduced the Signature Learning Experience (SLE) as one way of addressing Stellenbosch University (SU) goals regarding graduate attributes and the development of learning communities. Initial thinking about the SLE was that it would be a co-curricular activity, but Ludolph wanted to present the idea to academics for their possible participation.

Background information

Dr Linda Smith made a presentation on the definition of a Signature Learning Experience, its aims, general nature, possible modalities, desired outcomes, practical implications of introducing an SLE and possible components of an SLE at SU. Linda pointed out that two primary questions to be answered were: What do we seek to achieve by having a SLE? and How much are we willing to change the current system and curricula? (See Appendix A of these minutes for the full presentation.)

After the presentation some time was allowed for questions, as follows:

Q. What degree of student interest is there likely to be in such a programme? Will they not see it as unrelated to their studies?

A. A lot would depend on the structure and content of the SLE and on how it was shown to be relevant to the various disciplines. However, the possibility of student resistance is one of the arguments in favour of making the SLE elective.

Q. Would the SLE have to be taught by lecturers? Could it not be taught by student instructors?

A. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of an SLE, it requires the perspective of an experienced lecturer.

Q. How different is the SLE from what is already being offered?

A. Some departments may already be offering something that is very like the proposed SLE, and in these cases an SLE could be introduced with minimal adjustments to the curriculum, although the transdisciplinary aspect is likely to be new. Also, it should be remembered that the SLE is supposed to be the signature of the university, and so the aim is to offer the experience across the board to all students.

Proposed SLE for SU

Dr Brenda Leibowitz made a presentation regarding a possible SLE for SU, entitled *Being a Matie Student, Becoming a Global Citizen*. She proposed a 6-credit, supernumerary SLE module with one living and learning, diversity-related outcome and one relating a student's discipline to global questions. The module would require attending small-group sessions and electronic postings. Brenda suggested running pilots in 2012 and 2013 before official adoption. (See Appendix B for full presentation).

Group discussion

After Brenda's presentation those attending broke into small discussion groups followed by a report-back period. Points arising:

- There was general positive feeling towards the idea. Group members did not question the merits of developing graduate attributes and providing an interdisciplinary perspective.
- Some people are already trying to offer a signature learning type of experience, and these initiatives should be supported.
- One challenge was the perception, and reality, of overloading, which might be addressed by placing the SLE at the beginning of the year or offering it as part of the res. ed. or mentoring programme.
- A pilot is needed before wider scale implementation.
- Look at existing examples and adapt.
- The SLE should begin before students' arrival on campus.
- Choose facilitators carefully – content and process.
- Sell the SLE well so that students anticipate enjoying the experience.
- Have challenging topics.
- The SLE could be infused across a whole faculty, not presented in a single course.
- The interdisciplinary aspect is important.
- Buy-in by both students and academics is essential.
- We can experiment with different options – we don't have to get it perfect on the first attempt.
- Having a shared "text" would be advantageous.
- The arts are a valuable way to "open mental doors."

Way forward

Although it may seem that at least basic questions of breadth versus depth need to be settled, it would be possible to pilot a variety of approaches. The group agreed to meet again, possibly in early October, bringing specific ideas for implementation. They were also asked to indicate their interest in assisting with design, facilitation, training or evaluation.

Post-meeting comments

In general the meeting was encouraging, both in terms of attendance and the interest that implies and the consensus that an SLE was a desirable initiative. Questions centred not around whether there should be a SLE but on how it should be implemented, with a clear willingness to see such a programme in place.

It was apparent that for some of those present Signature Learning was a new concept and this coloured their perception of how it could be put into practice. This will right itself with time and more exposure to the ideas of signature learning. The theme and its application suggested by Brenda were not discussed, perhaps because participants were still dealing with the general idea of an SLE and were not yet ready to address a specific plan.

Two aspects not directly addressed, but about which people may have made had divergent, but tacit, assumptions were the balance of academic and general work in the SLE and the extent to which the signature would be that of the university as a whole versus that of a specific discipline. Related to this is the question of uniformity, that is, whether all students would be exposed to the same material or whether the SLE would have one process, but with content differing somewhat across disciplines or course themes.

Depending on the ideas brought to the next meeting, it may be possible to initiate more than one pilot, based on different approaches. These pilots would probably be influenced by current departmental practices that approximate SLEs in various ways. At the very least a small-scale “mini-SLE” could be part of the Welcoming activities in 2012.

Linda Smith

1 August 2011

Appendix D

MINUTES OF THE SIGNATURE LEARNING CONSULTATIVE SESSION

Held on Wednesday 7 September, 2011, 2.00 p.m.

1. Attendance

Bezuidenhout Juanita Prof

Bosman JP Dr

Botha Ludolph Dr

Brown Natasja Dr

Carolissen Ronelle Prof

Cilliers Charl Prof

Constandius Elmarie Ms

Dunn Munita Dr

Farmer Jean Ms

Greenhalgh Bradley Mr

Jacobs Ed Prof

King Gina

Kloppers Pieter Mr

Leibowitz Brenda Dr

MacMaster Llewellyn Dr

Malgas Rhoda

Muller André Mr

Nell Ian Dr

Odendaal Pieter

Ruiters John Mr

Schmeisser Michael Dr

Slamat Jerome Dr

Smith Linda Dr

Van Rooi Leslie Dr

Van Schalkwyk Susan Dr

Young Gert Mr

2. Welcome

Dr Ludolph Botha welcomed those present. He referred to current time constraints, as the intention was to introduce at least elements of signature learning in 2012, with a full roll-out planned for 2014 or 2015. However, the group was not to feel pressured, but to consider what would be best for the institution as a whole and what would be sensible for implementation in 2012.

3. Presentation on a possible signature learning module, by Dr Leibowitz

Dr Brenda Leibowitz made a presentation on a proposed Signature Learning module entitled *Student 2 Citizen*. Key points were:

- The Signature Learning Experience (SLE) must unite students across campus and across diverse groups.
- There should be an emphasis on community interaction and on research.
- The module could be piloted with one student cluster of about 800 students.
- The intention is to get students involved outside their required courses.
- The proposed module has two semester-long components:
 - Mentors will be heavily involved in the work of the first semester, which will address the

following themes:

- Where do we come from?
- SU – a land of contrasts
- What can we do about it?
- Portraits from the outside world
- The second semester will be more research-oriented.

See Appendix A of these minutes for full presentation.

4. Discussion

Following Brenda's presentation Ludolph opened the topic to the floor. Questions, comments and suggestions were as follows:

- Is participation in the module outlined by Brenda intended to be voluntary? Answer: It is required for students to participate in mentor discussion groups. Students' working towards receiving the SLE certificate would be voluntary. What if only one student in a given group is enthusiastic, and is let down by others in the group? Answer: We may have to create a mechanism for regrouping.
- It is important to convey the importance of and enthusiasm for the SLE right from students' first exposure to it. Those involved need to take ownership of it.
- Try to have the SLE as part of the curriculum.
- The signature of the university may be common across faculties, but may be addressed differently by different faculties.
- The SLE implies by its nature the acquisition of life skills.
- The time for taking action is now. Plans and decisions must take place within the next three weeks.
- Counterproposal to having the SLE as part of the curriculum: In the initial stages of implementation, keep it co-curricular. Use it as an opportunity for students to meet and get to know one another.
- The module currently proposed is only one component of an SLE process.
- Emphasize critical thinking and having heart.
- Students will be more ready for the more academic aspects of an SLE at third-year level. This is where a capstone course plays a role.
- Opportunities should be available for inclusion of SLE components from the first through to the third year.
- There is a need to cultivate critical thinking, debate and passionate discussion. Some of this is now taking place more by means of social networks than by face-to-face discussion.
- Who decides on the theme of the module? When would a different theme be introduced? Answer:

Perhaps comments from the 2013 group would determine the next year's theme. The First-Year Academy (FYA) can also play a role here.

- The module will receive additional credibility when prospective employers value it in candidate selection. This then becomes a way of advertising the SLE.
- It is important that lecturers themselves are receptive to critical thinking by their students.
- For there to be signature learning, there must be signature teaching. SLEs, when used to their full potential, transform the curriculum.
- SLEs must thus be part of the university's formal plan. Staff development has to be included in the plan. Therefore this project cannot be led purely by the FYA, but must be part of a broader plan.

5. Closing remarks

The meeting supported the use of the student clusters as the organisational unit for presenting the SLE module.

An open invitation was offered to anyone who would like to participate in the programme. Those who are interested should contact Brenda.

Anyone who would like to use an SLE in their department should contact Brenda.

Those attending were requested to continue the discussion with their immediate colleagues.

6. Closure

The meeting closed at 15h30.

Appendix E

Examples of activities that could be components of a Signature Learning Experience

From Michigan State's Integrative Studies programme, as described by Youatt and Wilcox (2008), p.25.

Signature Pedagogy in Action

Not surprisingly, when we looked across our campus, examples of this newly emerging signature pedagogy typically crossed departmental, college, and disciplinary boundaries. For example, the MSU Science, Technology, Environment, and Public Policy Specialization (STEPPS) program is a cross-collegiate program in public policy that relates to science, technological change, and environmental science. Instead of a singular disciplinary emphasis, the program emphasizes promoting change through the formulation of effective public policy.

Another “discovered” example of this new signature pedagogy in action was the MSU solar oven project. For this, engineering students carried out a project in Tanzanian villages that provided an alternative to the burning of wood and charcoal cooking fuels, thus addressing problems of deforestation and health. While effective, it required the native women in the villages to adopt a set of nontraditional behaviors. The solar oven project called on integrated knowledge from a variety of disciplines—from sociology to environmental science—well beyond the technology required to build the solar-powered cooking machine. At its foundation, this was a “discovery centered project,” but it also employed interdisciplinary and integrated knowledge, translated in ways that made it useful, in a specific cultural and geographic context. While our typical assessment strategies limit how we describe the outcomes of the experience, student participants have personally described it as “transformational” for them.

A newly emerging MSU program, the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Global Corps, also embodies this new signature pedagogy for undergraduate education. This unique program combines global outreach and research. It engages teams of students in a study abroad program while they complete community-based ICT projects in developing regions of the world.

A History course at Augustana College, as described by Calder (2006), pp. 1363-1367.

"U.S. History: World War II to the Present" does not actually begin with World War II. Rather, my survey begins with a prologue or overture in which students consider the nature of historical study itself...

Students come to college thinking that history is what one finds in a textbook: a stable, authoritative body of knowledge that, when remembered, somehow makes the world a better place. The prologue features exercises designed to expose the inadequacies of such a view. For example, when students write brief "histories" of a civil disturbance in the Spike Lee movie *Do the Right Thing*, they are surprised to learn just how different people's interpretations of an event can be, even when everyone works from the same evidence...

After the prologue, the remaining weeks of the course are given to eight problem areas

spanning the course's chronological boundaries... Each topic is given three class meetings, with each of the three devoted to a different kind of study: the first to visual inquiry, the second to critical inquiry, the third to moral inquiry...

Can beginning students learn to do history the way professionals do it? Of course not.

But my studies have found they can learn to execute a basic set of moves crucial to the development of historical mindedness. I want students to learn six such moves, or cognitive habits: questioning, connecting, sourcing, making inferences, considering alternate perspectives, and recognizing limits to one's knowledge...

questioning is an extraordinarily difficult skill for most students, probably because for their whole lives teachers and textbooks have posed the questions for them... So the first move students need to learn is that of asking good historical questions...

I find that films are good for this purpose. A well-chosen film orients students to basic information about a subject and motivates them to take an empathic leap into the past. Films make good launch pads for thought as they provide interpretations students can push against with their own questions... Most of the films screened in my course are documentaries, with an occasional

historical Hollywood drama or period propaganda film on the schedule. On film day my objective is to teach students how to learn from film, how to view moving images with an awareness of the manipulations involved... But in addition to literacy and student motivation, my ultimate objective on the first day of each

unit is to create an environment so rich in information and so charged with interesting problems that students who are inert in the face of lectures and textbooks will be stirred to ask a few historical questions...

Following the meeting given to visual inquiry, students prepare for the second meeting

in the unit—we call it "history workshop"—by examining primary documents pertaining

to the week's subject... Students write three- to five-page essays on questions of their choosing using the evidence they have examined. When the history workshop convenes, this essay is everyone's ticket to class—no one is allowed entry without it... It ensures that everyone not only has read the documents but also has read them closely enough to construct a historical argument, thus making each student the class expert on at least one facet of the subject...

This meeting has two objectives. My first goal is to facilitate discussion of the questions students have brought. The second goal is to introduce each week a new intellectual move characteristic of the way historians think... I look for opportunities to call time-out, stopping intellectual play to conduct short clinics on elements of analytic reading, persuasive argument, or historical thinking... For the third meeting in a unit, students read selections from two histories of the United States: Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* and Paul Johnson's *"A History of the American People."* These "untextbooks" support the goal of uncoverage in several ways. Their status as best sellers means students will be learning to think discerningly about the kind of popular history they are most likely to encounter in future years as adults. Students appreciate that the texts are inexpensive, while I appreciate that Zinn and Johnson between them will cover most of the topics a historically literate person should be familiar with for our period...Even though these histories are completely lacking in charts, sidebars, pictures, and Web support, students actually read these histories and even hold onto them after the course is over, rarely selling them back to the campus bookstore. Why? Because it is not dry coverage that drives the two histories but compelling moral visions expressed in provocative arguments...

In this third meeting I exercise greater control than in the second, sometimes lecturing

for minutes at a time on the interpretive questions I want to consider that day...

From the University of Chicago blog site

Greetings and happy summer from UChicago! Late June means many things. The sharp sun casts gargoyle shadows. Fixed-gear bikes whiz through the quad on their way to a BBQ at the lakefront. And we select the final winning essay entries from students and alumni!

So while you're daydreaming at the ice cream shoppe (or sitting in the back of the minivan visiting colleges across the country) perhaps these questions will give you something fun to think about:

2011 UChicago Essay Questions

1. "What does Play-Doh™ have to do with Plato?" - The 2011 University of Chicago

Scavenger Hunt List

Every May, the University of Chicago hosts the world's largest scavenger hunt.

As part of this year's hunt, students raced to find the shortest path between two seemingly unrelated things by traveling through Wikipedia articles.

Wikipedia is so passé. Without the help of everyone's favorite collaborative internet encyclopedia, show us your own unique path from Play-Doh™ to Plato.

Inspired by Ayla Amon, AB'10, Daniel Citron, AB'09, and Benjamin Umans, AB'10

2. Observation, Hypothesis, Experiment, Analysis, Conclusion; since the 17th century, the scientific method has been the generally accepted way to investigate, explore, and acquire new knowledge. The actual process of intellectual discovery, however, is rarely so simple or objective. The human mind often leaps from observation to conclusion with ease, rushes headlong into hypothesis-less experiments, or dwells on the analysis, refusing to conclude.

Tell us about your non-scientific method. (Diagrams, graphs, and/or visual aids allowed within your essay.)

Inspired by Megen Cowett, AB'11

3. Spanish poet Antonio Machado wrote, "Between living and dreaming there is a third thing. Guess it." Give us your guess.

Inspired by Jill Hampshire, AB'08

4. While working at the Raytheon Company, Percy Spencer noticed that standing in front of a magnetron (used to generate microwave radio signals) caused a chocolate bar in his pocket to melt. He then placed a bowl of corn in front of the device, and soon it was popping all over the room. A couple years later, Raytheon was selling the first commercial microwave oven.

Write about a time you found something you weren't looking for.

Inspired by Ashwin Acharya, an entering student from Hunter College High School,
NY

5. In the spirit of adventurous inquiry, pose a question of your own. If your prompt is original and thoughtful, then you should have little trouble writing a great essay. Draw on your best qualities as a writer, thinker, visionary, social critic, sage, citizen of the world, or future citizen of the University of Chicago; take a little risk, and have fun.

6. Don't write about reverse psychology.

Inspired by Andy Jordan, AB'13

Again, remember--these aren't here to trick you! There are no right or wrong answers. Just thoughtful ones. Anything catch your fancy? Feel free to weigh in below, or join the discussion on Facebook.

Some Freshman Seminars at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Dear first-year students,

Freshman Seminars locate you at the center of the classroom during your first semester with us and invite you to take an active role in your own education from the beginning of your UWM career. These courses differ in several ways from others you make take in the fall. They are smaller in size and broader in scope, in the sense that they are intended to enhance your skills (inquiry and

analysis, critical and creative thinking, oral and written communication) and engage you in reflection about the process of learning at the college level. These transitional courses allow instructors and students to explore subjects of mutual interest, to talk to and learn from each other in spite of and because of their differences, to connect past and present as well as campus and community.

Communication

Communication, Conflict, and Social Intelligence

Course Description:

This course is an exploration of how interpersonal communication can support or hinder the development of social intelligence, especially in the way we handle conflicts. We will examine some pitfalls of interpersonal communication and the causes, consequences, and effects of conflict: important communication skills will be introduced that can allow us access to others' views and experiences. We will identify differences in learning styles, communication preferences,

conflict styles and conflict beliefs, through examination of our own profiles. We will explore some implications of culture on how people approach communication, including how our cultural lenses may influence methods for resolving interpersonal conflict, violence, justice, and forgiveness. The

student will augment theory with experience. Emphasis throughout will be on developing communication skills, analytical ability, and critical thinking skills.

Work Involved:

Class attendance is required. In-class exercises and activities are purposefully designed to support active learning. Out-of-class work includes reading, reflective writing, and skill-building assignments. This class is not well-suited for a student who wants to read and regurgitate what he/she has been told...

English Seminars

Representations of the American Dream (Liana Odracic)

What *is* the American Dream, anyway? Has it changed over time? Does the definition of the Dream change according to who's defining it? How is the Dream defined and portrayed in different literary works, film, and non-fiction texts? Does everyone have access to the American Dream, or is its accessibility limited? Is the American Dream a myth? A reality only for some?

How so?

Going Green: Literature and Film (Kristin Terwelp) (Full)

In this course, we will trace the history of the “Green” movement beginning with texts by Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, and several Native American writers and ending with films and texts by Wendell Berry, Annie Dillard, and Al Gore. We will also examine “green” advertising and do some virtual window shopping at a “green” Wal-Mart.

Translation Game: Hidden Meanings in Language (Jennifer Mattson) (Full)

In this course, we will explore hidden and (mis)understood meanings between males and females, between advertisers and consumers, between politicians and voters, between Caucasians and African-Americans, between internationals who speak English as a second language and native speakers, between mainstream speakers of American English and non-mainstream speakers.

Southeast Asian American Life Stories (Mary Buley-Meissner) (Full)

This seminar will focus on narratives by and about Hmong Americans, who have become an increasingly important part of this country since the Vietnam War. Students will read a Hmong family memoir; the first collection of poetry and essays by young Hmong Americans; and a book investigating the causes and consequences of cross-cultural misunderstanding. These texts illuminate not only individual lives, but also the historical and cultural circumstances shaping people’s identities, communities, and sustaining values.

Madness and Mercy: From Medea to Beloved (Kristie Hamilton)

Through a combination of classic and contemporary literature and two film adaptations, we will study stories about anguish, fear, brutality and upheaval

in the lives of individuals and in the histories of families and nations. We will learn about worlds and times where madness makes sense and sanity is monstrous—where imagining mercy means fashioning hope from improbable possibilities.

The Power of Names (John Mulvihill) (Full)

You would never say that you are your name, and yet you would also likely never say that your name has nothing to do with you. So what do we understand to be the relationship between name and self? In this course we'll read both popular and classic fictional texts for portrayals of our beliefs and attitudes about names, as well as nonfictional texts that furnish more evidence of our beliefs and attitudes about names as well as provide conceptual frames. Students will come away from the course as better readers of literary, popular, and academic texts, and with a more sophisticated understanding of cultural conventions and of themselves as name-receivers, name-users, and name-givers.

Ethnic Studies

Identity and Transformation (Full)

Whether you come from a small town, a big city, the farmlands, from outside the USA, or someplace in between, where you are from is one way to identify yourself for others. But places of origin, like other “identifying” codes, can give others a false sense of knowing who you are, because people want to simplify, generalize, stereotype. Notions of identity are complex, and identification with gender, family, race, custom, and nationhood adds to it. Forming and sustaining a sense of identity is problematic for most everyone.

This Freshman Seminar investigates notions of personal, social and cultural identity. What do we mean by identity? How are ideas of identity both meaningful and limiting? How does globalization affect our sense of identity? Do we need to be alike to get along?

Our thoughtful attempts to work through these difficult questions will help bring a new and more profound understanding of who we are—individually and culturally—in 21st century America. We'll examine literature that addresses the concerns and challenges of "fitting in" and mine our personal experience, background, ethnicity and beliefs to share with our classmates a notion of "who we are." Together we'll provide a supportive and instructional space in which to discuss, explore, investigate and navigate the complex issues of identity.

Work Involved:

In-class learning activities, discussions, and assigned readings (35%). The writing for this class will consist of five short responses to readings (25%), and two peer-reviewed, revised essays (20%). Some of the writing will be analytical, and some will be reflective, or memoir-type writing. Two informal research projects (10%): one will investigate some aspect of your own ethnicity or background, and the other will involve research into a group with which you do not identify ethnically or culturally. These projects can be delivered in writing or orally. Our final project (10%) will consist of a creative exploration of identity through various lenses: visual, dramatic, written or spoken word. Ongoing small and large group discussions will engage students to become active learners in their own course experience. There will be no formal examination.

Virginia Tech – e-Portfolios

As part of the signature experience...VT students are likely to use the ePortfolio to document thematically their growth over four years - beginning with self-discovery and awareness; moving to civic engagement and an awareness of broader communities; on to a third-year focus on creative work and research; and culminating in a focus on innovative leadership.

Teaching critical thinking and academic writing (from Peden & Wilson VanVoorhis, 2009)

To help students be aware of the difference in information found in media accounts and journal articles:

“To help students think critically about media presentations, Hall and Seery (2006) describe an activity in which students read both a media account and the original journal article...The groups completed an in-class worksheet in which they identified discrepancies between the media account and the journal article and then explained reasons for the discrepancies.” (p. 170)

Applying class material:

“Instructors require students to write a journal in a variety of classes..., anywhere from several times a week to twice a month. Although the specific instructions vary, students frequently apply course material to what they observe in the real world. Students report that journals are helpful personally and academically, and useful in applying the material and encouraging reflective thinking.” (p.172)

GSLE Consultation Report Executive Summary January 2006

I. Summary of Report

A. Introduction

The intent of this report is to provide information, to the Vice President Academic/Chief Learning Officer and the Senior Management Team of Centennial College regarding the consultation sessions about the placement and implementation of the mandatory Signature Learning Experience (SLE) course. This report will be one consideration amongst others to inform and form the basis for a decision about the placement of the SLE course. The decision and background information will appear in a separate document.

Findings of this report arise from the feedback gathered from approximately nineteen meetings or consultation sessions with 13 different groups, comprised of approximately 63 faculty, 10 support staff, 31 administrators (Senior Administrators/Deans/Directors/Chairs), and 21 students. No clear agreement or recommendation emerged from the consultations about which option to pursue for placement of the SLE general education course. Participants, were very clear about what they did not want with respect to placement of the SLE course. They did not endorse one particular option from the three options presented for consideration. While the purpose of the consultations was not to debate the merits of the SLE project, nevertheless, several participants were clear about their disagreement with this college initiative.

B. Consultations

Purpose

The VP Academic and the SLE team determined that it was necessary to consult with academic areas and key stakeholders, in order to make an informed decision regarding the placement of the SLE course. The intent of these consultations was not to provide a structured quantitative analysis, but rather to:

- provide a semi-structured forum within which faculty could address concerns regarding placement of the GSLE (General education SLE course), which General Education course(s) would be replaced, who would teach the course, the impact on English and GNED faculty, the PD implications for courses and programs, and the impact of the diffusion of diversity learning outcomes into their programs and courses.
- Contribute data to a decision making process that would be based on data that considers factors such as, employment stability, pedagogy, faculty concerns, and academic managers concerns regarding planning and implementation.

Methodology

- Derived from both solicited and unsolicited input from college employees, the SLE team composed a summary of the advantages and disadvantages of three options for placement of the SLE course. This summary of options was discussed at meetings with the Senior Team on September 7, 2005, with Deans and Directors on September 13, 2005, and was circulated

electronically to Deans on September 15, 2005, with a request for written feedback to be returned by Friday October 7, 2005.

- At the meeting with the Deans and Directors September 13, 2005, Deans of the schools agreed to organize meetings with appropriate staff and faculty, to provide feedback and input from faculty and staff about the placement of the general education SLE course.
- The structure and format of consultations was determined in part by the Dean or academic administrator of each School/Program. In some instances, the group was comprised entirely of academic administrators representing a consensus opinion from their group, and in others, it was comprised primarily of faculty, with their Chair and/or Dean. [Table I].
- The Dean's Office in the School of Business was not able to organize a School consultation with the SLE team; however: a coordinator and a Chairperson did submit written feedback.
- Deans were also asked to complete and to submit a written response to a document entitled "Proposed options to consider for placement of the SLE course", to outline the advantages and disadvantages of each option from their perspective. Other documents were also provided to the Schools to circulate as appropriate: the "Overview of the Signature Learning Experience" document, the Curriculum Diversity Framework document, and the "Proposed options to consider for placement of the SLE course" document.
- Minutes of meetings held were recorded and prepared by the SLE Coordinator..
- Minutes of Meetings and additional written feedback and communications were retained and documented, but are not included in this report. A summary is included in the full report

Feedback

The SLE Coordinator recorded comments at meetings and collected written feedback from Schools and individuals. Comments and written feedback from each school were organized under common themes that emerged from each meeting. Summaries of the recommendations from each School/department feedback are presented under the following headings in Section 1C of this report.

a) Placement choice for the SLE course

b) Factors and implications; curricular/pedagogic, students, faculty/human resources, budget, organizational change, resources and 'other

C. Summary of School Recommendations

The following are summarized comments taken from formal and informal consultations, regarding the three options for placement of the SLE General Education course.

A. Replace GNED 101/GESL 101 ...

B. Replace program-mandated Gen Ed...

C. Replace one of the General Education Electives...

D. Other Comments and Feedback

Pedagogy

- Content and level of SLE-allow for some leveling and choice.
- Do not “water down the course by making it program specific.
- Consider the levels of analysis and English proficiency of students. ENGL should be a prerequisite or a co-requisite.
- Language of course outcomes needs to be concrete.
- Portfolio must have a grade value for it to be ‘valued” by staff and faculty.
- Portfolio – form and format needs some flexibility
- Only full-time faculty should teach this course.

Budget

- Where the budget for the SLE course delivery will be placed and managed is a critical element for the success of the SLE.

Managing the SLE

- Who will decide who teaches SLE course, and who will assign SWF’s?
- How do we ensure that these courses are taught by full-time professors?
- On-going quality assurance for course is needed.
- Will any jobs be lost?

Logistics

- Who will/wants to/should teach the SLE?
- Large numbers of faculty may have to be trained.

- A desire for flexibility in placement of the GSLE course was expressed. Several comments suggested allowing each school to decide the position in the model route where the GSLE course would be placed; however most schools agree that the course should reside in semester 2 or 3.

- What happens when students drop GSLE as they do with other general education courses?

Professional Development (PD)

- PD needs to be on-going for all staff, including managers, and should not rely solely only on the workshop format.

- Utilize strategies such as mentoring, reflective practice and team teaching.

- Use of “communities of learning” approach to faculty development.

- Who has the expertise to teach this content?

Other

- Why is a course needed to address diversity?

- College’s priority should not focus on this but should be on financial problems and increasing student enrolment.

- Replacing a general education course with the SLE may decrease a student’s competitive edge, and may affect articulation agreements with universities.

- Faculty hired in the college should reflect the diversity of the student body.

II Employment Stability Assessment

A. Potential Impact on General Education and English Faculty...

B. Summary

The above data suggests that the impact on General Education faculty and English faculty would be similar in terms of reduction of the number of courses that would be offered and taught by faculty. Because the General Education department has 1/3 the full-time complement of faculty, than the English department, (10 versus 29), fewer faculty would be affected if a GNED elective was replaced than with the replacement of GNED 101.

III. Planning the Pilot...

Appendix G

Excerpt from *Redesigning a curriculum for inquiry: An Ecology case study* (Spronken-Smith et al., 2011, p. 733)

Recommendations

In terms of advice for other curriculum teams wanting to undertake such changes, some key challenges have to be borne in mind:

-

There is a need to develop a shared vision of the curriculum so that all teachers feel ownership of the approach. Ideally, the support of an academic staff developer with an affinity for the disciplinary context should be enlisted.

-

The planning group should explicitly discuss what a Community Practice is, and how best they might operate, to facilitate the process of group cohesion and professional learning within the group.

-

There should be plenty of time allowed for extended conversations about teaching and planning of the revised curriculum. Sustainable curriculum change at the level of a degree programme cannot be achieved overnight, but may require meetings over a period of months or years.

-

Providing quality inquiry experiences is staff intensive and requires teachers who can work as facilitators. This may require some training and ongoing support, particularly for demonstrators.

-

It is essential to gain support from senior management and relevant Heads of Departments. The latter 'assign' staff to interdisciplinary teaching, so that the Director of an interdisciplinary course does not have control over the teaching team, which can vacillate from year to year.

-

There is an ongoing need for course co-coordinators and contributors to be aware of the content and approaches in the core courses. Open communication is essential to maintain oversight of the whole degree programme. Furthermore the teaching team should aim to keep improving the approach and to stay 'fresh'. However, not all staff assigned to teaching in the programme may be of the same mind and can be a frustrating brake on fresh or novel aspirations.

**Excerpt from the pilot study report on the UFH Grounding Programme
(Keet, 2010).**

SECTION E: GENERAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Academic and intellectual landscape

Though there is more than sufficient management support, the social disengagement of academia in general results in limited academic support and buy-in. The LKA/GP is predominantly perceived as an intellectual nuisance and an organisational add-on. The programme is slowly creating an intellectual momentum which will probably provide for more “natural” legitimacy over the next few years.

Recommendation 1:

More structured and sustained interventions are required to review the purpose of the university and its institutional obligation to be socially relevant and engaged. The location of the LKA/GP in contributing to this agenda needs to be carefully considered and articulated.

Captured as integrated with the University’s strategic plan, an inclusive transformation initiative needs to be strategically driven as part of the University’s reinvention and reimagination processes.

2. Administrative and operational landscape

The university’s administrative and operational landscape is a labyrinth of processes and procedures. Curriculum is immersed within these processes which represent a substantive challenge for the implementation and integration of innovative programmes. The perching and pitching of the LKA/GP onto the qualifications matrix of the university seems to be a high risk challenge. Apart from the Faculty of Law, it is highly unlikely that the impact of the

LKA/GP on the qualifications structure within faculties was considered sufficiently.

Recommendation 2 (Administration):

Without undermining the quality assurance objectives that are dependent on proper administrative processes, it should be considered whether the administrative landscape of the University can make special provision for the LKA/GP in terms of venues and scheduling, registration of students and the capturing and tracking of student performance. Curriculation processes at faculty level must have the full integration of the LKA/GP as a central objective.

3. Purpose of the programme

The feedback from students, facilitators and lecturers involved in the programme indicates that the purpose and objectives of the programme have, to a large extent, been attained.

Recommendation 3 (Curriculation):

The LKA/GP should be used as a tool for qualification and curriculum review in line with the project initiated by the DVCs office. An authentic rethinking of the purposes and location of the LKA/GP as a transdisciplinary endeavour is required. The programme needs to be extended to a year long programme of 16 credits for 2011 and be formally integrated into the qualification offerings of the University at the beginning of 2012. Increasing the credits of the programme might also be a worthwhile consideration.

4. Efficacy and sustainability

The empirical assessment shows that given the student-driven nature of the project, a favourable input-output and cost-benefit ratio has been achieved. The programme is certainly desirable, affordable and sustainable. In its full rolled-out version the programme will be able to sustain itself.

Recommendation 4:

Sufficient resources should be made available to track and assess the impact the programme has on student achievements and through-put rates through authentic knowledge engagement and substantive student participation in the construction of their own university experience.

5. Descriptive and Statistical analyses

The pilot added to a more accurate description of the programme, its statistics and its implementation challenges.

Recommendation 5:

Statistics on registration, attendance on all levels, attendance per week, attendance per theme, through-put rates and ratios compared to broader university numbers will be captured as the programme is rolled-out.

6. Pedagogical innovation and intellectual contribution

Responses to the LKA/GP confirmed the existence of an intellectual and social void that the programme is trying to respond to. The high levels of student participation in lectures, ekhaya and jamborees indicate that students are receptive to this pedagogical innovation.

The programme has been presented at various scholarly fora including Harvard University and a number of research journal articles are in the making. The intellectual and scholarly niche of the LKA/GP is related to a humanising pedagogy; community and social engagement; curriculum and transdisciplinarity; the link between science, technology, environment and society; student participation; and education, poverty and development.

Recommendation 6:

The intellectual work on the LKA/GP should be captured as a national project that contributes to the development of a higher education landscape that is more responsive to societal challenges. Data and information on the LKA/GP will be made available for the

purposes of scholarly analyses.

7. Proposal for 2010

a. **Architecture:** The student and facilitator feedback suggests that the architecture is pedagogically sound and practicable. The value of the ekhaya sessions have empirically been confirmed followed by solid support for the lecture, movie and jamboree sessions...

c. Density, Credits, Rhythm and Ritual:

Student and facilitator responses indicate that the programme's density and accompanying workload need to be re-considered. As a 16 credit course the LKA/GP should minimally be constituted by 160 notional hours.

Activity Hours per 14 days

Lecture 1.5

Ekhaya/ Umzi 2

Movie 2

Ekhaya/ Umzi 2

33

Journaling 8

Reading and self-study 8...

Appendix I

Film-based discussion

The Welcoming period or Orientation is an ideal time to initiate habits of critical thinking and active engagement with ideas. Using films as launching point helps to unite students in discussion rather than alienating those students with weaker language or reading skills than their peers. Below are some ideas of how cinematic “texts” can be used to introduce ideas, stimulate discussion and lead to deeper, more discipline-specific discussion later in the year. The writer tried the films out on groups of three to five post-high-school, non-university young adults to gain an initial indication of how first-year students might respond. Three themes were addressed: diversity, the environment, and the relationship between circumstances and agency.

Us and Them

Films:

1. Dr Seuss, *The Sneetches*. This is an animated story (12 minutes) of two groups of creatures called Sneetches, one with stars on their bellies and one without. Those with stars see themselves as superior, those without, as inferior. Someone comes along with a machine that can add stars to bellies, and another machine to remove stars so that the social difference can be maintained, until in the end no-one can remember what they were to start and they are all united (and the machine-maker has made lots of money).

The group that I tried this out on found the animated story appealing and entertaining. Their discussion covered the apparently natural inclination to distinguish between “us” and “them.” One boy spoke about his experience of stepping outside of his own group. Even in this very small group of only three people, there were differences in interpretation, with one person focusing on categorising and stepping out of his group and another focusing on how trying to conform can result in loss of personal identity. Had there been more time, thoughts about how various activities play into and entrench a sense of differentiation could also have been explored.

2. *West Side Story* (I abridged the two-and-a-half hour film to one and a half hours). This musical, filmed in the early 60s, translates the story of Romeo and Juliet and the rivalry between Shakespeare's Montague and Capulet families into gang rivalry in New York.

The group were impressed with the gymnastic ability of the dancers, but said they tended to switch off during the songs. Discussion centred around why gangs existed and what need they filled, as well as how effective various interventions were.

These films and topics could easily be related to literature, the creative arts, psychology, sociology and to issues of personal choice and agency.

The World and Me

Films:

1. *Quantum of Solace*. (The 106-minute film can be distilled to 23 minutes of relevant material when car chases, boat chases, air chases and explosions are removed.) This James Bond film uses the value of water as the driving force for political and financial skulduggery.

Careful editing is necessary for people who have not seen the film before to be able to follow the story line, which loses some of its “zing” without the action sequences.

2. Dr Seuss' *The Lorax*. This is an animated story (26 minutes) about a creature called the Lorax who speaks for an environment that is destroyed by irresponsible industrialisation.

Of the three films in this section, this was the one most enjoyed by the viewing group. They found it engaging and entertaining while clearly conveying a serious message.

3. *An Inconvenient Truth*. (The one-and-a-half-hour film can be reduced to about three quarters of an hour.) Al Gore's 2006 documentary addresses global warming with visuals as well as facts and figures.

This film evoked strong responses, with one person calling it “bogus” and saying humans had very little to do with the climate change we are experiencing and another group member finding the film rather disturbing and asking seriously what, if anything, she as an individual could do. Discussion touched on scientific papers contradicting Gore's claims, whether individuals could make a difference, the power of public opinion, bringing economic pressure to bear on environment-unfriendly products or services, and the money-versus-the-environment debate.

This discussion could be followed by the reading of an academic paper taking a contrasting view, and evaluating the opposing arguments, thus introducing students to academic writing and critique. Other activities could include discussion of the current drought and political situation in the Horn of Africa, personal stories of fights over limited resources, a presentation on Stellenbosch's water-purifying “teabags” and the creation of a short play or planning of a short film on an environmental issue.

This theme could relate to a number of disciplines and topics, including literature, biodiversity, water engineering, genetic modification, political science, agriculture, sales, packaging of products, health, economics, advertising and having a voice in the public arena.

Knowledge and Action

Film:

Yesterday. (The 111-minute film can be reduced to 57 minutes.) This is the story of a woman in a rural area who has contracted the HI virus and how she responds to her husband's infection, their being ostracized and her hope for education for her daughter.

The group of five young adults who watched this film felt that it conveyed an important message, but were somewhat uncomfortable with the material, as witnessed by some nervous laughter. Discussion centred around gender relations, the need for sufficient healthcare facilities, the importance of education, what one could reasonably ask of a partner and seeing choices clearly.

This film could relate to the health professions, sociology, anthropology, psychology, education and public management. It could lead either to further health-oriented issues or to more discussion about the relationship between knowledge and choice. In the latter case, another good film might be *Educating Rita*, which demonstrates how education leads to having more options.

Linda Smith

Appendix J

Excerpt from WSU's Life Skills curriculum

Specific Outcome 2: Academic Skills

Students will become familiar with the expectations of an institution of higher learning and resources available for their support, and will practice appropriate study methods and general academic skills.

Range

Learners will gain experience in the following areas:

Adjustment to student life

**Class participation/interaction*

**Listening*

**Note-taking*

**Organization of work*

Time management

****Study methods*

**Logical reasoning and critical thinking*

***Problem solving*

***Creativity*

Notes

**After initial presentation and exercises these should be infused into all subject teaching*

*** These are best taught within subject context*

****This should be supported throughout the year by a Supplemental Instruction programme*

.....

Specific Outcome 8: Life Management

Learners will be able to implement a range of self-management skills.

Range

Learners will be able to practice self-management in the areas of

- **Work skills (incl. good manners, punctuality, responsibility, professionalism)*
- *Entrepreneurial skills*
- *Personal financial management*
- *Stress management*
- *Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use*
- *Citizenship*

**Although addressed in Life Skills, it must be infused in all courses throughout the year*