Seton Hall University

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IF=CCC; Information Fluency Is now a Core Competency on Campus

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IF=CCC: INFORMATION FLUENCY IS NOW IN THE CORE CURRICULUM ON CAMPUS

Beth Bloom
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TOPICS

• Seton Hall University
• The Core
• Core components
• Librarians’ part in this
• Proficiency training
• Reasons for success
• Future
Overview

The Core Curriculum Committee was elected in the Fall of 2001 by the Faculty Senate in response to the President’s challenge to the Senate to devise a “signature Seton Hall educational experience.” The Committee embarked on an ambitious project of examining general education requirements at other institutions, of consultation with the University community at large, of discussions with all departments of the University, of surveying the entire faculty.

As a product of all these reflections, the Committee proposed a series of principles on a Core Curriculum to the Faculty Senate in December 2004. At its February 2005 meeting, the Senate adopted the following principles to govern the Core Curriculum:

The Faculty Senate of Seton Hall University recommends to the Provost and the Board of Regents the following principles for the development of a new University Core Curriculum to fulfill the mission of the University, which will be effective for the entering freshmen in fall 2007:

- That undergraduate education at Seton Hall University be distinguished by two central elements: a common grounding in the questions central, but not exclusive, to the Catholic intellectual tradition, broadly understood, and the consistent and systematic development of students’ competencies, capabilities, and literacies.
- That undergraduate students take three common courses considering these...
## TABLE 1. CORE COMPONENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiencies</th>
<th>Literacies</th>
<th>Required Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Fluency</td>
<td>Ethical literacy</td>
<td>Odyssey of the Mind, Heart and Spirit (Signature I), for Freshmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading/Writing</td>
<td>Esthetic Sensibility</td>
<td>Odyssey of the Mind, Heart and Spirit (Signature II), for Sophomore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Communication</td>
<td>Cultural sensitivity</td>
<td>Odyssey of the Mind, Heart and Spirit (Signature III), for Juniors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>Quantitative thinking</td>
<td>Senior Capstone course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Scientific awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Model of the Information Search Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Exploration</th>
<th>Formulation</th>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feelings (affective)</td>
<td>uncertainly</td>
<td>optimism</td>
<td>confusion</td>
<td>clarity</td>
<td>sense of direction/</td>
<td>satisfaction or disappointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts (cognitive)</td>
<td>vague</td>
<td>focused</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions (physical)</td>
<td>seeking relevant information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exploring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>increased interest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>seeking pertinent information</td>
<td>documenting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
University Core Curriculum

Vision

Seton Hall's new university core is a multi-faceted approach to general education that encourages students to become thinking, caring, communicative and ethically responsible leaders with a commitment to service. First, the Signature Courses provide a common and distinctive experience for students, each shaped to be unique to Seton Hall. Second, acknowledging the importance of the questions raised in the Signature Courses, all students take an additional course in their junior year (in or outside their major) that is specifically tailored to be a follow-up to the themes developed in the first two courses. Third, recognizing that students will live in an increasingly complex environment requiring constant employment of skills to understand, interpret and manage the flow of information, the new core includes the systematic development of proficiencies to allow students to meet these challenges.
University Core Curriculum

Proficiencies

Whether it was at town meetings, department visits, or in survey responses, faculty repeatedly made it clear that one thing they believe students who graduate from Seton Hall should have in common is a high level of proficiency in certain key areas that would help to make them lifelong learners and make them uniquely equipped for life beyond college. These “core proficiencies” were identified as follows: reading, writing, oral communication, numeracy, information fluency, and critical thinking. While all these skills are taught at one time or another in a student’s courses, making them an important part of the core curriculum experience means that we can not only guarantee that students receive a basic grounding in them but also that they will continue to be reinforced throughout a student’s years at the university. The often-heard lament that students seem unable to transfer what they learn from one course to another could become a thing of the past, because each year students will take courses in which one or more of these proficiencies are a focal point.

What does it mean to “infuse” a course with one or more proficiencies? When a course is infused, it means that a skill is deliberately addressed throughout the semester, that the grade breakdown reflects this emphasis, and that the skill is assessed in a clear and meaningful way. For example, if an instructor chooses to infuse a course with reading/writing, then the writing students do is not relegated to just the assigning of a final research paper. Rather, writing becomes an integral part of what happens in the course, whether this means regular in-class writing, the collection of the parts of the paper and not just the end product, discussions in class of what it means to write in that discipline (tone, audience, sources), and exams contain essay questions, not just objective questions. When this happens, students know that reading and writing are important elements of the course, as seriously and rigorously assessed as the subject matter of the
SUBGROUP REQUIREMENTS

• ☐ Attend summer retreat and 3 workshops each semester
• ☐ Participate in all workshop activities
• ☐ Post syllabus for IL-intensive course being taught each semester
• ☐ Post all IL assignments, formal and informal
• ☐ Use Blackboard in the IL course you are teaching
TABLE 2. SUMMER 2005 SUBGROUP MEETING AGENDAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
<th>Topic or Assignment</th>
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</table>
| June 15      | Carol Kuhlthau’s presentation  
               Faculty frustrations with students’ performance  
               Bring in an assignment topic for discussion |
| June 17      | Effective research assignments  
               Post topic  
               Introduction to Key databases  
               Develop assignment based on discussions: Post in blackboard |
| June 30      | Sample effective syllabi  
               Journaling and discussion: challenges in developing new syllabi and course assignments |
TIMELINE

Year 1:

June 2005
Consultant’s presentation
Three ½ day sessions

July 2005
Initial discussions

Fall 2005
Three meetings
(9 hours)

Spring 2006
Three meetings
(9 hours)

Year 2:

August 2006
TLTR Summer Institute
Three 90-minute meetings

Fall 2006
Two meetings (5 hours)

Spring 2007
Two meetings (5 hours)
RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

– Deeper communication with faculty on the CCC and in the workshops

– IF training is recognized as essential to General education at SHU

– Librarians have a permanent place in developing segments of the new core
RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

– There is more faculty awareness that students lack essential IF skills

– The university and students will benefit from a deeper understanding of IF.
HOW DID THE LIBRARIANS ACHIEVE THIS?

• Proactive in the push to develop a new core on campus
• As senators, they were assured membership on the new senate CCC
• Exploited previously established, successful partnerships with faculty and programs, such as Freshman Studies, and Freshman English
• Sought support from campus allies
AND THEY

• Persisted in the definition of IF
• Brought Carol Kuhlthau onto campus to support their IF initiative
• Persisted in making sure IF would be recognized as a core proficiency
• Made sure librarians would be part of the CCC assessment team
LESSONS LEARNED

• Be Patient

• Be Persistent

• Take advantage of supportive relationships with teaching faculty
PRESENT STATUS OF THE CORE

• Fall, 2007, 25 sections of Odyssey I will be taught
• Fall 2007 IF will be included as a core competency in all Freshman English 1201 and 1202 courses
• Increasing numbers of faculty will sign up for proficiency training
• Assessment will be added to core courses
• More faculty will focus on IF in coursework
LIBRARIANS’ PLACE IN THE CORE

• Librarians will continue to monitor IF workshops and train faculty colleagues.

• Librarians are part of the faculty teaching the Odyssey courses.

• Librarians will be included in assessing core competencies.
SAMPLE ASSESSMENT

• Which is the best database for research on Literary topics?
• Define “Abstract”
• List periodicals based on level of scholarship
• Questions that evaluate student’s understanding of a bib record.
• Understanding of information structures
THANKS!