

CCATF GenEd Conversations
7 March 2024

Topic: GenEd as a Complement to Other Academic Programs and Areas

Location: Zoom

Max participants at any one time: 11

Total people attending: 11

Notes:

We know that there is currently varying degrees of overlap between GenEd and programs.

- Content overlap
- Pre-reqs in GenEd
- Double count courses in GenEd and majors
- Learning outcomes overlap (recent study showed 46% overlap)

GenEd should not be designed to be a pathway to a major. Too many majors to ask of GenEd to address. GenEd should broaden people's thinking, not prepare students to go into particular majors. And many students change majors, so it doesn't make much sense to map into majors. It's fine if we find some coincidental overlap in general learning outcomes between GenEd and majors.

What does "complementarity" mean? We don't want to merely prep for majors. How do we communicate that to faculty, advisors, students?

When do students see the complement? We should recognize the change in student perception of the complementarity over time. It's usually initially high, then dips, then raises again, often well after they're out of college.

I see complementarity as integrated synergy. GenEd starting the learning process in areas (e.g., communications) that will receive more development across the curriculum and beyond the curriculum. Even beyond college.

Iterative learning should continue within undergrad, but also continue beyond. Should be a stepping off place for everything – majors, minors, future life.

If too many students in a class see the class as something to "get through", then it can negatively affect how students approach the course.

GenEd should help change student attitudes toward learning. We should aspire to a love of learning and desire to seek out new perspectives.

Need help from all faculty in helping students see the benefits of GenEd. Cutting down the objectives might help more faculty get on board.

Current integrative experiences are trying to help students see/build the holistic benefits.

How can the program help develop meta-cognition re: the benefits of GenEd? Can we help faculty help students develop this meta-cognition?

Some of this work should be done through GenEd courses. Some should be done in programs of study. We need a cultural shift to develop that connection between GenEd and programs of study. We can often inadvertently diminish GenEd by focusing students on the major.

Would having fewer well-defined learning outcomes help? Many people would like to have fewer outcomes. It becomes difficult to make fewer outcomes because disagreements arise about what they should be.

Connectiveness between GenEd and major will benefit BA in music. Scheduling in Music makes it difficult to provide room for connectiveness to take hold.

Do we want every student to have a tightly connected GenEd/area of study? How do we do that?

A few GenEd models are shaped like a tree. Starts with common experience. Ends with program-located experiences, with some common learning outcomes across program-located experiences.

How can we think about GenEd as learnings that can stay with students, and which students see as “must haves”?

There are challenges to teaching courses that “double count” as GenEd and major course, perhaps particularly in the sciences. Pedagogically challenging to teach toward majors and teach toward non-majors.

GenEd courses are at ~97% at capacity. Getting into any course is the primary concern of students and advisors, which shifts the focus from relevance to necessity.

We might be able to also think about complementarity to areas beyond majors, minors, e.g.,

- Community Engagement
- Industry partnerships
- Research
- Civic engagement

Areas beyond GenEd need to put their shoulder to the wheel in order to make a cultural shift and/or add complementary areas. APRs have demonstrated a growing concern with a growing scale and limited structure & resources.

Perhaps incorporate GenEd courses that might help students in specific programs.

I'd like to hear more about the culture shifts we've discussed in this session. I'd like to participate in those discussions.

END OF NOTES