



WASHINGTON STATE
UNIVERSITY

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Washington State University Two-day Workshop

As part of an effort to advance and assess institutional learning outcomes, and to embed assessment in existing classroom work, WSU organized a two-day workshop focused on the design of assignments for senior-level, integrative learning in capstone courses. Faculty from 4 campuses, 9 colleges, and 22 departments participated; together, these 30 instructors brought assignments from a wide range of disciplines, including capstones in the major and in general education. Each instructor shared an assignment, participated in a charrette, and committed to revising the assignment based on feedback from colleagues.

Participants reported they traded ideas about teaching (96%) and came away with concrete ideas about how to strengthen their assignment and make those changes later (100%). Nearly all faculty said they revised their assignment based on capstone principles (96%) or integrative learning design (89%), for example, by being more explicit about the assignment's purpose, task and evaluation, or by improving the connection and extension of prior learning. Faculty expect the workshop and charrette experience to impact their teaching in other courses as well, including how they design assignments and how they grade student work.

Designing Senior-level Culminating Assignments that Help Students Integrate their Learning
Workshops with Dr. Pat Hutchings Washington State University, May 25-26, 2016
Details for Faculty Participants

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

- **Day 1:** Wed, May 25th (9:30am - 3pm, with lunch provided, CUE 518)
- **Day 2:** Thursday, May 26th (9:30am - 3:30pm, with lunch provided, CUE 518)
- **Follow up:** assignment revision due by August 31

This two-part interactive workshop will focus on one of the most important challenges in undergraduate education today: providing students with opportunities to connect and integrate the various elements of their learning. This means making connections across courses, within the major and/or between general education and the major, connecting academic coursework and work, citizenship, and personal life. Such connections do not happen automatically; they require intentionally designed experiences—including assignments—that help students integrate their learning.

The workshop is especially intended for faculty who have taught a capstone course—or similar culminating experience course for seniors to integrate learning—and are interested in refining the assignment.

WORKSHOP GOALS:

- Share a capstone assignment you are working on with others who will ask good questions
- Stimulate ideas about how to strengthen your assignment
- Make revisions to your assignment

WORKSHOP DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Workshop Day 1: One of the most powerful contexts for integrative learning is the senior capstone. This first session will be an occasion to explore the varieties of capstone experiences at WSU and beyond: What are the different models, and what are their distinctive benefits, especially for integrative kinds of work? Within capstones, what kinds of assignments—papers, projects, community engagement experiences, and the like—both foster and provide evidence of students’ ability to make connections? Day 1 will help set the stage for work on your own assignment the next day.

Workshop Day 2: Developing powerful assignments is one of the most consequential intellectual tasks that faculty undertake in their work as educators. Yet that work is often private and unavailable for collegial exchange and knowledge building. This session, modeled on the [NILOA Assignment Library Initiative](#), will be an opportunity to talk with other faculty who teach in capstone contexts about the design of an assignment you’re working on. The session aims to 1) stimulate ideas about how to strengthen the assignment you bring to the session, 2) think together about how assignments might be linked to one another in ways that create more integrated, coherent pathways for students,

and 3) open up a productive space for discussion about teaching and learning. Day 2 will set the stage for you to revise your assignment as a follow-up to the workshop.

Follow-up: Revise your Assignment: Revise your assignment by August 31 and complete a survey about the revision process. Optional: Faculty will be invited to participate in a follow-up activity in August or fall semester.

PREPARING FOR THE WORKSHOP

Assignment: Please come to the workshop ready to discuss an assignment designed to foster and assess integrative learning in a capstone course for an undergraduate degree or UCORE, and your related rubric or evaluation criteria. This might be a draft assignment you are working on and would like to share with colleagues, one that has worked well but may be in need of a “refresh,” or one that has not worked as you hoped. If your course involves a sequence of scaffolded assignments, bring the culminating assignment or the one you have questions about.

Reflective Memo: To facilitate informed and constructive discussion, prepare a short reflective memo (approximately one page) to accompany the assignment, and a rubric or set of criteria you use to evaluate the students’ work. The reflective memo should address the following questions:

- 1) What is the purpose of the assignment? What outcomes is it intended to foster and elicit?
- 2) In what context is it used?
- 3) What does *integrative learning* look like in your capstone course and assignment?
- 4) How would you evaluate the quality and character of students’ work in response to the assignment? What do they do well? What is challenging?
- 5) What questions do you have about the assignment-- or what would you like feedback about?
- 6) Anything else that your colleagues need to know to be helpful

By 5/18/16: Please send your one-page reflective memo, assignment, and rubric to ATL by 5/18/16, so ATL can make copies for the small group discussions. Contact ATL if you have questions.

Pre-workshop survey: Please complete the pre-workshop survey by 5/18/16, coming in Qualtrics.

FACULTY SUMMER STIPEND AND TRAVEL FUNDS

- Participating faculty can receive a \$500 summer stipend and a letter of recognition. Expectations include participation in the workshop both days, assignment revision by August 30th and completion of a brief survey.
- Matching funds are also available for travel reimbursement for faculty participants from other WSU campuses.

Expectations for Faculty: In advance

1. Review your assignment prompt, syllabus, and your program's curriculum map, if available; provide your assignment prompt and rubric/evaluation criteria for the workshop.
2. Write a one page reflective piece about the course/assignment that will be shared with other faculty along with your assignment prompt (see Reflective Memo questions on page 2).
3. Do a short pre-survey (survey will be sent to you in advance of workshop).

Two workshop days

1. Participate in workshop both days.
2. Provide your assignment prompt, rubric/evaluation criteria, and reflective memo for peer discussion.
3. Review your colleagues' assignments after day 1 and come prepared to discuss on day. You can expect to review assignments from about 5 colleagues.
4. Leave the day 2 workshop with notes about possible adjustments to your assignment.
5. Provide a one page "intent" summary of what you plan to change in your assignment.

Follow up

1. Revise assignment and submit to ATL by August 31
2. Do a post survey about revision process by August 31

Faculty Pre-Workshop Survey Questions

[Below is a copy of the questions from the Pre-Workshop Survey for Participants in the Capstone Assignment ReDesign Workshop. Please note that the survey was conducted online using Qualtrics; therefore, while questions may appear differently in the online format, and include skipping, the wording and order of questions are as follows.]

We are looking forward to your participation in the upcoming capstone assignment design workshop with Dr. Pat Hutchings. Please complete the following survey to help us plan the workshop for the WSU community.

*Thank you,
Kimberly Green, Director, Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning*

General Questions

Q1. What has motivated you to attend this workshop and redesign your capstone assignment? (select all that apply)

- Opportunity to meet colleagues interested in talking about learning and teaching
- My chair/college or someone else urged me
- I have specific questions about my capstone
- I will be teaching this capstone for the first time
- Summer stipend
- Other (please specify) _____

Q2. Please indicate how important these aspects were to your motivation:

Q3. Comments:

The following questions are related to the assignment that you will be sharing and revising.

Q4. Please list the capstone or senior culminating experience course where this assignment is used (e.g., HIST 497).

Q5. How would you best characterize the capstone or culminating senior assignment that you will be redesigning? (select all that apply)

- Thesis
- Research project
- Artistic creation or performance

- Prototype development
- Real or simulated professional task
- Internship
- Presentation
- Portfolio
- Exam-licensure test
- Other (please specify) _____

Q6. Which of the following principles that connect to capstone design are highlighted in your assignment and course? (select all that apply)

- Integration and extension of prior learning
- Authentic and contextualized experiences
- Challenging and complex scenarios
- Student independence and agency
- A concern with critical inquiry and creativity
- Active dissemination and celebration
- Other (please specify) _____

Q7. Who takes your capstone course?

- Primarily majors in the discipline
- Mix of majors and non-majors
- Primarily non-majors
- Other (please specify) _____

Q8. Is your course designated as a UCORE [general education] capstone [CAPS]?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify) _____

Q9. About how many times have you taught this course or a similar version of this assignment as a culminating assignment for seniors?

- I have not taught this course/assignment
 - Once
 - Twice
 - More than two times
- Q10. Comments:

Q11. When do you expect to teach this course again? (select all that apply)

- Fall 2016
- Spring 2017
- Other (please specify) _____

Q12. What would you like to gain or take away from this workshop?

Q13. Do you have any questions or comments for Dr. Hutchings?

The following questions are related to other capstone or senior culminating experience courses that you may teach.

Q14. Please list any other capstone or senior culminating experience courses that you teach (e.g., HIST 497).

Course 1 _____

Course 2 _____

[Q15-18 are displayed as applicable if Q14 is answered]

Q15. Who takes your capstone course *[Course 1 Name]*?

- Primarily majors in the discipline
- Mix of majors and non-majors
- Primarily non-majors
- Other (please specify) _____

Q16. Is *[Course 1 Name]* designated as a UCORE capstone?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify) _____

Q17. Who takes your capstone course *[Course 2 Name]*?

- Primarily majors in the discipline
- Mix of majors and non-majors
- Primarily non-majors
- Other (please specify) _____

Q18. Is *[Course 2 Name]* designated as a UCORE capstone?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify) _____

The following questions concern workshop logistics.

Q19. We will be providing lunch/refreshments during the workshop. Do you have any dietary restrictions? If yes, please briefly describe.

- No
- Yes _____

Q20. Do you have any other comments, questions, or information you'd like to provide?

Faculty Post-Survey: Capstone Assignment Redesign

[Below is a copy of the questions from WSU's Post-Survey for Participants. Please note that the survey was conducted online using Qualtrics; therefore, while questions may appear differently in the online format and include some skipping/branching, the wording and order of questions are as follows.]

Thank you for your participation in the 2016 summer redesign project for a Capstone or Senior Culminating Assignment. We would like participant feedback about the project as a whole, including the value of the two-day workshop with Dr. Hutchings, to assess the effectiveness of our efforts to support faculty and capstones at WSU, identify potential follow up, and inform future offerings.

Please complete this survey by August 31. Contact ATL at 335-1355 or atl@wsu.edu if you have questions or any difficulties completing this survey. Thank you in advance for your feedback and your commitment to effective undergraduate curriculum and student learning.

Kimberly Green, Director, Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning, Washington State University, 2016

Section 1. Questions about the Two-day Workshop

Q1. Please rate the following aspects of the workshop in terms of how useful they were to you.

	Very useful	Useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful	Cannot rate
Pat Hutchings'	<input type="radio"/>				
Group discussion at my table during the	<input type="radio"/>				
Peer feedback on my assignment during	<input type="radio"/>				
Discussion of other assignments during	<input type="radio"/>				
Follow up resources provided/linked	<input type="radio"/>				

Q2. Comments:

Q3. Please rate the workshop's effectiveness in increasing your understanding of the following.

	Very effective	Effective	Somewhat effective	Not effective	Cannot rate
Capstones	<input type="radio"/>				
Integrative learning	<input type="radio"/>				
Assignment design	<input type="radio"/>				

Q4. Comments:

Q5. Based on your experience, to what extent were the following workshop and charrette goals met?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	Cannot rate
I was able to share assignments with colleagues working in similar (culminating/capstone) contexts	<input type="radio"/>				
I was able to get concrete ideas about how to strengthen assignments and make those changes later	<input type="radio"/>				
I was able to surface emergent connections among assignments that can contribute to more coherent, integrative experiences for students	<input type="radio"/>				
I was able to trade ideas about teaching	<input type="radio"/>				
I was able to feel part of a larger conversation at WSU about capstones, integrative learning, and assignment design	<input type="radio"/>				
I was able to feel part of a larger conversation by becoming aware of NILOA's Assignment Library Initiative work on other campuses and through disciplinary associations	<input type="radio"/>				

Q6. Comments:

Q7. After the two-day workshop, how prepared to revise your assignment did you feel?

- Well prepared
- Prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Not prepared Q8. Comments:

Q9. What **three words** would you use to describe your experience in the charrette process (small group discussion about assignments)?

Q10. Please rate your satisfaction with the logistical aspects of the workshop.

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not satisfied	Cannot rate
Venue (CUE 518,	<input type="radio"/>				
Lunch and refreshments	<input type="radio"/>				
Two day schedule	<input type="radio"/>				
Dates (end of May, prior to Memorial Day)	<input type="radio"/>				
Travel funds (for urban campuses)	<input type="radio"/>				
Faculty stipends	<input type="radio"/>				

Q11. Comments:

Q12. Please rate the overall usefulness of your workshop experience.

- Very useful
- Useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful
- Cannot rate

Q13. Would you recommend a similar workshop to your colleagues?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Q14. Comments:

Section 2. Questions about Your Assignment Redesign

Q15. What aspects of effective integrative learning design did you decide you wanted to improve in your assignment? (Select all that apply)

- More explicit about purpose, task, and evaluation ("transparency")
- More engaging to students (task as intriguing problem)
- Respecting and reflecting different ways of knowing and levels of preparation
- Allowing more useful, formative feedback
- Linked to and aligned with prior and subsequent assignments
- Other: _____
- None of the above

Q16. What aspects of the following capstone principles did you decide you wanted to improve in your assignment? (Select all that apply)

- Integration and extension of prior learning
- Authentic and contextualized experiences
- Challenging and complex scenarios
- Student independence and agency
- A concern with critical inquiry and celebration
- Active dissemination and celebration
- Other: _____
- None of the above

Q17. Specifically, what changes did you make to your capstone assignment? (Select all that apply)

- Making the purposes and instructions for the assignment more transparent
- Explicitly communicating capstone expectations to students (why this is "not just another assignment")
- Explicitly designing in more integrative learning, to help students synthesize various aspects of the curriculum, adding intentional occasions or activities for integrative learning
- Encourage critical, complex, sophisticated inquiry or analysis
- Adding reflection
- Scaffolding or chunking pieces of a larger project in small segments
- Revising the timeline and identifying specific milestones
- Refining the rubric to provide clearer criteria and/or feedback
- Revised group work component
- Peer feedback
- Other: _____

Q18. Please comment on the key changes that you made:

Q19. After the workshop, did you do further research or reading on your own related to the workshop topics (assignment design, capstones, integrative learning, etc.)?

- Yes
- No

[Q20 is displayed if Q19 is answered "Yes"]

Q20. Please briefly describe what topics you researched and why, and what sorts of resources you used.

Q21. After the workshop, did you use any follow up resources provided by ATL (books, slides, pdfs, links)?

- Yes
- No

[Q22 is displayed if Q21 is answered "Yes"]

Q22. Please briefly mention any resources you found particularly useful.

Q23. Over the summer, did you share your revised assignment with others, such as members of your charrette?

Q24. What were the biggest challenges in the revision process?

Q25. What aspect of the workshop experience was most helpful in supporting your revision work?

Q26. Knowing that you have not had the opportunity to try your revised assignment with students, how satisfied are you with the assignment you revised now compared to previously?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not satisfied
Previous to workshop and	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After workshop and revision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q27. Did participation in this experience (two-day workshop and following assignment revision) change any of the following aspects of your approach to teaching? (Select all that apply)

- How you will design assignments
- How you will teach students
- How you will grade student work for the capstone class or other classes
- Your views of capstones
- Your views of integrative learning
- Other:_____

Q28. To what extent did this experience increase your ability to revise other assignments in the future?

- I feel much more able to revise other assignments
- I feel more able to revise other assignments
- I feel somewhat more able to revise other assignments
- I do not feel more able to revise other assignments

Section 3. Questions about Follow-up Activities

Q29. Would you be interested in a one hour lunch gathering to share the redesign with your charrette group in the fall semester?

Q30. Are you willing to contribute your revised assignment to a WSU capstone bank?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Q31. Comments:

Q32. Have you or are you planning to submit your revised assignment to the NILOA Assignment Library?

- I have submitted my assignment
- I plan to submit my assignment
- I do not plan to submit my assignment
- Not sure

Q33. Comments:

Q34. Would you be willing to share your experience with assignment redesign with other faculty, such as participating on a faculty panel, contributing to a news article, or other?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Q35. Comments:

Q36. Would you be interested in joining regular follow-up discussions with a group of faculty about assignment design and teaching?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Q37. Comments:

[Q38 is displayed if Q36 is not answered "No"]

Q38. How often would you be willing to meet?

- Once per semester
- Twice per semester
- Once per month
- Twice per month
- Other: _____

Q39. Do you have suggestions for other ways to continue sharing and discussing assignments with WSU faculty?

Q40. Are you interested in potentially offering charrettes in your department/major?

Q41. Would you be interested in resources and/or professional development for using or refining rubrics?

- Yes
- No

[Q42-45 are displayed if Q41 is answered "Yes"]

Q42. I would like to find out more about how to use rubrics to:

- Communicate expectations to students
- Provide useful feedback to students for improvement (formative)
- Provide final evaluation of student performance for course/instructor
- Gather learning outcomes assessment data for the major/curriculum
- Gather learning outcomes assessment data for UCORE, Big 7 Learning Goals
- Other:_____

Q43. Comments:

Q44. Please indicate your level of interest in the following resources/professional development for using or refining rubrics.

	Very interested	Interested	Somewhat interested	Not interested
Workshop on rubrics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bank of sample rubrics used for	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
WSU faculty panel on rubrics used for capstones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informal discussion group on rubrics used for capstones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q45. Comments:

Q46. Do you have any other suggestions for follow-up activities?

Q47. If you have remaining questions about assignment design generally, or your assignment revision in particular, what are they?

Submit.

Thank you for your feedback and your participation in WSU's capstone assignment redesign project.