The purpose of the readings for summer 2006 is to provide an update on current issues in higher education and to provide a foundation for participation in:

1. Evaluating and documenting curriculum coherence and alignment in the general education core in 2006-2007; and

The readings described below are on reserve in the Lyman Beecher Brooks Library and are available online at www.nsu.edu/iea/. The password is: nsu

Readings


Student achievement of liberal education outcomes that are valued by the academy and employers is examined in this report (e.g., critical thinking, quantitative literacy, communication skills, ethical reasoning, civic engagement). The report finds that these outcomes have not been sufficiently addressed by colleges and universities in terms of documenting student learning and achievement. A set of learning outcomes is presented for consideration in cultivating and assessing student achievement of liberal education outcomes throughout the undergraduate experience.


Accountability/Assessment is the second in a series of papers issued by the Commission on the Future of Higher Education. The Commission was established by the U.S. Department of Education to study key issues and to make recommendations by August 2006 that will lead to a comprehensive strategy for reform in higher education. This issue paper discusses key challenges faced in higher education today, including erosion in the quality and outcomes of the collegiate experience. Promising practices also are presented. Additional information about the Commission and the issue papers may be found at: http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture.


Assessing General Education is a well-established questionnaire that is designed to help campuses initiate conversations about general education, reflect on the core curriculum, and begin a process of assessing the adequacy of the curriculum in terms of ensuring that students achieve the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes needed. Faculty and academic administrators are asked to rate the general education core program on twenty-eight dimensions such as clarity of student learning goals, coherence of the curriculum, and evidence of effectiveness. Results are used to focus attention on dimensions where there is much disagreement among faculty or on those dimensions with high or low scores. Campus discussions of the results should lead to an informed approach for conducting a comprehensive review of the general education core. NSU teaching faculty, department chairs, and deans are asked to complete the survey no later than August 1, 2006. The survey is available at www.nsu.edu/iea/. Password: nsu


Benander and Lightner present a practical approach to addressing curriculum coherence and alignment through effective teaching practices in the general education core. The authors also discuss how an interdisciplinary team of faculty developed strategies to promote transfer of learning across the general education core and improved teaching as well as coherence and alignment in the general education core. This faculty-led learning community focused on understanding how the pieces of the core curriculum fit together and how faculty can work together to strengthen the connections and relationships between and among the core courses. Recommendations for teaching to promote transfer learning are presented (e.g., explicit expectations and outcomes, advising, course design, modeling – for example, math professors invited to discuss statistical analysis in an introductory psychology course). The purpose of the reading is to stimulate faculty to think of creative ways to build curriculum coherence and alignment in teaching and learning and to provide a context for reviewing and assessing the general education core curriculum.


In this essay, the author provides a practical and approachable discussion of how to define, assess, and teach critical thinking. Facione contrasts a set of critical thinking skills needed by educated persons against “good thinking” and other myths from the popular culture.


Almost everyone in the academy agrees that one of the primary goals of education is to help students develop critical thinking skills. Almost everyone also agrees that students do not acquire these skills as much as they could and should. The difficult part is in knowing what to do about it. In this article, the author presents six key lessons from cognitive science for teachers of critical thinking. The lessons are about critical thinking, how critical thinking skills are acquired, and how critical thinking is taught best. The article also provides guidelines for teaching practice in light of the lessons.


Malx and Reybold explore faculty perceptions of critical thinking and preparation for developing critical thinking skills in students. A literature review focusing on faculty perceptions of critical thinking and pedagogical applications is presented. A case study, findings, and recommendations for teaching and learning practices also are discussed.

Summer Readings are on reserve in the Lyman Beecher Brooks Library and are posted on the Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment website. The URL is: www.nsu.edu/iea/. The password is: nsu
In Preparation for General Education Curriculum Review and QEP Development

PROMOTING STUDENT SUCCESS

What Faculty Members Can Do

1. Embrace Students and Their Learning
2. Set and Maintain High Expectations for Student Performance
3. Clarify What Students Need to Succeed
4. Use Engaging Pedagogical Approaches Appropriate for Course Intended Learning Outcomes and Students' Abilities and Learning Styles
5. Build on Students' Knowledge, Abilities, and Talents
6. Provide Meaningful Feedback to Students
7. Weave Diversity, Civic Engagement, and Service into the Curriculum Including Out-of-Class Assignments
8. Make Time for Students
9. Hold Students Accountable for Taking Their Share of the Responsibility for Their Learning


ATTENTION
NSU Administrators, Faculty, and Staff

2006 SUMMER READINGS