

# CORE CURRICULUM

Fall, 2015



# Core Areas A-E

- A1 Communication Outcomes  
Courses that address learning outcomes in writing in English
- A2 Quantitative Outcomes  
Courses that address learning outcomes in quantitative reasoning
- B Institutional Options  
Courses that address general education learning outcomes of the institution's choosing
- C Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics  
Courses that address learning outcomes in humanities, fine arts, and ethics

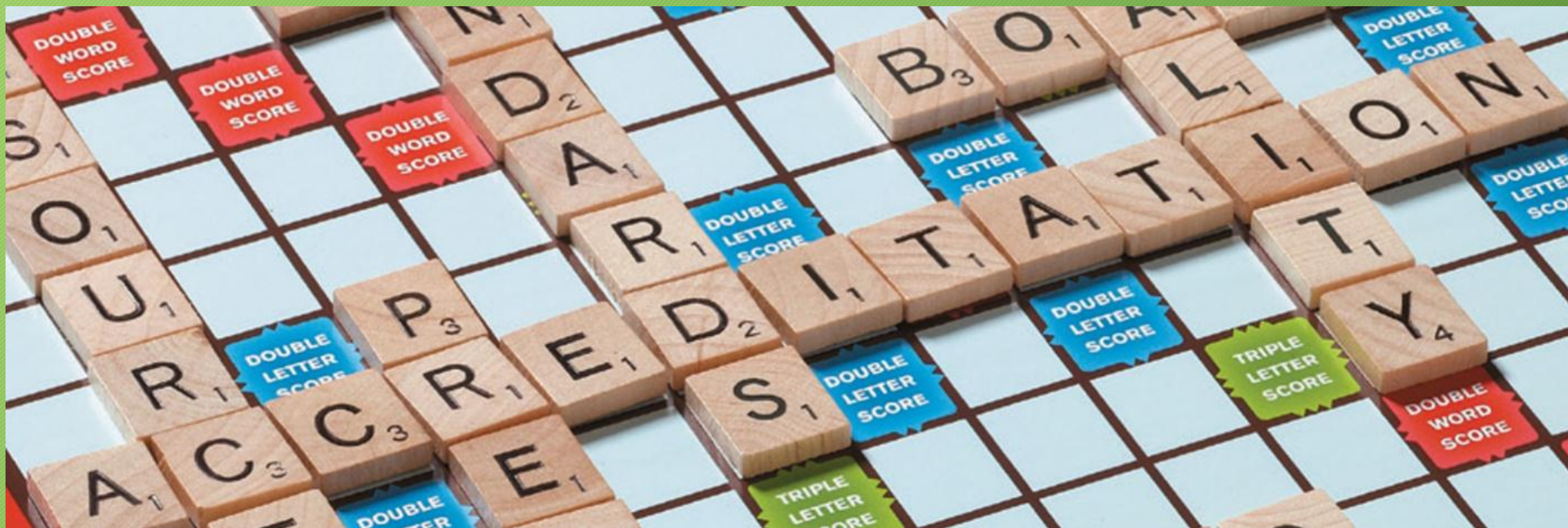
- **D Natural Science, Mathematics, and Technology**

Courses that address learning outcomes in the natural sciences, mathematics, and technology

- **E Social Sciences**

Courses that address learning outcomes in the social sciences

# Accreditation



# Widely participatory review process



- “The program is to be commended for a thorough, frank, and apparently widely participatory review process. These teams have each completed SWOT analyses in a concise and clearly organized format, and the comprehensive review narrative synthesizes these analyses and draws general conclusions.”

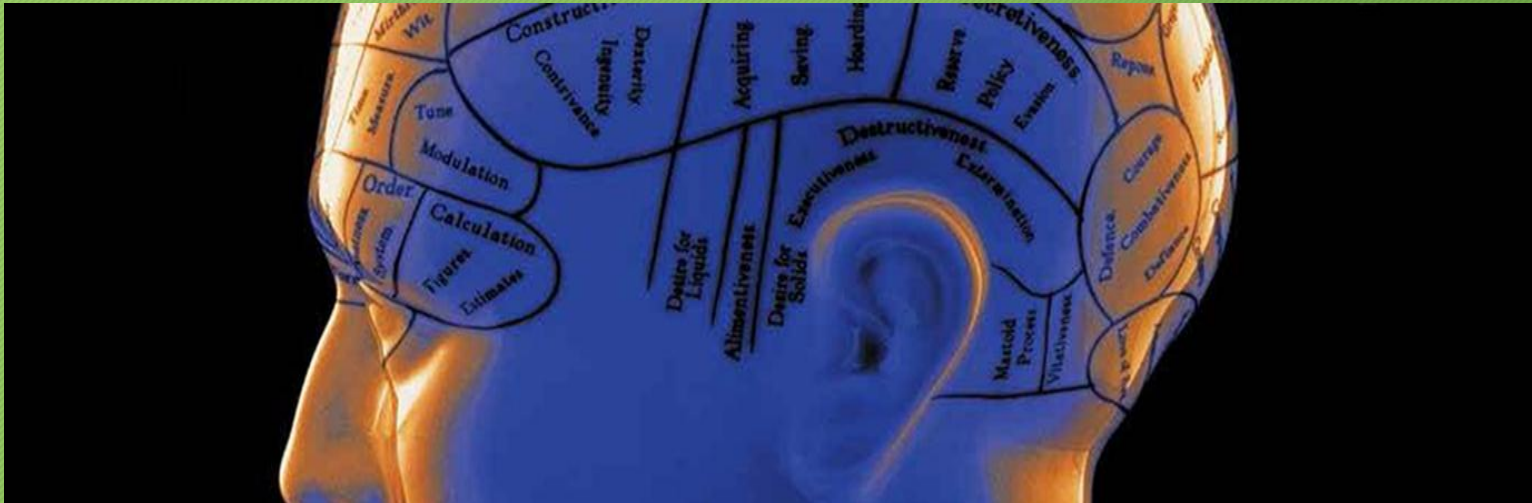
# Strengths



- “strong and engaged teaching from full-time faculty, often under challenging circumstances, as reflected in evaluations scores, awards, and multiple innovative approaches by individuals referenced.”

# Weaknesses

- “Perceived gap between Core learning objectives and actual practice in Core science and mathematics courses.”





# Weaknesses

- In other words, we were not demonstrating that students are meeting the program's stated learning outcomes.



# Weakness

## INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE

WILL DO YOU LITTLE GOOD UNLESS YOU FIRST UNDERSTAND  
THE DISCIPLINES THEMSELVES, NOT JUST SUPERFICIALLY, BUT  
AT A **DEEP CONCEPTUAL LEVEL.**



- that “PERS courses have come in for a lot of criticism, and I think it is fair to say that in their current state, the courses are on balance a weakness in the program.”

# Threats

- enrollment decline
- transfer bringing Core work from dual enrollment while in high school or transferring it from colleges that do not adequately prepare them for advanced level work
- budget cuts

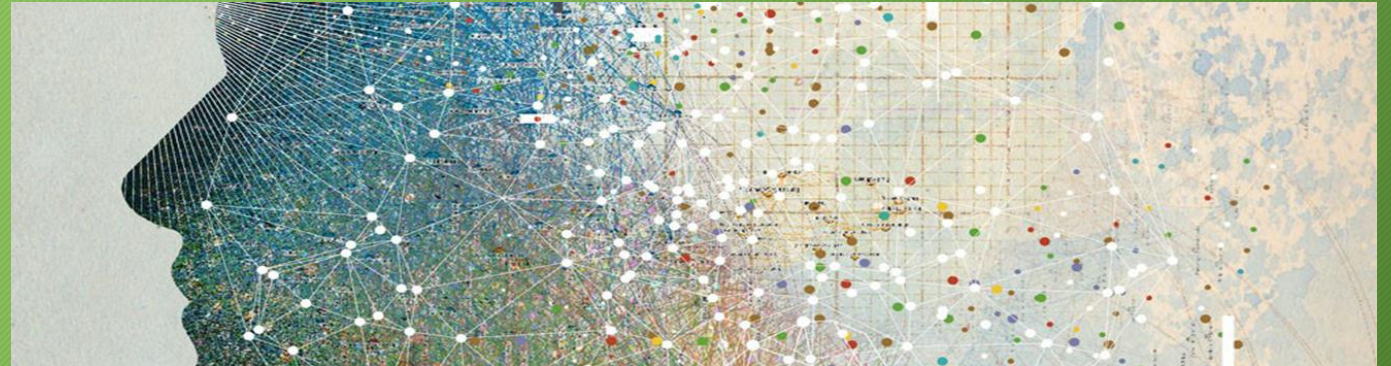




- And low retention rates in the system.
- But at VSU the students we lose are not just dropping out or failing.
- Last year well over 700 of them transferred from VSU to other public institutions in our own system.

# Opportunities

- **Opportunity 1:** Area B offers, as stated in Dr. Gunn's report, "an opportunity for VSU to add some much-needed distinction to its curriculum. VSU's core could be a selling and recruiting point that attracts strong high-school graduates."
- 



# Opportunities

- **Opportunity 2:** Coherence: as it is now, is our Core a collection of disparate courses and hoops to jump through, or does it hang together somehow?
- To what degree is the current VSU general education program experienced by students and faculty as a coherent, integrated whole?
- What distinguishes the program from a set of disconnected distribution requirements?



# Student Mission

- To provide a diverse student population a wealth of experience that assists students in molding their futures in a creative, conscious, and caring fashion while preparing them to be lifelong learners who will meet the needs of a changing global society.*



# Opportunities



- **Opportunity 3:** “Molding their futures.” Their future involves a career, not just a job.



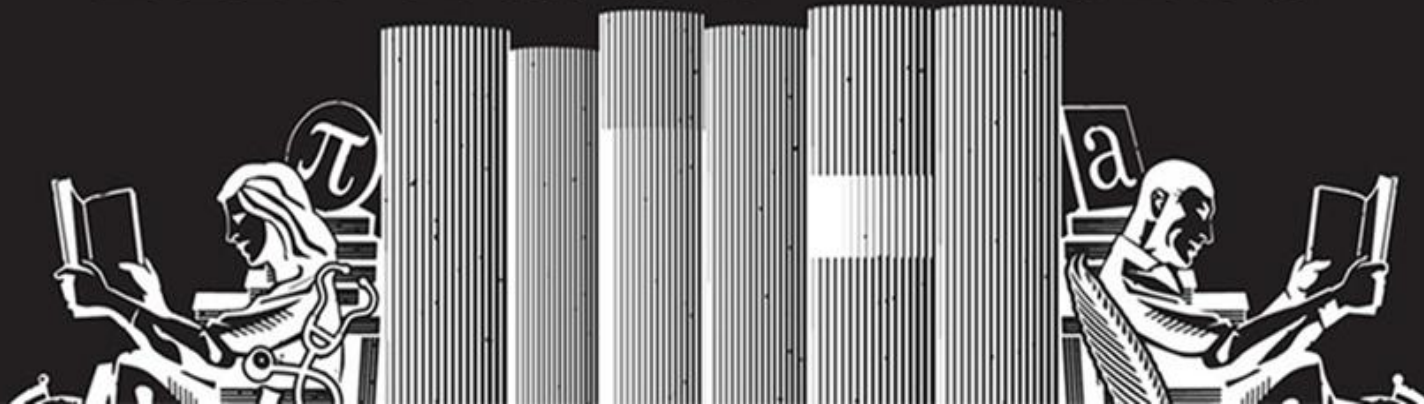


- “a candidate’s demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is *more important than his or her undergraduate major.*” In fact, in their latest survey, only 15 percent chose field-specific learning *alone* as the best preparation for long-term success.

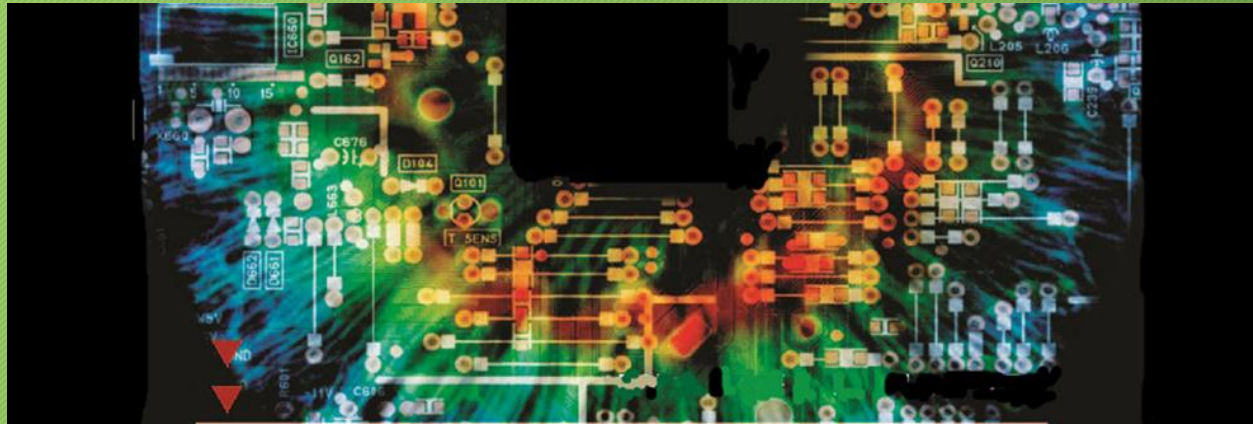
Liberal vs. Professional  
Education Education:

---

# The False Choice



# Jonathan Brand



- “The liberal arts as an educational philosophy is preparation for Any profession, and the specific skills that transcend any academic discipline instilled by the liberal arts are sought devoutly by employers in all fields.”

# Blazer Reef



# CORE AREA D

TIM HENKEL

# Skills Employers Most Want In 20-Something Employees

Ability to...

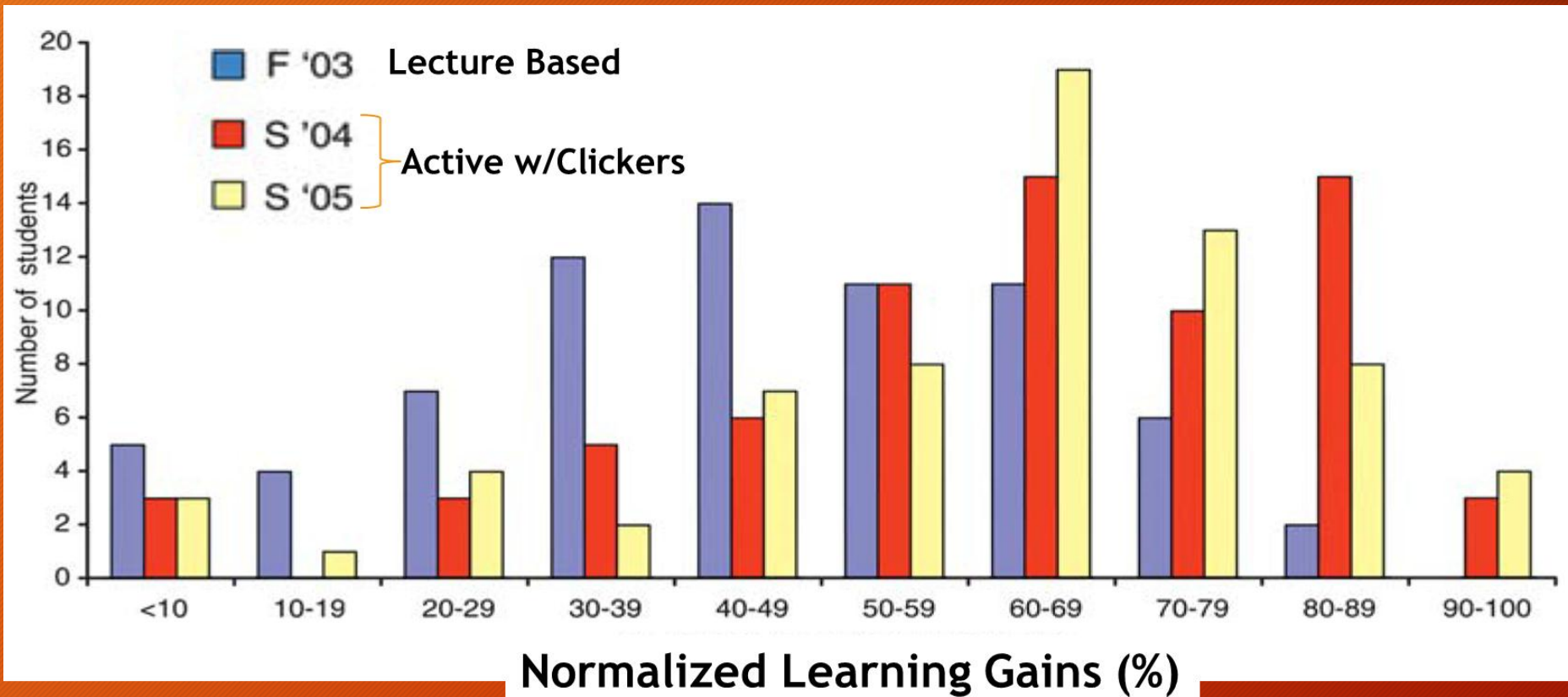
1. work in a team
2. make decisions and solve problems
3. plan, organize and prioritize work
4. communicate verbally with people inside and outside an organization
5. obtain and process information
6. analyze quantitative data

- <http://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2013/10/11/the-10-skills-employers-most-want-in-20-something-employees>

Practice these skills...



# Be Transparent - Science of Learning



Knicht and Wood, 2005 Cell Biology Education



Which of the following are most important to you?

1. Acquire information (facts, principles, concepts)
2. Use information and knowledge in new situations
3. Develop lifelong learning skills.

Which of the following could most easily be completed outside of class?

1. Acquire information (facts, principles, concepts)
2. Use information and knowledge in new situations
3. Develop lifelong learning skills.

# CORE AREA B

GARDNER ROGERS

# Project CORE: Creating Opportunities for Research and Engagement

## Supporting content

### Incubation

Teaching Circle at IDEA Center, F2014 and S2015

### Major Premises

1. Students misunderstand and devalue Gen Ed requirements; they struggle to connect learning from different Core classes; all the same, they **need** the skills and knowledge taught in Core classes.
2. Interdisciplinary, experiential-learning classes help students see value and connections; Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model helps students become responsible for their learning.
3. ePortfolios, in which students reflect on their emerging skills and knowledge, help them develop metacognition about their learning—good for their learning, good for their job prospects.
4. Project CORE offers a “value-added” version of the Core unavailable through two-year colleges or online and dual-enrollment classes.

# Overview of Project CORE

(Please see the handout for more detail)

This is a pilot program proposal

Works with cohorts of 100 students (selected from the “middle”) in F2016 and F2017

Instead of Perspectives classes, these students fulfill Area B requirements by taking two courses:

- Intro to the Core—1 credit hour, first semester first year
- Core Capstone—3 credit hours, second semester second year

# Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

- Developed first in medical schools; closely related to project-based learning used in engineering and business
- Reverses the usual method of instruction
  - Instead of presenting course content and then asking students to apply or repeat the content, PBL immerses students in an ill-structured, “real-life” problem with no defined right answer
- Collaborative, relies on groups
- Three basic prompting questions
  - What do we already know about the problem (multiple perspectives)?
  - What do we need to learn or know more about?
  - What can we do to develop that learning or knowledge? What tools are available?

# Assessment

We'll need to assess

- 1) Program outcomes (retention, graduation, GPA)
- 2) Student learning outcomes

Means of assessing student learning outcomes include:

- Indirect (student responses to surveys before/after courses)
- Direct (Instructor assessment of student learning)
- Artifacts of student learning (ePortfolios and texts, videos, Web pages/blogs, etc.) stored (with student permission) in VText
- Focus groups and exit interviews

# Thanks for Your Time

Contact info on handout—I'd love to hear from you

Gardner Rogers  
206 West Hall, 333-7337  
gjrogers@valdosta.edu  
@GteachVSU (just lurking for now)



# CORE AREA C

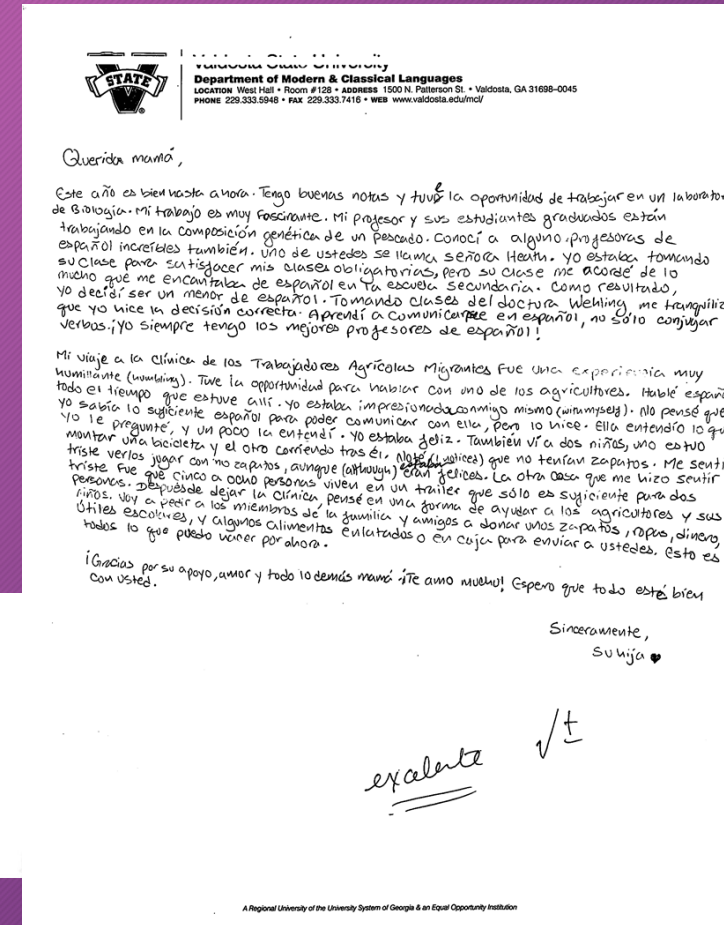
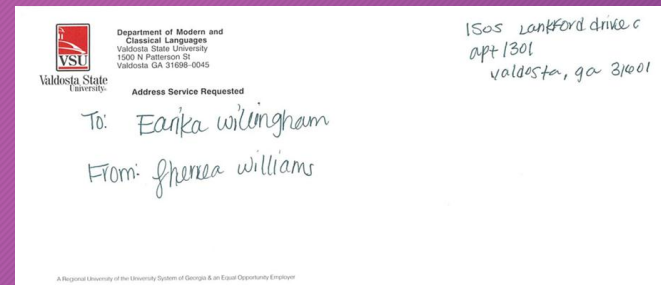
SUSAN WEHLING

Regional University-Mission-Serve the Region

SPAN 2001 Intermediate Span  
PERS 2799 Basic Spanish for Health Professions.

# Parent perspective of CORE: you better be a great teacher and help my child. CORE is where MOST students decide their major-SUPER important.

- ▶ Letters home-think retention.
- ▶ Letters to employers or profs. Writing skills.



# Citizen and resident of Lowndes County perspective of CORE : VSU needs to help us and interact with us and vice-versa. Takes a village to raise a child.

- Valdosta, GA.- 3<sup>rd</sup> poorest city in the US
- [http://business.mbcnews.com/\\_news/2012/10/14/14372928-americas-richest-and-poorest-cities](http://business.mbcnews.com/_news/2012/10/14/14372928-americas-richest-and-poorest-cities)
- We pool about one third of our students from the region. Our mission is to be a regional university. What exactly does that mean? How do we 'serve' our region?
- Median household income: \$32,446
- Unemployment rate: 9.2 percent (minority unemployment is 13.5%)
- Percent households below poverty line: 27.6 percent

Do we/our students KNOW Lowndes?  
Kinderlou and the South Side...How is our town a  
microcosm of national and international issues?



# Do we know our students?

## VSU students come from

Region	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
Lowndes County	2,037	2,039	1,944	1,934	1,865
VSU 41 County Service Region	5,131	5,136	4,857	4,686	4,614
Metro Atlanta	3,787	3,817	3,650	3,340	3,078

# Regional Schools percent qualifying free/reduced lunch

## How does VSU interact? Serve?

<b>Valdosta City Schools</b> (approximately 200 are homeless)	<b>92.3%</b>
<b>Brooks High School</b>	<b>89%</b>
<b>Echols High School</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>Berrien High School</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>AND</b>	
<b>Metro Atlanta</b>	<b>75.6%</b>

Student perspective of CORE: VSU needs to help me be successful, do my best, network, and gain many skills and experiences.

- Percent of Undergraduates Receiving Pell
- TermUndergraduates
- % Receiving Pell
- Fall 2012 45.8%
- Fall 2013 47.1%
- Fall 2014 46.8%
- average Pell recipient family income 30K maximum grant 5K

# How can we as professors make a difference- RELATE the CORE

- 1) outside the classroom: by engaging students in the region or at least relating your material in some sense to the place that we live.
- 2) in the classroom: re-think the way we teach.





# #1) Outside the classroom

## -Experiential Learning

- Take students to the community and bring the community to students.-City Council, Court, Prison, Literacy classes, Garbage Dump, Water Plant, Parks
- Who is working in the community with a degree in your field?  
**Bring them into your class!**

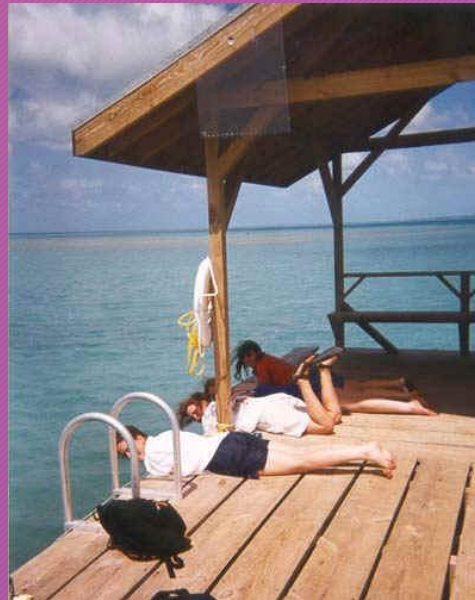


SPAN 2001 and PERS 2799 you can conduct an oral interview with non-English speaking clients



# Field trips / experiential learning

## Every CORE class has a community counterpart



Ropes course at Campus Rec.  
Teamwork, leadership and class cohesion- 1 hour of  
your semester. Allison is now leader for CORE.



# PERS 2799

- Even visiting within VSU is experiential.
- Makes class interesting and applicable.
- Weigh and measure each other in kilos and centimeters.
- Film each other doing patient assessment in Spanish.
- Lake Louise Station; Providence Canyon



# 2) IN CLASS-new expectations:  
We meet for 45-48 contact hours in SPAN 2001, 30-32 in PERS 2799.

ACTFL/ US GOV

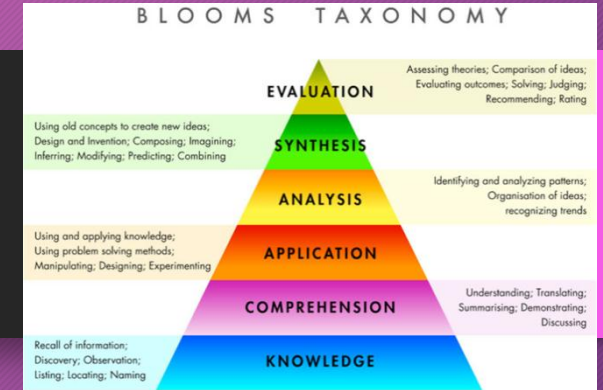
Group I Languages:  
Including *Dutch, French, Haitian Creole, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish...*

Length of Training	Minimal Aptitude	Average Aptitude	Superior Aptitude
(240 hours)	Intermediate Low	Intermediate Mid	Intermediate Mid
(480 hours)	Intermediate High	Advanced Low	Advanced Mid

# New Expectations -can you USE the language to help vs heavy grammar

- Proficiency related to client intake and professions.
- Can you in-take a client? (PERS and SPAN)
- Can you read and translate a birth certificate or immunization document? (PERS and SPAN)
- Can you take down a traffic report? (SPAN)
- Can you explain why VSU and USG don't have representative Latino populations? (PERS and SPAN)
- Can you enter a room and leave take appropriately? Cultural nuances. (PERS and SPAN)

# Differentiated instruction



- the greatest learning occurs when students are pushed slightly beyond the **point** where they can work without assistance.
- This **point** differs for students who are working below grade level and for those who are gifted in a given area.
- My own research is showing me that motivation plays an equal role.
- Center Work -design different levels within class



# SPAN 2001

Making instruction personal and class more meaningful and interesting.

## Combination Lab and Class

- 6-7 student centers
- 4-6 students per group
- groups rotate to each center
- 4-5 rotations per semester



• Examples:

All play spoons.

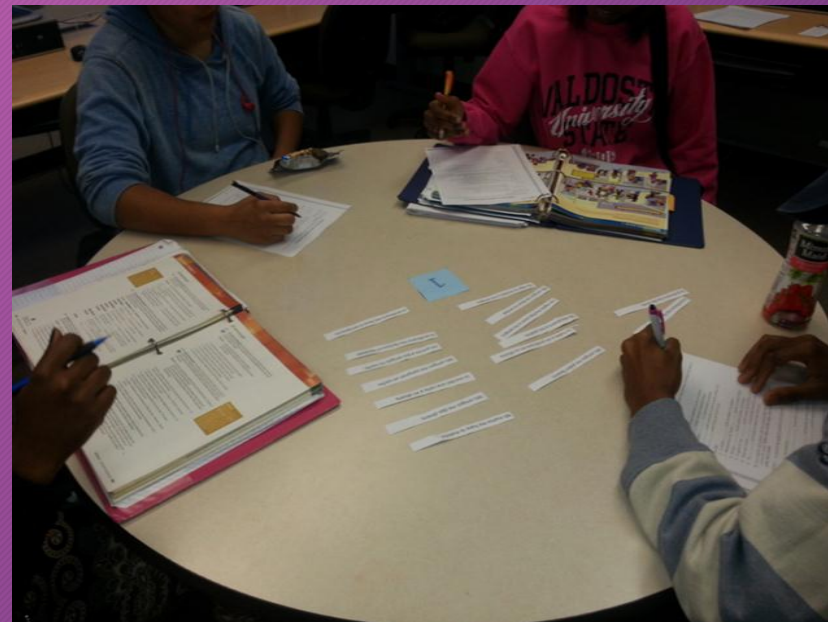
Can differentiate.



- Less knowledgeable translate Spanish to English.
- More knowledgeable students choose 10 spoons and write an essay using those words or play spoons with English words and translate to Spanish.
- “The number of students able to answer
- all the questions correctly dramatically increased after the game was played.”

# Sometimes-Always-Never

- The sun revolves around the earth.
- A rhombus is a square.
- Children are born male or female.
- Southerners supported slavery.
- La profesora **nos** hace la maleta.
- **Le** doy dinero a la profesora.
- **Se me** olvida el texto de clase.



## More professor involvement-Ticket in/out the door for CORE and all classes.

- Research shows that a good professor-student relationship is key to student motivation and performance
- Stand at door; ask students simple question from class.
- ¿Cuándo nació usted? \_OR\_ write down the most important thing -or 3 things you learned today as you leave.





**Think**



**Pair**



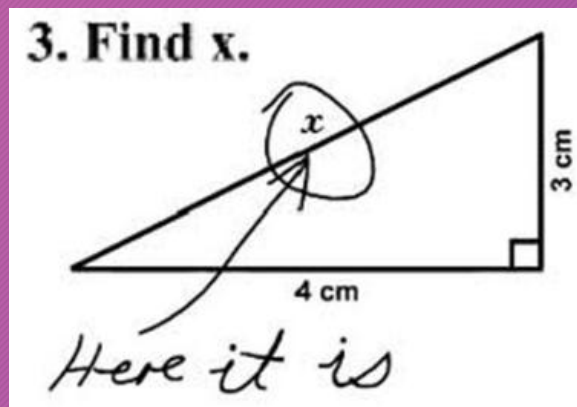
**Share**

- Person A: tell B why experiential learning is a good idea for CORE classes?
- Person B: what is one technique you could use to make learning more engaging?

# Doug Fischer, San Diego State



- Delayed testing AND/ OR Paired testing
- Have students start to take exam last 30 minutes. Tell them you will collect exams at 30 minute mark.
- They will have the next 30 minutes the following class to finish. Why?



My suggestions for CORE: Incorporate service-learning  
VSU needs a PERS class focused specifically on service  
learning class!

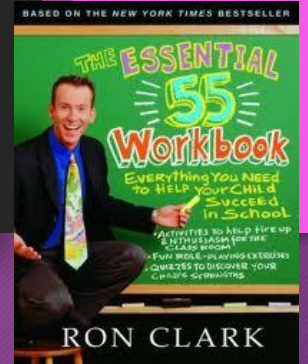


Measurement of Outreach and  
Recruitment





Having read 48 students resumes...  
Have a SOFT SKILLS CORE class about majors, careers,  
networking.



Rules on tipping, clapping, winning, losing, greeting, leave-taking etc.  
Social skills that are vital to success. They BRIDGE the class divide.

Rule 6 If you are asked a question in conversation, you should ask a question in return.

Me: “Did you have a nice weekend?”

You: “Yes, I had a great time. My family and I went shopping. What about you? Did you have a nice weekend?”

It is only polite to show others that you are just as interested in them as they are in you.

- <http://www.ronclarkacademy.com/Who-we-are>



# ALL CORE AREAS

AUBREY FOWLER

# CORE CURRICULUM

DEBORAH ROBSON

# Communication

- 
- 
- 
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qolaOprJbj8&feature=youtu.be>
- 
- 
-

# Sociology

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tnP5ggqrMM&feature=youtu.be>

# World Literature

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkXTWgG6guU>