



## Building Concepts of Sustainability into Undergraduate Curriculum

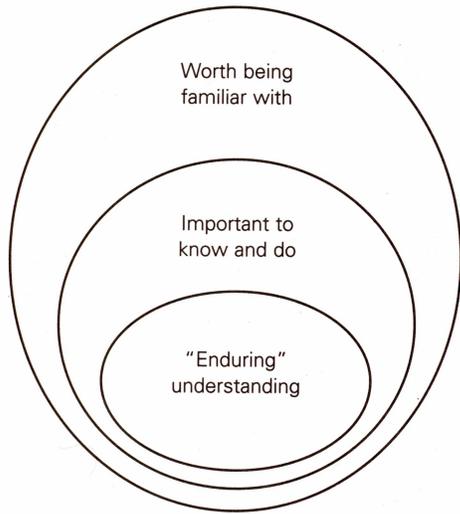
### Typical Approaches to Curriculum Improvement or Reform

- o **"Add-a-course"** approach. A good step, but often isolates topics in elective status or into just one disciplinary lens, e.g., sustainability just as a dimension of environmental studies.
- o **Re-orientation of majors, minors, or general education curricula** – the driver for sustainability at the moment is the development of global understandings and competence or civic engagement. Yeasty sites are, of course, freshman seminars and senior capstone experiences.
- o **Interdisciplinary curricula** – Either through new, added courses, or through learning communities that link or cluster 2-3 classes.
- o **The addition of community-based learning or service-learning to existing classes.**

### Curriculum Integration Approaches

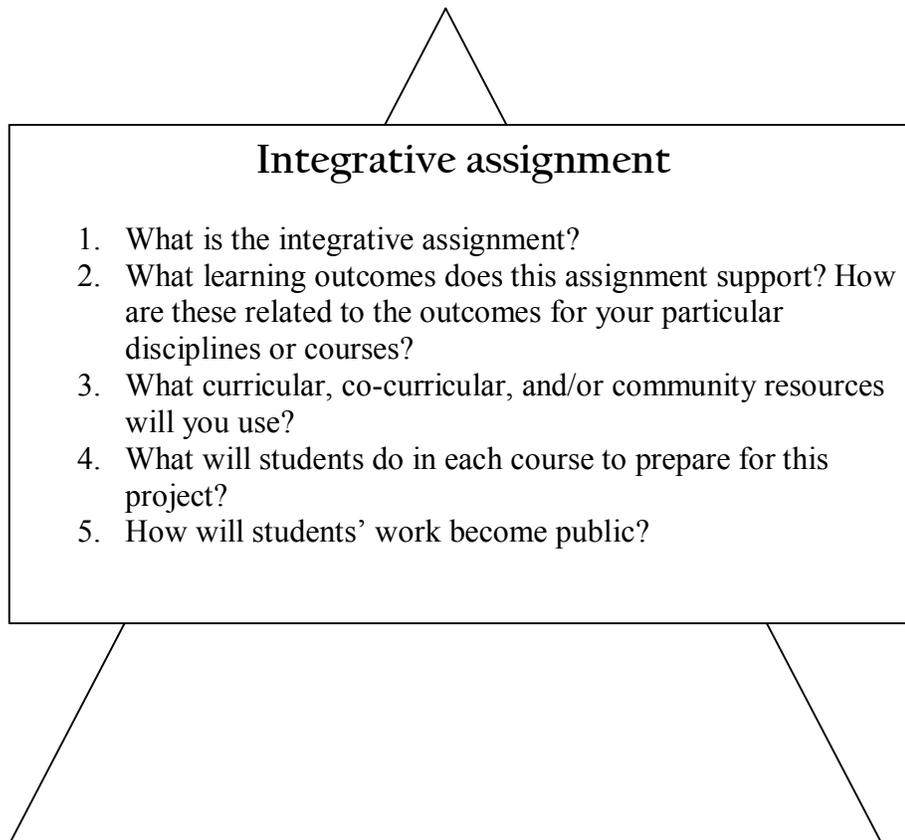
- o **Course redesign approaches:**  
Ponderosa and Piedmont Projects (AASHE now holds workshops on this approach)  
Generally, launched through an on-campus faculty workshop after which faculty members are encouraged to add sustainability content to one course in any way they would like. Faculty members turn in a revised syllabus and with a brief explanation of what they proposed to change. A campus web-site displays the changed syllabi.
- o **Ongoing "faculty learning communities"** – intra-institutional, inter-institutional.  
Faculty members meet over an academic term or for a full year or more both to explore a new dimension in their work and to create or co-create products. For example, many campuses currently have "scholarship of teaching and learning" learning communities.
- o **The Washington Center's Curriculum Integration Approach**  
This approach, developed in our learning communities curriculum planning workshops, focuses on conceptual attainment related to significant learning. In the various strands of our learning community work, we are encouraging faculty members to use this approach both for planning and for assessment of student learning. For the assessment component, we are collaborating with Harvard Project Zero's Interdisciplinary Studies Project.  
(See <http://www.pz.harvard.edu/interdisciplinary/staffresearch.html>)

# Designing Purposeful & Integrative Learning<sup>1</sup>



Source of nested circles visual:  
"Establishing Curricular Priorities"  
in *Understanding by Design*, by Grant  
Wiggins and Jay McTighe. 1998.  
Pearson Education, Inc. page 10.

What is the public issue?



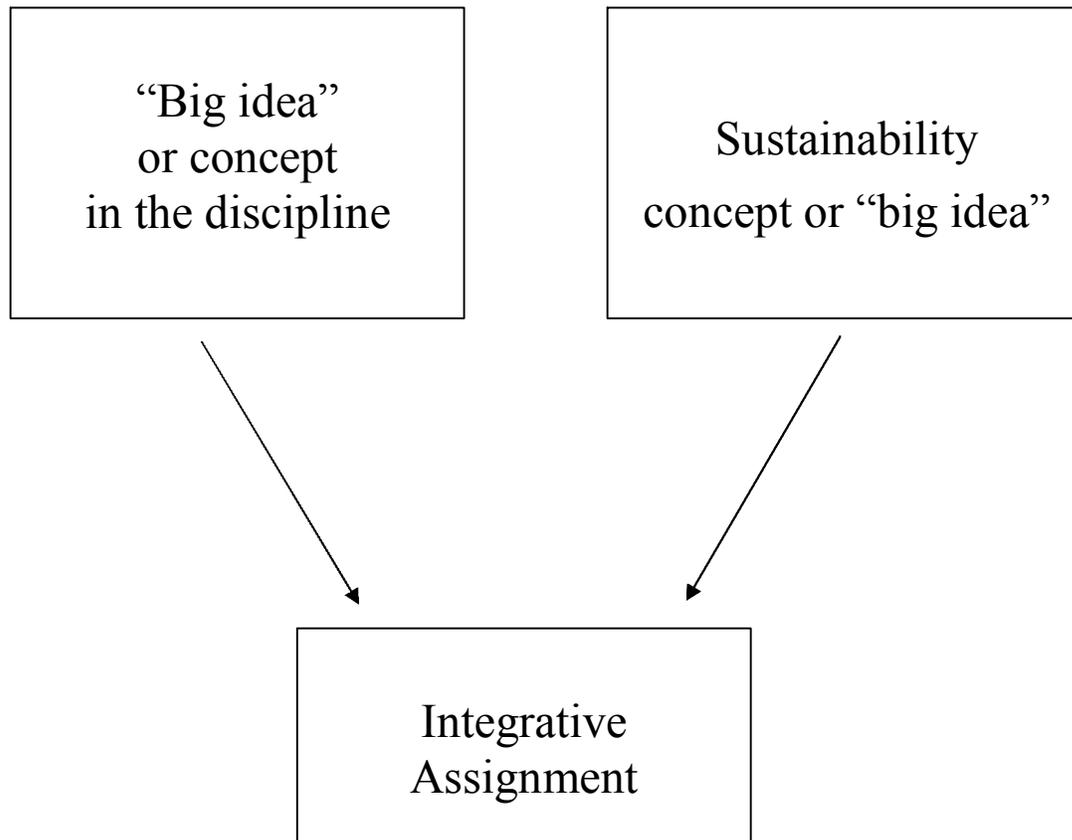
What do you most want students to learn from your course (or discipline)?

What curricular, co-curricular, and community resources will you use?

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<sup>2</sup> Emily Lardner and Gillies Malnarich, Co-Directors, Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education, The Evergreen State College.

# Designing an Integrative Sustainability Assignment<sup>2</sup>



.....that also asks students to recognize and use at least one of these principles:

- similarities and differences
- patterns
- structure and function
- cause and effect (including cycle flow)
- feedback
- a systems approach

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<sup>2</sup> “Curriculum for the Bioregion Initiative,” Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education, The Evergreen State College.