Integrating Across the Psychology Curriculum: A Content Review Approach

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Teaching integration at the undergraduate level requires thoughtful coordination among psychology faculty. This article describes a content review process by which complimentary strengths and perspectives can be discovered and used to design a coordinated integration curriculum. The George Fox College undergraduate psychology department’s integration content review is offered as an example. A content review requires a framework for both exploration of integration activity and desired outcomes. We propose four levels of integration activity in the classroom: (a) modeling of personal faith, (b) integrative discussions, (c) integration readings, and (d) course level integration. These levels are progressive, complimentary, and dependent, to some extent, on the course content. In addition, careful articulation of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes the department wishes a student to have at graduation is important for the design of an integration curriculum and for assessing outcomes. The content review is an opportunity for the department to coordinate efforts toward a multi-layered integration of psychology and Christian faith.

M any undergraduate psychology programs consider the integration of psychology and Christian faith or teachings to be an important program goal. Too often, however, actual classroom integration is highly individualized, differing from instructor to instructor and is uncoordinated among faculty or within the major. One solution to the problems created by an individualized, uncoordinated integration component, can be found by conducting a content review focused on integration. The goal of such a content review would be to coordinate individual efforts, and make the best use of the strengths of the department members. With the George Fox psychology major as an example, an integration content review is presented and discussed.

A content review is different in form and intent from a curriculum review. A curriculum review is an examination, usually by a committee within the department, of the courses offered by the department. Questions asked might include: Does this major have enough basic science courses? Is the psychology field represented by course topics offered? Are the courses properly arranged in sequence? Curriculum reviews are concerned with structural questions raised by comparison with other departments and APA guidelines (McGovern, 1993).

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A content review is concerned with what is being taught within the classes and how the material consistently builds toward the departmental goals. For example, a content review would reveal that while the course title is “History and Systems” (and basic history is covered), the course in our department takes a “Great Ideas” approach, rather than a focus on “schools of psychology” or individuals. The point of a content review is not necessarily to com-
pare one's class to other similar courses, but rather to share the inner workings and goals of the one class with the other faculty so that efforts to promote desired knowledge skills and attitudes can be coordinated across the curriculum. A content review may reveal how a particular class builds towards the goals of integration, professional knowledge, critical thinking skills, or written communication skills. Certainly both curriculum and content reviews are necessary for insuring continued quality in a psychology major.

The APA guidelines for curriculum review do not distinguish between a curriculum review and a content review (McGovern, 1993). Similarly, the protocols offered by most curriculum review authors are designed to use content review components to build towards structural changes, but not towards strengthening a particular departmental goal (i.e., integration), within a satisfactory psychology major. In order to meet our needs, we pulled out of the combined review protocols those items which were purely content review in nature. While, combined reviews can be useful in teasing apart what is being taught, by whom, in which courses, the combined reviews can be a very complex and time consuming task. A focused content review can be easily tailored to address a unitary departmental goal, such as integration.

Both graduate and undergraduate guidelines suggest that classes should be structured and evaluated with respect to knowledge, skills, and attitudes (McGovern, 1993; Peterson et al., 1991). Presumably, any particular class has a certain "canon" of knowledge that must be covered, that sets it apart from other courses, or builds on the content of other courses. A class may also introduce certain research, critical thinking, writing and speaking skills. In addition, a professor models and/or demands certain attitudes such as professionalism, honesty, tolerance, commitment, enthusiasm, etc. Halpern et al. (1993) discusses desired outcomes which a psychology major should have at graduation within the domains of knowledge (content areas, methods, theory and history), intellectual skills (thinking, communication, information gathering and synthesizing, and quantitative), and personal characteristics (open creative thinking, interpersonal skills, motivation, ethical conduct and sensitivity to people and cultures).

Walker, Newcomb, and Hopkins (1990) suggest classes be examined to determine how they build upon each other. The authors offer four levels of achievement each for the domains of knowledge base, methodological skills, communication skills, and independent work. For example, within the communication skills domain, Walker et al. describe a student as having attained level one when he or she has basic writing skills. The student has achieved level two when he or she can produce a critical literature review. Level three demands a literature critique and an oral presentation. The student has achieved level four when he or she can produce an advanced professional quality written and/or oral defense.

**Domains and Levels of Integration**

The curriculum review material offers very general domains and levels which can be used to construct a specific content review. However the domains and levels need to be tailored to fit one's own departmental goals and desired outcomes. Also, since there are no content review protocols specifically focused on integration, each department must generate its own. For the purpose of an integration content review, we suggest using the domains of integration knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Peterson et al., 1991). The specifics of those domains will need to be discussed and adjusted to meet the needs of each department. As for levels, we identified four levels of integration activity in the classroom. Each of these levels builds on those that precede it and each successive level requires a more sophisticated critical thinking activity on the part of the student. The levels include the following:

**Level One: Modeling of Personal Faith**

Christian faculty bring to each class their own personal integration of the material and a living faith. At this level, the integration amounts to the professor being open and honest about their faith, and representing what a Christian in their discipline should be. At Christian colleges all faculty in all courses should be engaged in integration at this level. However, in order for this type of integration to influence students, professors must be explicit about their beliefs. When course content does not lend itself to higher order integration, this may be the only integration taking place.

**Level Two: Integrative Discussions**

Here, the focus is on integrative discussions. These discussions can be the result of planning or
course offerings and delegating responsibilities for review for each course or group of similar courses. The third step involved generating forms which facilitated classification of course content into knowledge, skill, and attitude domains, and into four levels discussed previously. In the fourth step, faculty reviewed their own courses. The fifth step involved a faculty meeting to review the results of our individual work and consideration of any changes the department might make in the manner integration was approached within a course.

Department Assumptions and Goals

The act of integration is necessarily tied to the goals of each psychology department, and in turn these goals grow out of the department's assumptions about the relationship between psychology and Christian faith. For example, if the department's operating assumption is that psychology and theology are incompatible, then how integration occurs would be much different than if the department takes the stance that the two are compatible.

Various integration themes have been proposed that recognize assumptions about the relationship between psychology and theology. Carter's (1977) "psychology of religion" and "psychology parallels religion," and "psychology integrates religion," represent the assumption of compatibility. Similarly, Farnsworth (1982) identified "manipulation" and "correlation" as two basic approaches to integration. Manipulators seek to subsume one discipline under the other. In some departments psychology is used to "filter" theology, straining it through the world view of the psychologist. The other approach is to strain psychology through the world view of the theologian, filtering out secular facts that are incompatible with scripture. Other psychologists fall into the category of "correlation" where the goal is to find areas of agreement or where the two disciplines complement one another. Despite more than a decade of integration effort, there is little agreement on what is Christian psychology. Foster and Bolsinger (1990), in a review of the integration literature, identified only seven common themes.

Because there is no established approach, each department needs to work to establish their own values, goals, and assumptions. As the first step of the content review, our department examined our underlying assumptions and agreed upon the following values, goals, and assumptions to help shape our content discussions and review process.

Level Three: Integrative Readings

Here the course demands a critical reading of integration materials, and some sort of written or oral presentation of the student's evaluation. Specific assignments are made which are believed to promote the goal of integration. While the readings or assignments may or may not be specifically about integration, the assignment clearly leads students to deal with integrative issues. For example, a faculty member may assign students to develop an integrated position on a topic, or the assignment may be to develop their knowledge or skills in an area while at the same time respond to the integration implications. This level of integration is most likely to occur when the course content lends itself to integration, but there are points where integration opportunities occur.

Level Four: Course Integration

Level four integration occurs within a course specifically designated as an integration course, or when the content is limited to integrated content. While the other levels of integration can take place within any psychology content area course, a level four course is a sustained integration effort in integration knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Many psychology departments at Christian colleges include courses (often capstone courses) designated as integration courses.

George Fox College Content Review

The following sections will detail the procedures and results of George Fox College undergraduate psychology department's content review to provide an example of a content review.

Our first step was to discuss our ideals for the students' development and our assumptions about integration. The second step involved evaluating
The George Fox College psychology department's assumptions are:

1. All truth is God's truth and therefore, ultimately there will be no conflict between psychological truth and theology.
2. The discipline of psychology is not inherently anti-Christian and the integration of psychology and Christianity can take place in many forms.
3. Psychology is a science and, as a science, regularly needs to examine its philosophical assumptions, empirical bases, and core questions.
4. Psychology's understanding of animal and human behavior is incomplete and evolving.
5. Psychology is a diverse field of study drawing from and contributing to many disciplines.
6. In both its theoretical and applied forms, psychology is of value to society and can make valuable contributions to solving social problems.

The psychology faculty also agreed on a statement which defines integration as that which satisfies professional needs, provides a theoretical background and incorporates the theological basis underlying issues specific to the content of the course being taught.

These assumptions seem most consistent with what Farnsworth (1982) called the "correlation" approach. Because there is not a general perception of incompatibility between theology and psychology within the department, integration efforts revolve around harmonizing the two disciplines.

These assumptions underlie each faculty member's goals, but we had never as a department identified collective goals. When we did this as part of our review, we discovered broad agreement. We also discovered, however, that there were differences and while talking through these we developed better departmental unity.

George Fox College psychology department's undergraduate goals are:

1. Students should demonstrate knowledge of psychology's historical roots, philosophical assumptions, and empirical methods.
2. Students should develop skills which students can apply to their profession, society, themselves, and their Christian life.
3. Students should be aware of integration issues and be able to knowledgeably participate in integration discussions.
4. Students should develop attitudes of scientific skepticism and tolerance toward the diversity of opinions and persons they will encounter.

While integration of faith and learning is clearly a departmental goal, its importance has to be assessed in relation to the remaining departmental goals. For example, if the department's primary goal is integration then it would make sense to order the courses to facilitate integration. However, if psychological knowledge is the primary goal, then the courses might be sequenced differently. Complicating the sequencing issue is the content of the courses which in our experience often determines the level of integration. It is likely that a sequence for courses that facilitates integration may not be the best sequence to facilitate psychological knowledge. If one of these goals is not primary, optimum sequencing would advance multiple goals.

**Content Review**

With common values, assumptions, and goals expressed, we then set about the task of evaluating our course offerings. The George Fox undergraduate psychology department has organized its courses under the headings of Introductory Courses, Methods Courses, Lab Courses, Survey Courses (basic science and counseling) and Senior Courses. To assist in the analysis, we created a grid that would help de-construct our courses. The grid has four levels of integration down the left side and the domains of knowledge, skills and attitudes across the top. We used one grid per course to operationalize integration goals and behaviors. Another useful tool was a flow chart that shows what knowledge, skills, and attitudes were developed in prerequisite classes and what knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed in each class prepared students for subsequent classes.

Each faculty member reviewed his or her own classes. We then met and shared our analysis, and discussed the domains represented in the courses and the level of integration. The following section is a review of selected courses by the professors of those courses. We tried to represent the types of courses offered and the different levels of integration.

**Individual Course Content Review**

**General Psychology**

**Introduction and goals.** General Psychology is the first course in the psychology major as well as a service course within the college's general education
curriculum. The goals of the course are three-fold. First, students in this course develop an understanding of the scientific method, especially as that method is applied to the study of behavior and mental processes. Second, students learn basic theories and data in the discipline. Finally, students explore the relationship between their Christian faith and the discipline of psychology.

Each week a selected topic within the discipline is addressed in lecture, laboratory experiences, and outside reading assignments. The topics covered are typical of a general psychology course and include research design, neuroanatomy and physiology, sensation and perception, learning, memory and intelligence, and personality and therapy issues. For each topic, students are responsible for reading relevant sections of the text in preparation for lectures. Lab groups meet to interpret the results of experiments and discuss the implications and applications of the results for students' lives. It is during these discussions and in periodic papers that students engage in integration exercises.

Knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Because the General Psychology course is most students' first introduction to the discipline, most of the readings and lectures are focused on helping students to approach the content and research skills involved in psychology. While no integration knowledge is presented (i.e., no integration lectures are presented and no integration readings are required), integration attitudes and, to a lesser degree, integration skills are introduced in the course. During group discussions students are expected to address issues of application and integration in addition to the interpretation of experimental results. The students also write papers which address the application and integration of research results. In these discussions and papers, students develop integration skills such as the identification of common themes as well as differences among disparate sources of information and the ability to support their conclusions with evidence. In developing integration attitudes, students are encouraged to be aware of integration issues and be willing to participate in integration discussions. Students are also encouraged to develop attitudes of scientific skepticism and tolerance toward the integration views of other students.

Level of integration. General Psychology is a level two integration course because students are provided a few planned opportunities to engage in integration, but those discussions and papers are not extensive and do not require a high level of integration knowledge or skill. A general psychology course could be presented at a level three or perhaps even at a level four, but it is doubtful that students will have enough knowledge of psychology and would perhaps lack enough knowledge of theology to benefit from the additional exposure to integration.

Statistics

Introduction and goals. Statistical Procedures focuses on applied statistics for the social and behavioral sciences and emphasizes statistical logic and decision making. The course is cross listed as a math and sociology course, and is required for psychology, sociology, and business majors. Statistical procedures focuses on how to evaluate data after it is collected while ethical considerations regarding how research should be conducted and what research questions should be asked are topics discussed in the research methods courses specific to each major (i.e., psychology, sociology, business, other). However, students do learn appropriate methods of presenting data and are made aware of their responsibility to accurately and honestly present their results.

Although the primary emphasis of the course is on the understanding of statistical concepts and how to apply them to data, both by hand and with statistical software, there are two other goals for this course. One goal is to help students better understand how statistics are used within their own discipline and in the general media. The other goal is to help students understand empirical research articles.

Knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Since the primary goal of the course deals with understanding statistical principles and knowing how to apply them, knowledge of the statistical concepts is stressed as well as the sequence of data analysis. The three step process of graphically examining the data, describing the data, and then conducting inferential statistics is strongly emphasized. Students are also encouraged to develop a snooping mentality. Determining what variables are causing a significant effect, what a significant interaction means, and the size of an effect are emphasized. Students first conduct all analyses by hand before learning how to do the same analysis with statistical software. This is done in an effort to help them develop a better appreciation for statistical analysis and a better understanding of what the computer does in a statistical package.
Level of integration. Statistical Procedures is best classified as a level one integration course. This course does not specifically address topics of the Christian faith and does not easily lend itself to integration at a higher level. The course only focuses on what to do with data once it has been collected.

The most obvious attempt at integration is in the discussion of probability. In *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Josh McDowell (1972) presents a good example of the probability of Jesus fulfilling only a portion of the prophecies about him. This example is used as an introduction to probability and addresses the certainty of Jesus being who he claimed to be. However, integration really occurs on the personal level. Being available to students, taking extra time with students outside of class, relating to them on their level of understanding, and providing positive feedback as a source of encouragement are part of this integration.

Cognition

Introduction and goals. Cognition includes the traditional areas of study in cognitive psychology such as perception, attention, memory, reasoning, problem solving, and language. New trends in cognitive psychology are also discussed (e.g., neural networks, Artificial Intelligence).

Students are expected to develop an understanding of the theoretical explanations of intelligence and begin to understand how one would empirically investigate theories of mental processing. Students are encouraged to question how science and cognition, in particular, can inform them about God and the Christian walk. They are asked where science (cognition) may be limiting God and where science (cognition) is either taking people away from or drawing them closer to God.

Knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In order for students to integrate faith and cognition, they must begin to develop the ability to see God in new ways and to be able to reinterpret what someone else has done from a different perspective. This requires empirical creativity and inquisitive skepticism. Students must also decide for themselves what is right without blindly accepting how someone else has interpreted something. However, in doing so, they must learn how to substantiate their own beliefs and interpretations. Finally, students are encouraged to look for connections between research and their Christian walk or personal faith. They are encouraged to seek how to apply knowledge of how people think to how they live.

Level of integration. This course is considered to be a level three integration course because students are required to research the relationship between Christianity and psychology with specific reference to cognition. In addition, course discussions are designed to encourage students to think and talk about their views on integrating the Christian faith and psychology. Since this is an upper division course, most students are juniors and seniors and have completed all, or most, of their religion courses and have had several other psychology courses. These students are generally more mature and knowledgeable in their faith than younger students. In addition, they have begun to develop their world views and ideas regarding whether or not psychology and Christianity can coexist. As a result, discussions are generally more interactive and productive. However, students are challenged a great deal by the level of integration that must occur in this class. Many students find that attempting to integrate faith with the “abstract” notions of cognitive psychologists stretches their comfort zone.

The course is initially described using Koteskey’s (1991) classification of research areas in psychology. Within this classification scheme, psychology is divided into two categories: areas that study how humans are created like all other creatures and areas which study how humans are in the image of God. This simple classification scheme, taken from Genesis, serves as a starting point that all students can appreciate. As the course progresses, the professors note how medical advances, such as MRI and PET, shift the attention from the image of God back to biology and how humans are like other animals. Through open discussions, we build on this classification scheme and explore ways of seeing God’s character in various research findings and theoretical models. These discussions also help students formulate their ideas about integration for their final project which is a paper focusing on where cognitive psychology places people in relationship with God.

Sensation and Perception

Introduction and goals. The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with the theories, methods, and content of the sub-discipline of psychology devoted to the study of sensation and perception. This is a lab course and students spend up
to one half of class time engaged in research and its interpretation. In the first quarter of the semester students are introduced to the concepts of receptive fields and psychophysical methods which provide a theoretical and methodological backbone for the rest of the course. In the second quarter of the course, the exploration of receptive fields is expanded from the skin senses to the auditory and visual systems. Finally, students explore visual pattern perception and interpretation of sensory information. Integration of Christianity and content is not a major focus of the course.

**Knowledge, skills, and attitudes.** While the development of integration skills and knowledge are not built into this course, integration attitudes may be effected. Specifically, the attitudes that integration can and should influence any endeavor in psychology and that one should be tolerant of others' integration efforts are fostered. These goals are addressed through modeling and feedback. In the case of modeling, the instructor may volunteer how his or her Christian faith influences decisions to pursue some lines of research, how he or she treats subjects, and how the instructor uses research to serve the community. Feedback, in the form of encouragement, is provided when students engage in independent integration. For example, after class or during a break students may comment about the complexity and orderliness of God's creation or wonder about the evolution of sensory systems. Clearly, in their previous classes students have developed integration knowledge, skills, and attitudes which they spontaneously apply to the course content. Their spontaneous integration is supported and encouraged but is not planned.

**Level of integration.** Because integration is not a major focus of this course, no integration readings or discussions are planned. Modeling opportunities are built into the lessons, however, in order to insure that students are aware of what the professor is modeling. Overall, this is a level one integration class.

**Human Development**

**Introduction and goals.** Human Development serves not only the psychology major but also education, sociology/social work, and other majors on campus. As a service course it usually has more non-psychology majors than majors. Because it serves education majors, it must also meet guidelines provided by the education department of the state of Oregon. The course focuses on human development from the prenatal period through adolescence. Students are expected to understand basic growth principles in the physical, cognitive, and psychosocial domains. Students must also learn about normative human development, and the variety of factors that produce differences in development.

**Knowledge, skills, and attitudes.** The primary focus of the course is knowledge of human development, and acquisition of integration knowledge is secondary. There are, however, ample opportunities to develop integration skills and proper attitudes because integration opportunities grow out of the social issues that are a natural part of the study of human development. For example, the discussion of cognitive development usually leads to a discussion of the question of race and intelligence, which in turn affords an opportunity to discuss a Christian response.

One of the course goals is that students be able to think through issues, and demonstrate the ability to reasonably represent diverse perspectives. This is partly accomplished through assigned readings and papers. However, the current assignment does not allow the assessment of whether students can locate primary sources on their own, since the sources are provided.

To encourage tolerance for opposing points of view, and the willingness to examine evidence, both refuting and supporting their personal points of view. Students are encouraged through assignments to demonstrate a respect for the science underlying the study of human development, while at the same time to exhibit healthy skepticism. Methodology is discussed as part of the course, and builds on the knowledge gained from General Psychology (a prerequisite). The level of understanding is assessed through written and oral comments and through testing. With the writing assignments students are instructed to assess more than one side of an issue before they take their own position, and to react not only to the results but also to the method used to gather the data. This approach serves to disequilibrate the student, forcing them to resolve the imbalance between what they thought they knew was true and their new knowledge.

**Level of integration.** The Human Development course meets the criteria for level three integration. While the readings and discussion topics in the course are not specifically focused on integration, they are selected because they bring together three important domains: student knowledge of human development.
development, their knowledge and feelings about social issues, and their personal theology. For example, readings on cultural differences, single parent families, and the development of intelligence, bring together all three domains. Virtually all students are prepared with a position on each of the issues which then must be reconciled with their personal theology. In addition the assigned reading often presents evidence, or perspectives, the student was not aware of and thus challenges them to reconsider previous beliefs.

Social Psychology

Introduction and goals. Social Psychology serves primarily psychology majors and is classified as a survey course. The course depends on knowledge accumulated from other courses, especially in the areas of research design and analysis. While there is an important body of content to this course, the methods used to establish the empirical base, and how interpretation takes place are equally important. Specifically with regard to integration, students need to be aware of the methods of the field and how social, political, and religious views affect interpretation. The course is designed to begin with the methodology and corresponding ethical guidelines. These then are revisited as each of the content areas are examined.

Knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Students become aware of methodological and content issues through lecture, discussion, and reading assignments. Key to the course are case studies drawn from the literature and from current events. The case studies are particularly useful in engaging the student's personal theology, knowledge of psychology, and moral beliefs.

Through the case studies students share their personal perspectives and this forces them to engage the issues, while at the same time it allows them to learn from the perspectives of others. Students are partially graded on their ability to demonstrate professional attitudes. The final project requires students to select a case of their own and analyze it from an integrative perspective. This serves as a good mechanism to assess level of knowledge, attitudes, and integration ability.

Level of integration. While this course is identified as integrating at level three, it approaches level four. The content of social psychology involves the study of aggression, social influence, prejudice, persuasion, and other important social issues. Christian-
Table 1
Courses by Curriculum Subcategory and by Level of Integration

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>Level I</th>
<th>Level II</th>
<th>Level III</th>
<th>Level IV</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Model Personal Faith</td>
<td>Discuss Christian Topics</td>
<td>Readings Concerning Christian Topics</td>
<td>Fully Integrated Course</td>
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<tr>
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<td>General Psychology*</td>
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<td>Methodological:</td>
<td>Statistical Procedures*</td>
<td>Research Methods</td>
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<td>Lab</td>
<td>Sensation &amp; Perception*</td>
<td>Learning</td>
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<td>Advanced Listening Skills</td>
<td>Group Dynamics</td>
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*Courses that are addressed in the article.

The Systems of Psychology course is a psychology major's senior level course designed to cover the history of the science and philosophy of psychology. The students besides gaining basic knowledge of the history of psychology, also spend a large portion of the class discussing historiography and zeitgeist questions. A major goal of the class is to develop in the student the understanding that they are "history makers" and that their professional identity (as psychologists) is formed in relation to the history of psychology.

Knowledge, skills, and attitudes. One of the dominant themes of the course is the relationship between religion and the development of science (with the added dimension of the faith lives of the early scientists.) Another theme is the driving philosophical questions behind psychology, such as (a) What is the nature of persons? (b) What is the nature of pathology? (c) What is our relationship to physical body, the external world, and the cosmos? Discussions focus on the possible Christian answers to these questions. Key early integration writers such as James, Jung, and Hall are read and discussed. Papers and exams focus on the students' personal integration ideas in relation to the historical material.

Level of integration. This is a level four integration course because of the content but also because it demands a higher level of "integration critical thinking" than the other courses. The course requires tolerance of others' ideas, acceptance of the integration task, appreciation of many integration forms, and the ability to critique ideas. The course requires students to be ready to engage integration activities in class discussions and on exams. While one goal is certainly learning the historical material, the more important goal is their finding their own identity within the field of psychology.
INTEGRATING ACROSS THE PSYCHOLOGY CURRICULUM

Synthesis of Content Review

After having discussed all of the courses in the undergraduate curriculum, we developed a chart dividing the courses by curriculum subcategory and by level of integration (see Table 1). At George Fox College, we have six level one integration courses that tend to be research/mathematics courses, or biologically based. We have four level two courses with no common themes. With seven level three courses, it is our largest category. These courses tend to be basic content survey courses. Last, we have two fully integrated, level four courses for the senior psychology majors. Overall, the more macro-level the content of the course (such as Social Psychology), the easier it is to achieve higher levels of integration. The micro-level courses (such as Perception) were much more difficult to integrate at a higher level.

Discussion

The results of the content review actually surprised us. We began the project with the assumption that our curriculum had too many level one and two courses and an inadequate proportion of courses at the higher levels. After our discussion of the courses, we found we had many more level three courses than anticipated. We devoted subsequent discussion time to the question of whether we would like to rebalance the numbers. The consensus was to leave things as they are but fine-tune the courses at their current level. The process certainly raised our awareness of the integration efforts we are making as a faculty.

The remaining discussion section will be devoted to three topics. The first topic concerns how other departments might develop their own goals for the level of integration within a course. The second topic concerns the questions this process raised for us. The third topic for discussion concerns the critiques of our department's efforts.

Choosing the ideal level of integration for a course should be based upon the content of the course, students' knowledge of psychology and theology and students' levels of cognitive and emotional development. Courses which emphasize research methods and content focused on micro-analysis of behavior do not lend themselves to extensive integration and may be limited to level one or level two integration. The position of the course in the curricular sequence may also influence the level of integration that an instructor should attempt. Those courses which appear early in the sequence will be populated by students with less experience in psychology. Students with only a limited knowledge of psychology or a limited knowledge of theology will be less prepared to evaluate the commonalities or differences between psychology and Christianity. Thus students may have integration attitudes and integration skills but without knowledge of content, they will be unable to engage in extensive integration. Finally, faculty should consider students' cognitive and emotional development when determining the level of integration in a course. For example, Perry (1970) describes the vertical development of the intellectual skills of college students. Perry proposes that students move from a simplistic, categorical model of the world (right/wrong; we/they) to a realization that most knowledge is uncertain but that appropriate criteria can be selected to make and support decisions. Courses that are populated by students who are just beginning their college careers may be limited in the level of integration because students are cognitively or emotionally unable to engage in extensive integration. Thus, to conclude, faculty should consider course content, students' experience and students' level of development in determining the optimal level of integration for a course.

Through the process of defining one's optimal level of course integration, the following questions may arise.

Can Skills Be Integrated?

The field of integration is dominated by theoretical discussions of the topic, primarily focused on the integration of content, but few authors address the integration of skills taught in psychology curriculum. How does one rate the integration level of a skill based class? Some would even question whether skills can be integrated. Psychology skills include listening skills, research skills, and statistical skills. While we could simply set these skills outside the scope of integration or simply rate skills classes as level one integration, it would be more fruitful to ask how can we think about the integration of skills?

One direction of thought on this question concerns the unity of thought and action. Every action has an actor with an engaged value system, intent, and meaning system forming the context of the action. Instruction and modeling concerning the values, intent and meaning of actions impacts the actions themselves if one assumes unity of action and...
thought. For example, listening skills such as reflection or confrontation are performed by the counselor-in-training who uses his/her own self as the tool. One cannot separate the person from the counselor. Perhaps skill training needs to include paradigms of examining the personal context of a skill.

Students learning to apply basic skills with good intent or within a service context are integrating skills if you believe that the intent behind the action infuses the action. If the intent is moral, ethical, good-spirited, and service minded, one can say that it is integrated. While the skills that enable a person to conduct survey research may be value free, how those skills are used is certainly not.

Should the Expectation for Integration be the Same for Majors and Non-Majors?

One of the discussions the department had during this process concerned the integration for non-psychology majors. Did we need to articulate separate goals for non-majors taking psychology service courses (for example, education majors taking child development)? Did we need to keep the integration level of a service class lower because of the non-majors? With less exposure to integration, would the non-majors demonstrate the same levels of knowledge, skills or attitudes that we can expect from the psychology majors? It would be difficult to establish and maintain different sets of standards for majors and non-majors in the same class. Realistically, the majority of our service courses are early in the major’s sequence and require prerequisites that would place both student groups at the same preparedness levels. If we have done our homework in setting the integration level of the class, the non-majors should be comparable to the majors in ability. For our department at least, we do not need to treat majors and non-majors differently.

What Priority Do We Give Integration?

While the integration of faith and learning is one of the psychology department’s key goals, it became clear throughout the content review, that it is not the goal that determines class organization and content. While there are level four courses, typically the content of the course is similar to the content of courses taught at secular colleges and universities. However, there are clear differences in terms of what is emphasized, sensitivity to religious and social issues, selection of supplemental material, the focus of discussion, class atmosphere, and how faculty relate to students. In trying to balance the need to present the discipline of psychology in an honest fashion and at the same time integrate faith with learning (in the absence of an integrated content), a unique atmosphere has been created.

Should integration be the primary goal? Should the content of courses be organized to promote integration first and teach the content second? Each department must make these decisions for themselves. Our content review revealed that we are trying to balance these two goals, and that in doing so have created an environment that facilitates both.

Each member of the review team learned lessons about how to approach integration of faith and learning, and about what priority to give it. At the department level we learned that we tend to overemphasize teaching knowledge and attitudes and underemphasize skills. This is not the result of an overt departmental decision and is simply the result of the fact that it is often easier to present and to assess content than it is skills. A renewed look at teaching skills is one result of the content review.

A second department concern is with assessment. Expectations for the sophistication of integration increase with each year in the program, however, there is no systematic way to assess student progress. Assignments in some courses assess integration ability, but not all courses do this and assessment is inconsistent and not coordinated well with the developmental stage of the student. As a department we are now aware of the need to improve and coordinate assessment to determine whether we are reaching our department goals.

To assist our content review, we identified four levels of integration. These levels, however, are from a faculty perspective and address how the material is presented and the goals for the course. It may be useful to follow up a content review with an assessment of student integration ability. For example we hypothesized four levels of student integration ability: (a) Awareness. Students are aware of the concept of integration and the issues. (b) Knowledge base. Students have basic concepts and information about integration. (c) Consideration/engagement. Students are capable of thinking, speaking, and writing about integration issues. (d) Integration. Students can integrate independently whether the faculty member does or not. Ideally, students would be autonomous in integration, and capable of taking their skills, knowledge and content to the secular world (e.g., graduate school).
and continue integrating faith and learning.

The content review process involves cooperation and communication among the faculty and we found it to be a helpful process. It provided an opportunity for faculty to share goals and coordinate efforts. The end result can be a department that is more unified and effective in its integration efforts.

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