

## Exhibit 7.1. A Heuristic for Learning Community Curriculum Planning

*Suggested materials for this activity:* Post-its (sticky notes,), 2 × 2 inches or 3 × 5 inches, in various colors. Sheets of flip chart paper and marking pens. Syllabi you have previously used of courses that will now be part of the learning community offering. A list of the overarching intentions or learning outcomes for the entire learning community initiative on your campus—if they exist and if you know them.

1. Start by working individually, setting your syllabi aside at first. Call to mind the knowledge, abilities, and perspectives you are most passionate about enabling your students to gain in your course or discipline. More importantly, consider what genuine, enduring understandings you hope will result from your course. Generate all you can in a few minutes, and write *each* outcome on a separate note. (This activity works best when each person on the learning community teaching team uses a different color note.) Then, prioritize. First, identify what are the most enduring understandings you want students to gain from your course; second, determine what is important for them to know and be able to do; and third, determine what is simply worth their being familiar with. Consider next your larger aspirations for this learning community: What additional outcomes do you hope the learning community experience will allow the students to achieve, beyond the content knowledge, abilities, sensibilities, or perspectives they will gain in your individual course? Write down each of these on individual notes as well.
2. Next, move together with your teaching partners. Describe the aspirations and goals for student understanding and for the learning community you've jotted down as you lay out your sticky notes on a table or paste them onto flip chart sheets. Be sure to add more notes that list general institutional goals or outcomes for the entire learning community initiative, if you know them.
3. Build connections. Working together, arrange and rearrange your notes on the flip chart paper, drawing out key ideas and meaningful connections. Using this material, identify one or more provocative questions that might engage students' interest and help focus the inquiry and learning in your learning community. Here are a few examples:

How do photography, television, film, and video affect how we feel and act?

How might we minimize the impact of corporate greed and fraud?

What does it mean to be an American in our highly diverse and multicultural society?

Whose responsibility is the cleanup of toxic waste?

Write these provocative questions on individual notes also.

4. Invent one or more integrative learning activities (including, if appropriate, out-of-class experiences) that would speak to your question or questions and foster the understandings or outcomes you have laid out.
5. Based on the questions and activities you have developed, now create ideas for assessment occasions that would ask students to demonstrate what they know and can do and demonstrate their overarching understanding of the courses in the learning community and their overall experience. Each person on the teaching team should be specific about what he or she believes constitutes evidence of understanding for each assessment occasion. Develop appropriate criteria to judge student work.
6. Finally, reconstruct your syllabi or construct a joint syllabus, incorporating the goals for understanding, provocative questions, learning activities, and assessments that you have jointly developed.