

**Disciplinary and common core curriculum proposal.
May 2014 (additions October 2016)**

Mike Klymkowsky, MCDB / CU Teach – UC Boulder



Disciplinary curricula: The curricular design initiative offered here is based on the presumption that disciplinary departments should have a relatively easy time deciding on the set of required courses their students need to take based on what they can be expected to learn from those courses.

The performance expectations (learning outcomes) for students that pass these courses should be made explicit and verifiable. Over-ambitious or unmet expectations should be addressed through changes to such required courses both in terms of the content delivered and the pedagogical practices employed.

The goal of such an (ongoing) curriculum design and evaluation process would be to identify those courses that do not facilitate (and may actually obstruct) students' engagement with, and mastery of, their discipline. The process would also serve to identify and address omissions in current curricula and insure, to the extent possible, that the courses a student must take represent a well thought out and effective instructional sequence. Departments, rather than individual instructors, could (and should) be held accountable for the efficacy of their core (required) curricula.

Specific proposal (preliminary draft — added October 2016): To emphasize the importance of departmental efforts in the context of student education and success, I recommend that a new program be implemented in which Departments compete with one another based on the effectiveness of the education efforts. Departments could be placed in groups (Sciences, Arts, Humanities) and asked to describe their educational efforts. Important features would include retention of students within the major, time to degree, and (where available) measure of post-graduation student success; where available, evaluations of student learning outcomes would also be an appropriate metric.

A Departmental Educational Excellence Award would involve an across the board salary increase for faculty in that department, funded from transfers from other departments within the disciplinary group.