

About Project CORE (Creating Opportunities for Research and Engagement) Pilot Program

Overview

- This is a **pilot** program with lots of assessment built in.
- Starting F2016, it works with cohorts of 100 students in two consecutive years.
- Instead of Perspectives classes, these students fulfill Area B requirements by taking two courses:
 - Intro to the Core—I credit hour, first semester first year
 - Core Capstone—3 credit hours, second semester second year

Intro to the Core

- Students learn rationale and value of Core curriculum.
- Students chart how Core classes help them achieve personal and career goals (ePortfolios).
- Students make connections among Core classes.
- Class introduces them to methods and purposes of Problem-Based Learning.
- The course gives some attention to differing skills needed to succeed in various disciplines, but this is **not** a reincarnation of VSU1101.

Between the Two Courses (2-semester interval)

- Instructors of Intro classes stay in touch with students.
- They **mentor** and **monitor**, but they don't advise.
- The project convenes all P-CORE students once or twice each semester.
- Mentors build anticipation for Core Capstone, decide how to group students.
- We anticipate that of the 95-100 students who start Project CORE, 60-65 will take Core Capstone course.

Core Capstone

- The course is interdisciplinary and team-taught (simultaneous, not tag-team); it also invites faculty with relevant expertise to supply additional disciplinary perspectives.
- Each course addresses specific "messy" problem (on-campus technology use, Lowndes-Valdosta water management).
- The course uses Problem-based and Project-based learning as well as collaborative groups.
- Students reflect on how they're using knowledge/concepts from current and prior Core classes to solve problems.
- Students document emerging competencies in ePortfolios.

If You're Interested

1. Consider joining the Problem-Based Learning teaching circle at the IDEA Center this fall (every other Friday 10:00-10:50).
2. Consider joining the Project CORE teaching circle that will meet in the S2016 semester (time to be arranged).
3. Talk with me (Gardner Rogers). My email is gjrogers@valdosta.edu, and I'll be happy to meet and talk with anybody who's interested.

VSU's Core Curriculum

The following is an effort to help students understand the relevance of core to their lives and to motivate them to fully engage in core classes, to view the core as full of opportunities.

If you have suggestions that would enhance this statement, please contact Deb Robson at dcrobson@valdosta.edu.

By the time you graduate from VSU, the world will be a different place than it was when you entered. Our core curriculum is designed to prepare you to be successful in your college career and in your chosen profession, and to become productive and responsible citizens, family and community members. The community you enter upon graduation will be diverse. I will be far more global than local, and employers today expect their prospective employees to have knowledge and skills that extend far beyond their disciplines. As you progress through the core, we expect you to discover new talents, aptitudes, and interests that will allow you to have rich and satisfying lives in the future. Completion of the core is a vital step you take to prepare yourselves to be educated individuals in an increasingly complex world. Core invites you to harness and enhance your intellectual, physical, emotional, and aesthetic resources so you can improve your own lives and the lives of those around you. Stated quite simply, the core curriculum provides you the opportunity to find your passion!

If you simply want to learn how to “do something,” you should probably be attending a technical school. They teach the skill sets required for many noble and worthy professions. But VSU's mission is to prepare you for the complex, globalized, inter-connected, increasingly technical world of the future, where you will be called upon to readily adapt to change, be creative and innovative, make ethical, well-reasoned decisions, function independently and in teams, demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication, and use science, quantitative reasoning, and technology in your lives.

Each of you arrives at VSU in different stages of your life and with different perspectives on college. Some of you have long ago decided on a major and future career path. If you fall into this category, you may continue in this path, but you may discover in the core a new direction, a new passion. Some of you come to VSU to discover a career path, and the core exposes you to unexpected opportunities and introduces you to professions you did not know existed. The breadth of knowledge embedded in the core is as much about life as it is about specific academic disciplines. The complex and diverse world into which you will graduate is a world of interconnectedness.

Every area of the core curriculum, from Area A through F, provides you will knowledge and skills that will impact and inform your lives in the future. We know that some of you may not see

that relevance now. But when you start managing your family budget or health care issues, you will remember. When you try to manage a diverse workforce, you will remember. When you speak in your church or at Rotary, you will remember. When you help your future children with their school assignments, you will remember. When you experience difficulty in your lives, you will remember. When you want to produce change in the world, you will remember. When you become a leader and perhaps a role model in your community, you will remember.

Core Areas

The following information is being used to develop short videos to explain the importance of core courses to students. This information was largely acquired from faculty teaching in the core.

If you have ideas about how to present your areas of the core for use in these videos, please send them to Deb Robson at dcrobson@valdosta.edu. We welcome your contributions!

Area A:

English courses: ENGL 1101 and 1102

We live in an age when writing well is as important as ever in the professional world. In fact, the ability to write material that is coherent, informative, and persuasive, appropriate for the situation and audience may determine your ability to secure a job. However, we also live in an age when language is being degraded by technology (LOL), by advertising, and various forms of media. The professional world also expects readers who can understand, synthesize, analyze, and explain material written by others. Employers expect college graduates to be fully literate in written communication. Furthermore, responsible citizens in a democratic society need language skills to use the power allocated to them by that democracy and to critically analyze the messages they receive from media, politicians and in the workforce. You will learn the language specific to your career in your major, but the proper form and structure of language is the focus in this area of the core.

Math courses:

While there is a great deal of technology that helps us do math today, what those technologies don't do for us is tell us the kind of math we need to solve many specific problems. Math Modeling (MATH 1101) presents student with real world applications of math to help students manage their lives, both personal and professional. Math is a fundamental fact of life. Basic proficiency in math is an expectation of all college graduates. Combine this with English and one day when your taxes get really complex, and you'll still be able to do them. College Algebra (MATH 1111) is useful in decision making and analyzing options.

Area B:

Perspectives courses:

Perspectives courses are, by definition, cross-disciplinary. The value of these courses is that they make the relationships among academic disciplines explicit, providing insight into how various disciplines inform each other. Perspectives courses provide various perspectives on a wide range of issues that students will confront in their personal, public, and professional lives. Students learn how to be creative problem solvers who have more resources upon which to draw.
(need to get specifics on a variety of PERS courses)

Area C:

English literature courses: ENGL 2111, 2112, 2113 (one required for graduation)

To be engaged citizens in a democratic society, students need to understand the foundation of that and other societies. This can only be accomplished by reading works of critical thinkers across the ages. Understanding great literature lets you think bigger, outside yourself, beyond your own prejudices and biases. Your generation will be called upon to solve enormous problems, many of them stemming from cultures failing to understand the ideas, values, and beliefs of other cultures. These aspects of cultures are evident in the written work of great thinkers from numerous cultures. Through the study of literature you learn how to respect and communicate with members of other cultures. Studying literature provides students the opportunity to explore the “big questions” about the world, to look beyond their own parochial worlds, and allows them to see themselves in a broader, global context.

Foreign language courses

Learning a foreign language provides insight into the attitudes, beliefs, values, and thus the culture in which that language is embedded. Since we live in a global economy and most professionals routinely interact with people from other cultures in the workplace, the ability to speak a second language and understand the practices of another culture are highly valued by US employers. Learning a second language is less about finding words and more about creating meaning among people. In addition, you gain an appreciation for those who immigrated to the US, as most of our families did, and what they have contributed to our culture, the richness they have added in terms of the role they played in our history, our cuisine, our music, our art, and all the advances we have made because immigrants brought their talents to the US. Second languages also enhance the travel experience and allow us to present ourselves outside the US, not as the “ugly American,” but as people who respect other cultures and the contributions they have made to the world.

Communication courses:

While most people take communication for granted, there is much you can learn in Human Communication (COMM 1100) that will help you improve your personal and professional lives. You learn how to communicate more successfully in interpersonal relationships, in teams, in organizations, and in speaking before audiences. Talking is not the same thing as being a communicator who is sensitive to others, considers the audience, and knows how to plan communication to produce the results you seek. Leadership in any profession requires excellent communication skills, and rarely is excellent communication achieved without formal training.

Public speaking is a skill that is improved only through understanding the form and substance of speeches as well as practice over time. In addition to the obvious value of public speaking in the professions, many of you will be involved in your churches, local politics or beyond,

REL 2020 This study of the world's major religions can help you overcome the stereotypes or biases most people possess for religions other than their own. In our increasingly diverse world, this course invites you to find similarities rather than differences among the world's major religions.

Electives in Area C: (one elective in this area is required)

PHIL 2010 and 2020 These courses provide you with bases for ethical decision making and leadership and how to make reasoned, sound decision and advocate for them. If you want your ideas to be heard and valued in the workplace, you'll benefit from either of these courses.

THEA 1100, MUSC 1100, ART 1100, DANC 1500 Studying the arts can broaden your horizons and enrich your lives. According to research, students who study the arts mature to become more engaged citizens who are more likely to perform civic duties.

Area D1:

Although you may be terrified of science or don't see how it's relevant to your lives, the kind of critical thinking you learn in science courses is difficult to obtain elsewhere. In addition, knowledge of the human body will familiarize you with the terminology that will help you manage your own and your family's health care, and knowledge of the evolution of the species and genetics may play a significant role in your future. Your generation will face serious challenges to environmental that you must understand if you want to preserve for your children the world you live in today.

While you may think a calculator may meet your math needs in the future, many professions require that you understand statistics and use data analytics. This is simply a fact in the marketplace you will be entering.

Area E:

Required courses:

POLS 1101 Sure, you studied American government in high school, but then you were observers of government. As adult citizens in a democratic society, it is your responsibility to participate in that government, not just by becoming informed to vote in elections, but to acquire knowledge about the multitude of ways you will be interacting with government at all levels in the future. So much of what you take for granted in your lives today only takes place because citizens are making it happen. In the very near future, you will becoming one of those engaged citizens.

HIST 2111 and 2112 History....it's all about the past, right? Wrong! Our history tells us who we are as a society. It also helps us understand the attitudes of people from around the world have about Americans. Those attitudes are less about what we do today than they are about what our

people have done in the past. If we don't really grasp our past, we can't learn from it. The same can be said about understanding cultures in other countries. We need to graduate intelligent students who know how history shaped our past so they can change our future.

Electives in Area E: (two electives are required in Area E)

PSYC 1101 This course allows you to explore the relationship between your how your mind works and how you behave. Do you control your behavior? Do you want to? How do groups of people become mobs? If you ever want to manage people in the workforce, you need at least a basic understanding of psychology to be effective.

AFAM 2020 If you want to understanding of the roots of discrimination based on race, gender, and class, and you want to play a role in eliminating that discrimination, this is the class for you.

SOCI 1101 and 1160: While studying sociology, we examine personal issues like our gender and racial identities, the conflict we may experiences in our families, the process of aging, and the role faith may play in our lives. Sociology also tackles more public issues like crime, poverty, wealth, prejudice, discrimination, and social movements that seek to address those issues. By studying sociology we can better understand the forces that shape our live.

Millennial Characteristics

The following lists are summaries of research on millennials from the perspectives of scholars and business professionals. Many of these can be used to make core courses relevant to our students. Others can inform teaching strategies in core courses. As faculty members, it is our responsibility to adapt to this new generation of students. In some cases we can adapt to their learning styles, but in other cases, we can teach them to adapt to the expectations the professional world has for their success.

For the workforce, millennials will need to acquire:

- Ability to collaborate, work in teams, assertively and diplomatically
- Problem-solving skills
- Improved face-to-face communication skills
- Technological agility
- Data analytics: collection, qualitative and quantitative analytic knowledge and skills, form plan of action, and communicate it to others
- Be skilled in the work applications for internal forms of social media (i.e., Yammer)
- Integrity beyond what they expect to demonstrate
- Positive attitude
- Professionalism
- Communication flexibility
- Patience
- Ability to process critical feedback
- Writing skills
- Actual career-related work experience (internships)
- Clean up and wisely use their personal social media

Benefits millennials bring to workplace:

- Working well with diverse coworkers
- Working in teams
- Positivity and confidence
- Adaptability to change
- Ability to multi-task (which current research shows is counterproductive)
- Loyalty, but they also keep their options open
- Networking abilities
- Idealism
- Willingness to be held accountable

What millennials want in workplace:

- Want variety in work assignments/tasks
- Need almost daily feedback about performance
- Need leadership and structure
- Seek challenges and do not like boredom
- Flexibility in scheduling (and working shorter hours than previous generation)
- Need to know exactly what to do to get ahead
- Want their ideas to be heard and valued, they want recognition
- Work schedule that lets them have a life
- Fun and relational development with coworkers
- Instant gratification

Deb Robson

Susan Wehling
 swehling@valdosta.edu

8/10/2015

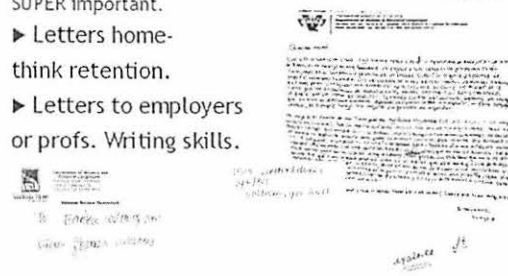
VSU's Core Curriculum
 It can be better!

Regional University-Mission-Serve the Region

SPAN 2001 Intermediate Span
 SPAN 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.



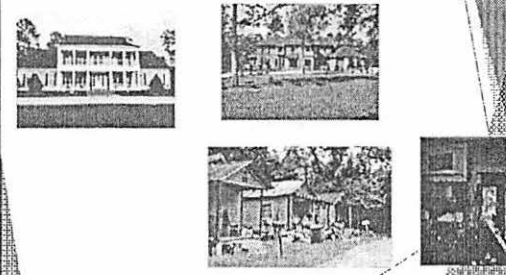
Citizen and resident of Lowndes County perspective of CORE: VSU needs to help us and interact with us and vice-versa. Takes a village to raise a child.

Valdosta, Georgia-3rd poorest city in US.
<http://business.nbcnews.com/news/2012/10/14/1437292/8-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?

Valdosta City Schools 92.3%
 (approximately 200 are homeless)

Brooks High School 89%
 Echols High School 73%
 Berrien High School 69%
 AND

Metro Atlanta 75.6%

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
- ▶ Term Undergraduates

	% Receiving Pell
▶ Fall 2012	45.8%
▶ Fall 2013	47.1%
▶ Fall 2014	46.8%

- ▶ average Pell recipient family income 30K maximum grant 5K

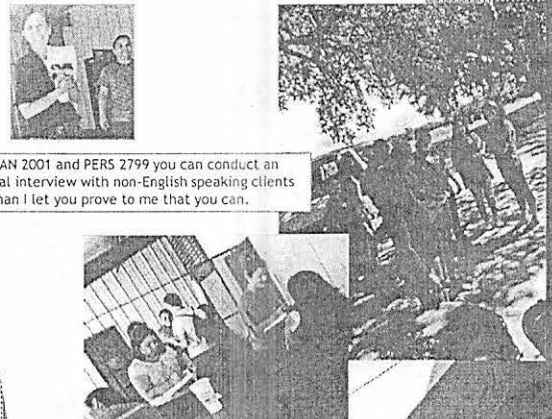
How can we as professors make a difference-RELATE the CORE

- ▶ 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.



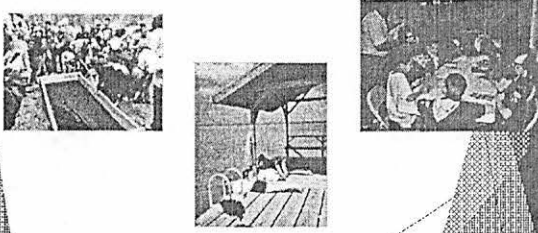
#1) Outside the classroom -Experiential Learning

- ▶ 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 than I let you prove to me that you can.


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.

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
(720 hours)	Advanced Mid	Advanced High	Superior

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 identify where most Latinos live and why? (PERS and 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




BLOOMS TAXONOMY



Less knowledge upon entry or years without Practice do more listing, memorizing, naming and discovering

Higher level application and creation

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.

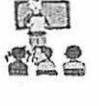
- ▶ Stand at door; ask students simple question from class.
¿Cuándo nació usted? _OR_ write down the most important thing -or 3 things you learned today as you leave.

Think




Pair




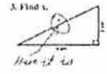
Share

- ▶ 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?

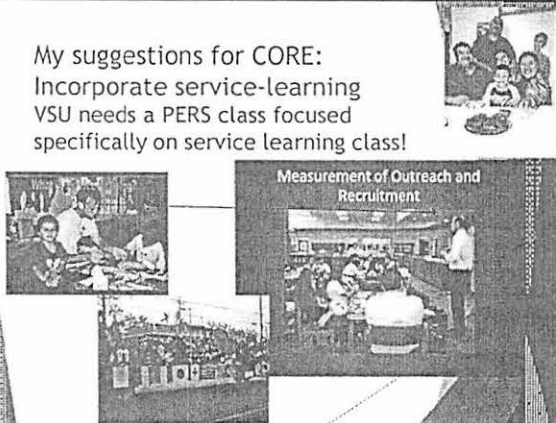
Doug Fischer, San Diego State



- ▶ 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>

