The Threshold Project
Convening #2: Throw a Pebble, Watch it Ripple
Oakland, October 9, 2015

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The Threshold Project

An evolving community of practice

Threshold Project Community of Practice Series 2015-2016
Reimagining General Education with an Equity Mindset

The Threshold Project is an evolving community of practice committed to imagining general education in colleges and universities. We believe that general education can and should be a community of practice for learning and for thinking about what it means to be an educated person.

We designed this year’s convening with the following values and assumptions in mind:

- ALL students deserve rigorous and engaging curricula that build on their cultural assets and preparation them into academic and interdisciplinary models of reasoning and practices.
- Faculty also desire rigorous, relevant and engaging professional development opportunities that push their teaching and research to new heights.
- Students and educators must be supported throughout the learning process.
- Learning is a network forming process, connections and relationships are crucial to the learning process.
- Interdisciplinary and collaborative learning promotes innovation and creative thinking.

Therefore, it is not only important, it is essential that instructors attend to the affective dimensions of learning. Powerful classrooms are facilitated by a co-located focus on the personal, social, cognitive, and knowledge-building aspects of classroom life (Cheeseman et al., 2012).

- Interdisciplinary and collaborative learning promote innovation and creative thinking.
- The Threshold Project is an evolving community of practice, aiming to support and nourish the ideas and practices of our members to develop and sustain a positive, diverse community of practice.
Context for this work

How this work started

Why are we all working on redesign projects without talking to each other or leveraging each others’ expertise?

Where is the space to really collaborate?
Why Focus on Threshold Concepts?

TCs are cross disciplinary

The TC approach is consistent with what we know about how people learn.

TCs emphasize conceptual knowledge, rather than “content” or “skills.”

TCs are the ideas that shape disciplinary ways of thinking, practicing, and problem solving.
Summer 2014
Leadership Institutes

Threshold Concepts, Wicked Problems, and General Education
The LEAP Challenge for Students: Essential for Liberal Education

Transforming for Liberal Challenge, releasing to all participants the

"grand challenge," releasing to all participants the

two annual meetings, AACU

An essential element of the LEAP Challenge, releasing to all participants the

The key concept at the center of the LEAP Challenge is that all college students need to prepare to contribute in a world marked by open or unscripted problems — problems that are necessarily created under conditions of uncertainty. These are also, beyond doubt, the kinds of problems we face in the global community and in our own diverse and deeply divided democracy. Some leaders speak of "wicked problems," complexity and uncertainty. The solutions they create will hold lasting consequence for our shared future.
Equity Mindedness

What does it mean to take an equity-minded approach when developing pedagogy?

How can we value and embed students’ cultural capital in curricular and co-curricular design?

How can we move the dialogue about student learning and success from deficit-minded approaches to asset-based approaches?

What spoken and unspoken assumptions about low-income students, first-generation students, and students from racial and ethnic minority groups underlie our efforts?

Lunch is at 12:15
Creating a Community of Learners

Take a moment to think about what it takes to make a learning situation “fly”

Establishing Norms: Supporting Participation and Collaboration

Think-Write

Think of a time when you were in a learning situation in community that went very well for you. What were some of the implicit and explicit “rules” or normal group behaviors that supported your participation as a learner? How did these help? Be prepared to share an idea with the group.

Whole Group Share: Our Norms
Sharing Learning Goals

Locate the Think/Write Prompt on the back of your “Norms” notetaker.

What Do I Already Know? What Do I Want to Learn?

Think-Write
In preparation for today’s meeting, you read “Dialogic Communication Within an Interdependent World” and chose a “golden line” that struck you as particularly interesting or important. Take a few moments to review your golden line.

Considering this pre-reading and the agenda for today’s session, consider:

- What do you already know about threshold concepts in general, interdependence as a threshold concept, equity-minded and assets-based pedagogy, or working on re-envisioning GE in an interdisciplinary/community of practice?
- What do you want to learn about these same topics?

Pair Share
Share with a partner
Please briefly (2 minutes a piece) share some highlights of your reflection with a colleague. Make sure that each person has had a chance to share uninterrupted.

What Do We Want To Learn?

Building a shared purpose
Be prepared to share one of your or your partners’ learning goals with the whole group.
Classroom Practicum

Debian Marty, CSU Monterey Bay

Locate your double-sided notetaker

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### Equity Minded Pedagogy — Metacognition Matters

"As educators, we have a responsibility to ask and answer these types of questions in a means of confronting our biases and our views of others. Unconscious bias is a powerful influence on who we educate and how we educate." (McKnight, 2015).

As you participate in today’s workshop processes, keep this notetaker handy. What you notice something that gives you insight into one of these questions, feel free to share in our debrief later.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Questions</th>
<th>Notes about this workshop or my own practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What does it mean to be an equity-minded practitioner?</td>
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LUNCH!

We’ll resume at 12:45.
Institutional Practicum

Take 12 minutes to read and make notes (independently)

Look at strengths and limitations of each.

In what ways do these different rubrics take into account what we know about TCs?

What do you notice about the TC of interdependence?
Institutional Practicum

Share your notes with 1-2 colleagues at your table.
### Threshold Concepts Debrief

**Remember your notetaker?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threshold Concept</th>
<th>Interdependence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counter-Intuitive Elements</td>
<td>(Challenges students' assumptions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal Elements</td>
<td>(Characterized by frustration, resistance, reflection)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformative Elements</td>
<td>(A significant shift in thinking)</td>
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</table>
Breakouts

Matt and Robin: TCs in other disciplines

Debian: Equity Minded, Assets Based Pedagogy

Yvonne: TCs and Assessment

Kim, Ann, and Lilit: Pedagogical Considerations

OR

Team Time!

Before you take a break, decide on which point of entry you want to try this afternoon
Threshold Project Convening #2 Reflection and Feedback

Take a few minutes to reflect on and synthesize today's learning.

1. What did you learn? What are some of your main takeaways from today's session?

2. What helped to support your learning today?

3. What questions remain?

4. Are there specific ways that we can support your work?

Please flip over the page to provide us with additional feedback about today.
Thank you so much for being here!

We look forward to seeing you again soon.

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