



Decoding the Disciplines: Helping Students Learn Disciplinary Ways of Thinking: New Directions for Teaching and Learning, Number 98

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The Indiana University Faculty Learning Community realized that the mental operations required of undergraduates differ enormously from discipline to discipline and that these ways of thinking are rarely presented to students explicitly. IUFLC Fellows from fields as diverse as creative writing, marketing, and genetics, and, as knowledgeable about their research areas as few people in the world, began to explore how students learn this content. The "Decoding the Disciplines" model takes advantage of the differences in thinking among academic fields in order to decode each individual discipline.

Following the model, faculty answered a series of questions to define crucial bottlenecks to learning, dissected the ways an expert deals with the issues that causes the bottleneck, and invented ways to model this thinking for students. After giving students an opportunity to practice these skills and receive feedback, each professor assessed student performance on these basic operations.

Their chapters in this issue of NDTL show faculty in the disciplines as they delved deeply into the specifics of thinking and learning in their disciplines and become involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning. It presents principles for facilitating assessments and a Faculty Learning Community. Institutions are invited to consider the Decoding the Disciplines model as a tool for structuring faculty inquiry into the thinking and learning in their disciplines.

This is the 98th issue of the Jossey-Bass quarterly higher education report *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*.

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