

Children and Violence: An Undergraduate Course Model of Interdisciplinary Co-Teaching

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The integration of co-teaching across disciplines in higher education is an approach that enhances the learning experience for both students and faculty. The process of examining material from the perspective of two disciplines contributes to critical thinking skills beyond traditional pedagogical approaches. This article presents a model for interdisciplinary co-teaching based on the authors' experience with an undergraduate course titled *Children and Violence*. The course *Children and Violence* evolved out of the professors' shared interest and professional experiences working on issues of childhood violence. *Children and Violence* was designed to encourage students to grapple with the complex issues that contribute to children becoming victims of violence or perpetrators of violence (or in some cases, both). The course was created using the criminal justice and psychology disciplines because these fields naturally interface when addressing the subject of child maltreatment and youth violence. A major purpose of the course was to examine the societal problem of children and violence from a critical multidisciplinary perspective. This paper will review the development of this course, as well as present suggestions for best practices for interdisciplinary co-teaching.

This article presents a model for interdisciplinary co-teaching based on the authors' experience with an undergraduate course titled *Children and Violence* at Lasell College in Newton, Massachusetts. Lasell College prides itself on involving students in non-traditional learning experiences. Students are engaged in academic material through a philosophy called *connected learning*, which is infused across the curriculum. As part of this approach, students are encouraged to learn course material through both in and out-of-class activities. This may include the faculty bringing guest speakers to classes, taking field trips, and students completing service-learning and research projects. Faculty are encouraged and often supported through grants to include connected learning activities in course curricula.

The course *Children and Violence* evolved out of the professors' shared interest and experience working on issues of childhood violence in their professional lives outside of the college. In addition, students advocated for more interesting and rigorous courses. The first author has over 16 years of experience as a prosecutor of major felonies. One of her positions was as the Chief of the Suffolk County District Attorney's Child Abuse Unit in Boston, Massachusetts. That position required working with a variety of professional disciplines to investigate allegations of child and adolescent maltreatment. The second author is a licensed clinical psychologist who has conducted research on childhood aggression, as well as on the effects of childhood sexual abuse, and who engages in clinical work with child, adolescent, and adult survivors of childhood maltreatment.

This course was originally geared towards students in the Justice Studies and Social Sciences departments (although open to all upper level students). Both

disciplines require students to complete internships in the field, often in multidisciplinary agencies. Because many students were upper level students (e.g., juniors and seniors) and had either completed or were beginning an internship, they were becoming exposed to multidisciplinary approaches to social problems. *Children and Violence* was first offered in the spring 2004 semester as an experimental course; it was then approved by the institution's Curriculum Committee as a permanent cross-listed course in Criminal Justice and Psychology. After assessment, the course was repeated in the spring 2007 and spring 2009 semesters. As the course developed over the years, a service-learning component was incorporated to encourage active student learning and to help students gain a deeper understanding of the course material. For example, in the last iteration of the course in spring 2009, students examined the issue of cyberbullying and developed a workshop for youth to present at the local Boys and Girls Club. They were trained within the classroom setting and developed strategies to use to engage with students at the Boys and Girls Club. This service-learning project allowed students to apply their knowledge of child development and criminal liability to youth, resulting in an integration of the two disciplines. After teaching the course twice and having it approved by the College's Curriculum Committee, the course became a permanent offering, serving as an elective for two minors.

Children and Violence was designed to encourage students to grapple with the complex issues that contribute to children becoming victims of violence or perpetrators of violence (or in some cases, both). The course was created using the criminal justice and psychology disciplines because these fields naturally interface when addressing the

subject of child maltreatment and its effects. A major purpose of the course was to examine the societal problem of children and violence from a critical multidisciplinary perspective (see Appendix A). Also, by having instructors from different disciplines teaching the course at the same time, students are exposed to an interdisciplinary approach to understanding multifaceted societal issues.

The integration of co-teaching across disciplines in higher education is an approach that enhances the learning experience for both students and faculty. The process of examining material from the perspective of two disciplines also contributes to critical thinking skills beyond traditional pedagogical approaches.

Literature Review

There is great debate about the causes of the current state of the American educational system as well as how to enact reform that will enhance the value of higher education. Educators have begun exploring innovative approaches to teaching that engage students in learning. Experimenting with non-traditional methods of enhanced learning and complex social problem-solving has led to a re-examination of how incorporating more than one discipline in the classroom can help provide undergraduates with the skills needed in today's global community. Examining issues from diverse perspectives develops critical thinking skills and allows students to achieve a comfort level with integrating subject matter cogently. Co-teaching is another approach that is receiving more attention in the educational reform movement.

Interdisciplinarity

As defined by Klein (1990), "Interdisciplinarity is a means of solving problems and answering questions that cannot be satisfactorily addressed using single methods or approaches" (Klein, 1990, p. 196). This concept of interdisciplinarity includes several core characteristics:

It unifies and integrates knowledge and must include an interaction, overlap, sharing of insights or bridging of disciplines among two or more disciplines from a theoretical, practical-outcome or problem-oriented approach. It borrows or applies tools between disciplines, and it may lead to the emergence of a new discipline and new fields of knowledge. (Franks et al., 2007, p. 171)

Although there have been a variety of co-teaching models that have attempted to involve more than one discipline, there is still very little research available from studies of the impact these courses have on

student learning (Lattuca, Voight, & Fath, 2004). Examining theories of learning and cognition, one reason interdisciplinary co-taught courses can enhance learning is that there is typically a multitude of opportunities to connect the new material to previously acquired knowledge (Lattuca et al., 2004). Also, "situational learning theories suggest that complex, real-world problems, such as those associated with interdisciplinarity, may enhance learning because they engage students in authentic tasks similar to those they will be expected to perform as workers or as citizens" (Lattuca et al., 2004, p. 32).

As Lattuca et al. (2004) pointed out, often interdisciplinary courses are taught in a fashion that places the student and experience at the center of learning. This constructivist approach to learning sees the professor as the facilitator and the student as the active learner which results in their accumulation of new knowledge. The student's experience becomes the focus of the learning, stressing discussion and participatory connected learning (Lattuca et al., 2004).

There are many other persuasive arguments presented for why there is value in interdisciplinary co-teaching. For example, engaging in discourse that critically examines a discipline from a different perspective allows students to discover the limitations of the field and encourages deeper student engagement in the learning experience (Woods, 2007). Many of our complex global problems require a holistic approach, and interdisciplinary education helps prepare students for working in a multi-professional context (Woods, 2007). At least one recent examination of such a course provides evidence that critical thinking is demonstrated and developed by both the professors and students in a team-taught interdisciplinary course at the University of Bristol in the United Kingdom (Hoare et al., 2008). Finally, engaging students in complex multidisciplinary social issues in a course such as this requires this type of rich experience because "human beings learn better if knowledge emerges from pedagogies that are both diverse and interactive" (Eisen, Hall, Lee, & Zupko, 2009, p. 99).

As the pedagogy is non-traditional, colleges employing interdisciplinary courses are not without their critics. For example, some have noted concerns that interdisciplinary studies can cause conceptual confusion for students, can take student focus away from their primary area of study, and undermines newer, inherently interdisciplinary programs like Communications and Women's Studies (Peterson, 2008). More traditional academics often see the topics covered in interdisciplinary courses as less substantive and less rigorous. Despite these critiques, the overall benefits far outweigh these concerns.

Co-Teaching

Co-teaching was originally developed by Roth and Tobin as a method to train student teachers in K-12 classrooms (Henderson, Beach, & Famiano, 2007). Much of the research on the effectiveness of co-teaching has focused on primary and secondary school settings; approximately 77% of middle schools were using some form of co-teaching as of 2006 (Kohler-Evans, 2006). The general consensus is that effective co-teaching involves attention to professionalism, classroom management, instructional process, learning groups, and monitoring of student progress (Nevins, 2006).

There is reason to believe that many of the principles involved in effective co-teaching also apply in a higher education setting. For example, Henderson et al. (2007) establish in a recent study at Western Michigan University that co-teaching at the higher education level is an effective way of ensuring fundamental and innovative pedagogical changes (Henderson et al., 2007). They discovered co-teaching in the college setting resulted in more engaged, active learners in the classroom, which informed the pedagogy of the instructors (Henderson et al., 2007). There is also some indication that co-teaching at the undergraduate level is especially useful when examining sensitive topics and utilizing group work in the classroom, and it can contribute to enhanced cognitive skill development (Kerridge, Kyle, & Marks-Maran, 2009).

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of co-teaching is the modeling by the two instructors of contrasting points of view on an issue and the resolution of differing perspectives on the same topic in front of the student learners (Harris & Harvey, 2000). This provides the college student the opportunity to see that true learning is an interactive process that adapts and changes continuously, something instructors know and are engaging in at the same time as students in a co-taught course. “Team teaching opens opportunities for students to join the team as teachers and learners. Although students and teachers have different responsibilities, we are all learning through our collective dialogue” (Game & Metcalfe, 2009, p. 46).

Interdisciplinary Co-Teaching in Higher Education

Accepting that both co-instruction and cross-disciplinary teaching are sound pedagogical approaches, interdisciplinary co-teaching at the college level may provide additional benefits for both students and educators. While there are a variety of co-teaching and interdisciplinary models for course instruction, combining the two at the higher education level is still relatively rare. What makes the pedagogy of interdisciplinary co-teaching special in this context includes a diverse and interactive classroom (Eissen et

al., 2009), cross-cutting topics that enhance critical thinking (Hoare et al., 2008), and different perspectives on the many issues discussed (Vogler & Long, 2003). It impacts the faculty because it ripples into faculty development (Eissen et al., 2009) and promotes collegiality (Hoare et al., 2008). It enhances student learning because academic disciplines are not mutually exclusive (Hoare et al., 2008). “Situating learning theories suggest that complex, real-world problems, such as those associated with interdisciplinarity, may enhance learning because they engage students in authentic tasks similar to those they will be expected to perform as workers or citizens” (Lattuca et al., 2004, p. 32).

An Interdisciplinary Course Model

Orlander, Gupta, Fincke, Manning, and Hershman (2000) presented a model of co-teaching developed for physicians in clinical teaching institutions. Their model of co-teaching was developed with the goal of fostering “lifelong, independent improvement in the practice of teaching” (Orlander et al., 2000, p. 257). They also noted that their model was developed based on theories of adult and professional education (Orlander et al., 2000). Orlander et al. (2000) cited research that indicates “adults learn best when working to solve a real problem” (p. 259). They also note that professionals “learn their field by doing, assessing the results of their actions, and then altering their behavior to increase the effectiveness of their work” (Orlander et al., 2000, p. 259). Finally, Orlander et al. (2000) suggested “co-teaching allows the teachers involved to identify their own learning needs derived from their teaching responsibilities. This learner-centered approach to identifying problems makes discoveries about teaching most relevant, powerful, and durable” (p. 259).

The model developed here in the undergraduate setting is based on similar goals. The major goal of *Children and Violence* was to examine the societal problem of children as victims of violence or perpetrators of violence (or in some cases, both) from a critical multidisciplinary perspective. In this instance, the two disciplines were Criminal Justice and Psychology. Reflecting on the experience of co-teaching an interdisciplinary course revealed the value to student learning and precipitated the creation of this model.

Course Development

Creation of a co-taught interdisciplinary course is a labor-intensive process and requires careful planning and preparation in the months prior to the course offering. This stage is referred to in the model presented here as the *generative stage* because it is the time when

co-instructors identify the purpose, goals, and content of the course. The first time offering of a co-taught interdisciplinary course requires buy-in and support from department and administrative personnel and in some cases faculty curriculum committees. In Children and Violence the instructors were able to secure department chair approval as the course was part of an overload for each instructor. The first time Children and Violence was offered it was an experimental course; this did not require curriculum approval and made it easier to offer once the department chairs approved the project. The generative stage can last anywhere from 6 months to well over a year. Given the requirements of many institutions to list courses several months in advance to allow for course pre-registration, the instructors found that starting at least 6 months prior to that process provided the necessary time for preparing the course.

Finally, during this stage the instructors had preliminary conversations with department chairs and Deans/Provosts of Academic Affairs regarding faculty issues such as workload and compensation. For example, in the model presented here, faculty members were provided with half a course credit for co-teaching the course (e.g., one and a half credits for a three-credit course). However, by the third time the course was taught, compensation was increased to two credits for each faculty member for a three-credit course.

A major factor that determines the amount of time necessary to create the course is the disciplines being combined. For example, Children and Violence may have taken less time to develop as a course because of the experience and background of the faculty involved and the natural interrelationship of the disciplines. Also, the intersection of programs within a designated school may be easier than combining courses between schools. That is, it may be more complicated to create a course that bridges the disciplines of business and philosophy (two programs which are often in different schools and many would argue have highly dissimilar points of view).

A significant part of the generative stage is identifying course goals and objectives. Having clear course objectives and goals provides faculty with an outline within which to assess the course after its completion. In Children and Violence a major goal was to help students understand the role of violence in children's lives from a psychological, criminal justice, and legal perspective. For example, as part of Children and Violence, students read a fiction novel about a teen who commits mass murder that explores the psychological factors that may contribute to antisocial behavior. At the same time, review of the new state statutory framework for sentencing juveniles convicted of homicide highlighted the legal ramifications of committing murder. By simultaneously examining both the mental health and criminal justice aspects of the

issue, it was hoped that students would engage in more complex thinking about the topic. In addition, one would identify student learning outcomes related to these course goals and objectives (see Appendix B).

Another important aspect of the generative stage of course creation is brainstorming possible course readings, assignments, and activities. This involved reviewing current popular and news media, and relevant mental health and criminal justice publications to identify topic categories for the course. For example, in one iteration of the course, violent video games were explored in depth, while at another time teen dating violence was a significant component of the course.

A period of clarifying and revising course objectives, goals, and assignments needs to occur after the initial brainstorming phase; this stage is referred to as the *refining stage*. During this process, the course topics, readings, and assignments are created and narrowed to a manageable form for the course. In addition, confirmation of guest speakers, field trip activities, and service learning projects is a critical aspect of this stage. This is often a time-consuming process that may involve meetings with colleagues within the university and visits to potential sites for field trips but leads meaningful activities for students that allow the integration of course-related concepts. For example, during the most recent iteration of the Children and Violence course faculty met with the Director of the Center for Service Learning the semester prior to the course to develop a service-learning component for the course. Contact with several agencies, as well as additional meetings with the center director resulted in the anti-cyber-bullying project that students engaged in at a local Boys and Girls club. In addition, contact with professionals in the mental health and criminal justice fields led to a social worker visiting the course to present on teen dating violence. Another professional connection led to students observing the proceedings of a local juvenile court as well as being able to meet with a chief juvenile probation officer and presiding judge.

Another significant aspect of the refining stage is confirming with department chairs, the Registrar's office, and the Dean/Provost for Academic Affairs about how the course will be listed on the course schedule. For example, cross-listing an interdisciplinary course leads to a more equal distribution of students from both disciplines, which contributes to the overarching rationale for interdisciplinary courses. In this instance, the Psychology and Criminal Justice programs already shared several minors that included electives from both programs, which seamlessly led to Children and Violence being cross-listed in both programs.

The last stage in the development of an interdisciplinary co-taught course is called the *finalizing*

stage. During this stage, a draft of the syllabus is completed, including learning objectives, course goals, course assignments, and course schedule. Completing and providing the syllabus prior to course pre-registration helps to clearly articulate the nature of the course to other faculty as well as to students. Faculty who serve as advisors can play a significant role in guiding students to courses, which may help ensure that a new interdisciplinary co-taught course will run successfully.

One final aspect of this stage of course development is the co-instructors identifying who will take responsibility for various aspects of the course. Concretely, co-instructors must come to an agreement about who will have primary responsibility for instruction on what days. Reviewing each of the scheduled topics and identifying which instructor takes the lead in presenting material and engaging students in discussion and activities helps the course to run smoothly. In addition, faculty can also decide to delegate responsibilities such as taking of attendance or management of the course web portal (e.g., Blackboard, Moodle). For example, on one occasion one faculty took primary responsibility for attendance and managing the course grade book, while the other took primary responsibility for the collection of papers and return of papers as well as communication with students via email. It should be noted that although there was a division of responsibilities, there were also regular meetings to review student work and discuss student inquiries and questions.

Course Delivery

Developing and planning an interdisciplinary co-taught course is critical in order to ensure its success. However, it is also important to clearly delineate a class instruction model for course delivery.

The model of interdisciplinary co-teaching described here has both instructors present in each class. This allows for a more robust interdisciplinary experience as a result of the interaction of both instructors during presentation of course topics. Kohler-Evans (2006) also recommends practicing parity when co-teaching a course. Parity in a co-teaching situation includes both instructors being fully represented in all aspects of the course (Kohler-Evans, 2006). This concept of parity does not prevent one instructor from taking primary responsibility for leading a course on a particular topic, and it still leaves room for simultaneous co-instruction. For example, in one iteration of Children and Violence, one instructor with criminal justice and legal expertise took primary responsibility for reviewing the current state of federal law on international child exploitation. The second instructor, a psychologist, was present in the classroom,

and when the class discussion led to issues related to the psychological trauma of child victims, the instructor was able to provide valuable insight. This has an added benefit of allowing students an opportunity to make critical connections that allow for deeper learning.

Because of the possibility of unplanned co-leadership of a specific class, the adherence to weekly check-ins is essential to identify and address any issues in the co-teaching relationship that may arise. These weekly meetings to review prior classes are essential for addressing course needs. This gives the faculty the opportunity to reflect on the prior class experience and to enhance the collegial relationship. Since having regular “check-ins” where faculty can state openly what worked and did not work in the prior class helps ensure the collaborative relationship necessary to successfully co-teach, it is important that part of the review and planning discussion focus on the interaction and relationship of the co-teaching faculty (Orlander et al., 2000). These meetings allow faculty to discuss matters such as concerns about student performance and student reaction to course content. One aspect of these meetings is to distribute and review student work and set parameters for assessment of course assignments. Finally, these meetings provide the opportunity to plan for upcoming presentation of topics and material to be covered.

In the model presented here, evaluation of student learning involved weekly reflection papers on the assigned readings and topics addressed in class, a small group final presentation, a term paper, and assessment of student work on the service learning project. The development of rubrics to evaluate student work assisted in the reliable and efficient grading of course assignments. At first, each assignment was independently read by each instructor, and then evaluations were compared at the weekly meetings in order to reach consensus on the assignment grade. Over time, it was discovered that the use of clear assignment goals, objectives, and rubrics resulted in consistent assessment of student work by each instructor. In fact, the grades were nearly identical for the majority of the assignments.

Although the format may appear similar with each iteration, the content and focus were revised each time the course was taught. For example, the instructors reviewed the literature and contemporary media to identify the most current issues related to the course theme of children and violence. This helped to keep the material most relevant for the students. In 2004, a major focus of the course was child sexual exploitation and maltreatment. By 2007, the course highlighted media violence and juvenile crime. In 2009, a central theme was cyberbullying and social media. In addition, over time the instructors wanted to bring the material to the next level by developing a collaborative project with

the college's Center for Community Based Learning. This worked well with the theme of cyberbullying and involved students visiting a local Boys & Girls Club and conducting a training for the children on the topic.

Summary and Recommendations

Offering this co-taught interdisciplinary course has resulted in multiple benefits. For the two professors, the course did a great deal to inform their teaching. Participation in co-teaching is motivating to both instructors as faculty can gain new insights into their own teaching and feel reinvigorated (Orlander et al., 2000). This process can also contribute to the development of a larger group of dedicated and high quality instructors for the institution. As other instructors at the institution learned of the experience of this co-taught interdisciplinary course, additional co-taught interdisciplinary courses were developed at the institution. Colleges and universities across the country are increasingly looking at interdisciplinary co-taught courses to address basic values of a liberal arts undergraduate education (Letterman & Dugan, 2004). This type of teaching also results in constant re-examination of an instructor's pedagogy, which requires a high degree of self-reflection and encourages innovative pedagogical changes (Orlander et al., 2000; Henderson et al., 2007).

Another benefit of interdisciplinary co-teaching as evidenced here is that the core concepts of one discipline are examined and clarified by the underlying principles of the other. This results in being able to critique and analyze tenets in your discipline in a sharper fashion. This occurs partially by the parallel process of professors modeling interdisciplinary discourse and the students then participating in it. For example, in *Children and Violence* the concept of "insanity" as it relates to violent crime is a topic covered. Students and faculty grappled with the discipline-specific perspectives on insanity when examining the conduct of violent juvenile offenders. Insanity from a psychological point of view is not a clinical diagnosis. However, in criminal law the idea of insanity not only exists, but also has some very distinct consequences for the juvenile offender. In this context, each instructor not only discussed the concept of insanity from the point of view of their discipline, but also engaged in a dialogue with one another to clarify the other's perspective. Students witnessed this, joined in, and engaged in their own discourse on the topic. Interdisciplinary co-teaching clarifies the ambiguities, contextualizes the issue, and stresses discussion and participatory connected learning. As stated, "human beings learn better if knowledge emerges from pedagogies that are both diverse and interactive" (Eissen, et al., 2009).

In addition, interdisciplinary co-teaching can lead to improved performance and refreshed disciplinary interest in the faculty. It can also build inter-departmental collegiality and improved morale, which enhances both productivity and student satisfaction. These courses can strengthen traditional interdisciplinary programs, like women's studies and environmental studies, by serving as required or elective courses for the programs. In *Children and Violence* the class counts for several minors, including Child and Adolescent Studies, Youth and Crime, Forensics Studies, and Human Rights. Additionally, cross-listing interdisciplinary co-taught courses increases the diversity of the students enrolled and further supports the integrative nature of the course.

For the students, there are also many learning benefits achieved through this process. A truly liberal arts student should take all types of courses and be conversant as an undergraduate in more than one discipline. In fact, taking interdisciplinary co-taught courses encourages the students to keep the door open to prepare for the specialization needed at the graduate level. Another strength of these courses is that they often deal with interesting and current subjects, which keeps the students' interest. For example, in *Children and Violence* the issue of cyber-bullying was brought into the classroom, which engaged the students in material often found in the headlines. In addition, this subject became one of the foundations of a major assignment in the course: the service-learning component of presenting to children at the local Boys and Girls club. Rigor and topical subjects are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The excitement that comes from examining these issues can also enhance student learning. The courses push the boundaries and comfort levels of the students, forcing them to transcend the traditional educational model to be active learners and to engage in higher-order critical thinking. At times the discomfort students experience in integrating multiple disciplines can lead to realizations that would not come from a traditional single instructor lecture experience (e.g., the "ah-ha" moment). The complexity of an interdisciplinary co-taught course moves the students from consumer mode to participating in the active construction of shared knowledge.

One thing the professors learned in conducting this course, as others have pointed out (Kohler-Evans, 2006, p.262), is the importance of weekly meetings and dialogue. Continual and constant communication ensures the smooth success of a valuable teaching experience (Orlander et al., 2000). In addition, continual reflection on the assignments, the classes, and the material is an invaluable part of the experience (Orlander et al., 2000; Kohler-Evans, 2006).

It is also important that the two instructors who co-teach the course are selected carefully. In this case, the professors had an extremely collegial working

relationship even before the first class was offered. The individual characteristics of each instructor were compatible and helped to make the course a success. For example, in this course, both instructors were comfortable stating their opinions, were able to effectively manage disagreements, had high levels of mutual respect for one another, and were able to be flexible. This resulted in each instructor learning from the other, thus allowing for refinements in teaching style and approach. In addition the entrepreneurial egalitarian spirit of the institution allowed the instructors to offer the course and present it in the fashion the professors found most productive.

After teaching this course three times, several pitfalls were discovered that one can plan for when creating future co-taught interdisciplinary classes. For example, students are not normally oriented to the co-teaching process since it is not the predominant approach taken in the American educational system. Many students struggle with confusion and frustration when first experiencing the co-taught classroom setting. In the course described in this paper, at times the students struggled with not being able to clearly identify one instructor as the primary authority figure. On a few occasions, a student would direct all course interactions toward only one of the two instructors. Instructors can avoid this by providing clear statements about the joint responsibility of each instructor for lectures and grading. The role of each instructor should be clarified throughout the course.

There were several other challenges faced by the instructors in conducting the co-taught interdisciplinary course. Being at an institution that focuses on teaching and advising, as well as both instructors being chairs of departments, made it sometimes difficult to find regular times to collaborate. For the course to work, it is imperative for the professors to meet consistently. The authors found that the course was most effective when it was continually engaging and highly interactive. With the time constraints, although it may seem easier to split up the lectures between instructors, the interdisciplinary nature of the course is diminished in such instances.

Administratively, there were also challenges that needed to be addressed. One was the issue of the department in which the course should be housed and also the question of cross-listing. Part of this is a budgeting matter, in that the course required additional resources for such things as guest presenters, field trips, and service learning activities. Institutional buy-in is also imperative. Faculty must begin the process of seeking departmental and administrative approval to offer an interdisciplinary co-taught course early in its development. In addition, both faculty teaching an interdisciplinary co-taught course should each receive full workload credit, which may impact other teaching responsibilities. The model of interdisciplinary co-

teaching presented here involved a full commitment of both instructors to be present at each class, which allowed the students the maximum benefit of interdisciplinary discourse.

After teaching the course several times, it became clear that mid-term course evaluations could be a useful tool in enhancing an interdisciplinary co-taught course. Mid-term evaluations provide students an opportunity to identify any concerns regarding the co-teaching experience and become more engaged in the course by providing input to the instructors. Such evaluations also help instructors assess how well course goals and objectives are being achieved at a time when course revisions can still be made. In addition, the traditional final course evaluations do not address the unique needs of assessing an interdisciplinary co-taught course. For example, standard final course evaluations do not address students' experiences of the interdisciplinary course and may not provide a way for students to evaluate both instructors. Final course evaluations need to be revised to assess the unique aspects of a co-taught interdisciplinary course. Finally, assessment methods need to be developed and enhanced to more accurately evaluate the impact of interdisciplinary co-taught courses on student learning. While a variety of co-teaching models have attempted to involve more than one discipline, there is little research on the impact of such courses on student learning (Lattuca et al., 2004). However, a more recent study of an interdisciplinary co-taught course suggests that such courses enhance critical thinking of both students and instructors (Hoare et al., 2008).

The model presented here is just one example of how to engage students in a co-taught, cross-disciplinary course. Because of emerging advances in technology, students can readily access new and different perspectives and ideas related to their discipline. In addition, multidisciplinary teams are increasingly the norm in the modern workplace. Students will be required not only to be experts in their areas of study, but also to be able to master and integrate tenets of multiple fields. Students must also learn how to effectively communicate with diverse audiences in multi-professional settings. Interdisciplinary co-taught courses are one way to provide students with the skills necessary to accomplish these goals.

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Appendix A
Children and Violence Course Components*

COURSE FEATURE	EXAMPLES
Discipline of instructor	Lawyer, psychologist, and guest speakers (e.g., domestic violence specialist, probation officer, judge)
Cross-listing	Criminal Justice and Psychology (300 level)
Meeting times	Two 75-minute meetings per week
Student profiles	Psychology, criminal justice, legal studies, sociology, human services
General education requirements addressed	Writing intensive
Topics explored	Child abuse and maltreatment Child pornography and exploitation Online predators Child witnesses of domestic violence Media violence Bullying Juvenile crime Child sex offenders Teen dating violence Children who kill Violence prevention
Pedagogical approaches	Lecture Guest speakers Out-of-class readings In-class discussion (e.g., small group activities, class debates) Reflection papers (five) Field trips Individual research papers Group presentations Service learning project
Grading basis	Class attendance Course participation Individual paper Group presentation Service learning project Note: use of rubrics to help students with clarity around assignments, expectations for academic work

*Modeled on an example from “Teaching Water: Connecting Across Disciplines and into Daily Life to Address Complex Societal Issues” (Eisen et al., 2009).

Appendix B
Course Objective, Goals, and Learning Outcomes for the Children and Violence Course

COURSE OBJECTIVE	COURSE GOALS	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Examine psychological, criminal justice, and legal issues surrounding children and adolescents who experience violence in their lives, both as victims of violence and perpetrators of violence	Increase student knowledge of psychological impact of violence on children and adolescents	Students will be able to articulate possible psychological impacts of violence toward children
	Increase student understanding of factors that influence children and adolescents to commit violence	Students will be able to how violence impacts child and adolescent development
	Increase student knowledge of legal issues that impact children and adolescents	Students will be able to articulate ways the criminal justice system handles violent youth
	Explore role of the criminal justice system in addressing violence in children and adolescents lives	Students will be able to compare and analyze the factors that contribute to child and adolescent violence
	Explore issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation and their role in violence	Students will be able to understand the role of professionals in working with children and adolescents who are victims and perpetrators of violence
	Examine moral and ethical issues of children and adolescents as victims and perpetrators of violence	Students will be able to assess the moral and ethical issues inherent in the study of child/adolescents violence
	To improve student critical thinking skills through oral discussion and written assignment	Students will be able to articulate how race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual orientation play a role in the experience of violence in children and adolescents' lives