

Strategies for Teaching Combined LAC Discussion Sections

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- What is a combined LAC section?
 - A LAC section that is linked to multiple courses, usually in several different departments

- What are some of the challenges of teaching a combined LAC section?
 - Different students with varied interests
 - Students are coming from classes taught by different faculty with different interests and focuses
 - Coordinating with different faculty, esp. at the syllabus planning stage
 - How to grade discussions
 - Course objective may conflict with student expectations (e.g. students may want grammar instruction)
 - Negotiating language barriers and language level
 - Small class size

- What are some of the advantages to teaching a combined LAC section?
 - More freedom in designing syllabi
 - Input from a variety of different faculty; availability of a variety of resources
 - Wide variety of students can enrich class discussions
 - Freedom to use an interdisciplinary approach
 - Highly motivated students
 - Small class size can lead to very intense discussions

- Some strategies for dealing with difficulties and exploiting advantages
 - Use a variety of different materials and media
 - Organize the syllabus along broad, conceptual axes
 - Use technology to broaden the scope of discussions
 - Get regular student feedback on course materials
 - Guest speakers?
 - Open discussions
 - Gauge students' background at the beginning of the semester (e.g. Sherine's map project)