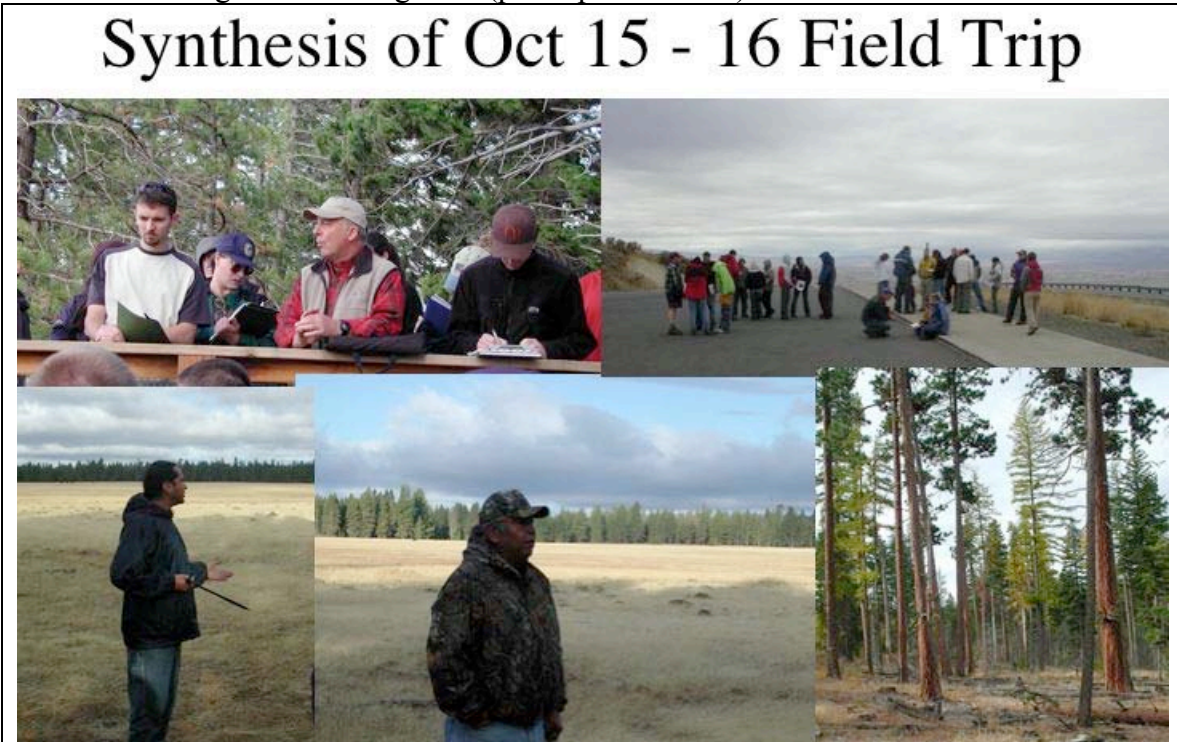


## Teaching Evaluation ESRM 303

**Situation:** We are now using the former CFR library room in the basement of Bloedel for the teaching of ESRM 303, Wildlands. We have tried to configure the room to encourage moving away from the lecture to a more active learning style of teaching.



**Instructional Activity:** Following the October 15 and 16 field trip, the lecture period on Monday, October 17, was set aside to have a class discussion of the trip. The topic was introduced using the following slide (powerpoint slide 1):



Students were then told that there would be two sets of questions that they would be asked to discuss at the table and then we would discuss as a whole in the class. The first set of questions was introduced using the following slide (powerpoint slide 2).

## Elements to Consider

- Biophysical context (climate, topography, soils, vegetation)
- Spatial context (surroundings & their influences)
- Temporal context (geological to seconds ago)
- Stakeholder context
- Management (stewardship, etc.) goals

Students were asked to consider each of the elements listed above regarding the four distinct sites they visited on the field trip and be able to present their responses to these. Students spent about 10 minutes discussing these and instructors (Brubaker and Fridley and TAs Combs and Schweitzer) walked around the room listening to the conversations. Hinckley mostly thought about the next step. Schweitzer actually sat at a table and listened closely. Students were then asked to respond. Most of the discussion centered around differences between Suncadia and the Yakama Nation. It was a lively discussion with Hinckley facilitating, answering questions when appropriate and correcting any factual errors. The final slide was then placed on the screen with about ten minutes to go in the class (too little time). Students were asked to complete their individual answers on a 3 x 5 card. Some mention was made of discussing their answers before writing with the rest of the group at their table.

## Questions and Issues

- Something new
- Something old, but in new context or reinforced
- Something unanswered, but you would like to have answered
- Any question/issue

Students worked diligently on this until 10:20 plus and then turned in their cards.

**Teaching Critique:** The following is a critique of this exercise

**Key words:** accountability and incentive

**Thoughts:** It was a short amount of time for each group to go into all the different contexts about each site. What about assigning each group a site and ask them to go into depth about its spatial, temporal physical contexts... and then share with the whole class what they came up with OR maybe better to give each group a context to think about and ask them to consider that throughout all sites (so one group focuses just on temporal contexts for each site and another focuses on spatial etc.)

Also, it is helpful after having student discussion, to ask them to answer essentially the same questions you asked them to discuss in writing. This gives them extra incentive to listen to what people are saying and stay engaged (they will have to write about this on their own after all) AND it holds them accountable for synthesis of what we are doing and why. Having the environment be one of just discussion is allowing many students to engage but also many to just sit quietly. Obviously there will be students who are more outspoken than others, but following the discussion with required written synthesis is very helpful (can be informal in journal but should require them to touch on all things you asked them to discuss in class).

So: groups discuss different parts and share with whole class what each of them came up with and later students answer whole question including all parts that all groups discussed in writing on their own. Therefore they will listen and engage during the time when groups are telling what they came up with. This should give good incentive to students to focus more AND listen to the ideas of the their classmates and consider other opinions in order to clarify misunderstandings (a few came up during the discussion yesterday) and to expand on their ideas and write down new ones.

This is a great way to frequently assess student understanding throughout quarter rather than test them all at once on many concepts that should have been integrated throughout. The students who speak most are clearly getting it but we have to be sure ALL are following the concepts here. (ok i think you get the point!)

Also, another strategy for ensuring all students are participating in group discussion and the class in general is to have a part of their grade be based on participation. For some students it is hard to speak about their ideas to the whole class (many have never had much practice in it growing up in our public school system.) Anyway...if we knew they were at least speaking and participating in their smaller groups that would be fine and ensure us that they are involved and not going to fail miserably because they never quite got the ideas of the class. This is why we should circulate during discussions and be sure everyone is participating. There are 4 of us and it would be awesome if we did that. Also we have the opportunity to make sure they are discussing along the lines that we hope for and redirect them if they are totally off or have misunderstood directions. We can also ask them provoking questions if we listen to their discussions.

I liked the questions at the end and I think they should have had to answer in journal writing not only the questions talked about during class of physical, spatial, temporal contexts, but they should also have to consider the questions posed at the end of class.

(I noticed huge incentive to learn trees when you told them they would likely be given a branch and have to ID the tree at some point! They all asked questions and observed the trees at the loop trail site. That was great!!)

**Instructor's Response:**

1. I like the idea of asking each table to take on context and contrast and compare the four sites (Three Forks, Gold Creek, Suncadia and Yakama Nation [Camas Patch, Burn and Stream]).
2. I like the idea of having them summarize what they hear and write these summaries, perhaps as a series of bullets, in their journal.
3. I would actually go to a table and sit and listen (I have always assumed that my presence would either limit the conversation or they would look to me for answers).