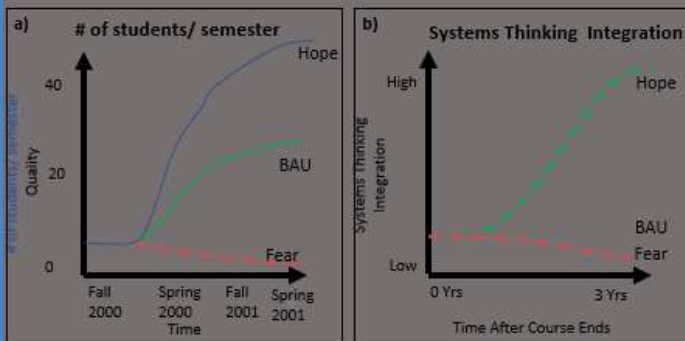# Leveraging Systems Thinking in Social Work/ Other Social Sciences Curriculum

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Why Integrate Systems Thinking in Social Work Education?

-Increasing exposure of Systems Thinking to more students, faculty, and community members.
-Make Systems Thinking more accessible for students and spread within the community.
-Gateway to System Dynamics
-Integration of Systems Thinking further in the lives and careers of the students
-Supporting Social Work students in practicing Systems Thinking in tackling relevant social problems.
-Increased application of Systems Thinking by social workers within their careers.
-Increased System Dynamics/ Systems Thinking Career routes for students.

Reference Modes

Case Studies

Example 1: Introduction to Social Justice (Undergraduates)

Strategy
-Integrated across the course
-Personalized CLDS on social issues for the final project.
-Slight exposure to leverage points
-Repeated exposure to Systems Thinking tools across the course

Reflections
+Generate early excitement
+Practice tool in visualizing complex issues
-Surface level (survey course)
-Lack of accessible readings
-No further exposure.

Example 2: Introduction to Human Diversity(MSW)

Strategy
-Guest lecture on ST and SD
-Theoretical exposure to leverage points, virtuous and vicious loops within social systems
-Examples of feedback loops in social systems.

Reflections
+Generate early excitement
+Practice tool -
-Surface level (erosion between sessions)
-Lack of relevant readings
-No "practice" of ST. Left students wanting more.

Example 3: Theories of Community Building (MSW)

Strategy
-Integrated
-Theories modelled to explain structural relationships.
-Visualization of "unintended consequences" of policies
-Repeated exposure to Systems Thinking

Reflections
+Generate early excitement
+Practice tool
+ Longer-term engagement
-Perceived as a theoretical rather than practical tool.
-Struggle in getting students to actually create CLDS

Example 4:Operationalizing Racism for Everyday Impact (Design Phase)

Strategy
-Integrated across the course with assignments
-Personalized CLDS on everyday racism issues
-Integration of relevant System Thinking readings.
-Focused on praxis

Reflections
+Stepping stone for integration across the syllabus
+Gentle invitation for further learning
+Pipeline for full course on Systems Thinking.
-Learning curve in simultaneous hi-flex engagement.

Ongoing questions

. Best practices for teaching Systems Thinking pedagogy in a hybrid format? Optimal class size for integrated experience?
. What are your experiences in integrating Systems Thinking with other courses?
. What are best practices in "teaching" systems thinking in a hybrid environment?
. What are things are avoid?