

Foundations 2022 Workgroup Minutes

Date	May 27, 2021
Time	4:00 – 5:30PM
Co-Chairs	<i>Edith Wang, Meghan Kiefer</i>
Attendees	<i>Cassie Cusick, Coral Bays-Muchmore, Tyler Bland, Zach Gallaher, Kellie Engle, Gina Campelia, Karen McDonough, Matt Cunningham, Kurt Weaver, Max Kullberg, Bruce Silverstein, Bryan Kestenbaum, Ceradwen Tokheim, John Willford, Isabela Covelli, Laura Goodell, Kiran Gill, Ruth Lewinski, Alison Doherty, Holly Martinson, Kristen Hayward, Mara Rendi, Jaime Fitch, Alyssa Stephenson-Famy, Sarah Wood, Peter Fuerst, Leo Wang, Allison Lambert, Michael Ryan</i>
Regrets	<i>Brenda Martinez, Michael Campion, Calvin Le, Haya Jamali, Carolyn Bell</i>

Agenda

	ITEM	TIME
1	Review Vision statements for learning resources	15 min
2	Student comments on what aspects of threads support their learning and how we could adjust threads to better support their learning	15 min
3	Michael Ryan, former Associate Dean for Curriculum: A Brief History of Threads	20 min
4	Small group work: What does a successful thread look like? What do threads need to achieve that vision of success? (content materials, course hours, assessments, relationship with block/block material?)	20 min
5	Large group discussion	20 min

Reminder:

- 2022 Foundations Retreat – June 8th 10AM-3PM PST

1. Review Vision statements for learning resources (*timestamp 0:00 – 29:55*)

Based on the previous meeting’s discussion, Dr. Wang and Dr. Kiefer developed the following vision statements for independent/out-of-class materials and interactive/in-class learning. The purpose of these (working) vision statements is to prepare for the June 8th retreat.

Independent/Out-Of-Class:

Out-of-Class Materials should	Students should
Provide students with new information: background, schema, framework, and important concepts & connections to previous knowledge	Recall facts and core concepts about topic Understand and describe/recognize framework and key concepts
Delineate key concepts within material	Be prepared to communicate above and apply concepts in class
Provide opportunity for self-assessment	Identify gaps in knowledge/areas of uncertainty

Independent learning resources will be a holistic, deliberate, and customized selection of established materials (e.g., course packets, textbooks, prerecorded lectures, practice questions) used to orient students to the subject, provide them with a schema, framework, delineate important concepts, and prepare them to engage in class.

Workgroup feedback included:

- Add “opportunity to consolidate learning (post-class)”
- Add the importance of making explicit connections/orientation to previous knowledge

Interactive/In-Class:

Interactive Sessions should	Students should
Provide students with opportunity to engage with faculty and fellow students	Meaningfully participate in working through problems or projects
Review and reinforce key concepts & schema	Practice communicating ideas and key concepts
Create opportunity for students to use information learned in new situations	Engage with faculty, other students, and materials to construct a personal framework for understanding the material
Support students in practice of applying concepts and filling in gaps in understanding of material	Use materials to discover gaps in their own knowledge and to help support fellow students’ learning

Interactive learning sessions should be a holistic, deliberate, and customized use of established forums (e.g., large and small-group live sessions) to provide students with an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding through engaging with faculty and peers, communicating ideas and key concepts to colleagues, and applying knowledge and solving problems in a safe learning environment.

2. Student comments on what aspects of threads support their learning and how we could adjust threads to better support their learning (*timestamp 29:55 – 36:50*)

Student members were asked to consider the following questions:

1. What does a successful thread look like?
2. What do threads need to achieve that vision of success? (content materials, course hours, assessments, relationship with block/block material?)

Student feedback included:

- It would be helpful to address the “when” and “why” of threads.
- Students are evaluated on the threads without an overview or detailed description of what happens if you get thread questions wrong.
- At the beginning of the year, it would be beneficial to go over:

- The number of thread questions
- What remediation looks like and when it would happen
- General resources for threads (whether there will be lectures or syllabi)
- Discuss how students can study and prepare for thread exam questions
- It's difficult to identify and track thread questions on exams, making it difficult to go back and review material.
- Threads are important, especially for Step 1 preparation.
- Microbiology should be revisited as a thread as it ties through systems.
- Rather than requiring students pass threads, could students' thread performance simply be tracked and shared with them?
- If passing the threads remains a requirement, there should be a well-balanced number of questions throughout the block.
- Threads should be integrated throughout the block. A good example of this can found in the renal content. The Pathology lead integrated materials into the normal lectures, which improved comprehension. It worked better than the Pathology sub-lectures (in which unrelated content is presented).
- Threads should be presented as a centerpiece of learning, as opposed to something extra.
- Anatomy and histology get enough time in the current structure. Pathology is underrepresented and deserves x3 as much time as it has now.
- Grading of threads should be easy to follow.

3. Michael Ryan, former Associate Dean for Curriculum: A Brief History of Threads (*timestamp 36:50 – 52:20*)

In 2010, the UWSOM was in the process of developing a new curriculum. At the time, about 75% of medical schools across the country were also undergoing or had recently completed curriculum renewal. The UWSOM worked with peer institutions to gain insights into their experiences and discuss best practices.

The UWSOM had about 30 department-based courses (a course in pharmacology, pathology, anatomy, immunology, etc.). Nationally, medical schools were moving away from department-based courses and toward an integrated block model. A major challenge faced by schools with this new model was around thread content. Several peer institutions found that students were triaging content (i.e. "I dislike anatomy, I'm not going to do any of it"). These students would pass the block and complete the Foundations phase only to perform poorly on Step 1. Other students might pass Step 1 but had a huge gap in their anatomy knowledge. Many schools felt there needed to be a way to track individual topic areas.

The UWSOM discussed threads at length (if we should have threads, what they should be, etc.) and talked with about a dozen peer institutions about their approaches. Nationally, there is a wide variety in approaches to threads, some schools have 17 threads while others don't have any. The UWSOM landed on a middle of the road approach. Threads would be created for prior courses that were not adequately represented in the new curriculum and would be present in all blocks. Ultimately, the three threads we currently have were based on philosophical and logistical reasons (i.e. availability of faculty leaders). Additionally, threads are not an official course and students do not receive grades (i.e. a "fail" will not show up on a student's transcript, but the remediation course will).

The initial grading approach was to assess mastery of the threads at the end of the Foundations Phase. However, there was concern that students could get through the first few blocks (which cover key concepts) and pass the Pathology thread, but know nothing about basic inflammation, neoplasia, etc. The group responsible for the curriculum renewal held a retreat with the Student Progress Committee to

determine how to assess thread mastery. It was ultimately decided to assess threads at the end of each term. Reasons included:

- There were not enough thread exam questions to assess by block.
- Assessing threads at the end of phase meant the School was unable to identify struggling students in a timely manner.

Workgroup question for Dr. Ryan:

Q: What was the early conversation about thread integration?

A: The curriculum renewal group discussed whether threads should have dedicated time (i.e. pathology gets eight hours a week). However, one of the goals was to integrate the material and it was thought that dedicating time to the threads would discourage integration. In retrospect, this didn't work very well. Initially they wanted threads in every session (including small groups). It was left to the thread leads to negotiate with block leads. Disputes were meant to be solved by the curriculum governance structure; however, this didn't always work.

4. Small group work (*timestamp 52:20 – 1:14:00*)

The workgroup broke into small groups to discuss the following:

**Guiding Principle: Threads need a larger and more coordinated/systematic presence in blocks.
What are your ideas for how to do this?**

Group A:

- Each thread is unique and should be addressed differently. HFF is effective, largely because they are consistent across the blocks (with dedicated time, assessments, pin tests, etc.). The other threads need more time. A lot of it comes down to the relationships between thread leads and block leads and the integration and control of material.

The gold standard is Pharmacology and CPR. The block and thread leads have worked together to effectively integrate the material. In blocks where the threads are not as successful, the problem is consistency: students are wondering where their pharmacology leads are; mechanisms and toxicity aren't taught in the way the thread leads want them to be; and exam questions aren't developed by thread leads. Ideally, there would be dedicated thread time that is controlled by the thread leads.

Group B:

- Thread content customized for the block should be effectively integrated. Sometimes, there is very little thread content and the group suggested rearranging content so it's more substantial. The group also discussed where thread content should be located in the blocks. It could work well to cover thread content from two previous blocks in the integration weeks. It could help the students consolidate information through a thread lens (while also giving threads more time).

Group C:

- Anatomy is the exemplary thread.
- How can we get thread faculty at each site to teach throughout the year?

Group D:

- It's challenging for faculty to find time for meetings and relationship-building.
- How does remediation play into threads? Thread leads are still responsible for remediation even if they aren't in the room teaching or crafting exam questions.

Group E:

- Energetics & Homeostasis is a great example of integration and time given to each thread (i.e. pharm facts, anatomy snacks, etc.). However, this is heavily dependent on the relationship between block leads and thread leads. We should instead focus on creating a framework for thread integration. Curriculum should assign hours to threads and allow thread leads to decide if and how they want to integrate the material.
- Thread leads often don't know when thread content is taught or what the thread exam questions are. A possible solution is to assign a specific number of questions to threads and make sure thread leads are aware.

The workgroup discussed how to give the threads more time in the set schedule. The students gave their thoughts:

- There should be more cases and practice questions that incorporate thread material. We don't necessarily need more class time, just more manipulation of the material. Students can always ask questions on their own time.
- Could pre-recorded videos be more thread-heavy to lay the groundwork? We don't necessarily need more time, just more/better integration.
- Sometimes the thread material felt redundant. Could block and thread faculty co-teach, so thread material is covered when it needs to be and to the depth it needs to be covered?

Additional considerations for threads:

- There's concern if they continue to be ungraded.
- What is the attendance policy for threads?
- How do we recruit faculty if student attendance isn't required?
- What does that remediation look like?

5. Large group discussion (*timestamp 1:14:00 – 1:22:05*)

Reminder: The retreat will be held June 8th from 10-3PM PST. Dr. Kiefer and Dr. Wang will review and summarize all the wonderful work this workgroup has done and present it at the retreat.

We will take a short break and reconvene later this summer to address additional aspects of the 2022 renewal.