A Parallel, Conjoined Approach to Interdisciplinary Computer Science Education

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**Requirements**
- Your flexible, upper-level Computer Science course
- A willing colleague offering a compatible course in a different discipline
- Ideas for team projects that combine disciplines

**How to Do It**
- Identify Class A - Computer Science
- Identify Class B - Other discipline
- Schedule classes at same time
- Do regular solo course prep
- Plan periodic "join points" to learn & collaborate together
- Devise team projects that combine student skills
- Run with it!

**Parallel**
Two collaborating classes held on the same days and times in nearby rooms

*ask Registrar to schedule you this way

**Conjoined**
Classes are "loosely coupled" by meeting together 5-10 times per semester to learn & collaborate

**What We Tried**
- Class A: Machine Translation (CSC)
- Class B: Writing and Stylistics in French (FRE)
- Schedule classes at same time
- Regular solo course prep
- Plan periodic "join points" to learn & collaborate
- Devise team projects that combine student skills
- Offered Fall 2012 & Fall 2014

**Interdisciplinary**

**What's the Downside?**
- Administrators love it - easy to assign credit for teaching
- Instructors love it - easier collaboration, more student interest
- Students love it - taste of real world, customer-client model
- No downside - worst case, you teach your own course anyway

**Results**
Before & after surveys showed that students thought they knew more than they really did and learned more than they expected they would.

CSC students were upper-division with strong technical skills. FRE students had comparably better language analysis skills, as might be expected.

Gains were modest to good in all areas. A surprising result shown in follow-up questionnaires is that FRE students' low gain in computer and programming skill was due NOT to lack of improvement but to overestimating how much they knew beforehand!

**Next Steps**
- Offering again in Fall 2016
- Discussing collaboration with colleagues in political science, theater, philosophy & history

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