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Geoscience classes, especially those with an environmental component, are by nature interdisciplinary. For example, introductory Oceanography involves topics in chemistry, physics, biology, and geology. A course in Natural Disasters is also about human behavior (psychology) and population dynamics and trends (human geography). I teach those subjects. Where possible we bring in guest speakers. There is almost always an activity on the topic. If the topic seems out of sync with the course in the eyes of the student, an understanding of the relevance of the topic to the course itself becomes a learning outcome for that section, and there will be an assessment that measures how well they made the connection. For example, in Natural Disasters it is common for students to not understand the connection between population growth and natural disaster events.

My approach to course design has eased over the years. Gone is a rigid adherence to a course semester plan. Geoscience, environment, and sustainability are so rich in current topics, that I see it as an injustice to students to *not* look at current events through a geoscience lens. If that means we miss out on one part of the spectrum of topics typical of a survey course then I see that as part of the cost of having an informed citizenry as an outcome for the course. So in Natural Disasters for example, we keep an eye on the news, and report out daily on events around the world. Most events only get brief mention, but occasionally there is a large event lasting months for which the *victims* of that event deserve our attention and compassion. The recent tsunami in Japan, flooding in Pakistan, earthquake in Haiti are not only news, but are so large that they affect all of us. They are also a direct and current application of the very science we are working through. Of course the event falls out of sync with the course plan – an earthquake strikes during the section on tornadoes. We switch gears because we have to: it is our duty as compassionate human beings. That requires everyone in my classes, not just me, to take a multi-disciplinary approach to our topics.

Is this approach effective as regards the standard rubric for geoscience understanding? Yes. I know because I assess, assess, assess. My students hand in something they have written almost every class period. Is that more work for me? Probably. My daily colleagues would tell you it is. But it has a number of advantages:

- It helps me to understand the ebb and flow of every course section every time we meet. When something is not working I know it right away and can adjust.
- It allows me to deviate from the survey model of an introductory class. If I want my students to know what is going on right now in the world in which they live, this is the way we get that done.
- It is more interesting for me. In requiring a class of 60 students to follow the news, there are 60 sets of eyes scanning the news: I get the details of events I might otherwise never learn about.

As a nascent teacher of topics in sustainability, the challenge I have encountered is like that of any new topic that is constantly changing; I have trouble keeping up. Sustainability, how it is perceived in the public and private spheres, and its state-of-the-art is changing fast. No textbook is adequate for that. Articles, videos, and news stories is how I keep up with it and how I expect my students to learn about it. And the tools for teaching and learning sustainability are just coming on line. I'm not inventing them myself. I choose to leave that to the experts.