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Cross disciplinary skills in education

LAST UPDATED: 03.01.14 Buying student success records increasingly depends on the ability to gain and demonstrate knowledge, skills, and perspectives that apply widely. Especially now that more and more students are ultimately choosing careers outside their field of study that require interaction with diverse colleagues. How do faculty and practitioners, through the integration of global perspectives in disciplinary and cross-disciplinary courses and programming, ensure that institutions deliver universal degrees that prepare students for success in a globally interconnected world, no matter their field of study? This is the second installment in architecture 2016-2017 for the Global Learning Series I. Discover how to enrich and expand student learning through the integration of global learning and the creation of cross-disciplinary learning experiences, as they have been framed by evolving workplace demands and real and looming global challenges. Learn strategies for integrating global learning into disciplines where universality can be considered implicit and merging global contexts is mistakenly deemed unnecessary. Who should attend this session is for faculty, senior international officials, chief academic officers, researchers and other international educators who seek to understand how to use current global issues to promote cross-disciplinary learning that develops global competencies and critical thinking skills. Moderator Peter N. Stearns, George Mason University PhD Peter N. Stearns, PhD, is professor of history and provost emeritus at George Mason University. During Stearns' tenure as provost, he spearheaded several important initiatives to expand the university's global presence, namely the establishment of a branch campus in Incheon, Korea, and collaboration with INTO to increase the number and diversity of students recruited from abroad. He received the prestigious Mason Medal in 2014; in the same year, the university was awarded the Nafsa Senator Paul Simon Spotlight Award for Campus Internationalization. Stearns has also written extensively about world history and emotions, including two popular textbooks. Other books include A History of Shame (to come), An Industry Turn in World History (to come), Guiding American Universities: Challenges and Choices, Conducting a History of Emotions, Gender in World History, Satisfaction Not Guaranteed: Dilemmas of Progress in Modern Society, Childhood in World History, and American Fear: Causes and Consequences of High Anxiety, among many others. He also edited the Encyclopedia of World History, the 6th edition. Before coming to George Mason University, Stearns taught at the University of Chicago, Rutgers University, and Carnegie Mellon He was also the founder and editor of the Journal of Social History from 1967 to 2015. Presenter Merry Byrd, PhD PhD Merry Lynn Byrd State University, PhD, is an associate professor of English at Virginia State University. He previously taught at Southern University in New Orleans and moved to Virginia after Hurricane Katrina and rested the embankment. Her specialty is the memoir of women and environmental humanities. She is the founder and editor of nola diaspora's two-yearly journal, www.noladiaspora.org, and is currently completing a monograph, Sustainable Selves: Women's Memoir of the Twentieth Century. He also served as principal investigator for Imagining a Sustainable Environment: Place and Culture in the Global Community, a collaboration between Virginia State University's Dr. George H. Bennett Office for International Education and the department of language and literature. Gundolf Graml, PhD of Agnes Scott College Gundolf Graml is an associate professor of German Studies at Agnes Scott College and faculty coordinator of the Global Learning Curriculum. In German Studies, his teaching and research focused on cinema, travel/tourism, and ecocriticism. In addition to teaching German courses, Graml has organized a number of faculty-led overseas learning experiences to Germany. As agnes scott college's global learning curriculum coordinator, she facilitated the curricular development and implementation of 15 faculty-led immersion experiences for all first-year classes of universities with goals ranging from Bolivia to Hungary. Tina M. Zappile, PhD of Stockton University Tina M. Zappile, PhD, is an associate professor of political science at Stockton University (NJ) and currently serves as chair of the Global Challenges curation team for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) National Blended Course Consortium (NBCC). His research focuses on international financial institutions in trade and development, in particular, formal governance and influence in multilateral development banks and recent patterns and disputes over provisions in trade agreements. His work in teaching and learning scholarships includes the use of simulations to increase students' global empathy and the application of team-based learning models in support of critical thinking. He has been published in World Development, International Studies Perspectives, Global Economic Governance and Multilateral Development Bank Development Practices (edited volume), Journal of International Political Theory, and Democratization of International Institute Reports issued by International Democracy Watch based in Turin, Italy, and Double Helix. At Stockton University, he teaches international relations, international political economy, international law and organization, Consumer Culture, and Go Global!- an online interdisciplinary summer course for incoming first-year students. The teacher plans the instructions students in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing knowledge about content fields, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as learners' knowledge and community context. As individuals and as members of the learning community, teachers choose and create learning experiences that fit the curricular objectives, relevant to students, and based on effective teaching principles. Teachers understand how cross-disciplinary skills engage students deliberately in applying content knowledge. The image above was taken from an online conversation held at my student teaching seminar course. The first image shows my original post about designing learning opportunities where students can apply their new knowledge to an authentic context. The second image shows the response I received from a fellow student teacher, who also happened to finish his student teaching practice at the same school as me. His teaching discipline was social studies, and in our conversation, we found that we shared many of the same students and that strong connections could be made between the unit he and the Teacher He worked with, and my upcoming unit about Asam and Base. In particular, as the discussion shows, social studies classes have covered the Industrial Revolution. This historical moment contributed significantly from acid rain and water pollution to the list of issues facing the earth. Acid rain is usually a key point covered when discussing Asam and Pangkalan, so feedback from fellow student teachers gave me some great directions in how to plan authentic and meaningful learning activities that will help connect students' knowledge from different disciplines and lead them to one problem. The above discussions I shared with fellow educators, and subsequent discussions we had directly, reflected incorporating my Standard #7 into my teaching methods because it exemplifies how I work as part of the learning community to create meaningful, relevant, and appropriate learning opportunities for the overall learning of students in my school. In addition, it reflects engaging students in applying the knowledge of content they have accumulated from various disciplines. I regularly communicate and share ideas with student teachers that I have discussed here. In the future I look forward to continuing to encourage open communication with other educators and working with them to plan instructions that rely on multiple disciplines, so that students can experience a cohesive, relevant, and well-developed education. Students entering polytechnic incubator's new program will undoubtedly multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary terms (arity) are thrown rather indiscriminately. Interestingly interesting administrators, teachers, and staff also use these terms rather loosely and too often without considering the underlying meaning. Recently I gave a talk about another disciplinary: transdisciplinary. The purpose of the talks is to share with colleagues from across the country the opportunities and challenges associated with the development of a truly transdisciplinary environment in higher education institutions. During the meeting upon my return, the terms multi, inter, and trans disciplinary (arity) were being thrown around, and it was clear that the meaning of those terms was not clearly understood. Hopefully this blog post will help explain the subject. Ultimately, if you're an incoming student, students considering a new program, or a parent, should be clearer about what a transdisciplinary is and why you might prefer it than a rigorous disciplinary, multi, or even interdisciplinary experience. First, I am not an expert in various disciplines. The ideas and descriptions that follow are not mine and have been around for decades, with many books and articles written on the subject. However my Polytechnic Incubator colleagues and I believe in these ideas and in their advantages and constraints, and they serve to motivate the design of the Incubator's transdisciplinary environment. In 1992, Hugh G. Petrie wrote a seminal article for the American Educational Research Association articulating the meaning of these ideas. Then, in 2007, A. Wendy Russell, Fern Wickson, and Anna L. Carew contributed articles discussing transdisciplinary contexts, prescriptions for the production of emerging transdisciplinary knowledge and contradictions, and advice for universities to develop capacity for transdisciplinary, rather than simply investing in product knowledge. The following sections try to capture the essence of both of these works. Discipline before starting a discussion about discipline, it may be useful to ground the conversation by developing a rough idea of what characteristics consist of discipline. Think of disciplines like English Literature, Dance, Philosophy, Physics, or Computer Graphics Technology. According to Petrie,¹ The idea of discipline today fits a number of things, including: Specialization of knowledge in a kind of exclusionary unit of cognitive effort. The fact that the unity of discipline seems to stem from a set of core metaphors and general concepts that define the field of inquiry, a specific set of observational categories for field structuring experience, specific methods for investigation, specifications of means for determining truth or justification for claims made in the field, and, perhaps most important of all, the idea of a purpose to be served in investigating the field in physics; the desire to understand the nature of the physical world in which we find ourselves). Organized groupings of people who study disciplines, train other practitioners, and establish social mechanisms for arbitration among various claims of truth in disciplines. One can get an idea here, as well as conclude that the idea of discipline has been and probably always will be useful, even if it is not entirely necessary. There are even those who have written interesting arguments strongly in favor of narrow-focused disciplines. What is much less clear is how disciplines change over time, develop, and in some cases all but disappear (think blacksmiths, farriers, and train whiomakers), while some are resurrected (think welders and electricians). How does one adapt in a constantly changing and technology-driven world, where half the lives of some technologies can be short (consider a tube television set, a 2G digital mobile phone network, or a desktop personal computer)? Multidisciplinary Petrie¹ discusses multidisciplinary as the idea of a number of disciplines working together on a problem, educational program, or research study. The effect is additive rather than integrative. These projects are usually short-lived, and there is rarely a long-term change in the ways in which disciplinary participants in multidisciplinary projects see their own work. Another way to look at this is that participants can be isolated by the way they view their knowledge and acquisition (i.e. specific methods for investigation, the specification of the means to determine the truth). In addition, Petrie writes, traditional distribution requirements in the secondary or college curriculum are usually of this nature. Any integration is assumed to occur in the heads of individual students rather than there being a carefully thought out public education system. Finally he stated that This is group work rather than teamwork. Interdisciplinary Moves to expand the idea of multidisciplinary to include more integration, rather than just additions, Petrie writes about interdisciplinary in this way: Interdisciplinary research or education usually refers to situations where job integration goes beyond merging mere disciplinary contributions. Some key elements of the use of concepts and disciplinary tools are changing. There is a level of integration. Interdisciplinary subjects in the university curriculum such as physical chemistry or social psychology, which now have, perhaps, themselves become disciplines, are good examples. More recent may be the field of immunopharmacology, which combines the work of

bacteriology, chemistry, physiology, and immunology. Another example of interdisciplinaryism may be the idea that from a core curriculum that goes far beyond simple requirements in public education undergraduate programs. In many ways, the integrative impulse of interdisciplinary thinking is often a central feature of public education reform efforts rather than frills. Turning to schools, there are a number of national efforts to change the 'layer cake' (biology first, then on it by chemistry, then on it by physics) approach to American science education on its side. These efforts will require an interdisciplinary approach to teaching science because, at any given time, a combination of biology, chemistry, and physics will be studied. Various interconnections between these traditional disciplines then need to be emphasized, and fundamental principles, including mathematics, can be taught and learned more efficiently and effectively. What's interesting here is that the combination of the narrow disciplines Petrie discusses that ultimately shape interdisciplinary thinking is relatively close to each other. When I look at the disciplines that make up immunopharmacology, for example, I see a combination of biology and chemistry, two disciplines that are pretty close. So then one can wonder, how does one get cultural empathy to say, those in west Africa facing the Ebola pandemic in immunopharmacology studies? Enter the transdisciplinary. Petrie's transdisciplinary writes about transdisciplinary in this way: The idea of transdisciplinary exemplifies one of the historically important driving forces in the interdisciplinary field, namely, the idea of wanting the integration of knowledge into some meaningful whole. The best example, perhaps, of the push for transdisciplinary may be the initial discussion of general system theory when held forward as a great synthesis of knowledge. Marxism, structuralism, and feminist theory are sometimes cited as examples of transdisciplinary approaches. Basically, this kind of interdisciplinary represents the drive to integrate knowledge, and, hence, is often characterized by denigration and rejection of disciplines and disciplinary work that are essentially fragmented and incomplete. If we now see this rough and ready difference through the lens of the three conceptual strands mentioned above, some interesting results emerge. First, consider the difference in theoretical-practical wisdom. Rigorous disciplinary activities tend to be primarily related to theoretical understanding, while multidisciplinary activities, and perhaps even some interdisciplinary projects, care more about practical outcomes. Transdisciplinary activities, to be sure, tend to answer questions about theoretical understanding, especially about the unity of knowledge, but the difference between theoretical concerns and practical questions in interdisciplinary work seems worth making. This is paradoxically if we think about immunopharmacology, cultural empathy, and combine it with sustainability in the context of the recent Ebola outbreak in west Africa. Sustainability goes into this context when we consider that it would be useful for people to keep Ebola out of west Africa once the pandemic has been addressed. Obviously there may be more disciplines, including liberal arts, engineering and technology (think scalable antidote delivery systems) and even fine art - if one considers how these tribes and cultures communicate, often through music, dance, and art. Transdisciplinary and Polysdisciplinary Incubator transdisciplinary has been described as a practice that violates and violates disciplinary boundaries,... and seems to have the greatest potential to respond to new demands and imperatives. This potential arises from transdisciplinary traits, which include problem focus (research comes from and is conceptualized in 'real-world' issues), evolving methodologies (this study involves repetitive, reflective processes responsive to specific research questions, arrangements, and groupings) and collaboration (including collaboration between transdisciplinary researchers, disciplinary researchers and external actors with an interest in research). 2 One of the core ideas of the Polytechnic Incubator is to deliberately integrate knowledge acquisition and skill development into a more meaningful whole. Early learners will be immersed in a group environment that promotes ideas of design thinking and project management, culture, and narrative communication that transcend many forms, including audiovisual. In addition to students who are immersed in this group environment, faculties from these fields will also be immersed in this environment. Discipline-specific skills can be obtained on time from faculty mentors (or mentors), and in the context of larger real-world problems. It has at least two advantages: 1) Relevance: Students can identify with the skills necessary to address open problems, make them relevant, and 2) Timeliness: Knowledge or skills are acquired when needed, not if necessary. Needed.

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