24TH UNIVERSITY-WIDE TEACHING CONFERENCE:

REALLY FABULOUS

OUT OF THE BOX

PRACTICAL WAYS
to Enhance Your Teaching & Student Learning
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Economics
School of Arts and Sciences
What is interdisciplinary research?

“Interdisciplinary understanding is the capacity to integrate knowledge and modes of thinking drawn from two or more disciplines to produce a cognitive advancement - for example, explaining a phenomenon, solving a problem, creating a product, or raising a new question - in ways that would have been unlikely through single disciplinary means.”

(Boix Mansilla, 2003)

Why is interdisciplinary discourse so hard?

Getting past the disciplinary barriers: Becoming Systems Thinkers
STRATEGIES FOR STARTING A DISCUSSION

- Choosing an issue of common interest is an easy way to start.
- Challenging theory with evidence will inevitably necessitate an interdisciplinary approach.
- Example from Research: Designing a Monitoring and Evaluation Program to Assess Anti-Sweatshop Programs in Global Apparel Supply Chains.
- Example in Teaching: Causes of the conflict in Darfur
A SIMPLE MATRIX CAN TELL DISENTAGLE RESOURCE AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rebel</th>
<th>Arab</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rich</td>
<td>Ethnic Cleansing/Resources</td>
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<td>Poor</td>
<td>Ethnic Cleansing</td>
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IR STUDENTS CHOSE AID EFFECTIVENESS IN HAITI

- The IR program provided
  - An article from the New Yorker
  - Several podcasts from NPR’s: Planet Money
  - A couple of books
  - Some scholarly citations
- Setup a Blackboard Site
- Convened a discussion (with pizza)
WHAT FOLLOWED WAS AMAZING

- We discovered that aid effectiveness touched on Economics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, History, Engineering, Medicine, Education, …

- We all discovered that we needed more information about Haiti.

- We also realized that we need to learn how to form a research question and evaluate evidence.

- My perceptions about the foundations of my own discipline were greatly broadened.
OUR NEXT STEPS

• One day symposium bringing together all of the practical and intellectual perspectives on aid effectiveness in Haiti.

• Retrospective: One year after the earthquake, how did we do?

• INTR 91 will help students identify a research question and learn about evaluating evidence.

• IR Scholars and Borghesani Scholarships to fund research and civic engagement.

• Senior Thesis.
Jonathan Garlick
Anatomy and Cellular Biology
School of Dental Medicine
WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES

1. Many disciplines – find one language = communicate so that all understand
2. How to make one discipline COMPELLING to other disciplines
3. How to frame questions/issues to invite a balanced integrative approach
4. How to evoke reflection to create a long-lasting context for “interdisciplinary memory”
STRATEGIES FOR FOSTERING AN INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

1. FACULTY ENLIGHTENMENT – faculty brainstorm, share views by modeling for students
2. BUILD INTERDISCIPLINARY BRIDGES - introspective, personal, experiential learning drives integration
3. INTERDISCIPLINARY LITERACY – enable effective communication allowing shared interpretation
4. INTERDISCIPLINARY DISCERNMENT – reach consensus from varied perspectives through collaborative work
5. SYNTHESIZE INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE – Integrated knowledge from multiple disciplines around a theme
UNIVERSITY SEMINAR - “STEM CELL” MODEL OF ID LEARNING

1. Create interdisciplinary literacy – sensitize students to best simplify their message
2. Explore humanizing aspects of each discipline – Ex: can science/medicine explain human & cultural constructs (personhood, altruism)
3. Integrate content through interpersonal communication and collaborative learning
4. Evoke internal reflection by creating a safe-haven for sharing personal views – “ensemble learning”
Julian Agyeman
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School of Arts and Sciences
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