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Global Studies Initiative Faculty Report: Faculty Training on Online Teaching and Learning

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Aims of Global Studies Initiative: Parkland’s Global Studies Initiative promotes the addition to Parkland’s social science courses of instructional materials on global issues with a focus on the European Union, Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia, and East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific. Further, it aims to provide social science faculty with instructional design tools and aid them with the implementation of new course materials in the classroom.

Global Studies Initiative Faculty Report: Best Practices for Online Teaching

Faculty Name: Lauren Anaya

Courses Taught (course name(s), section number): Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, ANT 103 and Introduction to Anthropology, ANT 101

Please answer the following questions to complete this report:

1. Please describe here a couple of the best practices for online teaching and learning that you workshopped in the EDU 914 Parkland Faculty Academy course, and how you plan to implement them in the online component of your classes in the Fall of 2020 and beyond. These can be anything from content management and delivery, to student engagement, student assessment, or anything else you learned in this training course that you will adopt in your teaching.

I am currently teaching Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, ANT 103, online and will also teach this course and Introduction to Anthropology, ANT 101, in the Fall of 2020. I have taught these courses in the past and part of the motivation for taking EDU 914 was to learn how to invigorate course discussion forums and foster more enriching interactions among the students. However, as I was prepping for ANT 103 this summer, I decided to implement additional small changes in order to create a more welcoming, organized, and intuitive online environment.

I began by redesigning the course homepage. The specific changes I made were to the navigation bar and with respect to the widgets I chose to include on the actual page. All of the important course-related tabs can be found on the navigation bar at the top of the homepage. These include: Content (where students will find the course syllabus, Parkland syllabus, and weekly content modules, which house the PowerPoint slides, videos, class exercise instructions, secondary links to the Discussion Forums, and other course materials for each week’s activities), Discussions (where students can access the Discussion Forums), Dropbox (where students deposit completed exercises), Quizzes (where students access the course exams), Grades (where students can keep track of how they are doing in the class), Classlist (which contains email contact information for other students in the class), and Anthropology Salon (where students can access an ongoing chat channel set up on Microsoft Teams – more on this below). On the left side of the homepage I included the following widgets: Announcements, Office 365 (link to email and Office programs), Parkland Library, Google Search, and

the SPARK Search Box. On the right side of the homepage I included the Calendar widget, a widget that links students directly to Technical Support, and the Parkland News widget. Before taking EDU 914 I was not aware that I had the ability to rearrange the course homepage so this small change was exciting to me. I feel that the homepage is now better designed to meet the needs of the students and will put similar effort into designing future homepages for the courses I teach.

Another small change I made is that I have started adding “to do” lists in the Description box for each weekly module (found under the Content tab). I also post a weekly “to do” list in the Announcements section of the homepage and send it out to the class via email. This allows students to locate and keep track of weekly assignments and due dates without having to refer back to the Syllabus and enables them to find this information in several places. Along with this, I have started linking the weekly Discussion Forums to the weekly content modules for easier access and so that students have a centralized location from which to access the course materials for the week.

In order to foster a sense of community in my online class I established an “Anthropology Salon”. This is an informal space where students can interact about the course and all things anthropology. They can use the Anthropology Salon to ask and answer each other's questions (I will be dropping by as well and can answer questions here), share additional resources and interesting news, etc. Students can also use this to publicize upcoming events that may be of interest to their classmates (whether live or virtual). I will also post suggestions for additional (optional) readings, references to websites of possible interest, upcoming events, and films students might want to check out. This is the students’ space for communicating with each other and me.

I set the Anthropology Salon up on Microsoft Teams (where I established a specific channel labeled “Anthropology Salon”). This is new and I foresee a challenge directing students to this resource and getting them to engage and share information. I plan to periodically post news items that link anthropology to current world events here and will keep reminding students to check out the salon. I may also try to entice them by posting a couple of extra credit opportunities here.

To encourage more vibrant class discussions, another change I have made to the course involves the format for discussion forums. Instead of posting 4-5 prompts on 4-5 different topics and asking students to pick 2 and respond, I am switching up the weekly forums. This week I asked them all to watch a short video and respond to a specific set of questions related to the video and the assigned readings. To get full credit they will need to post and respond to a classmate’s post. Next week I am going to divide them into smaller groups for discussion purposes and have them discuss the assigned topic(s) among the smaller group and post their notes/conclusions to the forum for the rest of the class to read. I am hoping that this will make the forum more interactive and encourage student-student interaction. I plan to keep mixing it up for the final 3 weeks of class to test different formats for the discussion forums.

2. Please reflect on how the new practices you are instituting in your courses will benefit your students in the online environment. Here you might wish to compare your course before and after you implement these practices.

I think the small, simple organizational changes (the redesign of the course homepage, publishing the week’s “to do” list in the description box for each weekly module, and linking the discussion forums to

the weekly content modules) will make it easier for students to find the information they need and to navigate the course.

The idea behind the Anthropology Salon is twofold: 1) to encourage students to interact more with other students in the class and 2) to demonstrate the relevance of anthropology to their lives and things happening in the world. Online courses can be isolating and students may feel disconnected from the class. If I can get them to see the value of the salon (and it is a big “if”) this may help foster a sense of community among students. Students retain more of what they learn and become more interested in a subject if they can make a connection between what they are learning in class and life outside the classroom. By posting relevant news articles, publicizing upcoming events, etc., I will help students see the relationships between anthropology and the world at-large. Finally, by switching up the format for the Discussion Forum I hope to encourage more lively discussions among students.

3. Please describe an assignment or class material covered in your course that teaches students about global issues or, better yet, teaches them about the areas of the world covered in this initiative: the European Union, Eastern Europe, Russia, Eurasia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific. How can you see applying some of the best practices for online teaching and learning to this particular assignment or material?

Students in ANT 103 learn about anthropological methods. One of the exercises I usually assign early on is an interview. Students are asked to interview someone from a different cultural background. In preparation, they read about strategies for qualitative interviews. After the interview they write-up the results, and analyze the interview process. I have included a copy of the instructions for this exercise at the end of this report.

In order to better adapt this for online teaching, I am going to divide the students into smaller groups and have them practice interviewing each other. They will then discuss the process among themselves and provide a written analysis of the group prep. This will enable students to see the benefits and disadvantages of different approaches to interviewing and to discuss with each other what works and/or doesn't seem to work before the actual interview. This will be the first time I have assigned a group project in an online class. Again, I am trying to encourage community by offering an opportunity for more interactions among the students in my class. This exercise is designed in part to combat the isolation that one often feels in an online course.

4. Finally, how do you think learning about global issues and other areas of the world benefits your students in your field of study or discipline?

It would be impossible to teach anthropology without teaching students about global issues: the two are inextricably intertwined. One of my goals in teaching anthropology is to help students learn to “make the familiar strange and the strange familiar.” The anthropologist’s job is to listen to, record, and represent the voices and perspectives of the multiple communities that make up our world so that we may better understand what it means to be human. Anthropologists strive to see the world through the eyes of others. Anthropologists engage in long-term participant observation and anthropological fieldwork requires commitment. Before entering the field, the anthropologist spends considerable time (often years) learning everything possible about the community he or she intends to study; i.e., the history,

geography, language, ways and means of life, etc. One of the core tenants of anthropology is respect for diversity. When we understand and appreciate cultural and social difference, we are better able to respect diversity and navigate our interconnected, multicultural world. For these reasons, learning about global issues and other areas of the world is essential for students who want to pursue anthropology.

Thank you very much for participating in the Global Studies Initiative and completing this report!

Anthropology 103

Exercise 2: Interview Assignment

Before you begin this exercise, please read “Strategies for Qualitative Interviews,” which can be found under the Week 2 tab on Cobra, and “The Qualitative Research Interview,” which can be found online at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x/epdf>.

For this exercise, you will conduct an extended interview (30-45 minutes) with a non-U.S. citizen or someone from a different ethnic group than yours. You may explore issues such travel, food, language, family, concepts of time and economics. You can also, but are not required to, ask such questions as:

What has surprised you (the interviewee) most about the host culture?

How do you (the interviewee) think you have been misunderstood by members of the host culture?

Describe a humorous or embarrassing incident resulting from language or cultural Miscommunication.

Describe your (the interviewee’s) greatest cross-cultural disappointment or disillusionment.

What advice would you (the interviewee) give to people embarking on a cross-cultural experience?

Describe the specific ways your life (the interviewee’s) has been enriched because of crosscultural experience

While you are conducting the interview, take notes to record your interviewee’s responses. After you complete the interview, write-up a 1-2 page (12 pt. font, double-spaced) report that:

1. Explains why/how you selected this person to interview
2. Describes how you prepared for the interview
3. Describes where and when the interview took place
4. Explains the interviewing strategy you used
5. Summarizes what you learned by interviewing this person
6. Reflects on your interviewing strengths and weaknesses (i.e., what worked well, what you may have done differently to get better results)

Your report, along with a scanned copy of your interview questions and notes from the interview, are due March 13, 2020, by 11:59 PM.