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

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Global Studies Initiative in Social Sciences Courses

Parkland College, AY 2019–2020

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.

<u>Global Studies Initiative Faculty Report: Best Practices for Online Teaching</u>

Faculty Name: Dorie Geissler_____

Courses Taught (course name(s), section number): _SOC 101 252W_2020SU_____

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.

    EDU 914 and the textbook "Small Teaching Online" was very helpful in making me a more effective online instructor. I found that I was already intuitively implementing some best practices and learned about more that I could add to my toolbox. The best practices presented in the course that I have implemented in my summer SOC 101 online class are as follows:

    a. Making the course objectives clear and regularly referring to those in student assessments. The main course objective for SOC 101 is learning how to think "sociologically". That is, cultivating a sociological imagination. The sociological imagination is a perspective that allows us to consider how outside forces, especially the time and place we were born and live, shape out life story or our biography. This is the first lesson of the course and I now refer to it consistently throughout. I have also created a pre/post course assessment to see if students think differently about a sociological issue after completing the course. I don't know the outcome as of yet, but I am excited to see the results.
    b. In my summer SOC 101 course I have also implemented a running question chat window where students can post questions. If one student has a question about an assignment, etc. chances are other students to too. This has been a helpful tool for class questions and engagement. Fellow students can also participate and help out their classmates.

c. Based on what I learned in EDU 914 I have also implemented a "Getting Started" module in my summer SOC 101 course. This module requires students to do 3 tasks: online introduction, view the syllabus introduction video, complete the course pre-assessment. The remainder of the course content will not open until they take these steps. I believe this is crucial to making sure all students receive a proper orientation to the course and begin with a clear idea of course organization and expectations before jumping into the content.

d. Lastly, against my personal preference, I am currently using conditional releases on some of my course content. Before students can open the course module assignments they have to make one attempt at the module quiz. The module quiz is a formative assessment issued at the beginning of a module. The idea is that students should do - at the minimum - a superficial reading of the course material before taking the quiz. They may also look up information in the text while taking the quiz. After submitting the quiz, students may take it a second time to better their score. Ideally, then, they have some familiarity with the new course content before approaching the discussions and assignments. Personally, I am not a fan of conditional releases because I like to see the big picture before beginning on a task, but based on what I learned in EDU 914, I am giving it a try and it seems to be working well.

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 answers to this question are somewhat embedded in my answers to the question above, but I will try to elaborate here.

a. Referring to the course objectives and implementing a pre-post course assessment will allow students to remain focused on the overall goal of the course. It is easy to get caught up in memorizing and key terms and lose sight of the big picture. The pre/post assessment will give them the opportunity to reflect on what they learned in the course and how they can use that information moving forward.

b. The chat window for course questions benefits students by giving them an open forum for questions and helps build community.

c. Like I said above, the "Getting Started" module and conditional release on content helps to ensure that all students have a basic understanding of course requirements before diving into the course content.

d. Conditional releases benefit students because they allow for an organized progression of learning content. The way I have set up the formative assessment quizzes and other assessments, students ideally have a basic familiarity/understanding of course content before approaching other course assessments.

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?

I have an assignment that has students compare the US education system to that of Finland. I developed this assignment when participating in the Global Studies Initiative over a year ago. I will say, this is one of my students' favorite assignments. It comes at the end of the course when they have the tools to incorporate layers into their analyses. Performing a global comparison of education systems requires students to think about education funding, economic systems, gender, race, socioeconomics, and more. The one thing I have implemented with this assignment as a result of taking EDU 914 is that now students have a choice of how to learn about the differences and how to submit the assignment. They may view a video outlining the differences between the education systems or read an article. They may also submit their assignment in the traditional written form, submit a video, or a PPT. EDU 914 suggested allowing students choice in how they submit assignments as a way for students to exercise their strengths.

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?

I think learning about global issues and other areas of the world is of great benefit to sociology students. As a discipline, sociology is focused on looking at the construction of society, how people shape social interaction, social structure, and meaning. As such, all societies are different. Examining these differences encourages students to examine their taken-for-granted assumptions about society and see how it is dynamic and subject to change. Thus, learning about global issues ultimately helps sociology students accomplish the primary course objective of cultivating a sociological imagination (see question 1a for the definition).

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