

Parkland College

SPARK: Scholarship at Parkland

Global Studies Initiatives in Social Sciences
2019 - 2020

Global Studies Initiatives in the Social Sciences

Spring 2020

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

Barbara-Ann Kaidy

Follow this and additional works at: https://spark.parkland.edu/global_studies_2020



Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

Open access to this Project Report is brought to you by Parkland College's institutional repository, [SPARK: Scholarship at Parkland](#). For more information, please contact spark@parkland.edu.

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.

Global Studies Initiative Faculty Report: Best Practices for Online Teaching

Faculty Name: _____ Dr. Barbara-Ann Kaidy _____

Courses Taught (course name(s), section number): Psych 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.

There are two very important things with which I have had trouble in my courses. One is student interest and engagement and the other is student assessment from the standpoint of knowing what the student expects and with what skills the student is entering the class. These are even more important online as the student also has rarely taken an online course before coming to my Psych 101 class, including using a learning management system like COBRA. Most of my students only know how to use Microsoft Word to a very limited extent. In the past, I have incorporated a one week boot camp where students are taught how to use the Internet to find scholarly references and information, how to use COBRA as a tool that has many facets, including checking their grades, finding the syllabus, posting threads and responses and accessing other tools, such as their quizzes, and how to use Microsoft Office to the extent that they can write research papers and essays and check them for grammar and spelling, write references correctly, and access their email and work with it. We have even had to talk about reading effectively and efficiently in the boot camp because students get very agitated when having to read anything besides texts on their phones. They expect that everything they need will be spoken in class, both by the instructor and other students. As a matter of fact, I have had two students that actually used me as a scholarly reference! (I was not flattered because I knew they were trying to escape reading the textbook.)

The point here is that students have preconceived ideas of what they will have to do in class to pass. Many count points and monitor their grades in an effort to only do as much as they think necessary.

This backfires many times because they miss too many assignments and misinterpret the effect of due dates and weight of the type of assignment. That is spelled out in the syllabus and I talk about it ongoing in class. I have had students try to make up the whole first half of the semester with a month left in the second half because they thought just doing quizzes was enough. Also, students many times don't take responsibility for the deadlines of assignments and think they can do a research paper, for example, in three days or less. I give half a semester each for the two research papers I assign, and I offer multiple times in class where students can work on finding the research they need with me in the room. That is on top of office hours.

So, I decided that I would fool the students into getting involved. First, I am going to make a warm welcome and introduce the topic of psychologists by asking the students to post a warm response that includes their telling me who they can remember is a psychologist from a previous class or from the media or some other knowledge (they can look it up). That will start a conversation about stereotypes and what is expected as to what psychologists are like and what they do. Then, I will go further and mention that we are going to become psychologists in this class by deciding what theory we like and developing an avatar so that we can speak from that perspective through the first half of the class, though students will be able to continue or change the theories they operate under for the second half if they choose. That will be enough to get things started so that students begin looking up information and getting involved. One of the first things we will do in class is look at a couple of avatar programs in boot camp so that the students know for what they are looking. They become as detailed as they like or more basic. The thing is the psychologist has to look like the psychologist they are mirroring so it is not them personally saying what they are saying. This is for the essays they write on topics they are assigned and the responses they make to other students.

State University of New York (SUNY) was one of the first universities to introduce the use of avatars, and they were mostly successful in that students tended to feel protected and less personally judged in online classes. Instructors created their own avatars, too, and the interaction was well received by the students. In this case, the students would become the avatar of the psychologist whose perspective they admire or with whom they relate well. These psychologists have research behind them, so the students will be able to speak with the evidence already established, though they may have to find it in their textbooks, in the library or online. They can step out from behind the avatar when they want to express their own opinions, but then they must provide scholarly evidence of their own through the same channels.

That will facilitate the beginning of a debate which will be held at the halfway point of the semester, with a group taking on a subject and conducting the debate like a College Bowl program. This will also feed the first research paper, so that students will use what they have found to write their papers and make their case. This is a change because normally, the debate is conducted only in the paper as we state both sides from the literature so as not to disseminate bias. However, now, the student may primarily state the case on the side of his or her perspective because the other side will be handled by another student. The interaction is going to be the key and allow a more creative approach but it still be a scholarly and scientific exercise.

As for the problem with assessment I mentioned above, I have decided to pare down the MSLQ of Pintrich so that I use approximately 20 questions to assess the self-regulative skills of the students coming into the class. There are 15 domains and the skills include critical thinking, motivation, self-efficacy, and control. The literature says students don't learn self-regulative skills in K through 12, and they don't transfer most of them from other domains, like work and home, until they become 30+, so it

is important that we know where students stand, especially when they take courses online. I think it will be very telling of what might be needed as a more personal approach for some of these students. I will also include some open ended questions so that I hear more about how they feel and what they have done or are doing in their normal lives outside school, such as work and family dynamics.

Understanding the stress and personal perspectives of the students are probably really good ways to know how students will succeed in the class and how they view and intend to succeed in their education overall, per Tinto. General education classes have been known to get less attention and effort of students in the literature, which has been found to lead to a shallow immersion and lack of retention of the course material. If these courses are meant to be foundational, they are not seen that way many times by students. It seems that the more we understand the thinking and stress makers of these students, we may be able to understand their actions or predict their actions with more accuracy. Perhaps that could lead to earlier and better targeted interventions.

I always make my last essay piece a short three question review and reflection of how students view their performance and what they will take away from the class. Since I will have this opening assessment available, I may re-administer the MSLQ as a final assessment of skills, too. That would give a better idea of how the class has helped impart those skills or not and would mesh with some of the same open-ended questions and the three I stated I already ask. Every written assignment already has a rubric aligned with it, so the students are getting feedback on their learning objectives and outcomes. The questionnaire and survey would be an opportunity to add the overriding background to the results of the class, which I think is missing.

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.

As I have already stated above, metacognitive self-regulatory skills are not taught in K through 12, and that is the paradigm of online education. According to the literature and my own research, students generally don't learn these skills or transfer them to the educational domain until they turn 30 or so. I have included a boot camp for the last 3 years that has included working online in COBRA and finding research in the library and other locations on the Internet and working with Word. Now, I have had to include working within Bongo or Zoom or some online courseroom and online office hours. I taught this last semester live online, which had all kinds of glitches and issues that stopped class in its tracks for a little while but served to show students that having a video malfunction in the on campus classroom is only one issue with technology. There are many more when we are online until we work things out. My students were not onboard for this quick change to online study, but many had already begun to slip out before the pandemic. Some had accidents, were called up for emergency military duty, had to work more and a different shift, took too many classes, had no one to watch the children, and so on. There were a couple of students who said they were glad they didn't have to attend class on campus because they could do multiple things while they continued to take the class. However, there were students who began the connection to the online courseroom during class period and left it open while they worked, which meant they were not really involved.

The idea here is to get students involved before they know it. If you begin to do something that engages you, the time slips away. You don't have the inclination to count the minutes because you are interacting with what you are doing. The course is involved in imparting the basics of psychology as a science and research as an objective scholarly exercise. It lends itself to online work because much of the information is online, including the archives of some of the most famous experiments and scholarly

works of the psychologists. But, the issue is how to get these students to work on their own, and that is not going to happen without understanding them and their thinking and quickly getting them involved in the work in a way that is not what they have done in on campus classes. That is what the warm welcome is meant to do and the immediate involvement in a creative task that is paired with the material we need to cover so that the students begin to move and act on their own. The classes will be synchronous and asynchronous because that is the nature of online education, but there are still many students who find comfort in numbers. Loneliness is prevalent in online education, so I think it is important to have classes that are live and live office hours available. It is good to have recordings, but they can seem like just lectures if students are not trained beforehand. That is what happened with many students, where they were asked to speak and didn't know how to work with their microphones and cameras. That has to be a part of boot camp as I go forward with the class.

I will be asking students to bring videos and other materials they find through their research online. I will begin a repository for students as a way for them to have access to the class's materials and my personal materials, such as journal articles I have gathered over the years. I think this will make it a bit easier to show them how to differentiate the scholarly stuff from the biased and poorly supported stuff. I will be giving extra credit opportunities and perhaps let them choose from a wider group of topics because online teaching allows for that. If the textbook must remain, it will become more important as a tool to begin the conversation, not be the conversation. Perhaps the webinar I made concerning how to read a journal article and what to do with it as a reference might be taped live with students in an actual webinar so that they can ask questions. That might be more effective for other students online.

There are many, many things that are available, but if we are doing small changes, these evolve into the whole course being up for grabs. Small changes are not so small when they open up to a change in perspective of what the course is supposed to do. The material is important, but so are the behaviors and thinking it fosters. If we look at the course online from that perspective, we can learn best when not only are the behaviors and thinking both self- and externally disciplined, but when creativity is fostered so that students want to go further for themselves. I am hoping my course will push that envelope with the changes I am making, regardless of delivery.

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?

All of our topics for essays once a week and the APA research papers include research from around the world. The psychology textbook we use, *Psychology in Your Life*, 3rd ed., uses the theories and literature of researchers from early to current times and of many different countries. Psychology has evolved from philosophy, also, so there are even more cultural elements that were prevalent before it became a science.

We don't spend enough time talking about Eastern Psychology in the United States. We brush by it as a sort of side piece. I do assign topics related to religiosity, differences in independent vs. interdependent thinking and actions, stereotyping and discrimination, meditation, cultural diversity and acceptance and so forth. The key in western psychology is that we are not supposed to suborn bias because the discipline is a science which relies on logic and evidence. However, in many eastern areas of the world, the subjective is the key element to psychology because it is the person who is experiencing how the mind, body and spirit work within the greater spiritual world. Culture and religion govern eastern

psychology. When one speaks about homeostasis in the west, one is talking about the brain's control over the senses in that it is constantly trying to balance the body through chemistry so that it is running optimally at the frequency that is determined by the brain. The brain and mind are considered as three theories: the duality of the brain and mind, the mind alone and the brain alone. The only evidence we have in the west is the brain as a physical thing that controls the rest of the activities of the body. When we talk about homeostasis in India, we are referring to the chakras and a complex system of spiritual areas of the body that must be aligned physically. In recent years, China has become more involved in scientific psychological research more in keeping with western traditions. This may be because of the views perpetuated by the addition of Hong Kong, which has a markedly western influence on the politics of mainland China, and the growth and involvement of China as an economic and world political power, eager to be involved with the west on China's own terms. However, many mainland Chinese ascribe to Feng Shui, which is a balance of the personal environment that is considered necessary to bring harmony to the senses. However, this is somewhat different from western homeostasis because it is also grounded in culture, such as including the color red in the environment is good luck in this tradition.

There is a growing concern regarding the Chinese students who have come here and who lack family in this country because of the loneliness and anxiety many are enduring. As these students are encouraged to take help by the faculty and their peers, they are expressing a similar attitude that many immigrants express in that having a mental or emotional condition is not allowed or accepted within their families. They refuse the help because it will be seen as losing face, or respect. This is just one more thing about which we talk in psychology because students themselves bring these topics to the course. This not only happens in the classroom on campus, but when students write about topics they are assigned, they relate them to themselves as examples. Many students admit there are issues in their lives in the course of responding to one another, which is a key component of online coursework. The students are from all walks of life, including the African and African American communities. Even in the latter two communities, the differences are striking, indicating that these cultures have great diversity, which the students point to themselves many times. One student wrote a paper on the difference in African American males and North African males and their propensity to be tested and treated for HIV/AIDS. It was quite interesting because she had to delve into the World Health Organization literature and the scholarly journal literature. The attitudes were somewhat the same and somewhat different with a large emphasis on culture, as is many times the case in social psychology.

My course does not discriminate amongst the studies that are published in scholarly journals as references. The key is to figure out whether the studies are qualitative or quantitative, whether they have been conducted ethically and whether the instruments used were valid and reliable. We only have the APA to go by here, so we have to judge these things by its Code of Ethics, but these studies from around the world have continued to become more controlled and mainstream.

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?

Well, I think I have indicated this, but psychology originally comes from other cultures. It is and continues to be a product of people throughout the world testing, analyzing and evaluating research questions that transcend the experiences of one homogeneous group of people. If we are not inclusive, we will not understand the true impact across cultures, socio-economic strata and other factors that differentiate us. The idea of testing research questions and hypotheses is that we are looking for inferential statistics to find the samenesses, but we are also asking questions that look at the uniquenesses of the individual by looking at the qualitative information we gather in things like case

studies. Nelson Mandella, Martin Luther King and Mahatma Ghandi have similarities in philosophy and cultural differences, which is a study in psychology. Psychology is about people, above all, and how they act, think and feel. There are no causes nor is there proof in psychology, just the gathering of more and stronger evidence. The world benefits from these truths because it must understand how to work together in prosocial ways. The differences amongst people are not weaknesses, just differences. We study people through social media and the Internet because we can come to more of them in this way. The accessibility of the Internet is a boon for many individuals who don't have a voice otherwise. We can point to many countries where the people have transcended the oppression they were experiencing by transmitting their message to others, even through the lockdown of satellite communication. This is psychology, as I tell my students, it is everywhere and in everything.

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