Parkland College

SPARK: Scholarship at Parkland

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

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Global Studies Initiative in Social Sciences Courses

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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.

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

Faculty Name: <u>Erika Rosenberger</u>

Courses Taught (course name(s), section number): <u>PSY 101: Introduction to Psychology; PSY 209:
Human Growth and Development; PSY 222: Industrial and Organizational Psychology</u>

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.

 A couple of the best practices for online teaching and learning that I have acquired include (a) building
a community and (b) making connections.

a) In a classroom setting, it can be easier to build a community with the first day activities and face-
   to-face discussions. However, in an asynchronous setting that is online, there can be a disconnect
   among the students and between the instructor and the students. A simple way to help build this
   community is to "show up" for class. Instead of just having the students discuss on the
   discussion boards on their own, I can respond to the students' posts to help students see that I am
   present. Currently in my summer course, I am scheduling an extra 30 minutes for 4 days out of
   the week to respond to students' posts. In addition, sending announcements (video or text)
   regularly demonstrates my engagement with the course.

b) The course content becomes more meaningful and students can better understand the material if
   they make connections with their own lives. We can facilitate this process by having students
   discuss what they already know about a topic before diving into the course content. Students'
   prior knowledge would be activated, and they can connect and build the new information to their
   already existing knowledge base.

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.

a) Other than responding to discussion posts and sending routine announcements, a stronger community can be built by showing compassion and empathy. Students may have chosen to take an online class because they are juggling full-time work, family, and school. Although it is important to hold students accountable, it is also important to acknowledge that unforeseen circumstances (e.g. medical issues, family problems, overtime at work) could affect the students' abilities to complete an assignment on time. Before EDU 914, I had a late work policy that allowed students to submit late assignments with a 20% penalty for each day they were late. However, I struggled with holding students accountable because some students took advantage of the late work policy and would continually submit assignments late.

Instead, I would like to implement what are called "Oops Tokens." Students would get a set number of these tokens (2 for my classes). These tokens can be used to submit a late assignment or redo an assignment. The following are some rules and guidelines for their use:

- For missing assignments and projects, with one Oops token, students can get a 48-hour extension, no questions asked.
  - The students will have to let me know they want to use the Oops token within 48 hours of the due date of the assignment. Regardless of when they tell me, they will have until 48 hours of the *due date*.
  - For example, if an assignment is due on Sunday at 11:59 PM and one student asks to use an Oops token on Monday at 11 AM and another student asks on Tuesday at 3 PM, they will both have to submit their assignment by Tuesday at 11:59 PM.
- Oops tokens cannot be used for exams. There will be a separate policy for exams.
- Students will have to tell me that they want to use it (e.g. via email). They can't assume that it is going to be counted. This policy will make it easier for them (and me) to keep track of how many they have used if they have to let me know about it.

I really liked the idea of Oops Tokens because it can be used for different things (for missing work, improving an assignment), and the students get to choose when to use them. I think the Oops tokens will reduce the behavior of consistently submitting late work since there will only be 2 for the semester. In an online environment, students have to be able to manage their time wisely and self-regulate throughout the course. Knowing they will be able to fix mistakes along the way will show that I truly care about them, even if we do not see each other physically.

b) Helping students make connections can be done in a multitude of ways. Although I think I do a decent job giving relatable examples, I'd like to expand on this by using assignments and other activities. For instance, I have used what are called 1-minute journals in the past to connect with students, which helps with building a community (see below for a snippet from my syllabus).

> *1-Minute Journals*: By 11:59 PM on Saturdays, submit a question via Cobra that you have about the content, a concept that you would like for me to go over, or what your main

takeaway was from that week. At the beginning of each week, I plan to answer any unresolved questions from the previous week. You will receive 1 point of extra credit per submission.

After EDU 914, I have decided to add to this idea. For 1-minute journals or a separate extra credit opportunity, students will be encouraged to find a connection with the current events and/or their own lives and submit a short reflection on it. For example, students could link an article about a current issue (e.g. racism and black lives matter) and explain how it relates to the class (e.g. implicit and explicit biases). They could also describe an event that happened to them (e.g. training their new puppy) and explain how it relates to the class (e.g. operant conditioning – positive reinforcement). Therefore, students can choose whether to discuss concepts using themselves or issues and events that are occurring in the world. I hope that this assignment will also help students become more aware of global issues. By looking up current events, they may stumble upon the problems people experience all across the world. For instance, the Black Lives Matter movement is at a global scale now. There is a direct connection between psychology and the problems of racism and implicit biases. When students are learning about stereotypes and how they influence people's thinking and behavior, they can make a meaningful connection to the world and their own experiences. Many students look for information via the internet now. I believe that the benefits of a current events task such as this will be heightened when students are already in an online environment. If they are curious about something, they can just open a new tab on the browser and search.

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?

In my PSY 209: Human Growth and Development class, there will be a regular cultural highlight task. In this class, the information is separated by stages in life (e.g. early childhood, adolescence, late adulthood, etc.). I plan to bring in a cultural perspective (articles, videos, etc.) in each stage of development to demonstrate how the context affects people's experiences in life and their development overall. I plan to change up the way in which students interact with the cultural highlights by including it as a part of a discussion board for some weeks, as questions in the reflection assignments, an activity they will complete, etc. For example, in the spring semester, I added a cultural highlight in the discussion board about the school lunch systems in Japan. Students watched the video about the Japanese school lunches and compared them with their own culture's school lunch system. I was surprised how many students were engaged with this topic. They recognized how even a small part of a day (lunch) is influenced by culture, and how these habits affect people's development. Specific to this example, students observed how children were involved in the food making and distributing process in Japan. Some of the foods were also locally grown, sometimes even at the schools. Students from the U.S. saw benefits to the healthy lunches and giving students responsibilities but also considered potential hygiene issues if not properly handled. Students from cultures that had similar practices (e.g. South Korea) were able to add to the video example by discussing their own experiences with the lunch system with some unique variations. As the instructor and as a person who was born and raised in the U.S., I was also able to learn about other cultures and perspectives, and it was overall a great experience. My plan is to have more activities like this throughout the semester.

By consistently including cultural perspectives, students' world views would widen, and furthermore, I will be helping students *make connections* between the world and the course content. Although the textbook for Human Growth and Development includes cultural differences in development, much of the information and data are still based on the U.S. However, the U.S. is a small part of our world. By exposing students to more cultures and having them apply the course content, I can help students become more aware of the areas around the world. When discussing issues including global issues, it is easy to form opinions based on your own experiences. It takes practice to take a step back and recognize that there are different opinions and ideas due to people's various cultures and backgrounds. Having a cultural highlight that will challenge students regularly will provide them opportunities and practice to take that step to consider perspectives outside of their own comfort zone.

Typically, I have a diverse group of students from different backgrounds in my classes, including Russia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, etc. By bringing up different cultures and discussing current global issues, I also hope to *build a better community*. When the class and textbook focuses on the issues and development that occurs in the U.S., students from other areas of the world may feel excluded. Seeing that other cultures, including their own culture, are discussed in the class will include all the students. Moreover, students with different cultural backgrounds add depth to the course content by bringing a new perspective that I cannot necessarily provide. Opening up the discussions to new ideas and cultural perspectives may also continue the conversation outside of the 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?

As a person who grew up in a community that had very little diversity, I did not experience or learn much of other cultures except for my own (Japan and America) until I was in college. There, my view and understanding of the world became more complex, and I learned to consider context and culture. The classes that included global issues and culture in the discussions were instrumental in facilitating the process, such as cultural psychology. My goal is to do the same for my students. Specifically, my goal for all of my classes are for students to understand themselves and others better. Psychology is the study of human behavior and mental activity. Culture and context influences both mental activity and behavior heavily. To me, it doesn't make sense to omit culture from the conversations about psychology. The results of one study can be completely different when performed in a different nation. Students should keep potential cultural differences in mind when reading peer-reviewed research in psychology. This will be good practice for students to sharpen their critical thinking skills and evaluate articles and research in general.

By learning about other areas of the world, students will better understand how their environment and culture have influenced their thoughts and behaviors. Students will also be able to consider how others' thoughts and behaviors have been affected by their backgrounds. When people are able to consider multiple perspectives, including others' cultures and global issues, I believe that they will become more empathetic and compassionate, which will benefit the students in psychology and in their lives in general.

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