



HONORS SUMMER BRIDGE: DESIGN, PURPOSE, AND RESULTS OF AN INTENSIVE, 6-CREDIT COURSE FOR INCOMING FRESHMEN

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Honors Summer Bridge: Guiding Philosophy

Honors Summer Bridge (Pilot) 2018

2 Courses, 6 Credit-Hours, 6 weeks, 18 Students

Designed to support transition to campus life and development of confident student identity; Fulfills two required 1st-year courses

Guiding Philosophy: Student learning is more meaningful and lasting if it is experiential, team-based, and interdisciplinary;

- Goals of Honors Summer Bridge: Aid new students in developing strong 21st Century skills; develop friend groups; feel at home on campus
- Scaffold interdisciplinary inquiry and team-based, problem-based learning
- Build communities of practice and support for incoming students

Potential Benefits of Summer Bridge Design



Students live together in residence halls, study and eat together, create lasting friend and study groups



Students become familiar with campus resources, the community, and recreational opportunities



Students gain expertise in research, become familiar with scholarly, peer-reviewed sources



Students hone 21st Century Skills: collaboration, communication, multimodality, interdisciplinary inquiry

Why Interdisciplinarity with Honors Students?



Dynamic, hands-on,
meaningful learning,
Allows students to explore
potential majors and real-
world problems



Interdisciplinarity is
challenging; Honors
students enjoy
challenging new learning
paradigm of TBL



Interdisciplinary projects
like this one allow
students to specialize
AND work with a group,
so their knowledge is
crucial to the success of
others



Students experience
practical engagement
with disciplines through
active practice; see real-
world application for First-
year coursework



Shifting of responsibility
from professor to students

- Multimodality
- team research projects
- Formal research paper
- Marrying of peer-reviewed research with multiple modes of information gathering, such as visual rhetoric, audio files, websites, blogs, music, TED Talks, documentaries, paintings, graphic novels, social media, dance, and theatre.
- Honors different learning styles and ways of knowing
- Student teams divide work among members, honoring each member's lived experience and special skills, re: technology, written and oral communication, design, leadership, collaboration
- Final project: Multimodal presentation on subtopic, accompanied by formal research paper version of content

Inclusivity of Multiple Learning Styles

Problem-based Learning is interdisciplinary, active, metacognitive, and experiential.

Experiential Learning Theory: (Sharan, 2015) positions hands-on, active, student-centered learning as more meaningful and as offering deeper, longitudinal knowledge and skills acquisition for individual and groups

Webs of Knowledge, Metacognition (Paretti, 2013)

Schlossberg's Transition Theory (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012) positions the available resources and assets students possess as crucial to their successfully making the transition to college life.

Self-efficacy: Self-motivation and acceptance of responsibility; engagement and buy-in, persistence (Moore, 2018)

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development; Social Constructivism (Goggin, Rankin, Geerlings, 2016)

Theories of Learning Supporting Interdisciplinary Inquiry

Honors Bridge FYS Interdisciplinary Project Design: Active Learning Strategy

Popular films offer segues into talking about challenging topics, ie: climate change, as well as student engagement

PBL : break down the large problem into manageable sub-topics, such as urban planning to mitigate effects of climate change on underserved populations

Interdisciplinary teams: assign teams based on a distribution of different disciplines

Teams synthesize disciplinary research to generate fresh angles on problems

Sample Interdisciplinary Project Topics for FYS



Interdisciplinary solutions to food deserts and associated health issues in America



Interdisciplinary approaches to eliminating single-use plastic products in America



Interdisciplinary approaches to closing the healthcare gap for the rural and urban poor



Interdisciplinary approaches to ending human trafficking in American and across the world



Interdisciplinary approaches to creating equity of experience in amusement parks for the differently abled



Interdisciplinary approaches to making national parks, wilderness, and STEM education more accessible to inner-city youth



Interdisciplinary modeling of proposed "dementia villages" in the United States as a solution to the warehousing of the cognitively disabled population

People in Policy

Examine the political theories and historical circumstances that guided the development of the American and Wyoming political systems.

Compare the ideals expressed in the American and Wyoming constitutions and the reality of political practice.

Examine the structures and processes of the American and Wyoming political systems.

Critically discuss the impact that government has on our daily lives.

- **Current Event Articles**

- Drawing connections between the course material and real world events students are interested in

- **Great Debates**

- Students engage in structured, informed discussions on contentious political issues

- **Research Presentation**

- Each student delves into an aspect of government they find interesting and shares their research in a conference-style presentation forum

People in Policy Assignments

Integrating
interdisciplinary
approaches to political
topics



SEGUE TO TBL PRESENTATION

Claire Thomas, Dylan Miller, Emily Jones: Undergraduate PBL Team

Dalton Stoddard, Discussant: Team Discusses TBL

- Dalton Stoddard, also an Honors Bridge student, leads a discussion with the team:
- Q: One Year Later: If you were creating this research project NOW, is there anything you would change, add, or rethink? If so, what, and why?
- Q: Do you think Honors Summer Bridge impacted your academic preparedness during Freshman Year? How?
- Q: Did your Bridge experience help you make the big transition from home life to college life in Laramie, Wyoming? If so, how?
- Q: Did participating in Bridge make it easier for you to make use of campus resources, contact professors, and/or get involved in university organizations, etc.? If so, could you share an example?
- Can you imagine using team-based, interdisciplinary problem-solving in your future academic or professional career?
- What would you tell a student considering taking Summer Bridge?

Assessment, Successes, Barriers and Next Steps

Successes: Students embrace interdisciplinary, problem-based learning with alacrity and enthusiasm; strong student buy-in and acceptance of responsibility across populations

Barriers: Interdisciplinary, Team-based, Problem-based learning is extremely complex

Paradigm shift from high school banking model; matriculation to TBL takes time and scaffolding

Outcome: Group projects are more multi-disciplinary than interdisciplinary; the dynamic, generative connections between disciplines are a work in progress for all teams

Next Steps: continue refining approach to scaffolding TBL; use student evaluations to help refine and continue the design for next year's students; Use more widely in Honors Colloquium across more sections

References

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