The Gestalt of Putting it All Together: Interdisciplinary Teaching

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- Problem-solving
  - Psychology and Radicalization Process of Terrorism
- Contextualizing
  - Psychology and Disability Studies
- Conceptualizing
  - Psychology and Critical Inquiry into Identity

Three Strategies & Related Content
(Strategies from Boix-Mansilla, 2006 and Nikitina, 2002)
An ill-structured problem: How to explain and intervene in the process of radicalization?

Scientific methods provide conceptual bridge between disciplines

Learning is highly targeted to the problem
- Empirical Methods & Theories
  - Case studies
  - Data collection and analysis
  - Factors and behavior analysis
  - Identity development
  - Ideology, conformity, & obedience
  - Social networks
  - Terror management theory


Papers
- Basic principles of jihad, ideology, & psychology of extremism. Address political and religious ideologies and social identity as frameworks.
- Radicalization process, including political and religious ideologies as they fit into Terror Management Theory and theories of identity development.
- Case study of Adam Gadahn, incorporating elements of the above.

Presentation
- Analysis of the Oklahoma City Bombing, including psychological profiles and analyses of radicalization processes in the development of McVeigh and Nichols

Annotated Bibliography
- Research for presentation
Science and humanities as interpretive contexts of disability
Complementary methods of meaning-making and evaluating evidence
Placing science into cultural and historical fabric of meaning and responsibility
- Interpretive methods & theories
  - Hermeneutics
  - Models of analysis: Medical, psychological, & social
  - Stigma & identity
  - Stereotyping & implicit associations
  - Defense mechanisms
  - Ideology, conformity, & obedience
  - Master narratives of identity

Psy and Disability Studies


Psy and Disability Studies: Selected Readings
- Journaling
  - Critically evaluate and apply ideas from readings and discussions, incorporating personal reflections
- Presentations
  - Pursue a line of inquiry based on approved topic
- Critical Paper
- NGO Project
  - Formal proposal based on research of nationally or locally relevant issue
- Final Creative Project
  - Multi-media project that critically engages with representations and lived experiences of disability

Psy and Disability Studies: Sample Assignments
- Correlation of related knowledge areas
- Rich in discipline-specific content
- Limited breadth of connection
- Proceeds from core concepts to conceptually abstract

Conceptualizing
- Narrative identity as core concept guiding inquiry and methods
  - Five-week research-based course
  - Examines psychology, literature, and media
  - Close relationship between scientific methods and critical inquiry
  - Real-life problems: authoring representations of identity

Psy and Critical Inquiry
Psy and Critical Inquiry: Selected Readings

- Response papers to readings and discussions
- Weekly meetings with instructors, program coordinators, and graduate teaching assistant
- Portfolios
- Resumes
- Required activities
  - Broadway play
  - Hiking trip
  - Canoe trip
  - Morgan-Stanley resume project
- Identity research project
- Symposium presentation
- Escape disciplinary silos
- Teach and learn from each other
- Develop learning goals
- Criteria for matching knowledge and resources to purpose
- Integrate knowledge, emphasizing links
- Address relevance and validity, preserving disciplinary integrity
- Make trade-offs
- Administrative concerns

Challenges
- Escape disciplinary silos
- Develop critical evaluation and application of concepts
- Amplify transfer of knowledge across curriculum and life experiences
- Enhance relevance
- Helps to answer that “why do I need to know this?” question
- Escape disciplinary silos
- Teach and learn from each other
- Revitalize evaluation, depth, and breadth of personal discipline
- Transfer knowledge and understanding across teaching experiences
- Re-contextualize all learning experiences for self and students

Benefits to Instructors
Interdisciplinary teaching and learning requires intense commitment, but yields equally intense and meaningful changes in the positive valence of learning within and beyond the classroom.

It is a purposeful methodology, disciplined and integrative, that leverages understanding across boundaries.

Conclusions

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