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About Me

My Experiences as a BID Student

My experience as a BID student has been altogether a learning experience which I have thoroughly enjoyed. A year ago I went from not knowing what the degree is, to finding joy in solving the complex problems that exist in today's society. Viewing dense problems used to seem impossible but through the integration process, I have found successful ways to attack issues larger than I would have dared to attempt before.

The start of my time as an Interdisciplinary was confusing due to the fact I was unsure what career path I wanted to follow, as well as what my prime interests even were. Through my time in the major, I have realized that multiple disciplines align with my interests and I intend to explore them all: Political Science, Business, and Communications. For my future career path, I would love to manage a promotions company or an artist. If that does not work out, I still recognize that the problem-solving techniques I learned in my college career will be applicable everywhere. There is constant room to grow and that keeps me eager to continue on the BID path.

Interdisciplinary Characteristics

There are four interdisciplinary characteristics that I see in myself regularly. I am well versed in perspective-taking, which means that I have the intellectual capacity to view a problem or subject from multiple points of view. I use that to understand a group of people or a concept to a greater degree when I'm attempting to solve complex problems. I always try to find out why individuals have the views that they do before I dismiss them simply for being different than my own. I accept that other people will have views contrasting mine, but although they are different, they are still important.

I appreciate diversity by always being excited to learn about new information that can give me a new perspective or idea to take into account. I am constantly aware that I am just a small part of a whole world of ideas and cultural normalcies. I think it is imperative to find out how others live and think, so I can make more sense of the unique world and environment that's surrounding me at all times.

Civic engagement has always been essential to me as a previous political science major. I constantly try to remind others that our voices and votes matter, even if you don't think you have the ability to change something in such a large system. With my mother being an immigrant, I feel like I have a sense of responsibility to be involved in my community and country. Participating in community service projects and voting in local as well as primary elections are two ways that I practice civic engagement in my personal life.

The final characteristic that I possess is a passionate love of learning. Exploring new ideas and concepts has always fascinated me, and I like my opinions to be challenged so I can further develop my stance with more educated reasoning. I have no problem investing time and intellectual energy into learning about different viewpoints, especially if I think they can help me achieve a comprehensive understanding of an issue.

My Future Aspirations and How IDS Fits In

I feel that I was always meant to follow an Interdisciplinary track, although I didn't know what that meant before I transferred to Emporia State University. During my first two years of college at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, I majored in Political Science, my concentration was in National and Foreign Security Affairs, and my minor was International Relations. I've always been someone who's had lots of varying interests and curiosities. When it came to my junior year in May 2018, I was at a crossroad.

I started to feel nervous about the fact that by completing the degree track I was on; I would likely be expected to pursue a job in Politics or the Political realm. I loved the discipline and the lessons that it taught me, but I was scared to commit since a variety of educational theories fascinated me and I did not want to limit my options. When I decided to transfer to ESU, I heard about the Interdisciplinary Studies program and I was overjoyed! I didn't know a degree was in existence that focused specifically on integrating diverging disciplines, to solve complex

problems. I knew this was perfect for me since it left a lot of room to explore my interests, and it can be useful in a variety of career paths.

Interdisciplinarity will be useful to my future career in more ways than one. If I end up being able to work in the music industry, I can use my interdisciplinary background to help me come up with creative solutions to obstacles the company runs into, I will be able to manage different groups of people successfully, additionally, I will be capable of producing marketing that is impressive and legitimate. Nonetheless, thinking like an Interdisciplinary will always be essential to comprehending complex issues I may have to work within my career or in the real world.

What is Interdisciplinary Studies?

Elevator Pitch

Interdisciplinary Studies involves the process of becoming a professional problem solver. The field involves the combination of varying fields of study or academic disciplines into one body. To be an "Interdisciplinary" is to be able to make connections between complex systems. The end-goal is being able to determine the best way to resolve intricate issues and complicated problems relevant to an individual's career/everyday life.

Academic Definition

Interdisciplinarity is an intellectual method in which those involved derive their insights and ways of rationalizing problems from the distinctive disciplines. The ultimate goal is the ability to apply these disciplines effectively to the situation at hand to produce an innovative

resolution. You are not able to see the individual parts of the problem reflected in the solution, only the final product that the combined disciplines yielded. This approach is the most useful when you have a complex issue that desires a creative, as well as an innovative solution to best fit its needs.

Drawing on Disciplinary Perspectives

Information Obtained from a Discipline

Disciplines are a distinctive, but expanding realm of knowledge that is associated with a domain of study. Its members study it by utilizing a research method, specialized vocabulary, techniques, and a body of theory that aids in providing a powerful lense in which individuals can interpret the world. The purpose of a discipline is for an individual to be able to decipher existence according to particular arbitrary guidelines and support its members with organizational assistance. Disciplines are much more intricate than a field of study or body of knowledge. The definition for a particular discipline must cover not only their content but their purpose as to why they exist in the first place.

Limitations of Disciplines and its Practitioners

Although the study of disciplines is vital, it brings 6 limitations that are worth noting. One limitation is that specialization tends to produce tunnel vision. This is quite limiting to an individual because there is always some significance in being able to see the big picture of an issue/idea. The second limitation that could be detrimental is that specialization can hinder creative breakthroughs. On a personal level, being creative and having the ability to create out-of-the-box solutions is critical to many, as well as useful in the career field. The third

limitation is that specialization fails to address complex problems comprehensively. As stated previously, the full picture always has somewhat of a level of importance. Using only one discipline to solve a truly complex problem can be difficult and you may end up not being able to answer every dilemma that an issue brings to the table. The fourth limitation reminds us that specialization can blind us to the broader context. Depending on the problem you are working with, the context you are missing out on could be vital to the real-world application of the solution. The fifth limitation is that specialization tends to discount or ignore other perspectives. Being able to see more than one perspective is important when approaching complex problems. The greater good must be kept in mind concerning all parties/perspectives and missing out on this limitation could be harmful (dependent on the problem). The final limitation is that specialization imposes a past approach to the present. It has been recognized that a disciplinary focus is considered to be an approach of the past, so in today's society, it is helpful to learn how to create solutions that will still be useful.

Perspective-Taking

Perspective-taking revolves around evaluating complex problems or issues from the perspective of each relevant discipline and determining the similarities and differences between them. This theory was developed by cognitive psychologists and has five claims that are essential in being an interdisciplinary in the contemporary world. The first claim states that “perspective-taking reduces the human tendency to negatively stereotype individuals and groups”. This limits stereotype and bias because as someone assumes the position of a stereotyped individual, it can reverse your perspective and offer a different view of a situation. Stereotyping is inconsistent with quality interdisciplinary practice and should be avoided. The

second claim says “perspective-taking helps to move us developmentally from a clear understanding of the differences between disciplines and their perspectives to recognizing distinguishing characteristics of disciplines.” The third claim notes that “perspective-taking facilitates our ability to assemble new sets of potential solutions to given problems” and helps nourish our understanding of the problem through the variety of disciplines and allows an individual to make creative connections. The fourth claim says that “perspective-taking heightens our awareness that we are biased in the direction of our knowledge whether it comes from our awareness that we are biased in the direction of our knowledge whether it comes from our life experience or prior academic training.” The final claim states that “perspective-taking invites us to participate in role taking.” The three aspects of role-taking include: correctly perceiving how others see and view the world, being able to view a situation from multiple perspectives, and exploring contrary disciplines in depth and having a full understanding of the other’s perspective.

Integration

Integration as a process

Integration as a process creates a new whole that could not have been possible using a single disciplinary approach. The BROAD model is a great example of one of the many ways that we can approach integration. It has a detailed application process for breaking down complex problems that Interdisciplinary Studies focuses on. It has a comprehensive 6 step-approach for how to integrate disciplinary insights into either a full or partial integration. The BROAD model helps by mapping out complex problems to find links between different disciplinary areas, the integration process becomes straightforward, and it uses the same

"disciplinary tools" that IDS uses to study issues. Integration as a part of this model and IDS means that there's a more comprehensive understanding that results from integrating those insights.

Complex Problem(s)

Appropriateness for Interdisciplinary Inquiry

Interdisciplinary inquiry requires complex problems which necessitate complex solutions. Complex problems have many different parts which make it impossible to quickly solve them. These problems connect and interact in a variety of ways. Complexity is the heart of interdisciplinary studies because it makes an individual focus on relationships between systems, it's open-ended, and it acknowledges its dependency on different contexts. Traditionally in disciplinary work phenomena is reduced to idealized models or simple structures, which is satisfactory in disciplinary work, but restrictive in interdisciplinary work because it can limit your understanding of an issue.

Deconstructing a Problem

Critical pluralism is the basis of deconstructing complex issues in IDS. It accepts the pluralism of relativism without drawing the relativist conclusion that "anything goes". There are two reasons that it is the foundation for interdisciplinary work. The first reason is that each disciplinary perspective has at least some sort of valuable insights. The second is that various disciplinary perspectives and the insights they generate cannot be categorized as true or false or be seen as simply opinion. Relativists and dualistic positions are not focused on recognizing the strengths and limitations of different insights, and that's a large portion of the duty of being an

interdisciplinary. Every disciplinary perspective and their insights must be evaluated when working through the interdisciplinary process, therefore critical pluralism is a necessity in the field.

How interdisciplinarians interrogate disciplinary perspectives is also vital to breaking down the problem. This interrogation in an interdisciplinary sense is “means to practice critical pluralism by asking critical and probing questions of each relevant discipline.” There are three proven strategies for critically evaluating disciplinary insights and locating their sources of conflict. The three strategies include: identifying the key elements of each insight, organizing this information, and critically analyzing it. This process helps with comparing and contrasting the insights that are produced by different disciplines.

The Common Good

The common good can be described as something beneficial for every or a majority of the members of a given community. It is something that can be achieved through collective action, citizenship, and collective action. The common good can result in a more constructive and all-embracing civic culture for the members involved in the community at hand. The common good intends to leave a legacy for the future, as well as become better people when we involve ourselves to promote the efforts for the common good. The common good is aimed at making the best situation for all, which is the main goal of interdisciplinary work when solving a complex problem. In IDS you want to try and reach a conclusion that is not perfect in every sense but can be beneficial for the majority of those affected by the situation.

Energizing others

Civic Leadership promotes the quality of life in a community and is one way of energizing others. This type of leadership mobilizes others to do tedious work for the common good and it is considered to be the "lasting change". It focuses on diagnosing a situation to explore multiple points of view, managing yourself by being aware of your tendencies/reputation, energizing others by creating a collective process that people can trust, and involves being able to intervene skillfully by being willing to push the envelope while holding onto a purpose. Civic leadership has five principles that it aligns with. These principles include the fact that civic leadership can be risky, your purpose must be concise, it starts with ourselves then we must engage others, anyone can lead anywhere at any time, and that leadership is something you do rather than just a position title.

One way we promote Civic Leadership in the Interdisciplinary program is through the Capstone Project. This project is a chance for students to display their skills as an Interdisciplinary while focusing on a complex problem that is relevant to society. By finding topics students are passionate about, we are finding ways to start conversations on issues that deserve much-needed attention in our communities and beyond.

Example of Interdisciplinary Work

A doctor is working to create a TEDTalk about his discovery of a new way to regenerate cells in the body. To make an effective presentation they must use their knowledge of English/Theater to create a well-worded and powerful presentation. For the visual aspect of their presentation, it will require an understanding of graphic design/art so it will be pleasing to the

eye. They must also have such a deep understanding of the topic from a medical standpoint, that they can easily articulate to the crowd the medical perspective in a simplified, but still correct manner.

Reflections

Understanding of IDS & The Future

Interdisciplinary Studies is a clear and concise way to explore the complex issues that plague the world and everyday life regularly. As a result of identifying a complex problem, recognizing the applicable disciplines, and working through the integration process, an individual can expand their perspective and create a solution that is relevant and advantageous to the problem. My future in the program includes improving on my selected disciplines (Political Science, Business, and Communications). I also intend on completing the Capstone Project in December 2020 to complete my degree. As of now, my topic is “how can we limit sexual harassment and concerts and festivals”. Through the rest of my college career, I will be thinking about how I can improve my knowledge in my selected disciplines, as well as how the classes may relate to my Capstone question.