Breaking Barriers: A Seamless Approach to Developing Academic Literacies

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Internationalization at York

• York University’s Academic Plan 2015-2020 prioritizes enhancing quality in Teaching and Student Learning, including
  – Expanding internationalization in the curriculum
  – Increasing international experiences such as summer programs, international internships, and exchanges

Statistics: Change over Last Eight Years

<table>
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<th>International Students at York</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>Growth</th>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduates</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate students</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
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Introductions

• Marlene Bernholtz M.A., T.E.S.L.
  − Assistant Lecturer, York University Writing Department, IEP Bridging Program

• Sophie Bury M.L.I.S.
  − Chair, Learning Commons & Head Librarian, Bronfman Business Library, Schulich School of Business, York University
IEP Bridging Program Vision

“We’re really hoping to foster a kind of reciprocal relationship so that employers and internationally educated professionals can see what they have to learn from each other.”

Kelly Thomson
Faculty Lead
IEP Bridging Program Overview

• Objective
  – Prepare Internationally Educated Professionals to transition into positions that match their education, credentials and experience in Canada

• Participants
  – Adults with expertise in Business, IT, or Human Resource Management
  – Diverse cultural and language backgrounds
The Conventional Approach

• Deficit Model
  - Academic literacies “remediated” through “supports” by academic services
  - Supplemental (extra-curricular), not embedded
  - Cause of “problem” located within individual students

Haggis, 2006
The “Remediated/Support” Model

- Library Research
- ESL Support
- Writing Skills

Course Curriculum
The Objective

Bridging programs for IEPs need to focus on “the development of a Canadian professional identity and cultural competency, not just bridging gaps in discrete knowledge and skills.”

Lum, 2009 p. 3
Suggested Basis for Innovation: Teaching Academic Literacies

- Sociocultural, not absolute
  - require intent participation, apprenticeship
- Best taught through a developmental and systemic approach
  - cannot be separated or segmented
- Need to be *embedded* within curriculum
- Process-oriented, requiring metacognition + reflection

Lea & Street, 1998; Haggis, 2006
ACRL’s Information Literacy Threshold Concepts

1. Authority is Constructed & Contextual
2. Information Creation as a Process
3. Information Has Value
4. Research as Inquiry
5. Scholarship as Conversation
6. Searching as Strategic Exploration

Multi-modal Learning: IEP Program
Course Context - Professional Communication in the Canadian Context

The Challenge

• To develop both “verbal language proficiency” and “personal and interpersonal skills”

St. John, 1996, p. 8

The Solution

• To take an integrative, strategic approach that considers linguistic, structural, and content components of communication
Integrated Literacies Approach

1. Jumpstart to Success
   - Bridges to social, academic, & professional competency

2. Information Literacy
   - Customized
   - Team taught
   - Hands-on

3. Professional Communication Course
   - Reports, presentations, reflections, annotated bibliographies, feedback

4. Dedicated ESL Support
   - Fully integrated
   - Student-centred
   - Assignment driven
   - Culturally informed
Integrated Methodology Approach

**Scaffolded Assignment Design**

- **Reflection**
  - Integrate course concepts into personal practice
  - Develop self-awareness based on successes, failures and alternative strategies
  - Create action plan for lifelong learning

- **Group Presentation**
  - Identify adaptation strategies to adjust to key differences in professional practice between Canada and country of origin
  - Search, retrieve, and cite a range of appropriate sources
  - Compare new and prior knowledge to determine value added
  - Build interpersonal and team communication skills

- **News of the Week**
  - Summarize, analyse and reflect on implementation of effective communication principles in the real world
  - Identify, search and cite relevant business articles
  - Synthesize ideas by connecting to course concepts
  - Construct meaning by relating material to own experience

- **Formal Report**
  - Synthesize information and analyse data to present compelling business case
  - Interpret evidence to draw and support conclusions, using persuasive rhetorical strategies

- **Assignments**
  - Using information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
  - Analyse scenarios to determine appropriate rhetorical and stylistic strategies for communication

- **Training Period**
  - Acquiring essential communication concepts
  - Develop strategies and techniques for direct, concise, appropriate communication
Culminating Group Presentation Project

Library Research

Critical Thinking

Canadian Business Culture

Business Writing

Group Presentation Project

English Language Proficiency

Presentation Skills

Professional Discourse

Team Dynamics

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Team Dynamics
Fostering an Integrative Approach: Favourable Conditions

- Visionary, Receptive Administration
  - Open to new ideas and models
- Inclusive Culture
  - Respect for reciprocal relationships
- Fully Transparent Communication
  - Frequent, multi-directional discussion
- Supportive Environment
  - Ready to put processes and resources in place to contribute to collaborative approach
Celebrating Success
Readings that Informed this Presentation


