

Café Salon Notetakers' Template for Café Salon #6 - Note-taker Jessica Orr
#6 How can arts and humanities research/creative work support literacy, creativity, critical thinking, and wellness as lifelong habits? Facilitators: Travis Williams and Christian Gonzales – Café B- ground floor (1st floor)

Summary Notes

1. *What would it look like for URI to take leadership in this area?*
 - Teaching workshop where mindfulness is taught as part of instruction
 - Inherently the instructor in the classroom is the “bully”, meaning the one who is in charge
 - Teacher class evaluations are not useful right now- questions that are asked don't focus sufficiently on habits of lifelong learning and critical thinking
 - Change questions to “how are you empowered in this class?” or other items like that
 - Timing of the evaluations has an effect on how students respond
 - Have to take the evaluation in order to see your grade?
 - The way teachers interact with students is based on how they think evaluations will go. Especially perilous for contingent faculty.
 - Can we have other instructors from other disciplines come in and evaluate teachers to help interdisciplinary instruction
 - Removing grading from some assignments can help students feel more free to be intellectually adventurous and productive
 - University is a unique place where you're between high school and the real world, freedom but also responsibility,
 - The instructor's personality has to be reflected in how they approach lessons
 - Students need the space to ask questions without worry about judgement
 - Teachers need to be able to step out of their comfort zone, know yourself as a person before you can hope to know your students
 - Office hours- allows you to truly know the students
 - How can we as an institution encourage students to come to office hours?
 - Online interaction- Gives introverts something to say
 - Reveal much more than they would in class
 - Be very responsive to emails
 - Teach instructors how to teach classes most effectively- blended classes, online, and in person
 - Freshman and transfer orientation sends a signal of “you must do this,” rather than an opportunity to allow students to explore interests.
 - Lots of pressure on the students to do well, when you take pressure off students they are free to do well
 - We have to consider the impact of finances on students
 - Skills that are needed in the workplace have shifted

- How can we change how advisors are trained to help students figure out exactly what they want to do
 - How do you properly advise a student?
- How do you actually implement an interdisciplinary course? Hard enough to just create a cross-listed course
 - Approval process
 - University needs take ideology of interdisciplinarity and make it actually happen with streamlined procedures and incentives
 - The actual issue is that the university itself makes it difficult to make any of this happen, need a model where instructors can teach together
 - None of these discussions matter unless there is a way to implement this course of action; administrative procedures need substantial reform
- **Consensus item: Need a way to approach administration about co-taught courses, create a model for co-teaching where instructors are allowed to do this**
 - **Make these issues a forum topic in the Faculty Senate**

2. *How does work in this topic open up research/scholarly activity across disciplines? - Who is already working on this topic?*

- Literacy- there is an inherent generational difference between instructors and students.
 - Have to be willing to retrain ourselves to use different media in instruction
 - Take technology into account
- Wellness brings in another facet of this issue- interdisciplinary work is inherently draining to wellness- how can everyone feel respected?
 - Can mindfulness be incorporated into lessons? Allowing people that time and space to transition in from the content into the discussion of the content, enters back into the experience, gives back power- just as valued as the next person and gives people freedom to speak their mind
 - Looking through articles and working interdisciplinarily- discuss and implement in different ways, look at this in a holistic way
 - Managing stress, communication, nutrition- inviting people to talk about these topics helps students be better learners, important for them to realize how stress affects productivity
- Are research and education the same thing?- teaching students how to solve problems and how to think, that's what scholars do

3. *What is the right breadth of areas to be covered?*

- Literacy- how have the ways we engage with the written word changed in the past 20 years, lack of ability to understand subtext
 - How one author's contribution is in conversation with another
 - Do these issues have something to do with technology? Is this an inherent problem in the college environment?

- There are many ways to tell a narrative- have these methods changed?
- Between 2000 and 2015, students are completely different- they don't want to read; consciousness of humor, satire, affect have decreased, or at least altered
 - Is this a factor of generation?
 - Difference in how the students socialize
- Ways in which we were taught to read and write are different than they were in the 90s/00s
 - Skim-reading is more common
- Does this change how we should create assignments? How students learn should be taken into account.
- Connecting to students is important- harder to do as the students change
 - About self- disclosure, connection to the instructor's own life
 - Model behavior- changes instruction, need more creativity on the instructor's part, many ways for the instructor to tell the story- make the content a story
 - The communication is still there, just different
- Rate of change in this area is accelerating
- Very judgemental society- peer pressure changes how students react and voice their opinions
 - Opening up by the instructor changes how the students react and open up in class
- Idea of allowing room for discomfort- social media allows creative interaction and point of view, allows conversation- part of wellness
 - How does the amount of work students are expected to do affect how much they care about their work?
- Nature, humanness, humanity- holding class outside has a profound impact on students, they have to break out of their normal routine of screens
 - Outside of the classroom is neutral territory
 - Free to express who they are
- Lifelong learning- how do we teach students to ask the right questions
 - Show them it is a transferable skill
 - How do I learn about something I want to learn about?
 - Encourage students to get out of their everyday life
 - Listen to our students
 - How do you teach facts but also encourage creativity?
 - Allow freedom of expression
 - All a matter of perspective
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4. *What are the University's strengths that would build out this topic well?*

- So many different departments
 - Allow the connections between disciplines to be realized by the students

- Freedom of expression because professors are seen outside of classroom- gives them power
- General education courses are helping blend different courses together
- But General Education has quickly become a system of check boxes and alpha-numeric codes. We have lost the ethos of wide and deep learning that GE was supposed to instill. UCAS still promotes message of “get your GEs done soon.”

5. *What areas of the topic would be a main focus for URI?*

- Collaboration across departments- how do we learn how to ask the right questions?
 - Lifelong learning
- Freedom of expression
- Empowering students
- Female instructors are not seen by students to be as knowledgeable about their topics, this is a huge problem for any discipline
- How can we model self-edification for our students?
 - When the students can tell you care about a topic, they will pay more attention,
 - Important for students to realize what they are passionate about