



Interdisciplinarity

Excellence in Teaching Fellows Program

Presenters:

Joanne Bloese and Amy Schiffner



Presentation Overview

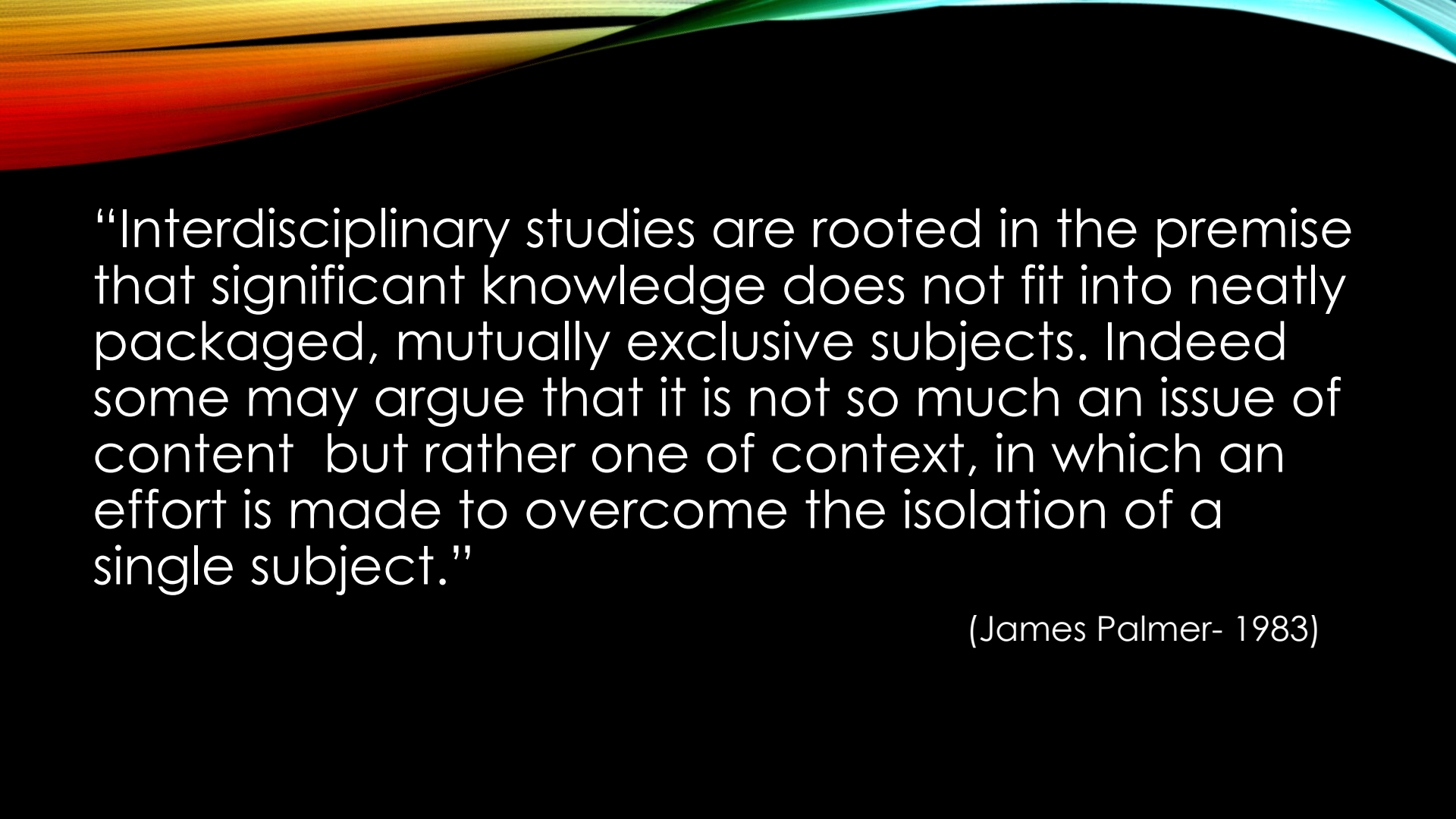
1. What's Expected
2. Values, Benefits, and Purpose of Interdisciplinarity
3. Interdisciplinarity in Context
4. Interdisciplinarity in Practice
5. Getting Started
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What's Expected for ETFP

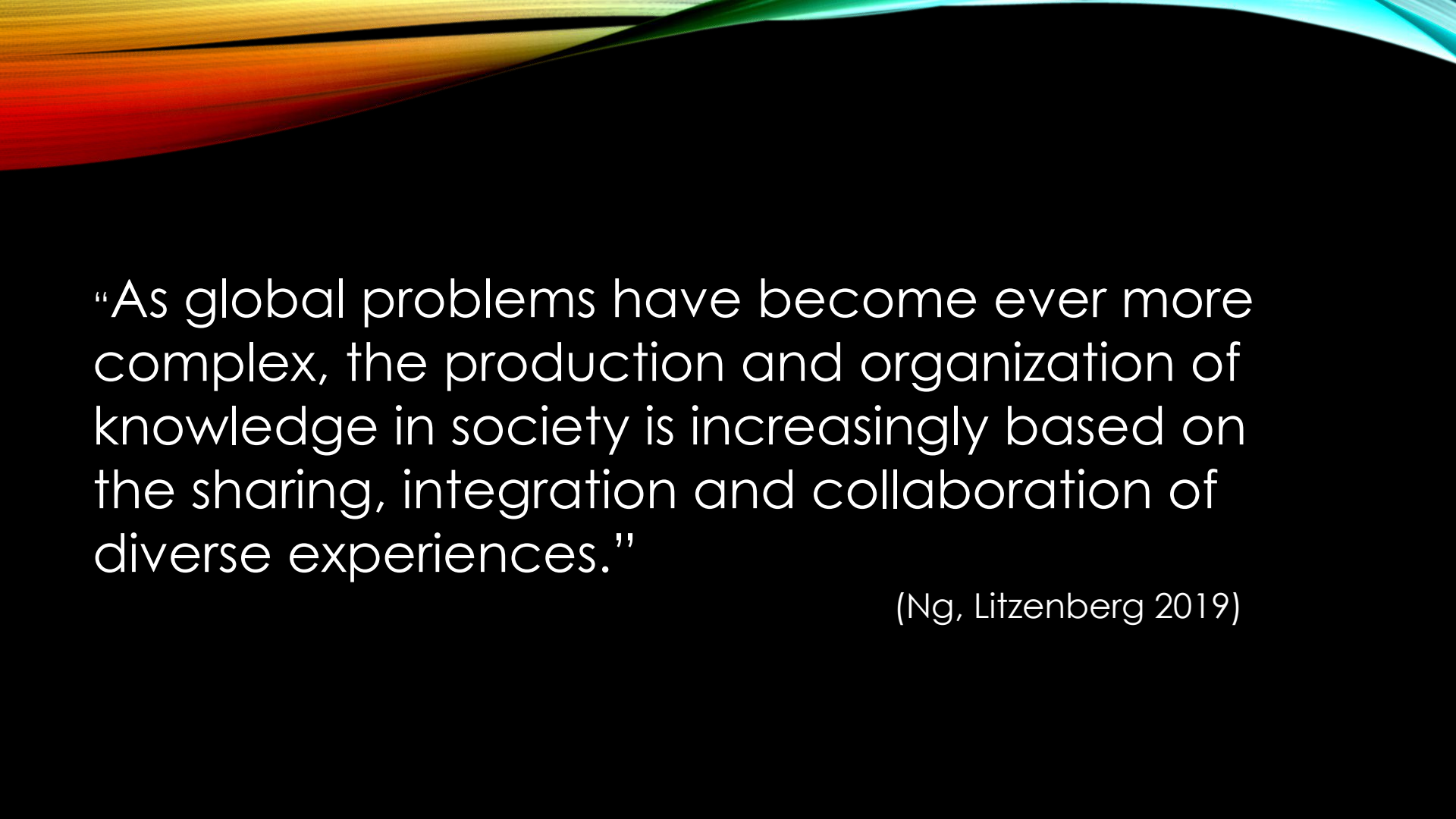
Expand/Revise your Syllabus:

1. To include interdisciplinary approaches, topics, perspectives, and resources;
2. To include opportunities for interdisciplinary thinking, discussions and class activities;
3. To design interdisciplinary assignments and assessments;
4. To include interdisciplinary reflection.



“Interdisciplinary studies are rooted in the premise that significant knowledge does not fit into neatly packaged, mutually exclusive subjects. Indeed some may argue that it is not so much an issue of content but rather one of context, in which an effort is made to overcome the isolation of a single subject.”

(James Palmer- 1983)



“As global problems have become ever more complex, the production and organization of knowledge in society is increasingly based on the sharing, integration and collaboration of diverse experiences.”

(Ng, Litzenberg 2019)



The values of Interdisciplinarity

Tenants of Interdisciplinarity:

- Thinking critically
- Analyzing ethical concerns
- Embracing ambiguity
- Recognizing biases
- Engages our sense of curiosity and creativity;
deepening of inquiry



Benefits of Interdisciplinarity

Students opportunities to...

- Think differently (see things from a new perspective),
- Apply learned skills to diverse contexts.
- Learn from each other.
- Identify, reconcile, &/or accept paradoxes.
- Connect concepts and ideas across various disciplines and subjects.
- Approach systemic issues from multiple disciplinary lens.
- Deepen lines of inquiry.
- Engage in higher level thinking.



Purpose of Interdisciplinarity

Synergistic Effect = The result of two or more processes interacting together to produce an effect that is greater than the cumulative effect that those processes produce when used individually.

Levels of Student Understanding:

- Conceptual level - Theory
- Level of action- Practice
- Interdisciplinarity - Synergy

Interdisciplinarity in Context

What Interdisciplinarity means in the context of your class.

What are the trade offs? Must there be ?

- If we add something to the class what is going to give?
- Concerns over watering down the discipline core.
- Finding the Synergistic Effects among your course content and student backgrounds.

Overcoming Structural Barriers to class objectives. Logistics

- How will this work?
- What will it look like?

Experiential Teaching

- How will you engage students authentic and transformational learning?
- Project based learning, collaborative projects and assessments, etc.



Interdisciplinarity in Practice

Interdisciplinary Learning is an established practice of pedagogical and methodological approaches designed to build capacity in interdisciplinary ways of thinking and being and to promote synergy as the means for innovation and problem solving.

It's not enough to simply put different disciplines and people together for meaningful interdisciplinary learning to occur.

Interdisciplinary Learning in Practice

Critical Questioning as a hallmark of Interdisciplinary Learning:

- Who and what is not represented?
- What stories are untold or missing from the discourse?
- How might others speak similarly or differently to this same issue/topic?
- What is hidden or unseen?
- How does audience and agenda change reporting and messaging?
- What are the conflicting insights from different disciplines?
- How are explicit views and implicit bias impacting thinking?
- How is openness retained or blocked towards a multitude of solutions to complex problems?



Interdisciplinary Learning in Practice

How can we identify relationships and ideas across disciplines?

- Exploring ideas and concepts in more than one way
- Examining the reasoning behind diverse perspectives
- Engaging in divergent thinking
- Embracing ambiguity as an invitation to dive deeper into a subject
- Taking calculated risks for new understandings and innovation
- Creating big-picture understanding of problems and ways to solve them.

What critical issues (or real-world problems) need interdisciplinary approaches and critical questions wrapped around them?



Getting Started

Considerations:

- How will some or all of the values of interdisciplinarity be woven into your class content?
- Will you will bring interdisciplinary questions into your course content?
- Will you bring in other subject matter or disciplines to expand your course content?
- How will differing subjects relate to each other in synergistic ways?
- How will you guide students to make connections across disciplines?
- What opportunities will students have to collaborate across disciplines?

Getting Started

Considerations:

- How open will your course be to allow for student autonomy in their line of reasoning to bring in different disciplines to course content?
- Will you allow students to bring in diverse content for class assignments and projects?
- How will you foster interdisciplinary thinking and facilitate interdisciplinary discussions?
- How will students demonstrate competency in interdisciplinary thinking and applications?

An abstract graphic at the top of the slide featuring a series of overlapping, wavy bands of color. From left to right, the colors transition from dark red and orange to yellow and green, and finally to a bright cyan/blue on the far right. The waves create a sense of movement and depth.

Breakout Rooms

In what capacity do you utilize interdisciplinarity in your own work? How has it served valuable to you?

What processes allow you to overcome barriers in your own work? Did interdisciplinarity play a role in your ability to overcome them?



Closing Remarks

Contact Information

bloese@hawaii.edu

amyls@hawaii.edu