Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies

Breaking Barriers: A Seamless Approach to Developing Academic Literacies

Internationally Educated Professionals Bridging Program
www.yorku.ca/makemore

Inkshed 2012 - Presenters
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Introductions

• Marlene Bernholtz M.A., T.E.S.L.
  – Contract Faculty, IEP Bridging Program, Writing Department, and Schulich School of Business MBA Program

• Sophie Bury M.L.I.S.
  – Associate Librarian, Bronfman Business Library, Schulich School of Business

• Jeannie Haller M.A., T.E.S.L.
  – Instructor, IEP Prequalifying Session: Jumpstart to Success; Concurrent English Support Course
Presentation Outline

• What are Academic Literacies?
• Integrating Academic Literacies within the IEP Program at York University
  – Program Overview
  – Fostering an Integrative Approach
  – Foundations and Process
  – Successful Outcomes
• Discussion
What are Academic Literacies?

- Academic Literacies include a range of skills necessary for student success at university.
- For the IEP Program, these include:
  - Library Research skills
  - Writing skills
  - Presentation skills
  - Communication skills
  - ESL skills
IEP Program Overview

- The IEP Bridging Program prepares Internationally Educated Professionals to transition into positions that match their education, credentials and experience.

- Students come from diverse cultural and language backgrounds, with expertise in business, IT, or Human Resource Management.
IEP Program Structure

• Pre-qualifying Session: Jumpstart to Success
• Phase I: Foundation Skills
  – Professional Communication in a Canadian Context
  – Canadian Business Culture and Management Skills
  – Fundamentals of Canadian Business Law and Ethics
• English Support Classes
  – Phase II: Specialized Skills
  – Relevant mainstream credit courses
• Experiential Education
  – Career coaching, Professional mentorship, Internship
Fostering an Integrative Approach: Favourable Conditions

- New Program
  - Pilot program with evolving processes and structures
- Visionary, Receptive Administration
  - Kelly Thomson, Faculty Lead
    - Leslie Sanders, Faculty originator of Professional Communication course
  - Nora Priestly, Project Manager
  - Briana Sim, Program Liaison Co-ordinator
  - Open to new ideas and models
  - Ready to put processes and resources in place to contribute to collaborative approach
Favourable Conditions

• Holistic, integrated approach
  – Diverse experience/expertise
    • Business Research/Information Literacy
    • Writing instruction
    • English as a Second Language Teaching
    • Business communication
  – Professional communication focus
  – Assignment design/group project work
  – Specialized approach to ESL support
Favourable Conditions

• Partnerships and Communication
  – Collaborative, proactive mindset
  – Respect for reciprocal relationships
  – Regular, frequent, meaningful communication
  – Recognition of how developing the connections among academic literacies contributes to IEP student success
Favourable Conditions

• Customization & Flexibility
  – Opportunities exist to develop and refine
    • ESL development mechanisms
    • Library skill development activities
    • Assignment design and process
Foundations and Process

• Prequalifying Session: Jumpstart to Success
  – Great flexibility and support, focused on Foundation Courses
    • Introduce skills taught in Foundation courses
    • Prepare for Professional Communication course
      – research, APA style, plagiarism prevention
    • Support Foundation Courses
      – analyze ethical issues
      – examine Canadian business culture
    • Provide on-going assessment + formal mid-term to assess student’s future support needs
Foundations and Process

- English Support Classes
  - Dedicated to supporting student performance in Professional Communication course
  - Extends academic literacies for IEP students in an ESL-supported environment
  - Flexible, student-centred approach facilitates individual development
  - Fully integrated into IEP program
Foundations and Process

• Professional Communication in a Canadian Context (ADMS 3015)
  – Core module for all IEP students
    • Ensures all students benefit from academic literacies
  – Skills are taught in context
    • Scenario-based assignments, collaborative work on profession-related issues, article review and presentation
  – Assignments build academic literacies
    • Researching/reviewing source material related to profession
    • Critically assessing/comparing materials
    • Communicating effectively in various business genres
  – Iterative, recursive approach
Foundations and Process

• Information Literacy - core course component
  – Determine extent of information needed
  – Access needed information effectively & efficiently
  – Evaluate information and sources critically
  – Incorporate selected information into knowledge base
  – Use information effectively to accomplish specific purpose
  – Understand economic, legal, and social issues regarding the ethical/legal access/use of information
Foundations & Process

Information Literacy Landscape

Secker & Coonan (2011)
Successful Outcomes:
Feedback on library session (2012)

4. The session prepared me well for my course assignment or research project:

- 1. Strongly Disagree - 0 (0.00%)
- 2. Disagree - 0 (0.00%)
- 3. Neither agree nor disagree - 1 (4.17%)
- 4. Agree - 7 (29.17%)
- 5. Strongly Agree - 16 (66.67%)
- Total Answers - 24

5. What I learned has useful and relevant application beyond this course:

- 1. Strongly Disagree - 0 (0.00%)
- 2. Disagree - 0 (0.00%)
- 3. Neither agree nor disagree - 1 (4.17%)
- 4. Agree - 6 (25.00%)
- 5. Strongly Agree - 17 (70.83%)
- Total Answers - 24
Successful Outcomes: Student Responses

• “The instruction that you gave us is very useful. The course of communication remind me to work harder in improving my English and communication skill.”

• “Thank you very much for teaching us to communicate better. I learned a lot and enjoyed your class, even though it was hard work.”

• “The entire session was useful, informative and effective for me being an IEP. I should carry on all the concepts that is being discussed in the class.”
Recommended Readings on Academic Literacies


Discussion

• Could this approach be adapted to other academic contexts?