

## **Exploring Faculty and Student Reflections on Collaborative Teaching in the Honors Seminar Classroom**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*University Honors programming in the United States is interdisciplinary and collaborative; from First Year Seminars to capstone research projects for upperclassmen, students embrace multidisciplinary learning and research. This approach, however, does not always translate into an incorporation of diverse perspectives of multiple faculty members in a given course. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach to explore the impact and results of a collaboratively taught Honors Seminar, this article departs from the authors' model of a co-taught course and then moves to an exploration of student responses that considers student perceptions of multi-instructor formats. In closing, this article addresses challenges to team-taught courses, from scheduling to institutional barriers, in an effort to encourage continued discussion about interdisciplinary and collaborative teaching in Higher Education.*

**Keywords:** collaborative teaching, team teaching, interdisciplinary coursework, Honors programming

## INTRODUCTION

**H**onors Seminars, allowing for meaningful and interdisciplinary intellectual exchanges in a small-group setting, are often integral components of Honors programming in the United States. A growing body of research focuses on this multi-disciplinary learning platform that can include First Year Seminars as well as Honors Seminars. The majority of existing studies, however, approach such courses as faculty-led research seminars with just one instructor. This article suggests that beyond the coursework itself being geared toward an interdisciplinary framework, Honors Seminars – and the students enrolled in these courses – also benefit from a multiple instructor model. The pages to follow highlight the value of collaborative teaching in the context of Honors Seminars. A critical approach to multi-instructor Honors Seminars capitalizes on the capstone research experience of many Honors programs; such Honors projects are traditionally collaborative in nature and encourage students to conduct cross-disciplinary work on a research team that is interdepartmental. Recognizing that interdisciplinary learning is a natural outcome of positioning multiple experts in the role of instructor, this paper analyzes student feedback to confirm the value(s) of team teaching in the Honors Classroom. We also address challenges in regards to planning and scheduling co-taught Honors courses and offer our own experiences to further comment on managing and negotiating teaching responsibilities. As a point of clarification, we use numerous terms synonymously to refer to the act of two or more instructors, ideally from varying disciplines, working together on a teaching team. The terms used in this article range from collaborative, co-taught, team-taught, to multi-instructor teaching or coursework.

While the paragraphs to follow discuss Honors Seminars and the existing literature approaching the multi-instructor design of such courses, we then move to offering a model for collaborative teaching in an Honors Seminar at a large, Midwestern, public institution. We give a brief outline of the Honors Program where we taught the collaborative Honors Seminar that is the focus of the present article and analyze the results of a pre- and post-test gauging the experience of students in the course. While the sample size is small – only 16 students were enrolled in the seminar – considering a subculture of Honors students and their anonymous responses to the course facilitates discussion on whether the experience of a team-taught Honors Seminar was positive (for both faculty and students alike).

Our aim is to further existing discussions as related to team teaching, endeavoring to move beyond the single instructor model in an effort to

embody and practice the values of Honors programs on a national scale. Team teaching is an established practice within Honors programming and the present article looks more closely at student responses to this collaborative approach while also addressing the experience of the faculty involved. In the penultimate section of the article, and perhaps most importantly, we include the results of the aforementioned pre- and post-test in which students enrolled in our one-credit seminar responded to prompts about the benefits of co-instructed courses and diverse perspectives in collegiate learning environments. In addition to the presentation and discussion of the survey results, we also discuss how we managed the team teaching experience, in particular during the pre-teaching phase. We acknowledge the challenges and limitations to co-teaching Honors Seminars, many of which are structural and relate to scheduling issues, thus signaling the need for continued research on the topic of collaborative teaching models in the Honors classroom.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

What makes most Honors programs unique is their ability to pull together faculty from many disciplines and areas of an institution, connecting university-wide experts in order to teach and mentor students across majors and colleges. Students who participate in Honors programs do so from all corners of the university. They share an interest in and curiosity about research and a commitment to exploring topics beyond the coursework of their major and/or minor curriculum(s). This highly interdisciplinary approach to learning has long been a pillar of the Honors mission and vision, presenting both a unique learning opportunity for students and challenges to those facilitating Honors coursework. The following literature review is focused on bringing to light some overarching themes present in the body of work dedicated to Honors programs as well as collaborative teaching models. It is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to help inform readers of the gaps noted in the existing literature on these two areas as they inform our own work in this field.

Research points to the highly multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary mission of Honors programs across the nation (Newell & Thompson Klein, 1996; Black, 2011; Shane, 2019). Black (2011) highlights how her program at Northwestern College in Minnesota endeavors to live up to this ideal, defining multidisciplinary as encouraging the engagement with and informed understanding of multiple disciplines such as “music, art, mathematics, and science,” resulting in more “well-rounded scholars” (p. 197). Black writes that admission to the Honors program at her institution means that students are committing to learning about multiple disciplines and being “interested in

everything” (p. 197). For Black’s Honors program, the goal is to create well-rounded and curious scholars who are not isolated within their majors:

Finally, we wanted the honors program to be a vehicle for associating, connecting, and integrating concepts and knowledge from a variety of disciplines. As an overriding focus, we strive through the multidisciplinary structure to help our students see associations that connect one discipline to another. (p. 197)

Black frames her argument around a key question that relates to implementation: What does it look like for a program or course to be multidisciplinary and collaborative? There is not a large body of research addressing how the established value of multidisciplinary teaching and programmatic implementation translates into practice, but there is indeed recognition of the importance of posing these questions and expanding the literature around issues in higher education specific to Honors programs.

Walsh-Dilley (2016) explores the state of research on and about Honors programs and emphasizes the need for more research and data focused *on* Honors programs in contrast to coming *from* Honors students and faculty to better inform best practices in the field. She argues that we have a scarcity of research focused on Honors programs specifically and that filling this gap would not only allow programs to demonstrate their value to students and administrators but would also help answer some crucial questions related to Honors programming. One such question that our study also grapples with considers how we best implement the mission and vision of Honors programs in the courses offered to students. Walsh-Dilley calls for research that is both “longitudinal and comparative” as well as befitting the “style of scholarship to which we are committed: interdisciplinary, integrative, and community-engaged as well as inclusive of and empowering to students” (p. 32). In other words, the research on and about Honors needs to mirror the values of Honors programs in being collaborative, interdisciplinary, and committed to engaging multiple perspectives, voices, and disciplines. While there is a body of work dedicated to better understanding the first year Honors experience and Honors orientation courses (Zee et al., 2016), additional research on Honors seminars is needed.

A noticeable trend in the existing scholarship on Honors programs and coursework explores how Honors courses are ideally suited to exploring issues of human rights, global issues, and equity and social justice (Szasz, 2017). Some of the reasons for this include smaller class sizes, lower student to faculty ratios, and discussion-based seminars that allow for deeper engagement with complex topics. Since Honors Seminars often draw on the

expertise of faculty from many areas of an institution, students have the opportunity to engage with and learn from experts in multiple fields. In the present article, not only do we emphasize the importance of bringing multiple perspectives from faculty from all fields and disciplines to the Honors curriculum, but we also argue for the importance of providing multiple perspectives on complex topics within a single seminar.

Similarly, Abes (2009) highlights the importance of bringing multiple theoretical perspectives into a classroom, suggesting that applying a single methodology or theoretical framework to research and data is insufficient and limited. For instance, Abes points to methodological approaches that center a heteronormative experience and erase the lived experiences of trans, queer, and gender non-conform bodies. Abes argues that by reading data through only one lens that does not give voice to different perspectives and experiences, researchers are perpetuating the erasure of some of our students' identities by not bringing in additional theoretical models (such as feminist or queer theories) that highlight other ways to make meaning. While Abes' argument focuses on the ways we teach our students to critically apply analytical frameworks in research settings, there is a direct link from Abes' argument to the present argument. Both respond to how we teach our students to engage from a multitude of perspectives and how diverse lenses shape their academic experience; identity development is not limited to research settings but includes daily discussions in the classroom. In short, a seminar taught by multiple instructors allows students to explore a topic from multiple perspectives in a way that a single-instructor model often does not.

The existing body of work that looks at multiple instructor models and collaborative teaching is more extensive at the K-12 level, where general subject teachers often collaborate with subject teachers (art, music, world languages) and special education teachers to deliver classroom instruction. At the university level, fewer studies exist that explore collaborative teaching models and offer examples of best practices and successes (Letterman & Dugan, 2004; Clark & Zubizarreta, 2008; Schray, 2008; Ford & Gray, 2011). In particular, Ford & Gray (2011) provide a framework of five distinct team teaching models for college and university level instructors that account for concerns such as teaching at an overload, "donating" one's time to teach when only one instructor can be the instructor of record for the class, managing who receives pay for the course, and other such issues that may not have the same need for consideration at the K-12 level (p. 104).

Kluth & Straut (2013) similarly offer university instructors a starting point for thinking through different types of team teaching options, breaking options into three possible models which they term "parallel teaching," "station teaching," and "one teach/one assist" (p. 231-233). For parallel

teaching, instructors divide the class into smaller sections and deliver the course in tandem to smaller subsets of students, thus creating a smaller teacher to student ratio. For station teaching, instructors create subsections of a course and deliver different content to each “station” based on learning goals and objectives. As with parallel teaching, station teaching takes place in the same classroom space with two or more instructors present. Finally, for the one teach/one assist model, one instructor delivers the lesson plan while a second instructor plays the role of assistant and moves around the room aiding students as they take in the class content.

Both Ford & Gray (2011) and Kluth & Straut (2013) offer useful studies in thinking through the different types of team teaching scenarios and the actual practice of dividing both the labor and benefits of teaching with one or more colleague(s). Their work demonstrates how team teaching and the co-taught classroom could take on many iterations and does not need to fit into one particular model or example. Ideally, the team-taught course accounts for each instructor’s strengths and experiences, availability, and desired teaching objectives and thus arrives at a model that pulls together the best of each instructor’s skills and strengths while creating an optimal learning environment for students. We argue that team teaching models, moreover, can also allow less experienced instructors to benefit from the exposure to more experienced instructors in a way that feels collaborative and student-focused. In such cases, the emphasis is not on evaluating a newer colleague but on working together to offer an ideal educational experience for students that at the same time benefits the more junior faculty member as well.

Our article builds on the identified need for increased research on Honors Seminars beyond the first year experience and calls for further exploration of collaborative teaching by providing one model of how an Honors Seminar on Global Borders was team-taught at a large research institution in the Midwest. In the following sections, we present a model that we created for our Honors Program and offer insights on the student learning experience derived from a pre- and post-course assessment.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The large research university in the Midwest where we co-taught our course along with a third colleague has a long-standing Honors Program, created in 1960. Like many Honors Programs, some of the founding elements of the program at our university include a First Year Seminar for freshmen, capstone Honors research projects, and optional Honors housing. Our focus in the present article is not on these first-year oriented or research-based opportunities, but instead on the one- to two-credit Honors Seminars. These

special topic courses are available only to students enrolled in the Honors Program and generally cap at 17 students. Honors students are required to take at least two seminars to graduate, and this number can vary depending on the College in which the student is enrolled.

The diverse topics of these Honors Seminars builds on and accentuates the informal, small-group setting of the courses. Seminars can be organized topically or thematically and offerings each semester are extremely varied. There are courses on data and analytics, finance, chemistry, architecture, mythology, sexuality, music, conflict studies, language, and countless other topics. While some seminars speak to a discipline-specific student audience, given a more focused as opposed to generalist course description, the majority of the seminars do the exact opposite. Thus, business seminars are geared toward non-business or economics majors, humanities seminars might be intended primarily for students in STEM fields, and so forth. The goal is to introduce students to a variety of areas outside of their chosen major and discipline.

Our Honors Seminar on Global Borders offered a thematic-approach and covered both physical borders as well as metaphorical ones. Our course took advantage of the small-group setting and each weekly meeting followed a discussion format as opposed to a lecture-based model. This discussion platform proved ideal for a co-taught seminar given the fact it put less pressure on the three instructors to coordinate or align lectures and allowed the students instead to direct the dialogue during our meetings. Each class centered on a specific border – either metaphorical or geopolitical – and began with a student-led presentation on the topic and ended with an instructor summary of the topic (aimed at filling in any gaps or clarifying discrepancies). The three instructors teaching our Global Borders course included an Assistant Professor, a Senior Lecturer, and a Lecturer with academic advising responsibilities; each instructor represented a different discipline and brought diverse experiences to the course. Our collaborative team took advantage of the fact that instructing an Honors Seminar at our institution is open to both tenure and non-tenure eligible faculty as well as to professional staff and graduate students with teaching experience. The following section offers a closer look at each instructor’s profile and area of expertise followed by a breakdown of how we divided our workload, structured the planning, and negotiated concerns related to team teaching a course.

### **Planning for success: managing the team-teaching experience**

Our overlapping interests in the themes of borders, migration, nation building, and personal identity development brought the three of us together

to plan a team-taught course. One instructor identifies broadly as a Caribbeanist with specific research interests in the Haitian-Dominican border region as well as Latinx migrant populations in the Midwest. Another instructor is a lecturer of French and Arabic with a research interest in the Middle East and maritime borders. The third and final instructor is a researcher of gender and culture within a Western European context (Germany, Austria, and France). Two of the instructors have a personal connection to the topic of borders and migration as they both emigrated from their native countries at a young age. Additionally, all of the instructors connected over a shared interest in the migratory history of the Midwest. Following multiple conversations over a period of several semesters on these overlapping and intersecting topics, the three instructors decided to create a course that would build on the expertise and experience of each individual faculty member to enrich the course content with the intent of highlighting to students the interconnectedness of borders, nations, and (personal and collective) histories.

An additional consideration in creating a team-taught course that would bring together all of our diverse cultural perspectives related to our desire to offer a model for how colleagues in our department could bridge individual expertise or research interests to achieve exciting cross-disciplinary learning opportunities for students. The three instructors are housed in a multi-section world languages department that includes several language and culture sections under a shared departmental model. While we all share a physical space in our building on campus and convene for monthly department meetings, we rarely collaborate on teaching and research projects with colleagues outside of our language and/or culture section. Collaborations in the classroom setting, if any, take place most frequently between colleagues in the same section or with faculty members of outside departments and disciplines on campus. We were interested in exploring a partnership that takes advantage of the obvious and exciting ways in which our research as humanists and cultural studies scholars overlaps while also gaining from the insights and perspectives each one of us brings to the conversation to compliment the knowledge of the others on our team. As such, we shifted our casual conversations about borders and migration to official planning meetings the semester prior to proposing our course.

Planning for a course begins months, and sometimes years, before the course appears on the university schedule of classes and is taught for the first time. Our Honors Seminar, too, required us to submit a course proposal 1-2 semesters prior to the desired semester of the course offering. These pre-teaching meetings, even in the early phase of course proposal, allowed the team of three to connect, both on a personal and professional level, and clearly



frame the guiding theme of our course and each of our unique contributions to the seminar topic. After discussing and agreeing on the theme of our seminar, global borders, and also the theoretical background for our pedagogy – building on interdisciplinarity and collaboration – we then moved to finalizing the syllabus and dividing the workload in terms of teaching assignments. In these initial meetings, we decided that it would be most beneficial to us and our students to rotate between classes (each only fifty minutes in length) and solo teach each individual class with the exception of three joint sessions (classes during which all instructors would be present) at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. This meant that we distributed the course content and structured the syllabus thematically based on which instructor would be present each week. We opted for this model as a way to disrupt the notion that geopolitical borders function in separation from one another and to demonstrate how borders are fluid, interconnected, and informed by other borders whether they be located in Europe, the Middle East, or Latin America.

Given the fact the Honors Seminars at our institution are one credit courses that meet only once per week for fifty minutes and are intended to be discussion based, we did not need to spend extensive time aligning our classroom approaches or teaching methodologies. Instead, we decided student presentations, weekly instructor-prepared discussion questions, and brief lectures from instructors would guide each class meeting. We also used these brief pre-teaching meetings to discuss and divide the instructor workload leading up to our team-teaching semester. One instructor finalized the syllabus and submitted the course proposal, another designed our course flyer to help recruit students, and the third coordinated a guided campus art tour in partnership with the University Museums that took place at the mid-semester point looking at border-themed art on campus.

Beyond addressing the focus of each class meeting on the syllabus, we also created a course hashtag. This virtual connection that existed beyond the classroom walls not only allowed us to share content with students vis-à-vis social media forums, namely Twitter, but it also served as an ideal way for the three of us to connect beyond email. Through the course hashtag, we were able to take a digital pulse of the classroom, discerning where discussions had led and tracking the breadth of content covered in class across instructors. Reading student tweets and engaging virtually with the articles and images shared by students as well as our co-instructors allowed the instructors not present in class on a given week to gain insight with regards to the direction of the course and student learning. For future team-teaching projects, we would like to expand on the virtual component of the course by including more online community building opportunities by using social

media and online platforms as that proved to be a useful, and somewhat underutilized, tool for those of us not in the classroom to stay connected to the group discussions and dynamics.

The fact that the Honors Seminar we taught was a one-credit pass-fail course, with no student work to grade other than providing feedback on student presentations, meant that we could avoid the sometimes time-consuming and/or polarizing conversations about assessing student work. We were, however, tasked with addressing student concerns with respect to the joint roles of multi-instructor teams. Especially in the first class session of the semester, the first of the three joint sessions, we clearly discussed how power would be negotiated in the classroom, clarifying that each of us would represent a different field of expertise and that all of us would engage fully and equally in our semester-long discussions of global borders. Our shared roles in the instruction of the course, all as instructors of record, resonated with students during the first joint-taught class when we introduced our research interests and backgrounds while also consciously drawing connections between our interdisciplinary connections and the motivations that led us to create a team-taught course.

Ford & Gray (2011) discuss the importance of establishing the expectations regarding the role of each instructor in a team teaching model, noting how “questions of authority and credibility can be intertwined with preconceived ideas of gender and discipline in the classroom” (p. 103). In our case, we emphasized our roles as equally invested instructors in the course with different yet related areas of expertise. We did this in order to dispel any student assumptions about expertise and credibility based on institutional roles and titles as well as privileged identities in the classroom (in this case, we primarily mean the instructors’ gender and ethnic identities – visible identities that are loaded with cultural biases). In our experience collaboratively teaching as a team of three, questions of authority and expertise did not come up during the semester and our students engaged with us as equal members of a multi-instructor course.

## RESULTS

Given the fact that a different global border topic guided each class, with the exception of the first, a mid-semester, and the last meeting of the semester-long seminar that all three instructors attended and led, it is important to reflect on what the students learned, in a general sense, about global borders. After spending time discussing the Haitian-Dominican border, borders of the Middle East, the Iron Curtain dividing Western and Eastern Europe, divided Germany and the Berlin Wall, as well as maritime borders –

to list only a few of the frontier zones that guided our discussion – how much did students really take away from a collaboratively taught course with little work assigned outside of class? While the following section analyzes the students’ narrative-based comments in regards to our collaboratively taught Honors Seminar, the quantitative data that we collected from several Likert-scale questions included on the pre- and post-test confirm that students’ knowledge on and understanding of borders expanded as a direct result of this course.

Below is the survey tool that we used to assess students’ perceptions of the team-taught Honors seminar:

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being strongly agree, 2 agree, 3 neutral, 4 disagree, and 5 being strongly disagree), answer the following 4 questions:

1. I have an understanding and general knowledge about a wide range of global borders in regards to geopolitical borders and shifting border policies.
2. Metaphorical borders also exist and are important to consider when addressing the topic of borders.
3. I consider our local campus community as relatively “borderless.”
4. Borders can stand for religious, racial, cultural, etc. dividers.  
For the next two questions, give a short (1-2 sentence response)
5. How did or how do you think a co-taught course addresses diverse, global perspectives of a given theme, in this case “borders,” in ways that a solo-taught course (one instructor) may not?
6. What are you hoping will be/what was your biggest takeaway from this class?

In particular, on the pre-test, only 18% of students in the seminar stated that they agreed or strongly agreed that they had an “understanding and general knowledge about a wide range of global borders in regards to geopolitical borders and shifting border policies.” On the post-test, however, 86% of the students in the course confirmed the same. This shift in perceived knowledge on global borders is a consequence of the varied interests and expertise of the team of instructors. As previously mentioned, our course also offered a sustained focus on metaphorical borders and introduced students to various borderlands theorists. Thus, in response to another statement on the pre- and post-tests, “metaphorical borders also exist and are important to

consider when addressing the topic of borders,” 35% strongly agreed on the pre-test whereas an overwhelming 93% strongly agreed on the post-test. While on the pre-test those students who did not strongly agree in regards to the existence of metaphorical borders did indeed agree (65%) with the statement, the fact that nearly all students selected the strongly agree option on the post-test corroborates that the broad thematic focus of the seminar further exposed them to metaphorical borders: racial, cultural, economic, and otherwise.

Perhaps more importantly for the goals of the present article, this survey also included an open-ended question about student perceptions of multi-instructor courses. Notably, we elected to give the same survey on the first and last day of class and comparing the comments on the pre- and post-test allows us to gauge if students had doubts or concerns about the teaching model at the start of the semester. Students were informed that the course would be taught by three instructors from different disciplines but had not yet experienced this particular co-taught classroom environment at the time of the pre-course survey. Particularly striking is that of the sixteen students that responded to this initial pre-test, all indicated positive associations with a co-taught curriculum on the final question posed on the survey.

Student responses to the open-ended questions were transcribed and analyzed for trends and repeated word pairings and word clusters. Using the search function in Microsoft Word allowed us to easily detect patterns and then confirm the number of times certain words or word combinations appeared in the responses. For instance, multiple students used words and word combinations such as “multiple perspectives,” “different perspectives,” “unique perspectives,” and insights from individuals with “different backgrounds” and “unique backgrounds” in the survey given before the course started. We took this to indicate that our students already had an appreciation for diversity in perspectives and opinions and that our students found value in learning from instructors with different and complimenting areas of expertise. Moreover, our students indicated that they valued having instructors not only with different research backgrounds but also with varying lived experiences and identities. Students were able to differentiate between these two and listed both as critical to a positive classroom experience. One student wrote, “the more ideas the better” while another offered the following: “One professor would not be able to do this, just because they haven’t lived three different lives.” In general, students expressed great enthusiasm for the co-taught course experience from the onset. Not one single respondent raised concerns or apprehensions about having more than one instructor for the class.

On the final day of class, students were asked to fill out a post-test – identical to the pre-test – in order to gauge shifts in perception and

understanding of the course subject as well as to evaluate the method of course delivery. The post-test results indicate that our students maintained positive associations with the co-taught course delivery following their experience with our course team-taught course model. Of the fifteen respondents who completed the post-course survey, not one expressed negative reactions to the co-taught course format. The open-ended survey responses were once again analyzed and scanned for trends and repetitions in wording and word clusters. Our results indicate that our students sustained appreciation for the co-taught classroom citing some of the same reasons, if not more enthusiastically, offered at the beginning of the class. Students appreciated having heard from multiple voices on the topic of borders. They also identified a value in learning about global issues from instructors who brought to the class not only their diverse professional backgrounds but their own unique experiences living and engaging with different borders of the world. One instructor, for example, shared her own experiences of living “behind the Iron Curtain” as a child and another described her background co-founding a global awareness-raising event that commemorates the 1937 Haitian Massacre on the Haitian-Dominican border. In regards to the diversity of experiences, one student wrote, “I loved it! It was so nice to have different perspectives, stories, and backgrounds.” Another wrote, “Every instructor has different experiences and knowledge of global borders. It’s foolish to think one person is an expert on all borders.” Yet another wrote, “I think the class being co-taught was awesome to be able to learn so many different perspectives. One professor would have been okay but having three from very different backgrounds was awesome.” In short, the co-taught classroom offered students a richer and more diverse learning experience, something they easily identified and appreciated. The overwhelmingly favorable student responses to the team-taught Honors Seminar, regardless of the small sample size, lead us to believe that the experience of having three as opposed to one instructor(s) of record resulted in a positive experience for the students enrolled in the course, prompting us to ask of ourselves and our colleagues how we can continue to build such learning opportunities into the curriculums we create.

Another valuable insight for students in the co-taught classroom relates to students critically assessing the subjectivity inherent in teaching practices. While we often position instructors as experts in the room, the collaborative classroom allows students to better recognize how teaching is not inherently neutral or objective. This is not offered as a reason to discredit solo instructor models, but instead to highlight one of the benefits of introducing multiple lenses into the classroom setting; students are able to see how subjectively we approach our disciplines and fields, ideally recognizing how they too bring their lived experiences and subjectivity to their majors and

areas of study. In doing so, students and instructors both can discuss the layers that go into learning and discussing a particular topic. Peeling back those layers – such as subject identity, positionality, subjective knowledge, and contextualized learning – allows for a more complex and nuanced understanding of a topic. Having recognized this, one student wrote, “It shows that the definition of what a ‘border’ may be can vary from person to person and place to place, which was seen throughout every topic.” Another student wrote, “Each professor brought a different background and specialty, which challenged me to view borders in different manners.” A final student concluded, “It allows diverse perspectives (from different backgrounds and experiences) to be presented. Students can learn and judge multiple sides to an issue.”

As Abes (2009) argues, interdisciplinary research methods are of tremendous value to students because they demonstrate how multiple methodologies and lenses benefit our understanding of a topic. Szasz (2017) similarly suggests that interdisciplinary teaching benefits student development. Evident from the assessment of our interdisciplinary and collaboratively taught Honors Seminar on Global Borders is that students benefit both in terms of content acquisition and student development when offered a multidisciplinary seminar taught by colleagues with different perspectives and identities. Beyond the value of multidisciplinary approaches in Honors Seminar and in the undergraduate classroom in general, our goal in discussing student responses is to clearly address the value of team teaching as assessed by students in the team-taught classroom. While in the previous section we outlined a model for planning and implementing a collaboratively taught undergraduate Honors Seminar, also including student responses allows for the student perspective on the course to surface. Thus, coupled with our instructor reflections in regards to the collaboratively taught course, the quantitative and qualitative data from student pre- and post-tests makes a strong case for the positive student outcomes of collaborative teaching in the Honors classroom. Moreover, the multi-instructor offering of the course on global borders drove home the value of perspectivism; students clearly denoted that they appreciated and benefited from the expertise and multifarious research interests of multiple instructors and they were made aware of the myriad conceptual schemas to approaching (metaphorical and geopolitical) borders.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Our intention with respect to our outline of a collaborative teaching experience of an Honors Seminar and the overwhelmingly positive student

responses to this model is to encourage other instructors involved with Honors programming to do the same. This is not to say, however, that there are not any challenges to co-teaching at the university level. One of the more common structural issues relates to scheduling and institutional support. While it can be difficult to find a teaching schedule that works for more than one instructor, the alternation of the teaching helps to alleviate the time that each instructor spends on the course. At the institution where we taught our course, scheduling of the seminar is flexible; instructors can elect to meet for one or two hours on the same day each week, or teach a condensed course for longer time periods over half of the semester.

Another issue regards the splitting of any honorarium or salary offered for teaching the seminar. While the amount (if any) allotted to instructors of a respective Honors Seminar varies per institution, many offer a modest honorarium to go toward professional and development funds. Sharing the funds in an equitable way could offer potential points of conflict given the fact that some instructors may be unable to discuss or negotiate this on their own (i.e., if an institutional policy dictated pay by rank or instructor role.) For this reason, we argue that ideal team teaching scenarios are realized at institutions where flexibility and autonomy is allotted to faculty so that colleagues can identify opportunities to collaborate and set parameters based on mutual agreement. At our institution, instructors of Honors courses are given free rein to elect how to share the honorarium provided.

One final point of discussion addresses how institutions facilitate networking opportunities for faculty and staff with similar teaching interests to connect and consider the idea of co-teaching. As both tenure and non-tenure eligible faculty can teach Honors Seminars on our campus, instructors are able to take advantage of myriad co-teaching opportunities to envision fruitful cross-departmental collaborations, perhaps out of which interdisciplinary research projects or future collaborations can grow. We argue that additional research and data around team-teaching across roles and positions at different types of institutions would benefit further discussions around productive and positive research and teaching collaborations. With the goal of creating interdisciplinary multi-instructor learning environments for Honors students, we advocate for further research on the subject of collaborative teaching within the Honors context in particular, and hope to encourage more mixed-methods research that support, in the words of one of our students, “the more ideas the better.”

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