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CE > Vol.3 No.6A, October 2012

OPEN ACCESS

Forging a Template for Undergraduate Collaborative Research: A Case Study

PDF (Size: 72KB) PP. 859-865 DOI: 10.4236/ce.2012.326129

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ABSTRACT

Undergraduate collaborative research is highlighted in many university initiatives; however there is a lack of exemplars in disciplines that do not employ the scientific method. "Pop Music Reviews" was an attempt to forge a template for Women's and Gender Studies. This paper presents a description of the pilot project and provides qualitative assessments by the first- and second-year students, fourth-year teaching assistant (TA), reference librarian, and professor. Together, the appraisals indicate that there are two different but equally necessary components for a successful collaborative research endeavour: the structural setting and the social and emotional environment. In both these components, there were weaknesses in the areas of planning and background training. Yet, the benefits as perceived through the experiences of the various participants were significant. Reported gains included increased understanding of research processes and applications, enhanced critical thinking skills, expanded disciplinary knowledge, improved student motivation and confidence, greater interest in graduate studies, and the fostering of collegial interactions and mentoring.

KEYWORDS

Collaborative Research; Critical Thinking; Research Skills; Women's and Gender Studies

Cite this paper

Graham, D., Hempstead, J. & Couchman, R. (2012). Forging a Template for Undergraduate Collaborative Research: A Case Study. *Creative Education*, 3, 859-865. doi: 10.4236/ce.2012.326129.

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