

Advancing Honors Education for Today and Tomorrow

Advancing Honors Education for Today and Tomorrow

Edited by

Graeme Harper

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



Advancing Honors Education for Today and Tomorrow

Edited by Graeme Harper

This book first published 2024

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2024 by Graeme Harper and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN: 978-1-0364-0774-2

ISBN (Ebook): 978-1-0364-0775-9

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Higher Education Today and Tomorrow <i>Graeme Harper</i>	
Chapter One.....	11
Let Them Build & They Will Lead: The Intentional Intersection of Praxis and Theory in the Undergraduate Honors College Learning Cycle <i>Siobhán Ní Dhonacha</i>	
Chapter Two	35
AI – Agency and <i>Innovation</i> – and the Honors College <i>Susan Lynne Beckwith</i>	
Chapter Three	49
Becoming Culturally Responsive: Music Pedagogies in Honors Curricula <i>Galit Gertsenzon</i>	
Chapter Four	61
Expressive Advising: A New Model of Leader Development <i>Anne Jackson</i>	
Chapter Five	77
Leveling Up Honors Education: Video Game Analysis in the Honors Classroom <i>Mike Piero</i>	
Chapter Six	93
A Proposed New Purple College <i>Brooke Biaz</i>	
Chapter Seven.....	101
Thinking, Reading and Writing About the Economy <i>Tom Ue</i>	

Chapter Eight.....	117
Advancing DEI by Addressing Injustice in the First Year Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar <i>Tara M. Tuttle</i>	
Biographical Notes	129
Index.....	133

INTRODUCTION

HIGHER EDUCATION TODAY AND TOMORROW

GRAEME HARPER

We know that throughout history, and throughout the world, variations in access to education and encouragement to undertake education have been common, often linked with the social and economic standing of families, communities, and individuals, and often to the detriment of those individuals and communities who could not easily access that education. The focus of attention has not entirely been on the early years of education – though, certainly, much emphasis has been placed on whether an individual or an entire community could access basic instruction in numeracy and literacy. But there has also been a tradition, in many countries, of considering whether a student continues to the (optional) third step of formal education, and if they do continue, or can continue to this tertiary level, what choice of tertiary education do they make?

Vocational education, further education, continuing education and higher education all refer to progression to that third educational step. That is, a step to somewhere beyond secondary education, which itself is a step to somewhere beyond elementary or primary education. In a good portion of the contemporary world, the third step advances on what is considered a necessary ‘basic education’. Therefore, each of the first two steps – into elementary education, then into secondary education – tends to be mandatory. The third step, into tertiary education, tends to be optional. There are variations on this general pattern, but those are the fundamentals.

While optional, continuing beyond secondary education most often suggests some version of aiming to acquire ‘advanced knowledge’. But advanced in what way? Advanced in focus? Advanced in depth? Advanced in application? Advanced in the depth and range of knowledge of those who teach in it? Advanced in expectation? Similarly, how is it acquired? And by what means?

It is here the term 'higher education' either lets us down or equips us, because 'higher' suggests an elevation, rising above, something beyond the ordinary. But what, and through what methods? This is not necessarily captured in suggesting comparisons between vocational and non-vocational education, or in posing these questions as matters located in the research of faculty or in the quality of teaching, or in whether an institution is heavily funded by government grants or corporate sponsorship.

In the United States, which provides a fascinating advanced education case study, history records a series of movements, debates, reforms and challenges that have sought to either confirm a way of defining 'higher' education as grounded in canonical classical traditions of advanced learning or to challenge those ideals, most often on the basis of perceived anachronisms. This history has followed changes occurring in American society and culture, born on its connection in part with European traditions (and at one point in the 19th and early 20th Centuries, most strongly with German higher education) and then relating a growing sense of American higher education as foundational to the national psyche. Equally, the movement between 'old world' and 'new world' can be mapped according to a history of rejection or adoption and often adaptation of European models. It is here in the USA, for example, that Frank Aydelotte, having spent 1905-1907 at Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar, and in 1921 becoming President of Pennsylvania's Swarthmore College, announced at his Presidential inauguration what would become US national collegiate honors education, focusing on what he called the 'more brilliant students'. He announced:

We could allow them to specialize more because their own alertness of mind would of itself be sufficient to widen their intellectual range and give them that acquaintance with other studies necessary for a liberal point of view. We could, I think, at least partially obliterate the distinction between vocational and liberal studies. (Aydelotte, 1921: 24)

Aydelotte, whose ideas were well supported by Swarthmore faculty (Blanshard, 1970: 188) continued:

We could give these more brilliant students greater independence in their work, avoiding the spoon feeding which makes much of our college instruction of the present day of secondary school character. Our examinations should be less frequent and more comprehensive, and the task of the student should be to prepare himself for these tests through his own reading and through the instruction offered by the college . . . (Aydelotte, 1921: 24)

Aydelotte further suggested that:

By altering the character of our instruction from a secondary to a college and university level, we ought to be able to dispense with some of the drudgery of teaching and release at least a portion of the time of college and university professors for study and research , thus in turn raising the whole level of our education. (Aydelotte 1921: 24)

The character of Frank Aydelotte's presidential inauguration speech was not new to American tertiary education educators. Since the 17th Century the founding of such institutions as Harvard University (1636) and the College of William and Mary (1693) came with declared ideals associated with educating 'youth in good letters and manners' (Royal Charter, College of William and Mary), while the history of institutions such as Yale University (1701) and the University of Pennsylvania (1740), which was the first to offer both undergraduate and doctoral studies (Rosenberg, 1961: 387), shows them, relatively soon after founding, offering multidisciplinary curricula in their pursuit of educational excellence.

Indeed, by the time of Frank Aydelotte's presidential inauguration, American tertiary institutions had long been concerned with questions of what constitutes access to and acquisition of advanced knowledge. They had been concerned, too, with whom advanced learning might most directly benefit – a concern which reflected a focus on societal beliefs that might best inform the creating of the American republic. In that vein, produced in 1828 by Yale College and widely quoted ever since, the 'Yale Report' explored what would be familiar territory to those who, nearly a century later, would be in the audience for Aydelotte's Swarthmore speech. 'What then is the appropriate object of a college?' asks the Yale Report. It continues:

It is not necessary here to determine what it is which, in every case, entitles an institution to the name of a college. But if we have not greatly misapprehended the design of the patrons and guardians of this college, its object is to lay the foundation of a superior education: and this is to be done, at a period of life when a substitute must be provided for parental superintendence. The ground work of a thorough education, must be broad, and deep, and solid. For a partial or superficial education, the support may be of looser materials, and more hastily laid. (Yale Report, 1828: 7)

'A superior education' and 'a substitute . . . for parental superintendence', which must be 'broad, and deep, and solid' - all determinants here of what an advanced education should entail. Jurgen Herbst, in his 2004 study of the

report, grounds the Yale Report's interest in advanced knowledge even further when he says:

Issued at the threshold of the industrial age, the Yale Report -- as, for simplicity's sake, I shall refer to the documents from now on -- sums up comprehensively, albeit somewhat repetitively, a philosophy of collegiate education in the liberal arts which, over the course of several hundred years, had emerged in modern western culture. In the United States, this philosophy focused on the classical heritage, freshened by the results of the revival of literary learning in the Renaissance, and permeated by a commitment to reformed Christianity. It supplemented this intellectual fare with an at least cursory overview of modern scientific and social ideas and theories which had emerged during and after the scientific revolution of the seventeenth and the political upheavals of the eighteenth century. (Yale Report, 1828: 214)

What distinguishes Frank Aydelotte's declaration almost a century after the Yale Report, and his focus at his inauguration on honors education, was the context in which he drew on his personal experience during his Rhodes years in Oxford and equally showed the influences of period in which he was speaking.

Delivered in the midst of Modernism, where industrialism, and urbanization and new technologies were challenging the perceived weariness of a Europe coming out of war, Aydelotte framed his vision of advanced education both on American aspiration and European tradition. Of course, it was also at that time perhaps only in America that Aydelotte's vision of 'raising the whole level of our education' could best be made. Britain, from where his influences emerged, had other issues with which to contend. Although Frederick Rudolph, in his seminal work, *The American College and University: A History* (1962) suggests that 'the movement for the higher education of women became irresistible' (319) by the later 19th Century, American colleges were still heavily male, as was the language that informed them, and much of American society. So Aydelotte's reference to 'the task of the student should be to prepare himself for these tests through his own reading' was not inconsequentially focused on the education of young men in America. It was a patriarchal reference. In Britain a full 6% of the adult male population had been killed during World War One, while in America, with its distance from that war, the casualties, though appalling, were far fewer. The future of leadership of the Western world was shifting away from Europe and across the Atlantic, borne equally on America's distance from the ravages of European conflicts and on the ambitions of a growing modern industrial American nation. Advanced education, acquiring advanced knowledge, honors education in Aydelotte's vision, was

to reflect both a sense of an esteemed past and the forward thinking bound in an aspirational future.

The American case study in advanced higher education provides plenty of food for thought. Whether in the 17th Century, with the birth of what are today well-known liberal arts colleges, in the 18th century with foundation of institutions offering both undergraduate and graduate study, or in the early 20th century with the appointment of Frank Aydelotte to the Presidency of Swarthmore College and the launching of what would become a uniquely American sense of what constitutes honors education. So, what now, here in the 21st Century, constitutes the future of advanced higher education?

One thing is certain: Frank Aydelotte's vision, while limited in its sense of equity and inclusion, and bound up in the national and global contexts of those immediate post-war years, also made much of a need to 'transcend' individual institutional schemes and to go beyond the notions projected by admirers of singular institutional agendas to look for what might indeed be those higher standards of what he calls a 'unifying principle' of higher education:

In this generous rivalry for higher intellectual standards is to be found the unifying principle which will unite competing institutions. Science and scholarship, literature and art must necessarily transcend institutional or even national boundaries and demand from their votaries an allegiance which swallows smaller rivalries and loyalties. (Aydelotte, 1921: 25)

I return to the question here, now, in the early decades of the 21st Century, of what constitutes the future of advanced knowledge through a 'higher' education?

I would suggest this future is not based in the institutional shapes and structures once created on the back of 19th century disciplinary specializations and declared most obviously in the formation of academic departments and programs of study. In that sense, acquisition of advanced knowledge is not bound to what James Turner describes in his chapter 'Discipline Creation and Research Formation: Chicken or Egg?' as the 'birth of modern disciplinarity' (12) the splintering of 'newly distinct, separate provinces' (12). Turner writes:

Discipline formation was a complex process. It took decades. Multiple factors must have played into it. For instance, universities now existed within a modern industrial economy; maybe its specialized division of labor

encouraged disciplinary specialization. Consider, too, that in the nineteenth century institutions arose to set doctors, lawyers, engineers, and similar professionals apart as distinct, status-conscious groups; possibly professors emulated them. (24)

Similarly, here in the 21st Century advanced knowledge acquisition is not driven by the same expansion of higher education we saw in the first half of the 20th Century as well as in the second half. It was this early 20th Century expansion, of course, that drove Frank Aydelotte to consider what could be done to support high performing students, as college class sizes grew and he sensed that those who had the ability (as he saw it) to reach a more advanced level of understanding would not do as well as they could.

Could it be, too, that our contemporary advanced educational future is not one that will be (or, perhaps can be) founded on mostly national trajectories, reflecting mostly the ambitious desires of individual nation states? That certainly was what happened in the pre-Modernist period and then throughout the 20th century. But now? Now, advanced knowledge through higher education can surely only be global. Certainly, nations will define their investments in colleges and universities, and national and international politics will initiate national investment and disinvestment. Decidedly, too, industries based nationally will seek out skilled workers in those nations, and shifts in national priorities, global competition and regional raw materials, among other things, will propel national agendas. But the connected, digital world, the world that emerged in the last decade of the 20th Century provides a network of learning that is difficult to control nationally and has expanded exponentially. Fluid, interconnected communication is today the norm – at least where it is not limited by active forces aiming to prevent it for political or industrial reasons. The future of advanced learning is therefore global by default, and it is limited only by access to digital communication or control imposed against the natural flow of communication.

What constitutes the future of advanced learning is these things and more. Honors education, which is seen globally and highlighted in the United States through a history not solely confined to the work of Frank Aydelotte nor, of course, to the period in which he launched it at Swarthmore, continues to reflect on what ‘advanced’ higher education might entail. What constitutes the advanced in higher education grows more diverse and inclusive – even if, today, it does not yet include as wide a range of individuals and communities as it might include in our future. Advanced knowledge acquisition, likewise, seems poorly served by the limitations of

institutional rankings and definitions – so that it seems sure enough that as we progress questions will arise as to what innovative and forward-looking pedagogies and human discoveries can be made in all kinds of tertiary education.

Technologies will inform much of our progress. Digital communication technologies for certain, and the increasing capacities of ‘big data’ (huge data sets that provide valuable research assets). Further, artificial intelligence (AI) will both support advanced higher education and potentially also challenge it, as questions of what constitutes human-centric knowledge will grow no fewer in the years ahead, and definitions of what the process of discovery and learning and communicating what we know will continue to form and reform what advanced learning will entail.

Technological evolution has also led to the greater personalization of higher education – at least, in part. For example, online learning has supported more access to college level study for those with work, home or community duties. This is not quite democratization because in itself availability does not mean all have the time, money or access to technology to access higher education. However, the pressure on institutions founded on a relatively narrow band of in-person course delivery options and central locations to update their approaches will undoubtedly continue. Whether this will support advanced higher education or in some way undermine it remains a question. That is, advanced learning is not only content but also forms of human exchange – exchanges which improve our acquisition of advanced knowledge. Asynchronous online learning tends to be convenient yet more detached from immediate and organic human interaction. Synchronous delivery of online courses replaces the need to travel to a university site, for example, but still entails the organization of time much the same as in-person classes. Hybrid versions of education, where some students are online and some in person, or some classes are in person and some online, seem to generate more interaction and draw on the benefits of both forms of delivery, but the depth of understanding and the definition of what might define advanced understanding is itself not yet fully understood – especially as this relates to such things as the impact of artificial intelligence on digital environments and digital online asset creation (such as virtual environments and avatars and scenario-based learning experiences), the role of virtual agents and of machine learning. In all cases, however, an increase in choice of how someone studies in tertiary education has suggested institutions need to offer more personalized and more empathetic forms of course delivery. If mass education had its era of expansion in the 20th Century, then mass

personalized education is surely the form most likely to progress in the 21st Century. It is in this personalized mass education environment that we need to consider what is truly involved in acquiring advanced knowledge.

Finally, advanced higher education, the kind often proposed by honors programs and honors colleges, seems most likely to become more holistic as this century progresses. Holistic in that what has emerged since the 2019-2023 COVID-19 pandemic, and certainly in the United States as one example, has been a greater concern for a work-life balance, for general well-being, and for attention to student mental health. The pandemic introduced what has frequently been defined as ‘profound changes’ (Alfano et. al: 70) in attitudes to work, and while these might change as the COVID-19 years fade into memory, there is little doubt that the impact of shifting work into the home (supported by contemporary digital technologies) as well as concerns about how good health generally is perceived and supported have led to a more holistic sense of the relationship between work, learning and life. This has naturally influenced such things as the advising of students on strategic educational choices. It has impacted (and is impacting) on what advanced human knowledge might focus upon. In a nutshell, on what knowledge is thought to matter and in what ways what research is funded, what learning is promoted, and what results are celebrated. Holistic higher education might indeed become the norm in a century now defined not by industrialism but by post-industrial knowledge economies and a set of global changes, whether in natural resources, in climate and in environment, in industrial processes and self-generated, even customized outputs that see us all increasingly individual and increasingly interdependent.

The chapters here in *Advancing Honors Education for Today and Tomorrow*, explore many of these things as they relate specifically to honors education today, and with an eye to what is ahead. The chapter writers bring multiple individual perspectives and draw on a variety of backgrounds to explore their topics of interest – and have defined these according to what they consider to be most notable. This of course is a selective view, but one which records both a moment in educational history and a trajectory. If there is to be an advanced higher education then it is almost certain that it cannot be one that fails to address simultaneously the context of the past and present and the potential seen in the future. We can perhaps reflect upon and adapt the words of Frank Aydelotte at this 1921 inauguration as President of Swarthmore College when he says:

In industry, in government, and in international relations we are entering upon an age which brings new and difficult problems . . . The key to success in meeting them lies in education . . . (Aydelotte, 1921: 19)

Works Cited

- Alfano, Vincenzo, Ilaria Mariotti, Mita Marra & Gaetano Vecchione, 'I want to break free: the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on work–life balance satisfaction,' *Regional Studies, Regional Science*, 10:1, 70-88, 2023
- Rosenberg, Ralph P., 'The First American Doctor of Philosophy Degree: A Centennial Salute to Yale, 1861-1961', *The Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 32, No. 7 (Oct., 1961), pp. 387-394
- Royal Charter, College of William and Mary
<https://scrc-kb.libraries.wm.edu/royal-charter>
 (Last accessed, February 14, 2024)
- Turner, James, 'Discipline Formation and Research Training: Chicken or Egg?' *Global History of Research Education: Disciplines, Institutions, and Nations, 1840–1950*, edited by Ku-ming (Kevin) Chang and Alan Rocke, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2021.
- Yale Report of 1828, The, (Reports on the Course of Instruction at Yale College; By a Committee of the Corporation, and the Academical Faculty)*, New Haven: Hezekiah Howe, 1828

CHAPTER ONE

LET THEM BUILD & THEY WILL LEAD: THE INTENTIONAL INTERSECTION OF PRAXIS & THEORY IN THE UNDERGRADUATE HONORS STUDENT LEARNING CYCLE

SIOBHÁN NÍ DHONACHA

Introduction: Believing is Experiencing

In the hurry to reach a destination, (usually the “destination”) often there is not (if ever) time to deeply reflect, for various reasons. Yet, a key question in effective learning and design thinking is both asking and showing “How did I get here from there? And back again?”² Therein lies a sometimes too hidden persistence and success factor, and an efficacious teaching empowerment tool. In Honors for both students and faculty, the destination is the completion of a successful research project. This is the culminating experience, the ocean to which all rivers flow. At the beginning, finishing a research project may look about as possible as climbing the highest mountain without rope or gear, sourcing anything during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, swimming across a lake without training, or moving to another State or Continent having never previously left one’s hometown. The idea that “this enormous thing is expected of me in my Senior year” frankly scares a lot of honors students, especially those who are First Generation or who are not coming through college preparatory or high school pipelines, for example.

The honors student teaching praxis that I have developed over time and through repeated practice is rooted in an Experiential Learning Theory framework. I employ an interdisciplinary curriculum coupled with a rigorous pedagogical research model. Another essential element is the inclusion of Ethics of Care and Cultural Humility pedagogy, along with some foundational Educational Psychology. This approach is undergirded

by Hawaiian and Irish Worldviews which place an emphasis on collectivism, connection, and interconnectedness. The practice of the Hawaiian cultural value of *pilina* through the foundational premise of *mo'oku'auhau* (history of ancestors), mindfulness, and action based shared responsibility (*kuleana*) through relationships such as *kaikua'ana* (elder/mentor) and *kaikaina* (younger/learner) support an Empowerment Teaching & Advising[®] model I am developing.

This bedrock shapes iterative inquiry and creative output that is focused on pertinent global and local topics existential to the very fabric of life affecting the current and future Honors student.³ Naming is an act of creating - to create a *hui* of student scholar researchers requires intentional concretized educational and cognitive development scaffolding, resources, academic and professional skills acquisition, academic financial investment, clarity, partnership with diverse faculty mentors, curriculum design, emotional intelligence awareness and writing skills. Funding, location, and the architecture of space, place, and intersection matter to achieving this goal. Theory and praxis join together to spark growth in a connected delineated pathway.

This approach is fundamentally based on the vital experience of caring interventions in my own life that literally turned on the light in the middle of profound darkness, empowering me to develop resilience and self-perception while empowering agency and self-efficacy. The foundation and balance that informs this honors teaching praxis is a focus on effectively maintaining a working balance between honors teaching, curriculum development, advising, essential programmatic development components, and fostering student care and success.⁴

Crafting and curating culturally contextual learning opportunities to improve critical thinking while empowering honors students across diverse majors nurtures and develops intellectual bravery, inquiry, confidence, professionalism, as well as emotional intelligence.⁵ Students need connection, as well as the satisfaction of clear outcomes and results while engaging in deep and rich learning, so how do we best create connected, engaging learning spaces for honors students now, and in the future?⁶ Applying quality experiential learning theory and “mobile and transferable” skill acquisition empowers students to succeed and encourages student affinities and core talents.

“Now” vs. “Then”

American public universities are under increasing pressure to recruit, retain, and graduate students with dwindling public funding, while still tasked with nurturing talent and innovation.⁷ Developing and supporting student talent is a global issue and goal, as witnessed by the growth of honors programs and initiatives in Europe over the last number of decades.⁸ One key mission of an honors program is to provide a supportive, enriching, and challenging environment for honors students. These students tend to be amongst the most motivated and engaged at the university, and will generally have expressed an interest in and drive to conduct research and creative projects. Yet honors programs must also be sure to invite and outreach to students from diverse backgrounds to maximally support potential pathways for all budding student scholar researchers. Talented students who would like to innovate and participate may not yet have perceived or identified their own latent potential or fully understood how to connect with research interests.⁹ To accomplish this requires rich and effective component elements which include developing responsive, culturally situated, and innovative curricula, rich teaching and advising, dynamic program development, and effective recruitment outreach and retention protocols. An Honors education scaffolds and encourages students to consider options from a broad, but informed, perspective. As a result, the actualization of an Honors education is intrinsically complex, comprehensive, and interdisciplinary. The application of this type of pedagogy is often derived from the field of educational psychology with the actualization of essential professional and academic skill acquisition germane to the environment of the moment.¹⁰ Both are needed.

Students in America are experiencing pressure to be certified, to earn a living ample enough to potentially own even a modest home, to learn in silos, and are entering a technologically gamified society that does not always understand or support “intellectualism” or even critical thinking. Nonetheless, the intellectualism and critical thinking found in an Honors education is critical, and the lack of which is keenly felt and observed. If one lacks context, one cannot easily retrieve or inform the present with the holistic answers that live in the past.¹¹ One cannot truly shape the future without the whole story blueprint, nor without the requisite deeper understanding of circumstance and context. Students can be architects of the new, but the new is often the old in another form under another name, and often playing a familiar game.

Research Roadmap GPS

Honors needs to meet the student where they are, at that first entry point, and begin co-creating a concretized unique profile roadmap that leads to the student's desired destination. Even as the student does not yet know how to get there, and all the while bearing in mind and heart the whole student, and actively affirming all of the cultural, background, and unique elements that created this whole student. Honors should not have a "one and done" mentality, even as each student is learning to become an accomplished student-scholar researcher or creative.

Mapping the Student Lifecycle: The Whole Honors Student & Practitioner

Mapping is an organizing principle, and a method to view in both granular detail and macro vision what may be taken for granted or implicitly understood as the core of praxis in any discipline. In the case of a Research Intensive degree granting university, while the student life cycle and experience is the foundation of a university, research is a driving principle across a number of metrics. The Honors curriculum is designed to run right through the heart of the research pathway, intersecting and directly engaging at crucial early junctures in the student experience. The purpose of a specific mapping project is to show links and alignments in the student academic life cycle. Using a mapping approach in honors to view the student lifecycle as rooted in undergraduate honors teaching and advising praxis helps to clarify, value, and create ways to acknowledge and enhance honors teaching and advising praxis. Successful students ultimately create a successful university, and consequently, a successful Honors program. Student success is reliant upon the proscriptive scaffolding, care, learning, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking cognitive tools offered, taught, received, assimilated, and applied throughout the entire academic journey. This is a "whole student approach" taking into context that each student has a unique story and culture, may be first generation (like myself), and may need more bridging. Students typically will benefit from having the compassionate understanding reinforced in an ethics of care model that none of us can "know" what we do not yet know, and seeking help and accepting help while transitioning to the university experience (and all along the university pathway) is a key marker of building genuine resilience and persistence.

In essence and in this context, articulated care and articulated mentoring are loops that cross back and forth to weave and create a strong and sturdy framework for student success that follows meaningful application and engagement. This synergy is not confined only to undergraduate student success, but the examination of such is a primary focus in this chapter. Mentoring interventions based on care are an intrinsic part of the psychology of recovery and form a bedrock for those whose life chances have not been replete with typical protective factors.¹²

Balancing and holding space for the whole self, story and journey is an educational duty, a *kuleana* (responsibility), and one which yields concurrent academic benefits and growth.¹³ In Hawaiian epistemology, a grounded framework for faculty and educational praxis at the Research Intensive University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Native Hawaiian Place of Learning, this is resonant with *mo‘okū‘auhau* (genealogy) of keeping in mind as collectivism and constructivism in the classroom can be used as scaffolding pedagogies which build both *pilina* (relationships) and self-efficacy through intentional deliberate engagement in a rigorous intellectual yet caring classroom space.¹⁴ For example, students developing and practicing professional communication skills that can be applied across a range of academic, internship, and employment settings is critical and especially important. To address this need, for example, design a learning environment where each student takes a turn moderating the bi-weekly discussion written response, conducts presentations, and leads at least one topic-based class.

This is advanced learning in that the student is actively supported, taught, and scaffolded to richly examine and reflect upon the course materials, and also eventually skillfully facilitate a scholarly group dialogue with peers in a trusting yet rigorous learning space. If one were employed in a professional capacity (even at the Internship level, for example), one would have to lead a meeting at some point. Honors students often express that being asked to present feels like their nemesis, and report that this may be the first time they have been tasked with creating and designing a slideshow or presenting ideas cogently in a presentation space. Starting communication skill acquisition early in a trusting space demystifies the professional academic process. This also provides an arena for professional skill acquisition in terms of what some might term the “minutiae.” But the minutiae are what render an endeavor whole, complete, and solid. As with small rivets set in critical places in a pipe, the pressure cannot be contained without each element in place playing that role.

Connection matters. Honors students (and all students) need connection and care, as well as the satisfaction of concrete results while engaging in deep and rich learning, so how do we best create caring, connected, engaging learning spaces for honors students now, and in the future?¹⁵ Students in Honors courses and in various advising sessions ranging from research pathway focused to emotional intelligence focused to degree exploration note this type of connected and caring pilina/relationship building as meaningful and important in their voluntary, anonymous survey responses.

Sample Results

HON 100 Level Connection Focused Survey Results

Table 1. Question: Did Honors 100 help you create connections with your Honors cohort and the Honors Program?

N=66

Answer	Percentage
Yes	83%
No	11%
Somewhat	6%

Out of 66 Honors students who filled out the survey, 83% felt they did create connections, 11% felt they did not, and 6% felt somewhat of a connection. In total, 89% of respondents reported being helped to make connections in a course specifically designed to foster deep learning through both intellectual and social connection making.

Qualitative Response Example:

“YES, I made a connection with a member of the Honors Program, my professor, and this course allowed me to form a relationship with her through zoom, and canvas. I also was able to meet members of the Honors Cohort in this class, and it was nice to know that there were other kids who may not have that much experience in research, similar to me. I was able to make these connections through deep discussions, and collaborative assignments on canvas.”

Applying quality experiential learning theory and “mobile and transferable” skill acquisition empowers students to succeed and encourages student

affinities and core talents. Students also need to connect to place, authenticity, knowledge systems, culture, and epistemological lineages that have been made invisible. “Privileging one world view and knowledge system essentially erases the others.”¹⁶ Honors students desire to be taught as and be seen as whole students, even as the stressors and influences to compartmentalize and perform according to certain metrics continue to affect the student experience all through the educational pathway.¹⁷

The Honors Student: Now and Future

Honors Programs are designed to support and nurture the development and emergence of students who wish to engage and inquire deeply with rigor to follow a research or creative inquiry pathway. This leads to new knowledge and approaches which may help to move the needle on pressing and key issues in society. How can more students see themselves as possessing of this type of potential and desire? How can Honors expand support and opportunities to diverse students to obtain social and academic capital while pursuing and embracing an honors education that is contextual to place and time? In a society that closely hews to a rational efficiency model to drive policy decisions, quantitative approaches and number crunching tend to be allowed to speak the loudest.¹⁸ One recent positive trend has been the reduction in the use of standardized testing in the higher education application in America, even as that came with the cost of a deadly pandemic. This may increase equity if other factors of privilege (high level internships, field trips et al.) do not replace the standardized testing filter.¹⁹ In addition, there are those who view educational theory and the role of schools and higher education through a social constructivism, hidden curriculum, critical, postmodern, queer, multicultural, feminist or complexity theory lens.²⁰

Developing an Iterative Micro to Macro Mindset, Procrastination Awareness Alerts & Contingency Planning

Inculcating a “micro to macro and back again” mindset in students concretizes that this (micro) semester and decisions therein leads to all of the (macro) semesters, and successful completion of the research/creative project and graduation thereof. Envisioning oneself in the future creates a connected pathway to what actions now will manifest in that future. Undergraduate students tend to live predominantly in the “now,” which is eminently reasonable in terms of cognitive development and maturation,

and can also be a solid mindfulness approach. However, honors students in particular are also tasked with the “then”-this cannot happen unless there is some sort of actual clear bridging and frontloading between “now and then.” This could be seen as a micro version of the ethical and moral philosophical framework of longtermism where all of the constituent parts lead to the current moment, and the attainment (or not) of the desired goal.²¹ This is accomplished through clear, accessible, and engaged teaching and advising. You, the future research scholar, is built upon the open to feedback, guidance, and contingency planning of you the present-day burgeoning student scholar. There cannot be one without the other.²²

Procrastination might feel like a temporary relief to students due to the protective cognitive wiring of the human brain, but in reality, will only increase stress, and often stops one from reaching the needed destination.²³ Procrastination usually only results in frustration, or worse. Honors students require complex, personalized support enroute to successfully graduating with academic Honors.²⁴ One key element in teaching and advising is creating safe advising spaces for students to explore, to make tangible connections, to discover, and to ask questions. Overall student success in Honors occurs across a number of metrics including successful enrollment in Honors academic course requirements, academic skills acquisition such as writing proficiency and information literacy, successful advancement to the Honors research project. This successful progression requires the refinement, conception, concretization, and implementation of key mechanisms and stakeholder partnerships. Additionally, advising and course surveys track engagement and effect.

There may not be one unique element that definitively characterizes “the one protective factor” in the building of a deeper, authentic resilience. However, the aggregating of adaptive behaviors may support positive and stronger developmental benchmarks that encourage richer participation in the student life cycle and academic journey.²⁵ Masten refers to this as “ordinary magic,” and describes resilience in this way, “Many, many studies point to the same list of qualities that are associated with resilience, but one of those, for example, is having close relationships with competent, caring adults.”²⁶

Interventions such as intentional “concrete early onboarding” that use a compassionate ethics of care model play an important role to support deeper capacity and resilience building as students transition to university and into the Honors experience. This type of proactive but not excessively intrusive pilina/relationship building using an interview/talk story coupled with early

advising method, for example, can create space for incoming students to learn that none of us can “know” what we do not yet know. Seeking mentorship and guidance while transitioning to the university experience should be normalized and understood as “to be expected” (which continues all along the university pathway, to be clear). This is a key marker in building genuine resilience and persistence, and is an important attribute of a fully realized academic journey. Honors students inside the high intensity “must succeed one hundred percent of the time-failure is not an option high achievement pressure cooker” need to pay special attention to this aspect of building realistic resiliency as part of the student life cycle.

**We do not know what we do not know-yet.
Yes, that really is normal!**

Deep learning is an incremental, iterative, scaffolded and component-based affair. Nobody knows what they do not know-yet. And yes, this really is normal. Learning is not a zero-sum game, but in a society so focused on standardized testing, education can become more regurgitation than assimilation.²⁷ Honors students often operate within a pressure cooker of high achievement and a state of every ready preternatural acceleration that runs at full throttle along the no speed limits of the higher education supra Autobahn. Stopping to learn deeply is not always part of the equation, even though Honors students will generally share that this type of rich and enhanced deep learning is why the student applied to Honors in the first place, and this is all a sincere ideal and goal. Just so long as the Honors student already knows everything about how to “do this”-quickly. Humility, openness, patience, inquiry, intentional practice, iteration, and embedded scholarly reflection is the not-so-secret sauce in the deep learning stew. A student in the Honors 300 level Experiential Learning Theory course observed, “This Honors course helped me connect Kolb’s (2008) Experiential Learning Theory and the Youth and Government program together. By learning about Experiential Learning Theory, I was able to apply theory to the program and ...by creating experiential learning activities, students were able to take an active role in the Experiential Learning Cycle, create a learning identity; and most importantly, learn about...bill-writing”²⁸

Online Teaching

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic clearly altered the virtual educational landscape in many ways. Courses that had never been offered in the online

format suddenly were, and in a very sudden way. This intensive online format modality occurred over a significant number of semesters. When this shift occurred, I had been teaching successfully online in an engaged and intentional manner since 2015, having developed an existing online Honors 300 course with Writing Intensive and Oral Communication designations, and had successfully taught over 125 students in this course at that point. Online education is here to stay through student and institutional demand, and shifting paradigms in society involve the urgent need for complex thinking skill acquisition.²⁹

Experiencing the Experiential

Embedding intentional reflection, Educational Psychology and Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) in teaching since 2015 has been of great benefit in that students then have key takeaways such as “Growth Mindset,” and the ELT Learning Model to lean into. Students can thrive in a structured yet caring learning framework, supporting assimilation of and ownership of knowledge gained.³⁰ This echoes the theories of Dewey, Vygotsky, cognitivism, and constructivism in terms of meaning-making and knowledge construction.³¹ The active development of agency, care, and empowerment for students in the academic life cycle is forefronted and valued. Honors courses should offer graduation designations. These could be Communication and Writing Intensive, for example, and in so doing, Honors acknowledges and respects student academic graduation requirements. Intentionally planning and ensuring that this type of effective synergy occurs within the overall degree profile through the Honors curriculum clearly signals to students a caring efficiency in a higher education landscape where tuition costs have spiraled. This can be done creatively, academically, professionally, and with rigor.

For example, in the Honors 300 course I designed students are required to script and produce a Podcast by the end of the semester as part of a small team. Students can choose from three topics/themes that I have crafted into questions, must have at least one subject matter expert guest, and provide and include evidence based written scholarly research. The questions are 1. How can we create a Climate that cares about Climate Change? 2. Is social media or human nature the Problem? 3. If voting is our voice, why do so many of us not speak? This is the first time for nearly all students to write a script, host, or produce in the media or creative arena. The graduation designations satisfied are Writing Intensive and Communications, both at the 300 level and which can be hard classes to find in the STEM majors, for

instance. Student podcast teams choose a theme and then small scale crowd source with one another to create compelling and interesting titles such as *A Place to Knowhere: Resilience in the Social Media Age*, *Chronically Online: The Podcast*, *All Eyes on Climate Change*, and *Body Positivity: Breaking the Beauty Standards*. A student shared that the very next semester after completing this assignment in the Honors 300 class, another mentor passed along information about a paid internship opportunity which turned out to be primarily focused on creating podcasts. The podcast assignment in Honors 300 not only provides graduation designations, scholarly research, and deep pedagogical engagement, but also imparts what I have come to term as “mobile learning” that builds both academic and professional skillsets.

Student team members shared, “Furthermore, the members have improved overall communication skills within formal settings. Producing a podcast required thorough group interactions along with the verbal skills to present information for recording sessions. Each member of the team needed to communicate effectively with one another to ensure tasks were completed and for everyone to understand the direction of production. This communication was essential for the team to create a podcast that everyone could be proud of.” An Honors education can link the intellectual and the place based to positively impact the lives of our “student scholar researchers” as I call the students I work with.

Experiential Learning is a scholarly engagement teaching methodology that supports learners engaged in direct experience to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop capacity and talent.³² Learners link abstract learning and theory to real life application. A facilitated reflection process enables students to make relevant connections to goals and intrinsic motivation. Online education can be used as a schedule reliever and outreach strategy for students who may live outside of the commuter zone or live on another island, as is the case in Hawai‘i. Honors education develops students’ abilities to become deep thinkers and learners, which is a persistent theme in American Honors education, as West examines, “Teaching students to think means teaching them to consider multiple points of view, to scrutinize evidence, to make meaning in a deliberate and responsible way”.³³ Additionally, knowing the cycle and type of learning style affinities as articulated in Experiential Learning Theory can positively influence persistence and achievement. One student reported that understanding Reflective Observation was an invaluable tool in repeating and successfully passing a required STEM sequence course, especially when studying for the tests, for example.

Experiential Learning curriculum and engagement, which can also be referred to or known as enrichment opportunities, are not always equally or equitably available to all University students. This means that some students may not avail of the résumé building, skill building, portfolio profile enhancement, and networking that these types of “extra curriculars” can provide. For example, in America some students have to work full time while also attending University full time. This leaves little or no room for Study Away or Volunteers for Intercultural and Definitive Adventures (VIDA) or being a member of an Undergraduate Research Journal Student Editorial Board, for example. One solution is to intentionally embed Experiential Learning opportunities directly into the honors classroom curriculum and academic pathway, carefully ensuring that these types of courses also carry required graduation designations. The author discusses this approach in this chapter and provides specific examples of successful implementation. Direct scholarly engagement in internships, pre-med clinical portfolio building volunteering, or laboratory placements while earning course credit provides an effective and caring empowerment teaching curriculum and framework for students from diverse backgrounds. This pedagogical approach encourages student talent development and the ability to turn praxis into theory and back again in an iterative and sustainable life-cycle in an Honors academic pathway, and beyond. Students have self-reported this type of engaged curriculum led to better college coping skills.³⁴ Successful applied teaching and advising praxis optimally includes and is welcoming to a wide range of student personality styles, circumstances, cultures, contexts, and perspectives.

Ethics of Care Framework

The Ethics of Care emphasizes the importance of *response*: people have varying degrees of interdependence and dependence, and the importance of addressing contextual details of situations in order to safeguard and promote the actual specific interests of those involved.³⁵ The discipline and application of the Ethics of Care matters in facilitating the acquisition and assimilation of knowledge both academic and social in higher education.

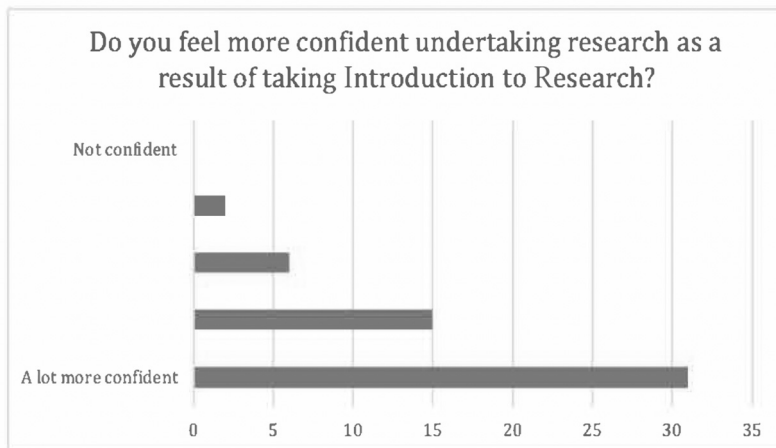
“The ethics of care starts from the premise that as humans we are inherently relational, responsive beings and the human condition is one of connectedness or interdependence... An ethics of care directs our attention to the need for responsiveness in relationships (paying attention, listening, responding) and to the costs of losing connection with oneself or with others. Its logic is inductive, contextual, psychological, rather than deductive or mathematical.”³⁶

Honors 100 Level Course: Introduction to Research-Writing Intensive

This course offers a “shared” curriculum experience for incoming first years, and any sophomores who still need to take this research focused course, thus creating focused and applicable research and information fluency skill acquisition pathways. The curriculum centers Native Hawaiian Place of Learning scholarly works, demystifies research, as well as creates an intentional shared cohort/*hui* (partnership, union, alliance, team) space. These are key elements that support student empowerment, retention, and meaningful connection making for the four-year Honors pathway. This course offers high achieving honors students the opportunity to learn about and apply research methods and to improve writing, critical thinking, and information literacy skills, a priority for WASC accreditation. The below graph demonstrates an increase in confidence. Students shared in an anonymous survey:

“The Honors 100 course provided a foundation for helping me understand the process of research, as well as the elements that go into building a research presentation. I learned a lot about the different aspects and perspectives of what a good research project consists of (Literature Review, Annotated Bibliography). I also got a lot better with my formal writing, and this is something that I will most likely use throughout the rest of my life!”

“Honors 100 provided me the confidence to approach questions with the understanding that there will not always be concrete answers. As I continue to conduct research, I will use the knowledge I gained from this class to not be discouraged when the data seems to contradict my hypotheses. Instead, I will continue to strive for a deeper understanding regardless of barriers to my research.”

Voluntary Honors 100 Level Anonymous Student Survey (n=54, 2022):**Honors 300 Experiential Learning Theory & Scholarly Engagement: Writing Intensive, Oral Communication**

This course provides Honors students both an academic nudge to engage in enriching place-based learning outside of the classroom, and supports scholarly learning reflection and deep learning opportunities in dress such as information fluency, high-level writing skills, presentations, podcast assignments, in a real-world learning loop. Placements have been in research laboratories, hospital or private practice medical settings, or internships at NASA, for example. Students learn “mobile skills” such as making a podcast, presenting, writing a lesson plan, all the while honing the ability to write, think, and communicate like a professional in this course. Students apply the skill acquisition and learning process to future Honors research and professional pursuits. This may not be generally embedded or as specifically addressed in the overall undergraduate curriculum. One student shared:

“Honors 300 has allowed me to improve my formal writing and my ability to convey my thoughts in a scholarly manner that is clear for others to understand and comprehend. I also have learned to look deeper than the surface thoughts and to dig deep into my reflection process when reading articles and watching videos.”