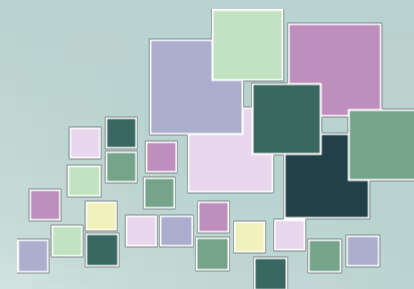


Rachael Igo



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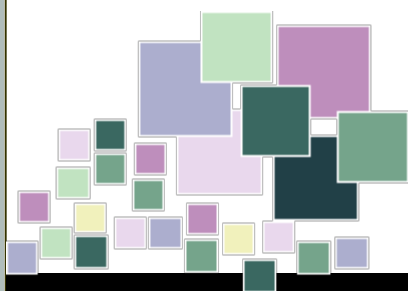
Rachael Igo



Welcome to my e-folio

I am an honors student at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I plan to graduate in Spring 2016 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Creative Writing with a Technical Communications minor. My professional goals include a career in literary editing and publishing with dreams of becoming a published writer.

In me e-folio please find the sections titled Leadership, Research, and Global Citizenship under the Honors tab. They all contain artifacts I have collected throughout my education along with reflections on how they have helped me meet the honors competencies.

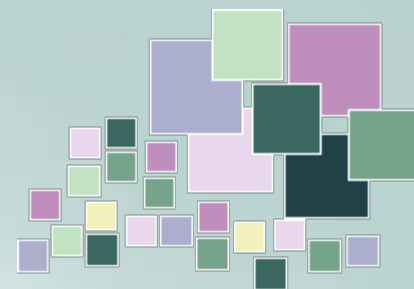


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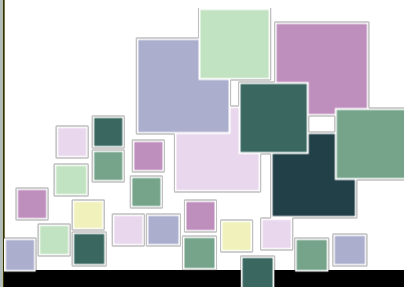
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The Honors Program: Developing Leaders, Researchers, and Global Citizens

"Minnesota State Mankato's Honors Program challenges motivated students to take their college experience further than they thought possible. They will develop the ability to solve problems, the skills to tackle tough jobs and the courage to engage in difficult discussions. They will cultivate the desire to seek new knowledge and to explore new places. They will become widely recognized, renowned, prominent, distinguished leaders, researchers and global citizens who are able to bring about change in the world, no matter what their chosen discipline may be.

The program includes classes designed specifically for honors students as well as a variety of co-curricular activities to enrich those classroom experiences. Students will have the opportunity to work with mentors, to take part in the University's Undergraduate Research Conference and to be involved in a number of other events, seminars and activities on and off campus.

Because they will have the opportunity to push themselves to do more here at Minnesota State Mankato, they will be ready to push for success in the real world as well." - <http://www.mnsu.edu/honors/>

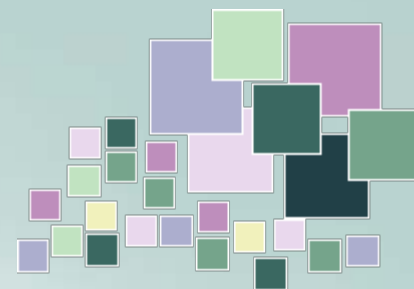


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My Leadership Philosophy

My leadership philosophy contains three main aspects: the abilities to adapt, understand, and mentor. I have learned the values of these characteristics throughout my leadership experiences during my college career through the honors seminar American Indian Leaders, and my leadership positions in Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society. The two experiences that taught me the most about leadership was being a tutor for the Intensive English Language Institute and my position as [Media Relations Director](#) for the Honors Program.

Leadership means having the ability to adapt. One misconception about leadership I used to have is the notion that I would have everything all figured out ahead of time. For example, right before my first semester as the Editor -in-Chief of the [Honors Beacon](#) newsletter, I was so excited that I had everything planned out to a "T." I had all of the articles and deadlines planned out, and I had a vision of exactly how the first meeting would go. After the first meeting and a couple of weeks, I learned very quickly that, no matter how hard I planned everything, plans changed. I did not have as many writers as I had hoped, the writers were not interested in the articles I had planned, and not everything followed my deadline schedule. I needed to learn how to adapt to these changes and become comfortable with being flexible. I quickly learned to try new approaches, new tones of communication, and different ways of approaching those I was leading. As I continued my Editor-in-Chief position I was able to practice my new approach on leadership. I recognized that each semester would be different, and approached it so. I let the flow of each semester and the different writers I was teamed with define what the semester would look like instead of forcing things to go my way. However, I also found it very important to not be too lenient to the flow of things. I learned how to let situations determine my leadership style without letting them taking over my control.

I had another opportunity to practice being a flexible leader through my experience as a tutor for the [Intensive English Language Institute](#) (IELI) where I was paired with an international student from Korea. She and I met twice a week and I helped her with her language skills. Once again, I made the mistake of envisioning how everything would play out. We had tentative weekly assignments, and I was determined to complete each one in the recommended time. However, things did not go as planned. Not all of the techniques and activities seemed to work out for us as easily as I thought they would. In this position, I was forced to make executive decisions and fast. Unlike my *Beacon* job, I did not have hours or days to think of a solution. This position taught me how to make important effective decisions quickly as a leader, and that I can actually be successful at it.


Leadership means understanding others. This section of my leadership philosophy is mainly based on my experience tutoring for IELI. Like I mentioned before, not all of the techniques and activities worked out for my mentee and I. The reason I was able to make fast and effective decisions was that I was able to understand her. I took the time to get to know her and her learning style. This is also a value I consider when working with my

writers for the *Beacon*. I have learned to take the time to get to know my writers so that I can best learn their writing style, allowing me to pair them with the best articles for them. I can know what type of feedback they prefer on their articles-through e-mail or in person, and if they like straight and to the point feedback or relaxed conversational feedback. In this way I believe I am being an effective leader because I am not only helping people get from point A to point B, but I am catering to their needs and ensuring they learn something and enjoy their time along the way.

Leadership means being a mentor. This year, my last year as the Editor of the *Beacon*, I am training in a new Editor (Sara) to take my place. I think an important part of leadership is finding someone to follow in your footsteps. I remember picking Sara out of my writers last year as someone who would value the job well. I reached out to her encouraging her to apply and even attended her interview. This fall, I am starting to train her on what I do. Being a mentor to Sara has taught me that in order to be an effective leader in this case, I need to be confident. That is the most important aspect in what I do when I am teaching her. If I am not confident and positive about what I do, then she may not take it as seriously as she should. I think the most amazing thing about this training is how much I am learning about my own job while teaching Sara about what I do.

The majority of my leadership philosophy originates from these two experiences in IELI and the Honors Office. However, I have recognized aspects of them through my honors course work and Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society as well. In my honors seminar [*American Indian Leaders*](#), I had the opportunity to research a leader of my choice. Writing and researching about Jacqueline Pata helped me to learn about the importance of being passionate as a leader. I think passionate characteristics tie in well with my leadership philosophy. If I was not passionate about being an adapter, understanding others and mentoring my philosophy would have no meaning. I have also learned to incorporate my leadership philosophy into my positions in [Sigma Tau Delta](#). During the 2014-2015 academic year I was the vice president of this organization and worked closely with the president. As we worked together we had the common understanding that adaptability is important when it comes to leadership. This academic year (2015-2016) I have the role as the president and am continuing to learn about my leadership style and to put it to good use.

Through my experiences, I have learned the value of being a good leader. I have learned how much of a difference it makes when I am able to adapt to a situation. Being able to understand those who I work with makes me an effective leader, and having confidence in myself while being a mentor is crucial. Leadership is important to me, because it is a way to successfully work with others and to make those collaborations enjoyable ones.

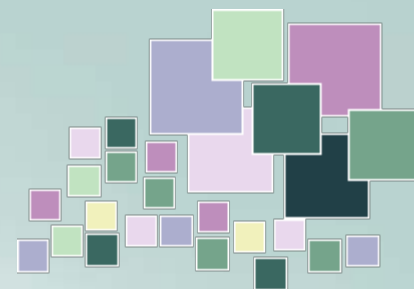


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My Research Philosophy

When I think of research, I think of being creative, solving problems, and synthesizing information. Through my undergraduate career at Minnesota State University, Mankato my research philosophy has grown through my development of information literacy and synthesis, as well as through my work with my original research project, and dissemination of those results.

When I first started out working on my research competency I focused on information literacy. Most of my classes my first semester had research components built into them, so I quickly became familiar with navigating and utilizing the databases available on the University's library web page. I think the most important lesson I learned from doing class related research projects was that I could actually use the research to my advantage. Prior to my research exposure through Honors, I saw information literacy research as looking up information an instructor wanted and regurgitating it to them. My research papers in my first year at Minnesota State Mankato showed me that I can relate my research to topics I am interested in. For example, I wrote my [Scandinavian Studies culture research](#) paper on Tove Jansson, a famous Scandinavian children's author. This was a great way for me to connect research to my passion for children's literature.


I had another opportunity to relate research to my interests and field of study. When I took the [Research and Information Literacy](#) seminar, I got to research a topic of my choice for the entire semester to conduct a literature review. I chose to research information helpful to a creative writer interested in writing historical fiction for children. This experience once again opened my eyes to how I actually use research to my advantage. I also learned a lot more about information literacy along the way. I became a pro at navigating and utilizing the data bases made available to students through the University library. I learned how to experiment with search terms and how to take advantage of doing an advanced search. I learned how to synthesize articles by skimming though headings and subheadings and how to determine if a source is credible. In this course, information literacy and synthesis proved to me to be valuable components of research and well equipped me when it was time to conduct my individual project.

The part of the research competency I struggled with the most was finding an individual research project to do. I knew a creative work was an option like publishing my own book or the like, but I wanted to conduct a traditional research project. I started focusing my search on other academic areas I was interested in besides English and Creative Writing. An opportunity opened up to me when I gained interest in [Gender and Women's Studies](#) and wanted to delve into the topic further.

A fellow student and I conducted an individual research project with Dr. Laura Harrison from the GWS department in spring of 2015. We wanted to test if students at Minnesota State Mankato who do not identify as feminists agree with feminist values. We designed our own survey for this this project, a task I did not previously know was so challenging. Writing my own survey taught me how important it is to be careful with wording,

especially when research results depend on those words. We went through multiple drafts of our survey and had it looked over and revised by our advisor. Getting IRB approval to conduct our study taught me a lot about the ethics that goes into research. Going through the tedious processes of completing and revising the application made me realize how serious testing human participants is and that it should not be taken lightly. It also made me have more respect for those who do research regularly. Presenting our research at the [Undergraduate Research Symposium](#) made me feel like a member of the community of scholars. In our dissemination of results, we concluded that students at Minnesota State Mankato have a misunderstanding on what feminism means, and according to our study they agree with feminist values. We expressed that we would like students to gain a better understanding of the term. It was great to show off what we had been working on all semester and present it in a professional manner.

My research philosophy is that to me, research means being creative, solving problems, and synthesizing information. This understanding of research has been molded by my unique experiences as an undergrad. I have gained the ability to use research to take a research opportunity and use it to my advantage, gaining knowledge in my field of study or personal academic interest.

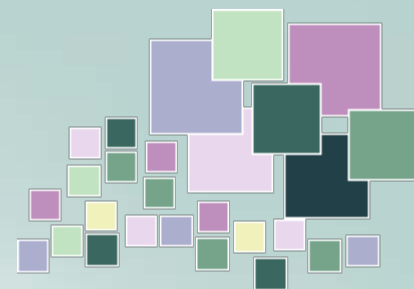


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My Global Citizenship Philosophy

My global citizenship philosophy has developed through my class work in the honors courses *American Indian Leaders*, *A Global Perspective on Women and Change*, as well as through my experiences studying Spanish and tutoring an international student at the Intensive English Language Institute (IELI.) My philosophy is that global citizenship means connecting with people through language, being aware of cultural biases, and recognizing culture as a means of identification.

To me, global citizenship means being able to connect with people, no matter what their background is. One way to do this is by speaking the same language as someone. To fulfill my language competency, I studied Spanish for four semesters, completing [Spanish 210W: Conversation and Composition](#). The most rewarding aspect that came out of learning Spanish happened during my summer job. During the summers in-between academic years I have worked at Gateway Bank in Mendota Heights. During my first summer there I was working as a teller and a client came to my station who is a native Spanish speaker and knows very little English. Even though I was not fluent in Spanish, I still knew enough to communicate with her and help her with her banking transactions. She was so happy that someone was able to communicate to her in her own language. From then on, she always went to my teller window, even if it meant waiting in line longer. It was great to build that client relationship and I had a connection with her that no one else had. I was not fluent in her language, and she was not fluent in mine, but we each knew enough about each other's to figure things out and teach each other along the way. This relationship taught me how important learning other languages is and helped me demonstrate my ability to tolerate ambiguity and negotiate meaning through language.

Another way I learned about connecting with others despite language barriers was when I was tutoring an international student on her English skills through the [Intensive English Language Institute](#) at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The most challenging aspect of the language barrier was when it came to vocabulary words my student was not familiar with. I had to become creative in ways of communicating to her when she didn't know what certain words meant. To clear confusion, I utilized Google Images, acted out charades, manipulated my voice and used exaggerated facial expressions. I was proud of the techniques I came up with and the experience taught me that, despite language barriers there are ways to overcome them without using verbal language, one simply has to negotiate meaning through language, and not necessarily verbal language.

Global citizenship means being aware of cultural biases. When I volunteered as an IELI tutor, I experienced a situation in which I realized one of my own cultural biases. When I found out that the student I was tutoring was only 19, I expressed to her how mature she looked for her age. I thought I was giving her a compliment, because in my American culture young adult women like to be told that they look older than they actually are.

However, in her Korean culture youthfulness is considered to be beautiful, so she didn't recognize that I was giving her a compliment. She said that in Korea girls are always

trying to look young. This was an interesting encounter because I was inflicting my own cultural bias- of looking older (as a young adult) as a definition of beauty- when in her case according to her culture looking younger was better. She also talked about how her older sister looks younger than her, and therefore is considered to be more beautiful than she is. This taught me to avoid assuming things about people from other cultures and aided in my ability to explain perspectives of another society or culture.

I became aware of another cultural bias of mine in the honors course [A Global Perspective on Women and Change](#) when we were studying women of Indian heritage and the hijab. We discussed common miss-conceptions about this personal choice of headwear. One miss-conception that I shared was that women who wear the hijab in America where they are not legally required to are forced to wear them by dominant males in their community. We learned that, although sometimes this is the case, most women chose to wear the hijab for modesty reasons. In their culture it is considered immodest to be in public with their hair exposed. Prior to learning this in class, I always felt bad for women I saw wearing the hijab thinking they were being forced to wear it, but now I understand that for them, it is similar to me preferring to wear pants instead of shorts in public settings. Also, I am now able to explain the cultural perspective of the hijab to others.

Global citizenship is recognizing that individuals within a common culture see their own culture as something that is important to them. The honors seminar [Native American Leaders](#) helped me to learn this lesson. Rhonda Dass, the professor of the course is a Native American and identifies as Anishinaabe. When she talks about her culture, I can feel the sense of connection all Native Americans share, no matter what tribe they are from. I think one common thing that links them together is oppression. Ever since European Spanish and French settlers came to the Americas, Native Americans have been oppressed. This class really opened my eyes to how they are still being oppressed today. There are Native Americans who own American land that they are not allowed access to or payment for, some have to live in the poor conditions of reservations, people dress up like their ancestors for Halloween, parts of their language have been appropriated into common American lingo, and they are depicted as sports mascots. Despite all of this, Native Americans are really good at coming together to stand for who they are, and they stand against these injustices because they want to stand for who they are. This intercultural experience has enabled me to better understand how individuals from certain cultures see their own culture as what's important to them.

The *Native American Leaders* seminar also helped me to use discipline specific concepts to identify other social conditions and cultural realities. For example, I studied more closely the appropriation of Native American culture into the name of Washington's football team. When I learned that, in early settlement days, the term "redskin" was used to describe Native American scalps as proof of death, I was appalled that football professionals find it an appropriate mascot name. I was able to share with others the knowledge I learned about this social injustice through civic engagement. In my public speaking class, I gave my final speech advocating against the mascot name while using cultural references as evidence. While giving this speech, I demonstrated my ability to evaluate social conditions and cultures through engaged interaction.

Throughout my four years at Minnesota State University, Mankato my understanding of global citizenship has grown through development. Through all of my experiences I have been able to define my own global citizenship philosophy. To me, global citizenship means connecting with people through language, being aware of cultural biases, and recognizing culture as a means of identification.

