

My academic career has a history of jumping around. I've changed my major more times than I can remember, and I have amassed over one-hundred and ten credit hours to date. When I graduated high school in 2006, I started studying without a purpose. I landed a great job while in school and over the years devised a creative and practical education path to fulfil my career. My employer paid for my education, and I figured aeronautics, mathematics, and engineering should be my ticket to success. I thought that I wanted to be an engineer because it made sense, but my life purpose changed after having children.

I was determined to be a father to my kids until they were at least off the ground and out of diapers. I wanted to go back to school and finish my degree, but I lost my drive to be an engineer. That sort of stuff didn't thrill me anymore. As I look back, I was really looking for an interdisciplinary education the whole time. My purpose has always been fluid, dynamic, and creative. Through this multifaceted creativity, I've explored the field of aeronautics, business, engineering, and mathematics prior to enrolling at UCF. Now I am persuaded that adding to my repertoire of computational science, public affairs with a minor in writing and rhetoric, it will create a valuable way of thinking critically to fulfil my future calling.

Over the past few years, I have wrestled with building a purposeful life dedicated to Jesus. Most recently, I explored pilot training to serve as a missionary, but I quickly found it not to be my calling, and at a crossroads. Do I continue to live my life and be content, or do I push towards the upward call of pastoral ministry? I decided to answer the call, but I quickly found that my academic career was a mess; but now I see, it is a beautiful mess. It is like a collage, all the pieces apart look chaotic, but when placed properly within the frame, is a thing of beauty. I believe that pulling from the disciplines that I have previously studied and synthesizing them will change my life.

Interdisciplinary studies can be instrumental, critical, or a combination of both according to Repko, Szostak, and Buchberger (2020). It is either a critical study of ideologies that challenge current structures, or it seeks practical applications for problem solving by being instrumental (Repko, Szostak, & Buchberger, 2020). From my vantage point I am an instrumentalist. This is how I believe interdisciplinary studies encompasses the nature of who Jesus is and the empathy that He showed to the world. He was never determined to judge the world, but He was determined to be compassionate by knowing us and by being with us. This is how I feel interdisciplinary will apply to my new career path. It will allow me the creative skills to solve complex problems within multiple cultures, and to creatively communicate the love that we should have for each other that manifests itself through empathy.

The Interdisciplinary Life (2019) says that we “are lifted beyond the confines of what you normally experience and share in perspectives that are new, challenging and richly rewarding”. I believe that this is true for my new path in life. The critical thinking skills that I have learned in my engineering and mathematics courses will give me additional abilities to be creative and to think critically in the world of public affairs. And that by refining my writing skills by minoring in writing and rhetoric, when I begin to preach, I will be prepared to speak with eloquence. These disciplines are more useful when combined. Each is useful to a point, but through an interdisciplinary approach they will be made into something truly great.

References

- Repko, A., Szostak, R., & Buchberger, B. (2020). *Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- The Interdisciplinary Life*. (2019). Retrieved from ProgressiveConnexions.net:
<https://www.progressiveconnexions.net/2017/the-interdisciplinary-life/>