Theme 1: Enabling Connections to Enhance the Student Experience

Moderator: Duane Seibel

December 3, 2020
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Sharing is Caring? Food Interventions in the Learning Environment
Sarah Walshaw, Senior Lecturer, Department of History, SFU

Using Contemplative Practices to Create Community: experiences from a student-faculty meditation group
Elisabeth Bailey, Instructor, Faculty of Applied Science/School of Nursing, UBC Vancouver

Kindness: An Exploratory Study of How University Students are Kind
Sally Stewart, Associate Professor of Teaching, School of Health and Exercise Sciences, FHSD, UBC Okanagan
John-Tyler Binfet, Associate Professor, Education, UBC Okanagan
Adam Lauze, Research Assistant, UBC Okanagan
Zak Draper, Statistician, PhD Student, Psychology, UBC Okanagan
Sharing is Caring?
Food Interventions in the Learning Environment (History Classroom)

Sarah Walshaw
Senior Lecturer, Department of History, SFU

ROUNDTABLE: Enabling Connections to Enhance the Student Experience
Model – Hist 485 “Food in Global History”
• Small seminar class, theoretical foundations, student-led curriculum
• Thematic food presentations, food sharing (default – instructor)
• Students shared stories, values
• Highly considerate of food observances (alternatives for vegan, kosher, etc)

Model – Hist 146 “African History Since Abolition”
Lecture class (n=70; 1TA)
• Instructor shared food (e.g., popcorn during films, apples in bowl, snack break)
• Demonstrated instructor care but unclear if impacted student peer connections
Study – “How do student food contributions impact well-being in learning environments”

• SFU - ISTLD funded intervention run in Honours cohort (n=9) and FASS 101 (n=4) Spring 2020

• Funding for students to bring/make foods

• Shift to emergency remote instruction – difficult to continue after March 23
Study – How do student food contributions impact well-being in learning environments?

• Fall 2020 – completely remote learning environment
• Hist 146 (n=50; plus TA)
• Hist 348 (n=30)
• Optional – low uptake
• Study in progress – results SP 2021
Dessert: Discussion and Thanks

- Boost student connection with in-class or required components (low-stakes or P/F)
- Draws on Cia Verschelden’s “Funds of Knowledge” and capital outside of course/academia

Thanks to SFU’s Well-Being in Learning Environment Grant series and participants
Thanks to students for generosity of spirit!
Using Contemplative Practices to Create Community: *Experiences from a student, faculty, and staff meditation group*

Elisabeth Bailey - Assistant Professor of Teaching – UBC School of Nursing
What we know...

• Health professional students manage both intense academic workloads and the challenges of new roles in complex healthcare environments

• Studies show that mindful practices positively impact nursing students' stress, anxiety & mood, burnout, sense of well-being & empathy

What we tried...

• As a teacher, I frequently talk about self-care practices I use to manage stress
  • *Meditation comes up a lot!*

• Summer 2019 - students approached me about starting a meditation group
  • Began meeting weekly for ~30-45 minutes
  • Co-facilitated with students
    • New activities & practices most weeks
    • Guided meditations, breathing practices, exercises to create a "mantra" or personal goals, etc.
  • Informal check-in & sharing
How things have evolved...

• Over time, the group has expanded to include new students, other faculty, & staff
  • Open to the whole community
  • Average of ~ 4-6 attendees per session
  • >50 community members have participated over the past year

• In COVID context, we have shifted to weekly online meetings hosted via Zoom

• Weekly agenda:
  • Welcome & quick check-in
  • ~ 10-minute guided meditation
  • Sharing intentions for the week ahead
Benefits & Next Steps...

Participants report:
• An increased sense of connection
• Using meditation more regularly to manage stress & anxiety
• Using apps & other resources introduced through the group to support practice
• Using mindful awareness strategies to mitigate anxiety in clinical settings & high-pressure academic tasks (exams, etc.)

Next steps...
• SoTL Project?
• Impact of “low-barrier” meditation practices on students’ perceived stress, mindful awareness, and academic/clinical measures of success

“Meditation got me through the program...I am so grateful for this group...”
- BSN student
Kindness: An exploratory study of how university students are Kind

Presented by Dr. Sally Stewart, School of Health and Exercise Sciences and Dr. John-Tyler Binfet, Faculty of Education, UBC Okanagan

Dec. 3, 2020 UBC/SFU Dialogue Series
Health Benefits of Being Kind

- Kindness is teachable and “contagious”
- Increases secretion of OXYTOCIN (↓ blood pressure, ↑ self-esteem, optimism, overall heart health)
- Energy; people feel stronger, calmer, and less depressed
- Altruistic people surveyed in 136 countries were happiest
- Those who volunteer had 2x greater overall health vs aspirin protection against heart disease
- Serotonin production
- Activates reward and pleasure centers in brain
- Stress, anxiety, pain, depression
What better way to enable student connections and enhance student experience than through **KINDNESS**!

- **Kindness research with university students:**
- How do university students define and demonstrate kindness?
- Incorporated into a 1\textsuperscript{st} yr HEALTH course with a unit and assignment on kindness/gratitude (theme analysis)
- to inform campus programs and course design to impact student connections, experience, wellbeing and academic success
Research Results: defined kindness as improving others’ lives; being polite and helping.

Intentionally Integrating kindness into courses provides an opportunity to positively impact the learning environment and thus student wellbeing, the student experience, learning and academic success.

Kindness increases sense of belonging, class cohesion and enjoyment. . . . . . .CONNECTION!!

Consider drop out rates!!
Including Kindness in the classroom:

TEACHERS Project Phase II:

- Training and supporting faculty to include wellbeing interventions in their classrooms
- Kindness was one of the interventions in pilot
- Positive results
- Phase II: more faculty, more classes, more students = collective greater wellbeing, connections and academic success

Please email me if you’d like to participate.

Thank you!!
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Thank-you!

#thrivingbeyonddcampuses

Don’t forget to register for the roundtable discussion, Thursday December 3rd from 4pm - 6pm PST

https://covid19.bccampus.ca/thriving-beyond-campuses/