InSight

A Journal of Scholarly Teaching

Volume 17

A Journal of the
Faculty Center for Innovation

"There are many lessons from trying something new and giving it time to flesh itself out…It is a process that includes failure and adaptation. As instructors, we are the expert in the material being presented, so this change in perspective, to a student view, provides a window for compassion." (p. 55)

Kramer, G. (2018). Willing to innovate. *Journal for Research and Practice in College Teaching*, *3*(2), 53-56. https://journals.uc.edu/index.php/jrpct/article/view/886/796

Subscription Information

InSight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching is published annually as a free, refereed resource highlighting scholarly contributions to advance the practice and profession of teaching. Limited print journals are available upon request; online versions are available at http://insightjournal.net/.

ISSN: 1933-4850
E-ISSN: 1933-4869

InSight's *cover photo provided by:* ***Rae Els***
Rae Els is a full-time Park student in Parkville, MO. She is a sophomore majoring in biology and double minoring in chemistry and mathematics. Rae is a member of Park's pre-health club and enjoys volunteering at blood drives. She is also a member of the Delta Lambda Zeta sorority and will be their secretary during the 2022-2023 academic year. The image submitted was of iconic Mackay building on a foggy day in the fall as Rae was heading to class.

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"As a practice, SoTL has tremendous potential to serve those least served by previous curriculum reform movements which tended to emphasize technical or methodological change rather than addressing the larger community and environment in which teaching and learning take place." (pp. 1-2)

Gilpin, L., & Liston, D. (2009). Transformative education in the scholarship of teaching and learning: An analysis of SOTL literature. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, *3*(2), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.20429/ijsotl.2009.030211

About Park University…

Park University (originally Park College) was co-founded by George S. Park, Dr. John A. McAfee, and Rev. Elisha B. Sherwood in 1875. An independent, private institution, accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, Park University currently enjoys a distinguished position in higher education as a growing institution with its flagship campus in Parkville, MO, a campus in Gilbert, AZ, 39 campus centers in 22 states, and an extensive online degree program. In 2005, Park University created The Faculty Center for Innovation (originally the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning) to promote the practice and profession of teaching, including scholarly inquiry into teaching across the disciplines. *InSight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching*, an outreach of the Center's programming, is a refereed academic journal published annually. The editorial staff invites submissions of research and scholarship that support faculty in improving teaching and learning. Open to submissions from all disciplines and institution types, *InSight* articles showcase diverse methods for scholarly inquiry and reflection on classroom teaching. Additionally, as *InSight's* readership continues to grow, in 2021 the Center decided to create an opportunity for higher education faculty to submit practical teaching tactics accompanied by a reflection and evidence-based educational material aligning to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). This category, known as *InStruct*, was designed to showcase innovative instructional strategies within the classroom while displaying SoTL principles.

From the Editor…

It has been a year, hasn't it? In looking back at the editor's introduction I wrote last year while deep in the COVID pandemic, I remember thinking: Hey, infections are down; maybe next year, we will return to some semblance of normalcy! Alas, as I sit here reflecting on the last year, I think about all of the events that have affected (and will keep on affecting) students and faculty in higher education: COVID and its lingering effects, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the fall of Roe v. Wade in the US, assaults on diversity and inclusion, reports of faculty burnout and the "great resignation" as teachers of all ranks seek out less stressful job opportunities outside education. Students report that their anxiety is at an all-time high, surprisingly worse than during COVID lockdowns. Enrollments are down in higher education, and that enrollment cliff we have been hearing about for a decade is just over the horizon. And in the middle of it all, higher education is rapidly changing in ways both good and bad, wonderful and terrifying.

One thing that sustains me and gives me hope, and perhaps reading this volume of *InSight* will give you the same comfort, is knowing just how many smart and talented colleagues we have doing the hard work, innovating in their practices, engaging and comforting students, and meeting these many challenges in higher education head on with determination. I am encouraged by the teacher-scholars in this volume to think differently about teaching: How can we more fully bring knowledge-making practices from indigenous cultures into our classrooms? How can we create a

better sense of place and engagement for students though virtual technologies or through focus on community? How can we better prepare faculty for online teaching? This volume also showcases some excellent, and highly adaptable, implementations of innovative active learning strategies using experiential learning and gamification. Our *InStruct* article feels especially relevant to me in troubled times with a focus on mindfulness and gratitude as necessary components of our classroom practice. I am profoundly grateful for the scholars in this volume for giving me inspiration and hope!

Finally, I'd like to highlight our student editorial on the importance of the liberal arts. As Morgan Milledge compellingly argues, the liberal arts are fundamentally important for helping students develop skills relevant to any job, but perhaps more importantly for the present moment, the liberal arts also develop the kind of information literacy, critical thinking, and communication skills that are important for being engaged, informed, and vocal citizens in a democracy – skills we are going to need from our students now more than ever.

I would like to thank all of the peer reviewers and authors for their hard work making this volume a reality. A special thanks goes to Dr. Jamie Els, *InSight's* Assistant Editor for her good humor, seemingly infinite patience, and exceptional work in getting *InSight* out the door every year. Many thanks also to Morgan Milledge, our outstanding editorial intern. I would additionally like to thank Lauren Lovvorn, our proofreader; this volume will be Lauren's last as she is off to bigger and brighter things, and we thank her for her years of excellent service to *InSight*. We are also grateful for the support of the Director of the Faculty Center for Innovation, Dr. Amber Daily-Hebert, and Associate Provost Dr. Emily Sallee, Drs. Stacey Kikendall and Jean Mandernach, advisory board members, and the rest of the FCI team.

--Amy Mecklenburg-Faenger, PhD

More Acknowledgements…

InSight's editorial staff would like to thank the board of trustees and executive staff of Park University; their leadership and support in providing faculty resources makes this publication possible. A special thank you is given to Shane Smeed, President, Dr. Michelle Myers, Provost, Dr. Emily D. Sallee, Associate Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs, Brian Shawver, Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning, and Dr. Jayme R. Uden, Associate Vice President and Dean of Students. Thanks also to the ParkWrites program for funding the editorial internship that served *InSight* this year.

"…effective teaching is fundamentally an intellectual activity, an endeavor to which we brainiacs in higher education are particularly well-suited, but…we also have to understand and prepare for all the important ways that teaching and learning are social and emotional interactions." (p. 4)

Neuhaus, J. (2019). *Geeky pedagogy: A guide for intellectuals, introverts, and nerds who want to be effective teachers*. West Virginia University Press.

A Treasure Chest for Instructors

Tracie Marcella Addy, PhD
Associate Dean of Teaching & Learning
Lafayette College

One of my most enlightening experiences as a beginning instructor in higher education was discovering scholarly research focused on teaching and learning. I became aware that I could access literature specific to the teaching approaches that I implemented and learn what other instructors found to be efficacious. This treasure chest of resources provided evidence for me to adopt particular teaching approaches. Combined with individually reflecting on my teaching, gathering students' feedback, and modifying my instruction based on emerging themes, this became my scholarly approach to teaching.

Scholarly teaching integrates what is known about how people learn and research on promising teaching approaches to design meaningful, significant learning experiences. Instructors focus on who is in their class, what motivates their students to learn, how situational factors impact learning, and which teaching strategies can support students in achieving learning outcomes. Relevant literature on teaching and learning can emerge from fields such as Education and Psychology, in addition to discipline-based educational research, the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), and other methodological inquiries. Incorporating research-supported principles and practices while concurrently designing for course-specific contexts creates environments more conducive for learning. In this sense, scholarly teaching empowers instructors to view their classrooms as sites of inquiry, and to apply what is known about good instructional practices to their courses, whether or not they disseminate their findings more broadly through systematic research investigations.

…scholarly teaching empowers instructors to view their classrooms as sites of inquiry, and to apply what is known about good instructional practices to their courses…

In scholarly teaching, student learning is at the focus of course design, and instructors are responsive to the diversity of their learners, modifying instructional approaches as needed. Acknowledging the humanity of students is critical, and understanding that students' lives outside of the course impact their experiences within the course. Such teaching approaches are inclusive, holistic, and value reflection and feedback.

A current illustration of scholarly teaching approaches continues to occur during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many instructors have had little choice but to try new strategies in their courses for the sake of instructional continuity and to respond to teaching at this moment. I see an uptick in the number of instructors accessing scholarly resources focused on teaching in technology-enabled environments, trauma-informed instruction, and alternative assessment and grading practices. Instructors modify their teaching approaches and gather feedback from students, and learn from the experiences of others through social media and other outlets. Theoretical frameworks

such as community of inquiry which focuses on social, cognitive, and teacher presence, and practices such as social-emotional learning are more commonly applied by an increased number of instructors.

Taking such a scholarly approach to instruction has the potential to improve a number of outcomes, as teaching, either formal or informal, is an integral component of academic life. However, in higher education we still wrestle with a number of contradictory paradigms. A major mission of colleges and universities is to provide significant learning experiences for students, yet, teaching may be devalued, and taking a scholarly approach to teaching may be challenging given institutional rewards systems. Future faculty may not receive training that prepares them to be future educators in college classrooms. These, and other paradigms limit the potential for what teaching and learning could look like in higher education by embracing and applying scholarship on teaching and learning in the decision-making process when designing learning environments. The utility of such research is threatened if it is published in journals that few ever read and apply.

As an educational developer, I see the role that I can play in bridging the gaps that exist in higher education with accessing relevant education literature. Research can be a starting point for instructors who want to take the next step in their teaching, or a confirmation that instructors are on a good path to advancing their students' learning. I can refer instructors to studies to learn about, and be inspired by what has already been done. As a conduit of this information I can justify its validity in higher education settings. However, what if accessing scholarship in higher education was more intricately embedded within our institutional structures? This more systematic approach is warranted, particularly as we continue to educate a generation of students who continue to experience the trauma and challenges of a pandemic, social and global unrest. The traditional methods for teaching utilized in the past do not always work in the present. To acknowledge such, and take a scholarly approach to teaching in today's classrooms is critical.

As a start, we can embed scholarly approaches to teaching in the discussions occurring within departments and programs. Keeping an eye out for, and locating literature relevant to teaching students within our disciplines, and creating intentional opportunities to discuss such articles on a regular basis can provide pathways for transformation in departmental curricula and teaching approaches. Instructors within departments can form communities of practice around specific teaching topics that engage colleagues in the literature. In preparing teaching portfolios for promotion and tenure review, instructors can cite the studies that they referenced, in addition to including their self-reflections, student feedback, and artifacts of teaching, to highlight how they took a scholarly approach to teaching. These are just a sampling of opportunities available to us in higher education.

As you read the articles in this volume, consider how you or the instructors in which you partner could use the findings to inform teaching efforts and take a scholarly approach to teaching. Unlock the treasure chest of resources.

The act of teaching should begin with an understanding of how people learn, and the implications of that understanding for teachers. Journals like *InSight* are providing us with ongoing opportunities to engage with those ideas. But as the field

continues to expand and evolve, we need to make sure we are validating and valorizing those teachers who are exploring and attempting radically creative new ways to teach. That can always include ideas for how to apply and adapt evidence-based practices, but it should also include strategies that push us into brand-new territories, creative techniques that might surprise ourselves and our students, and open new areas for future research. We tend to think about practice as deriving from theory, but reversing that direction can produce surprising new results. A creative teacher has a hunch, tries something new, finds that it resonates with their students, and then they or others seek to understand what might be underpinning its success. Just as we need theorists to speak to practitioners, we need such creative practitioners to clear new ground for theorists to explore.

Tracie M. Addy, PhD *is the Associate Dean of Teaching & Learning at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania where she is responsible for working with instructors across all divisions and ranks to develop and administer programming related to the teacher-scholar model from classroom teaching to the scholarship of teaching. As the Director of the Center for the Integration of Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship, she develops and delivers programming on teaching and serves* ex officio *on the Teaching & Learning Committee. In addition to these roles, she performs scholarship on teaching and learning and educational development, primarily focusing on learner-centered practices including active learning and inclusive teaching. She is a co-author of the book* What Inclusive Instructors Do: Principles and Practices for Excellence in College Teaching *and a regularly invited keynote speaker.*

A Senior's Perspective on Transferable Skills Learned in the Liberal Arts

Morgan Milledge
Park University

Throughout the summer before my senior year of high school, I visited a handful of small, Midwestern universities. Admission counselors at each school informed me of the advantages that would come with applying there—from challenging coursework that would help me grow as an individual to increased future job prospects. They spoke highly of professors in the English and Communication departments, the delicious food options at the cafeteria, and the different clubs and activities I could choose to become involved in there. And, lastly, all of them told me how I would become a well-rounded student and citizen thanks to some required liberal arts courses.

As a high school student, the idea of taking required general education classes didn't cause me to bat an eye; I was used to taking classes I didn't care about. In fact, I had known I wanted to study English in college since my freshman year of high school but only got to take five English-related classes there. I thought, "What's a few more years of general education courses?" I knew I would just be going through the motions again. As I near the end of my college career though, I wish I had been better informed about just how much of my degree relied on completing liberal arts courses, not because I would have chosen a different program, but because I might have been better prepared to utilize transferable skills.

The history of liberal education has always been a contested subject; however, knowledge of how it came to exist has advanced over the last century. The most popular claim is that liberal education originated in fifth-century Greece, and was interpreted in different ways by philosophers such as Plato and Isocrates. However, it seems the goal of a liberal education was to produce ideal human beings capable of reason (Kimball, 2010). In modern times, it is thought that general education requirements exist to help students ground their intellectual reasoning, think critically, and write well (Princeton University, 2022). I believe my University education has achieved this goal. For instance, my required language classes in Spanish made it necessary for me to think deeply about language and its structure—topics that have benefitted me as a writer of both Spanish and English. Furthermore, my psychology courses, Introduction to Psychology and Lifespan Development, taught me about human motivation and reasoning. Although I might not have realized it at the time, this knowledge has undoubtedly helped me in my public relations and interpersonal communications classes.

These (sometimes unacknowledged) transferable skills that have come from the classes I was not personally interested in are the things I appreciate most about my higher education experience. One reason the skills I've gained from my non-major courses are so important to me is that, unlike engineering or journalism, English is not a job-specific degree. The skills I have gained throughout my education will follow me no matter what career I end up pursuing. However, according to Dr. Deesha Chadha,

the methodology regarding the teaching of transferable skills needs more time to develop, as the value of such skills has only recently been realized. Chadha defines transferable skills as, "… those which are learnt in education and applied to employment" (p. 19). As previously mentioned, skills from my liberal arts courses have already transferred to my degree-specific ones, and I imagine they will transfer to my career as well.

While I now recognize that my skills have indeed transferred from class to class, it wasn't until the second semester of my junior year that I was consciously aware I was utilizing and gaining "transferable skills". The course that made me realize how much my skills and knowledge had actually transferred thus far was a course in professional writing in English. Throughout the course, we not only learned the importance of clearly defining tasks when working in a group to plan an event but also how this skill might be used in our future careers. It was made clear by the instructor that the modern workplace is highly collaborative and that it is imperative to know how to work in teams both effectively and efficiently. It was also made clear that knowledge from previous courses we had taken would come in handy throughout the class. For instance, the writing skills we had developed in classes such as first-year writing and rhetorical theory would ultimately be vital in writing an effective literature review. In addition, the skills I learned in my public relations course would help us advertise our event to other students.

…liberal education requirements provide the perfect opportunity for transferable skills to grow in unexpected ways.

Some may be skeptical that shifting toward a focus on the development and application of transferable skills may turn higher education into job training, ultimately defeating the purpose of liberal education altogether. However, my view is that liberal education requirements provide the perfect opportunity for transferable skills to grow in unexpected ways. My upper-level, interdisciplinary seminar in world art gave me experience in describing artistic scenes and renderings using only words, a skill that I very well may need in a career related to the magazine or report writing. Through my science courses like Personal and Community Health, I learned how to write about a subject as technical and complex as the human body while remaining clear and concise.

There are many reasons to believe the skills I've learned thus far won't stop benefiting me when I graduate. In fact, modern business leaders emphasize the development of soft skills in their future employees. According to Dr. Julie Lavender (2019), skills such as communication (both verbal and written), as well as highly developed social intelligence, are listed as the most important qualities by executives across the United States. One of the reasons these skills are so highly sought after by employers in every field is because recent college graduates have been found deficient in critical thinking, writing, speaking, and teamwork. Advancing technology is likely one cause of the shortage in soft skills. The irony in that, though, is that the most valuable work skills won't be ones that a computer can accomplish (Wilkie, 2019). It is because of this fact that professionals such as Lynn Pasquerella, president of the Association of American Colleges & Universities in Washington, D.C. say liberal arts degrees will be so highly valued in the near future (Wilkie, 2019).

The usefulness of transferable skills ultimately comes down to the individual student's perspective, but I believe I would not have what it takes to impress potential

employers if it weren't for the skills I've developed by taking courses I originally viewed as chores. I see each of the skills I've learned benefitting me as well as those around me--whether I end up as a high school teacher or a technical editor. The challenge now is teaching students to appreciate, retain, and apply the transferable skills they have learned to their education and careers.

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Morgan Milledge *is a senior studying English and public relations and served as an editorial intern for* InSight *in spring 2022. As a valuable member of the* InSight *editorial team, she blinded, proofed, and reference checked manuscripts, and she wrote the compelling student editorial on the value of a liberal arts education included in this volume. After graduating in December 2022, Morgan plans to pursue a career in publishing–hopefully as a literary or technical editor. She has always been passionate about reading and writing and would love the opportunity to help aspiring authors tell their stories.*

The Impact of Incorporating Indigenous and Other Nontraditional Ways of Mathematical Knowing into a University-Level Geometry Course

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Abstract. During the Fall 2021 semester, the author taught a university-level geometry course into which they incorporated texts and discussions on mathematics and mathematical epistemology from outside of the "Western" tradition typically centered in college math curricula. Analysis of student survey responses and students' reflections on their work offer some evidence that even minimal engagement with these nontraditional perspectives, facilitated intentionally, led to increases in students' appreciation of other epistemic traditions. Though the smallness of the sample size prohibits drawing broader conclusions, the significance of some findings suggests a critical need for further study of these pedagogical practices.

I am a white-identifying male of European descent, teaching at a predominantly white four-year liberal arts university of roughly 3500 students that lies on the ancestral lands of the Cherokee/Tsalagi (GWY) or Aniyvwiya (DhBᎾᏫT). These lands were stolen by European colonizers. I echo the words of my university regarding the meager impact of this simple statement: "we acknowledge that an act of recognition is not enough to overcome the settler-colonial history that has attempted to eradicate [I]ndigenous people from the history and consciousness of these lands" (University of North Carolina, Asheville Land Acknowledgment, 2019).

I offer these statements at the outset of this article for several reasons. Most evidently, these statements acknowledge the complexity of the land I live with and do my work with while paying respect to those who, historically, have called this land home. Furthermore, my identity as a white person limits what I can ethically do or say, for my lived experience does not permit me to speak as an expert on Indigenous ways of coming to know nature.

Most relevant to the focus of this article, however, is the fact that the land is the perfect starting point for a conversation on geometry. After all, the word "geometry" comes from the Ancient Greek γεωμετρία, meaning "measurement of the earth." Some of the earliest geometers in the Western/European tradition were concerned with understanding the shape of the world around them, using abstract mathematical ideas to calculate areas and volumes for engineering, agricultural, and other purposes (Greenberg, 2008. However, this Western geometric tradition is only one of many culturally-bound ways of coming to know the world, and overemphasis on Western mathematics has long served to alienate students not of European descent,

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at every educational level (Aikenhead, 2017; Cajete, 2020; Johnson, 2021; Moses & Cobb, 2001; Peralta et al., 2013).

Intentional efforts to incorporate other mathematical traditions into Western STEM curricula also begin with the land. As scholars of Indigenous ways of living in nature make clear, such ways are typically place-bound in ways that Western science, with its emphasis on generalizability, is not (Aikenhead & Michell, 2010; Cajete, 2006; Peat, 2002; Simpson, 2014). It is important, therefore, to situate this article in a specific context, geographically and institutionally.

This article is an account of my and my students' engagement with a Fall 2021 college geometry course into which I incorporated Indigenous and other nontraditional ways of mathematical knowing. My goals in teaching the class in this manner were twofold: (1) to introduce students to other mathematical ways of coming to know the world while complicating the (Western) ways with which they were already familiar, thereby, ideally, (2) strengthening students', particularly non-white students', identities as members of a mathematical community. I first describe my efforts to plan the course and then provide a brief overview of the relevant assignments and activities the students completed. I then turn to the students' responses to the non-Western elements of the course, as evidenced in pre- and post- surveys of students' perceptions and in the students' written reflections.

Despite my intentional efforts to incorporate nontraditional mathematical ideas into this course, the central focus of the course in question was still axiomatic geometry in a Western tradition. It is particularly noteworthy, therefore, that even relatively modest efforts to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing had a measurable impact on students' mathematical worldview.

Some Notes on Terminology

Various scholars of cross-cultural science education offer definitions of the word "science" that broaden its applicability beyond European and European-influenced institutions. For instance, Japanese scholar Masakata Ogawa uses the word "science" to refer to any "rational, culturally based, empirically sound way of knowing nature that yields, in part, descriptions and explanations of nature" (1995). In a similar fashion, Tewa scholar Gregory Cajete suggests that science is "a story of the world and a practiced way of living it" (2006). It is worth noting that both of these definitions encourage a pluralistic view of ways of knowing the world, as opposed to the "anything goes" connotations of the word "relativistic."

Words like "Western" and "European" are similarly problematic, owing to the complex meanings they encapsulate: where is "The West"? Where does it begin? End? Does the term "European" apply to modern mathematical traditions ultimately influenced by the European one, like the mainstream math predominant in most industrialized nations, regardless of their geographic location? Even the seemingly straightforward and objective words "knowledge" and "mathematics" come with their own challenges, as both of these terms are strongly culturally bound. Acknowledging the relational, action-oriented focus of most Indigenous languages and epistemologies, Aikenhead and Michell (2010) use the phrase "Indigenous ways of living in nature"

(IWLN) instead of "scientific knowledge," emphasizing a verb ("living") in place of a noun ("knowledge").

In the current work, for lack of better terms, I use words and phrases like "knowledge," "ways of knowing," "science," "mathematics," "Western," and "European," fully acknowledging the complexities entailed by these terms. I humbly ask the reader to receive these words with the same intentionality and open-mindedness with which they are written.

Preparation for the Course

Preparation to teach the course began in Summer 2021. At this time, I selected the course textbook, Marvin Jay Greenberg's *Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometries: development and history* (2008). Though Greenberg's text falls well within the Western/European mathematical canon, the book's treatment of geometry in the Western tradition is supplemented by historical accounts that are uncharacteristic in their richness and scope. These accounts offer an epistemic context for the development of modern Western geometric ideas absent from most other textbooks. Moreover, the author includes an entire chapter on the philosophy of mathematics, explicitly acknowledging there the neo-Platonist foundation in which most modern Western mathematicians work. Greenberg stops short of considering Indigenous geometries, but to my knowledge no other geometry textbook in the Western tradition offers both a solid foundation for Western geometry and an intentional treatment of that geometry's epistemic limitations.

During the summer, I also reached out to Indigenous colleagues on campus and in the community. My colleagues on campus, including a scholar from the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, a scholar from an Indigenous community in the Colombian Andes, and a white astronomer familiar with Indigenous ways of knowing, offered critical support by directing me to readings and other resources on Indigenous epistemology that would prove helpful in my course planning. Meeting and corresponding with the Director of Education for the nearby Museum of the Cherokee Indian, herself a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, provided me with additional ideas for incorporating general Indigenous ways of knowing into the course. (This person recommended other members of the Cherokee community whom I could contact for more specific ideas, but I was unable to correspond directly with these persons.)

These consultations helped me to develop a list of supplementary readings that would enable students to engage with other epistemic traditions. With these resources in hand, I was able to plan class activities (some of which are described in the following section) that would facilitate students' engagement with nontraditional ways of knowing and help them to connect these ways with ideas from the more familiar Western mathematical tradition.

Class Activities and Assignments

Eleven (11) students enrolled in the geometry course, including seven (7) male and four (4) female students. Racially and ethnically, four (4) of the male students

identified as white or Caucasian and three (3) as Hispanic or Mexican American. Of the female students, three (3) identified as white or Caucasian, and one (1) as Hispanic. Ten (10) of the students were mathematics majors, including five (5) students seeking licensure to teach either middle school or high school mathematics. (The course is a required one for the latter students.) The remaining student was majoring in accounting with a math minor.

In the first week of the class, the students were asked to complete a short pre-survey (Appendix) designed to ascertain their views on some basic ideas from mathematical epistemology (Questions 1-6) and their sense of agency and membership in broader communities of mathematical practice (Questions 7-10). These questions, offered to each student in random order, would be repeated verbatim on the course's post-survey.

Despite the incorporation of non-traditional ways of knowing into the course, the course was still centered on a traditional axiomatic approach to Western geometry, and roughly 90% of class meetings were devoted to this approach. Meanwhile, nontraditional ways of knowing were the focus of five of the class meetings and throughout the semester, the students engaged with five sources centering nontraditional perspectives on scientific epistemology. While only two of these sources (Peat, 2002 and Lakoff & Núñez, 2000) concerned mathematics specifically, our class conversations helped to translate all of the texts into a mathematical context.

In Week 3, the students read Chapters 5 and 6 of *Bridging cultures: Scientific and Indigenous ways of knowing nature* (2010), by the white Canadian scholar Glen S. Aikenhead and Barren Lands Cree Nation scholar Herman Michell. This reading gave the students a basic understanding of what its authors refer to as "Indigenous ways of living in nature" (IWLN). In-class conversation on the reading focused on a few of the several characteristics of IWLN that Aikenhead and Michell highlight, namely, that these non-Western ways of coming to know are generally place-based (pp. 73-75), valid (pp. 88-90), and rational (pp. 90-91).

In Week 8, students were asked to read Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's essay "Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation" (2014). In this work, Simpson unpacks the meaning of a traditional story of a child's coming to learn how to collect sap from maple trees through interacting with nature. Simpson makes the point forcefully that learning is strongly geographically situated; coming to know the world must take place in a particular location in the world. After a discussion of this reading, the students engaged in an activity in which they created maps of various locations on the university's campus. This place-based activity was the jumping-off point for a conversation on alternative (Western) geometries in which the "distance" between two points is not measured in fixed numerical units but rather relationally, two points being "close" if the concepts they represent are metaphorically or operationally close. As we discussed in class, the late Black mathematician and philosopher of mathematics Robert Moses adopted similar approaches in his culturally responsive math education program, The Algebra Project (Moses & Cobb, 2001).

In the same week, students read in class an excerpt from pp. 166-167 of white Scottish/Canadian scholar F. David Peat's *Blackfoot physics: A journey into the Native American universe* (2002) highlighting the ways in which both Native American and

traditional Western ways of knowing approach the number 4. As Peat points out, this number is associated with balance and harmony in various Native American constructions (e.g., the sacred hoop, the medicine wheel, and the bowl of heaven), balance which is also evident in the inherent equilibrium of four coplanar points in Western geometry.

In Week 12, students engaged with two sources, a conference presentation by Káínawa First Nation scholar Leroy Little Bear on Blackfoot metaphysics (2016) and an excerpt (pp. 1-10) from the introduction to *Where mathematics comes from: How the embodied mind brings mathematics into being*, by George Lakoff and Rafael Núñez (2000), both scholars of European descent. Both of these sources gave the students fresh perspectives on "traditional" science. On the one hand, Little Bear's presentation explores ways in which Indigenous (Blackfoot) ways of knowing diverge from Western ways of knowing, highlighting specifically the holistic and locally grounded nature of Indigenous ways as opposed to the analytical and universalizing nature of Western ways. At the same time, Little Bear draws attention to convergences between the traditions, noting parallels between, for example, quantum mechanics and the Native American notion of the implicate order.

Meanwhile, even as they operate within a Western philosophical tradition, Lakoff and Núñez (2000) demonstrate the unprovability of the neo-Platonist foundation on which most modern Western mathematicians base their work. "Mathematics as we know it has been created and used by human beings," the authors begin; "[m]athematics as we know it is limited and structured by the human brain and human mental capacities. The only mathematics we know or can know is a brain-and-mind-based mathematics" (p. 1). These authors' complexification of Platonic thought helped the students to see that the challenges to the primacy of Platonic mathematics come not only from wholly without.

Throughout the semester, I was keenly aware of what I could do and what I could not do. As an expert in the Western mathematics and mathematical philosophy, I could capably "problematize" the mathematics my students were used to studying, helping them to see the pitfalls of the neo-Platonism that undergirds much of Western mathematical thought, even up to the present day. As an eager student of Indigenous ways of coming to know, I could confidently introduce my students to ideas that the authors of our readings bring to the conversation on science and math and help them to navigate these authors' ideas. Finally, I could attempt, whenever possible, to integrate ideas from our readings on Indigenous thought with more traditional Western mathematical concepts, as Peat attempts to do in his discussion of the Native American sacred hoop/medicine wheel and four points in general position.

I could not, however, speak as an Indigenous scholar, or even an expert in Indigenous epistemology, a topic in which I am myself still a novice. Moreover, even had I more expertise, some elements of Indigenous ways of knowing are not only spatially bound but temporally bound, as well. As Simpson makes clear throughout her work (2011, 2014, 2017), some stories may only be told at certain times of year, and only by certain people.

Given these limitations, my adjustments to the course were relatively modest ones. Nevertheless, the evidence to which I now turn suggests that even these modest changes resulted in measurable shifts in students' thinking about mathematics. This

evidence indicates that intentional efforts, however small, to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing into mathematical coursework may have a profound and positive impact both on students' learning and on their sense of membership in communities of mathematical practice.

Impact on Students' Learning and Identity

At the semester's end, students were invited to complete a post-course survey posing the same questions as the pre-semester completed a few months previously (see Appendix). Each student also had an opportunity to reflect on their engagement with nontraditional mathematical perspectives in two brief, related portions of a course portfolio due on the last day of the final exam period.

How did students' responses to the survey questions change from the beginning of the semester to its end? Each student was asked to provide a "codename" as an identifier, enabling a matching of pre- and post- responses while retaining anonymity. Performing a paired students' *t*-test on each of the ten items on the surveys shows statistically significant change at the $p<0.05$ level in a single item ("Understanding culture helps us understand science and math") and at the $p<0.10$ level in two additional items ("Mathematical ideas are discovered, not invented" and "I feel like my contributions to the body of mathematical knowledge are valued"). On the first of these items, the mean response changed from 3.455 to 4.455, suggesting that the course contributed to solid gains in students' appreciation for the cultural basis of mathematical practice. The responses to the latter two items suggest that students shifted from slightly favoring mathematical "discovery" to slightly favoring mathematical "invention" and that students came to have a greater appreciation of their own contributions to the body of mathematical knowledge. The first shift might signal a move away from neo-Platonist thought, in which an ideal mathematics inheres in the universe, waiting to be discovered, and toward a more humanistic conception of mathematics, in which math is, at least in part, socially constructed. See Table 1 for a summary analysis of all aggregate responses.

Table 1

Pre- and Post- Survey Results, Aggregate, n = 11

Item	Pre- survey mean	Post- survey mean	Change	*p* value, paired student *t*-test
Mathematical ideas are discovered, not invented	3.364	2.818	-0.545	0.082
Mathematical ideas vary from culture to culture	3.636	4.364	0.727	0.120
Mathematical ideas are built into the universe	3.545	3.545	0.000	1.000
Mathematics is socially constructed	3.636	3.636	0.000	1.000
Understanding culture helps us understand science and math	3.455	4.455	1.000	0.008

Table 1 Cont.

Item	Pre- survey mean	Post- survey mean	Change	*p* value, paired student *t*-test
Mathematics helps me understand the world around me	4.727	4.909	0.182	0.167
I enjoy doing mathematics	4.636	4.636	0.000	1.000
I like learning about mathematics	4.636	4.545	-0.091	0.676
I understand mathematics most easily when I work on it with others	4.091	4.091	0.000	1.000
I feel like my contributions to the body of mathematical knowledge are valued.	2.909	3.545	0.636	0.067

Disaggregating the students' response by gender shows some interesting trends. Considering male students' responses (n=7), only two items, "Mathematical ideas are discovered, not invented" and "Understanding culture…," exhibit statistically significant change at the p<0.10 level, and indeed p<0.05 for both. In fact, the change in the first item for male students only is more pronounced than it was for the class as a whole. Meanwhile, for female students (n=4), only one item, "I feel like my contributions…," demonstrated significant change at the p<0.10 level, and the change suggests an even more marked gain in female students' esteem of their contributions than in the class aggregately. This finding, though only modestly statistically supported here, agrees with the considerable literature on gender differences in students' perception of membership in STEM disciplinary communities. Women, especially women of color, are historically marginalized within Western STEM communities (Bello, 2018; Good et al., 2012; Moss-Racusin et al., 2012; Ong et al., 2018; & Smeding, 2012). See Table 2 for data on items showing significant change when disaggregated by gender.

Table 2

Pre- and Post- Survey Results Showing Significant Change when Disaggregated by Gender

Item	Pre- survey mean	Post- survey mean	Change	*p* value, paired student *t*-test
Mathematical ideas are discovered, not invented (MALE, n=7)	3.286	2.571	-0.714	0.047
Understanding culture helps us understand science and math (MALE, n=7)	3.286	4.143	0.857	0.017
I feel like my contributions to the body of mathematical knowledge are valued (FEMALE, n=4)	2.750	3.500	0.750	0.058

Finally, we can disaggregate the data by students' reported race and ethnicity. In this analysis, there are no items showing significant change at the $p<0.10$ level for the students identifying as Hispanic or Mexican American ($n=4$), but two items, "Understanding culture…" and "I feel like my contributions…," showing significant change at the $p<0.05$ level for white students ($n=7$). The change in the first item may suggest that white students may be less apt than their non-white peers, at the outset, to recognize the salience of culture in science and science education. In fact, the literature on science education clearly demonstrates non-white students' awareness of the connections between race and science. Furthermore, one of the primary motivations for centering non-Western science in mainstream curricula is to improve non-white students' participation in science (Aikenhead, 2017; Aikenhead & Michell, 2010; Cajete, 2020; Hernandez et al., 2013; Johnson, 2021; Peralta et al., 2013; & Tlali, 2017). See Table 3 for data on items showing significant change when disaggregated by race and ethnicity.

Table 3

Pre- and Post- Survey Results Showing Significant Change when Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity

Item	Pre- survey mean	Post- survey mean	Change	*p* value, paired student *t*-test
Understanding culture helps us understand science and math (WHITE, *n*=7)	3.429	4.571	1.143	0.030
I feel like my contributions to the body of mathematical knowledge are valued (WHITE, *n*=7)	2.857	3.857	1.000	0.038

Obviously, the smallness of the sample sizes in the foregoing analyses precludes our drawing more definite conclusions, particularly for the disaggregated data. However, the preliminary findings are promising and suggest the need for more work.

I turn now to the students' reflections on the non-Western elements of the course. Students' portfolios, submitted at the end of the semester, offered two opportunities for such reflection. One opportunity was in response to an explicit request for this reflection as a standalone component of the portfolio:

> Your portfolio should include a brief reflection (orally or in writing) on your engagement with ideas outside of the "Western" mathematical tradition which we've explored together this term. You could reflect on a specific tradition outside of this one, you could reflect on the ways these traditions overlap, collide, or integrate with one another; you could simply reflect on how our explorations have impacted you.

The second opportunity was in the students' reflection on the portfolio as a whole, in response to the following prompt: "Finally, your portfolio should include a

personal reflection (in writing or in an audio or video recording) that serves as a "guide" of sorts to the rest of the portfolio, explaining why you've chosen to include the work that you have."

Several portfolio responses suggest that the course was effective in helping students appreciate the cultural underpinnings of mathematical ideas. For example, one (white female) student noted, "after this class I understand that [math] doesn't come without a significant narrative attached. I never really focused on the fact that all of the math I've learned in my lifetime comes from an almost exclusively European tradition." Another student, who identified as a Hispanic female, shared a decidedly different perspective: "It's fairly easy to detect the euro-centricity in our education system growing up in two different cultures. Even if my parents haven't gotten much education, I immediately recognize that education is strongly directed toward the major groups in this country." This dichotomy mirrors one of the phenomena already suggested by the survey data: white students showed significant gains in understanding of the role culture plays in mathematical sensemaking while non-white students showed no such gain. Students in the latter group do not need explicit instruction to know that Western mathematics education is a fundamentally white-centered enterprise.

Another common theme in students' reflections was the development of a nuanced understanding of the Western mathematical tradition, absent specific reference to non-Western ways of knowing. "I once thought that traditional, Western mathematics was a universal bastion of truth, that these mathematical ideas were so pure that they were discovered facets of the universe itself," one (white male) student notes, concluding, "I now realize that math is completely a human invention." Another (also white male) student's comments are similar:

> The authors [Lakoff and Núñez] write about mathematics being built on "conceptual metaphors" and being closely related to our minds rather than separate from them. Although at first I was a little discouraged by this seeming restraint put upon mathematics in the minds of the authors, I have come to appreciate their perspective.

This student was not the only one to admit to initial struggles with a positive outcome. One of his peers (a white female) remarks that

> [b]efore this class, I thought of mathematics as something that just is. Math is math is math. I thought of it as something that was black and white, as something that could be right or wrong…This course, especially with the time we spent on non-traditional mathematics, has truly helped to me see the creativeness and beauty that I had overlooked within mathematics.

Perhaps most important for instructors who might want to incorporate non-Western ways of knowing into their math classes, several students reported enjoying the non-Western content of the course, ascribing it a high value. "I really wish other mathematics classes would incorporate non-Western perspectives of mathematics," one (white female) student offered. The same student, who plans to become a middle

school mathematics teacher, elaborated on the role such perspectives could play in the classes she will soon be teaching:

> I feel that using some of these non-Western perspectives that I was introduced to in this class and in this reading in particular, I will be able to give my students a whole new perspective and help them gain a better appreciation for mathematics…This could help show students that mathematics is not just an irrelevant subject that does not relate to anything and something they should not care about. Students would be able to see mathematics in a different light and see how relevant it is to their lives and other disciplines in general.

Another (white female) student admitted that "[o]ur journey exploring mathematics outside of the traditional Western Approach has had quite an impact on my understanding of mathematics as a whole and has also been honestly one of my favorite pieces of the class." One of her peers (another white female) agrees: "Overall, I really enjoyed how this class was able to tie in some non-traditional mathematics or mathematics that were based outside of the European perspective." Yet another student (a Hispanic male) was very blunt in his assessment: "to be honest, I felt as it was a disservice to me and my fellow UNCA mathematicians to not have had a math classroom of this importance earlier."

Indications for pedagogical practice and future study

Even these meager preliminary results suggest that modest changes to a college mathematics course's curriculum (taking three or four hours of class time out of an entire semester) can lead to gains in students' appreciation for the role that culture plays in mathematics. These results also indicate a need for both more widespread adoption of intentional pedagogical practices related to non-Western ways of knowing and further exploration of the role such practices can play in helping students appreciate scientific perspectives outside of the traditions centered in most Western scientific curricula.

I close by offering one more case for incorporating Indigenous perspectives into traditional college mathematics classes: doing so is rejuvenating, enlightening, and fun, as much for the instructor as for their students. Learning to see our subjects through lenses other than our own can bring us all joy, even as it brings us closer together.

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Appendix

Contents of the post- survey

[**Note:** each of the ten items on the survey below asked students to respond with one of "Strongly disagree," "Slightly disagree," "Neither agree nor disagree," "Slightly agree," or "Strongly agree." Responses were coded with values from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree") to permit quantitative analysis.]

Thank you for taking a few moments to complete the following survey on some of the social, cultural, philosophical, etc. aspects of mathematics. This survey, and a similar one I asked you to complete at the semester's start, will help me to better understand if and how our class impacted your perception of these aspects. Please contact me (pbahls@unca.edu) if you have any questions, comments, or concerns with this survey!

1. Mathematical ideas are discovered, not invented.
2. Mathematical ideas vary from culture to culture.
3. Mathematical ideas are built into the universe.
4. Mathematics is socially constructed.
5. Understanding culture helps us understand science and math.
6. Mathematics helps me understand the world around me.
7. I enjoy doing mathematics.
8. I like learning about mathematics.
9. I understand mathematics most easily when I work on it with others.
10. I feel like my contributions to the body of mathematical knowledge are valued.

If you have any other comments about the topics treated by this survey, please feel free to include them here: [space provided]

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"We must recognize that [students] are complex beings made up of interacting minds, bodies, spirits, emotions and so on. On some level, we need to design universities that recognize, value, and account for these complexities" (p. 1).

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Student Perspectives on Using Virtual Reality to Create Informal Connection and Engagement

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Abstract. Following the global pandemic, educators relied heavily on live videoconferencing options and online meeting spaces to host class in lieu of traditional, in-person classroom learning. Yet, exhaustion and Zoom fatigue fueled a lack of engagement in such online spaces, while simultaneously the need for more informal connection to support learners' emotional well-being emerged. This study aims to better understand how online learners perceive the use of virtual reality (VR) as an alternative platform to informally connect and engage with one another, and to ascertain the impact on their satisfaction and motivation for such engagement. Specifically, the investigation sought to examine participant perceptions of social presence felt, the ability to connect and exchange informally, and the impact on motivation, digital literacy, and satisfaction overall.

Following the global pandemic, the world grew to rely more heavily on technology to maintain workflow, synchronous meetings, and connection (Vargo et al., 2021). Videoconferencing platforms (such as Zoom, Skype for Business, Google Hangouts, GoToMeetings, and Cisco WebX) replaced live, in-person meetings, classrooms, and offices. In particular, higher education institutions rapidly transitioned to online and hybrid modalities using learning management systems (LMS) and supportive asynchronous communication tools (such as document sharing repositories, screen sharing/recording tools, virtual workboards and workspaces). Although these tools afforded a way to remain connected while learning and working remotely, individuals also began to suffer from an abundance of screen-time and overscheduled synchronous meetings using these technology-supported meeting spaces–leading to "Zoom-fatigue", distraction, and a lack of interest in online social events (Fosslien & Duffy, 2020; Wiederhold, 2020). During this time, researchers also discovered the need for more intentional and informal opportunities to socially connect with classmates, peers, and colleagues–demonstrating the detrimental effect of isolation, anxiety, and burn out as a consequence of unanticipated remote working and learning (Brooks et al., 2020; Hwang et al., 2020; Toscano & Zappala, 2020; Wang et al., 2020).

While individuals and organizations sought to combine (and simultaneously felt overwhelmed by) the use of synchronous and asynchronous tools to maintain productivity, they also unearthed the need for informal, social connection and engagement to support the emotional aspects lost from the move to these online environments (Toscano & Zappala, 2020). However, utilizing the same work-based platforms (LMS and videoconferencing) proved to be somewhat exhausting, unmotivating, and lacked the authentic feel of the social environments they tried to replicate–from the office water cooler to celebratory events to informal conversations over coffee (Fosslien & Duffy, 2020; Wiederhold, 2020).

With an understanding that learning and working remotely were essential tasks at hand, the importance of supporting the social and emotional needs of our learners and workers became evident. In particular, the need for meaningful social engagement, informal exchange, and (for lack of a better word)–fun! Yet, given the lack of motivation or interest to socially connect, using the same technologies that were leading to exhaustion and fatigue, this investigator sought to explore options to address this need by using virtual reality.

Literature Review

What is Virtual Reality (VR) and Why Use it to Enhance Engagement?

Virtual Reality (VR) is defined as "technology which allows a user to interact with a computer-simulated environment, whether that environment is a simulation or the real world or an imaginary world" (Mandal, 2013, p. 304). While virtual reality emerged as a new paradigm in computer technology, it also grew in popularity in the gaming industry and, initially, required expensive equipment (such as head mounts, gloves, or VR goggles) for use. However, in 2003, the launch of SecondLife® introduced a virtual space where users could create their own avatars and socialize in a virtual space together (Dailey-Hebert et. al, 2020). By 2012, a smartphone display for VR was released and made VR more affordable and accessible to industry and educational domains. In a 2019 Horizon Report, the adoption of artificial intelligence and mixed or virtual reality were listed as important developments for technology use in higher education (Alexander et. al, 2019). Yet, intentional use and design is essential to ensure that VR can support learner engagement. Sherman and Craig (2003) found VR to include features that support immersion, interactivity, and people on the creating and receiving sides of the medium in the virtual world – highlighting the importance of *presence* and *engagement* in VR. In particular, research suggests that VR provides a more realistic experience, which results in a higher sense of *presence* (Slater & Wilbur, 1997), and consequently, a more powerful emotional impact (Milk, 2015), which leads to *higher engagement* and *motivation* (Lee et al., 2010).

VR provides a more realistic experience, which results in a higher sense of presence, and consequently, a more powerful emotional impact.

Digital Literacy and How Virtual Reality (VR) is Being Used in Higher Education

Digital literacy is the ability to use information and communication technologies effectively (Santos & Serpa, 2017). Virtual reality has been utilized in higher education to promote learner engagement across the disciplines and in a variety of settings such as building virtual cities in a local government class, creating products to sell in a virtual world for a brand management class, and through virtual labs in a biology course (Dailey-Hebert et al., 2021). Additional examples of VR use in higher education include training experiences for pre-service teachers (Bower et. al., 2017), VR gaming to support language literacy and language acquisition (Swier & Peterson, 2018), and medical training through virtual reality-based simulations (De Ponti et. al., 2020). Although VR can be intimidating for new users, research has shown that VR can

promote a more authentic space (Berki, 2020), promote empathy (Dean et al., 2020), create opportunities for more realistic exchange (Safadel et al., 2021), and improve satisfaction of the participant experience (Wang et al., 2020). Therefore, this study sought to investigate the impact of using virtual reality (VR) as a social space for informal connection between and among learners enrolled in two fully online graduate classes. Specifically, the researcher/instructor sought to examine participants' perceptions of social presence felt, the ability to connect and exchange informally, and the overall impact of motivation, digital literacy, and satisfaction.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was three-fold. The first goal was to better understand how learners (fully online graduate students) perceive the use of VR as a platform to informally connect and engage with one another. The second goal was to ascertain the impact on their satisfaction and motivation for such engagement using the VR platform. The final goal aimed to identify lessons learned (for participants and facilitators) for using this platform and to determine whether using the VR platform would impact their perception of (and interest in) using VR in the future.

RQ1: How do fully online graduate students perceive using virtual reality as a platform to connect?

RQ2: What impact (if any) does using virtual reality have on participants' overall satisfaction and motivation to engage in this modality?

RQ3: What strategies, practices, and techniques should facilitators and participants consider when using this VR platform (Kumospace)?

Methods

This study sought to examine the perspective of online graduate students using VR to connect and sought to gain perspectives from both novice and experienced students in the program (i.e., those entering their *first course* in a fully online graduate program, and more seasoned graduate students nearing the *end* of their graduate program). Data was collected during the 2021 Fall semester with graduate students enrolled in two fully online courses. The two courses included *ED504: Learning as a Competitive Advantage* and *ED 565: Team Learning and Innovation*, and both courses were led by the study investigator. Each class utilized live, weekly videoconferencing (Zoom) to discuss thoughts and ideas related to learning content for the majority of the course and then utilized a VR platform (Kumospace) to conduct their live session at the end of the course for an informal social event. At the conclusion of the course, participants were sent a survey to share their thoughts, reflections, and reactions to the experience of using the VR platform (Kumospace). The survey results were analyzed with SPSS and coded to identify emergent themes and topics. Standard deviation and median were calculated from the survey (see Results), and emergent themes from open-ended comments were coded using Dedoose (an online platform for analyzing qualitative and mixed-method research). Some emergent themes from the open-ended comments included: future and intentional uses of VR, training needs, and engagement through enjoyment. All participants were informed about the research project and

invited to participate in the study. An informed consent and survey were provided to all invited participants who joined the VR sessions, and data was gathered online via an electronic JotForm survey.

Procedures

The instructor evaluated several VR technologies prior to selecting Kumospace for this study. This selection was made based on the 1) ease of use, 2) cost-free account options, 3) no additional equipment or downloads required for users, and 4) intuitive use of the platform. Additionally, having options to customize the space for the class was also a desired feature. The free VR account accommodated up to 30 users in one room (VR space) and was suitable for use in the class sizes. The instructor (PI) created a free Kumospace account and used the templates provided in the platform to customize a VR room for the learners/study participants. Additional signs and cuing provided prompts that would allow participants to explore the VR space prior to the class discussion. Six zones were created in the VR room that included a piano lounge (with piano music playing in the background), a living room with a television screen that looped an embedded YouTube tutorial for using Kumospace, a Spotify-enabled jukebox for the class playlist, a space with chairs and boardgames that could be played online with a partner, a refreshment station (to get a virtual drink and snack), and a presentation area with active whiteboarding features (see Images 1-3).

The customized VR (Kumospace) room was available via a live hyperlink that was shared with class participants and was accessible by clicking on the hyperlink, entering their name, and joining the room. Students received communication (via course announcements, emails, Slack channel, and discussion board) to join the weekly live session using Kumospace. In addition to the direct link and overview, a brief introduction and 2-minute video tutorial was also sent in advance of the session.

Image 1

Virtual Reality Room Spaces – Whiteboard and Refreshments

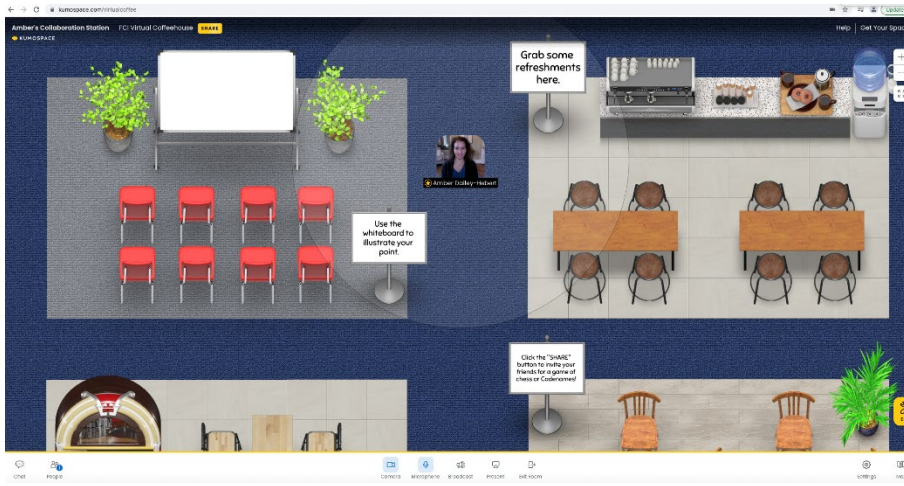


Image 2

Virtual Reality Room – Jukebox and Game Room

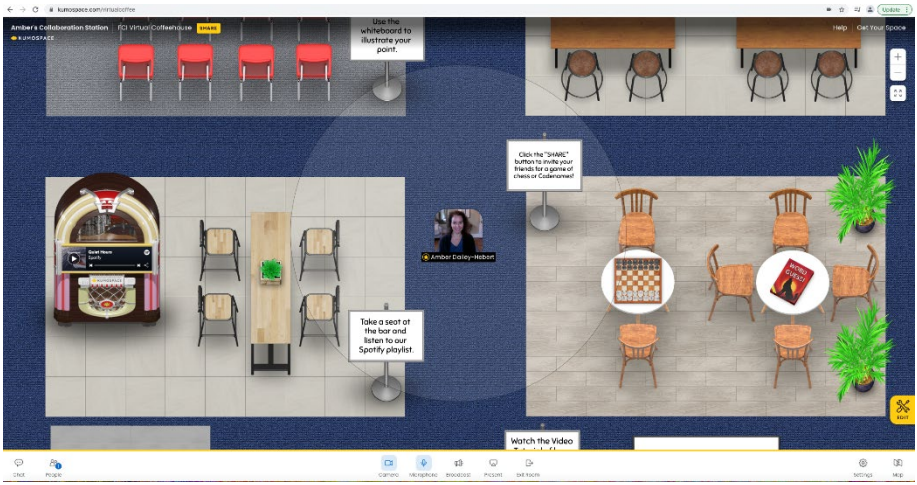
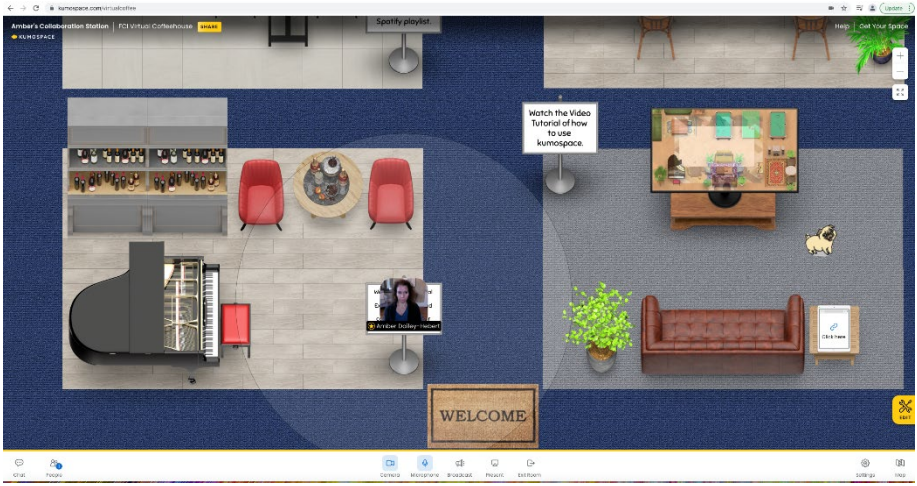


Image 3

Virtual Reality Room – Welcome and Video Tutorial



All participants were asked to use a Google Chrome browser, which was recommended by the VR platform, and were invited to join the call 10 minutes in advance if they had any concerns or technical questions pertaining to the platform setup or access. All participants were able to join successfully without any issues, with the exception of one student who experienced technical difficulty with the microphone function. The participant switched to a different computer and rejoined the session successfully.

Participants

Participants included graduate students enrolled in two required, core courses of a fully online Master's degree program. *ED 504: Learning as a Competitive Advantage* and *ED 565: Team Learning and Innovation* were the two courses used in this study. The principal investigator of this study was also the instructor for both courses, which allowed for data collection and observation of the student experience. One class (ED504) consisted of the first course in the graduate program with a cohort of 10 new students, and the second course (ED 565) included a cohort of 11 advanced students in their second year of the program. Of the twenty-one students invited to participate in the study, seventeen completed the survey (N=17). All participants were adults with an intergenerational mix of approximately 53% (30-44 years old), 24% (45-65 years old), 18% (18-29 years old), and 5% who were 65 years or older. The participants' highest educational degree obtained included a majority (60%) with an earned bachelor's degree, 24% with an earned master's degree, and 18% with a doctorate or terminal degree. Therefore, the sample included a highly educated and diverse group of approximately 60% female and 40% male participants. Additionally, the majority (94%) had experience using videoconferencing tools and used them approximately 1-4 hours a day. Yet, the majority (53%) had never used VR to informally connect with peers, classmates, or co-workers. Participants from both classes were sent an email invitation (with informed consent) and a link to the electronic survey (via JotForm) from the principal investigator/course instructor. All information was kept anonymous via an online JotForm for the survey, and no individual identifiers were used or shared.

Materials

The survey collected demographic information, prior experience with VR technology, and perspectives on the VR experience in the course. Demographic information was collected for age, gender, and education (highest degree obtained). Additional information was collected on each participant's level of experience using videoconferencing tools and level of experience using VR tools. Upon review of the literature, a single survey to assess the aspects and aims of this study did not exist. Therefore, the survey was crafted with instructor-developed questions and questions adapted from existing surveys on the explored concepts in this study. The survey consisted of 19 Likert-scale questions to assess perceived improvement and confidence with *digital literacy*, *presence* (Slater et al.,1994) in the VR space; *physical space* (Lessiter et al., 2002); level of *engagement* (NSSE Student Engagement Survey), and *satisfaction* (Njoroge et al., 2012). The Likert-scale dimensions ranged from 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= neither agree or disagree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. Finally, four additional open-ended questions were included in the survey for participant responses focusing on advice for future facilitators and participants. Although not included in the original survey as indicators, the table (see Appendix) explicitly lists the concept sections and questions adapted from existing research.

The survey was administered following the final Kumospace (VR) live session and was sent via email, course announcement, Slack channel, and discussion board posting to all course participants. The survey was open to complete for approximately two weeks following the invitation to participate in the study/complete the survey.

Data was collected via JotForm (N=17) and reviewed, analyzed based upon the survey responses and open-ended question responses.

Results

Findings from this research strongly affirmed that fully online graduate students (in this small sample) appreciated the opportunity to socially connect with their peers using the VR platform (Kumospace) provided. Results indicated that students perceived an improved digital literacy and confidence in using VR, felt present and engaged in the class community, and were motivated to connect using this platform. Overall satisfaction was high among participants, and they indicated a desire to use the platform in the future. Additional information and detailed results are outlined below.

Digital Literacy

Students perceived an increase in their confidence using VR and improved digital literacy following the class sessions in Kumospace. In fact, 95% agreed or strongly agreed that "using Kumospace improved my digital literacy and understanding of virtual reality", and 95% agreed or strongly agreed that "using Kumospace increased my confidence for using virtual reality in the future". Additionally, a surprising 100% indicated that they "will consider using VR technology in the future" based on the experience.

Table 1

Summary of Digital Literacy Survey Responses

Digital Literacy	***Median***	***Standard Deviation***	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
1. Using Kumospace improved my digital literacy and understanding of virtual reality (VR).	***4.24***	0.56	0	0	1	11	5
2. Using Kumospace increased my confidence for using virtual reality in the future.	***4.35***	0.61	0	0	1	9	7
3. I will consider utilizing virtual reality (VR) technology in the future.	***4.60***	0.51	0	0	0	7	10

Presence

One argument of existing online learning environments is the lack of feeling present with others or feeling disconnected and isolated. Therefore, we assessed student perceptions of whether the VR space improved their sense of presence, defined as "a psychological state in which virtual objects are experienced as actual objects in either sensory or non-sensory ways" (Lee, 2004, p. 27). Approximately 76% of participants agreed/strongly agreed that "In the virtual environment, I had a sense of being there", while over 94% felt "involved and had a sense of being in the scenes displayed with my peers". Participants also appreciated the flexibility of the VR space to navigate between varied conversations with 94% agreeing or strongly agreeing that "Using Kumospace allowed me to navigate and join different conversations in the room".

Table 2

Summary of Presence Survey Responses

Presence *(questions adapted from Slater et al., 1994; Lessiter et al., 2002)*	***Median***	***Standard Deviation***	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
4. In the virtual environment I had a sense of being there.	***4.06***	0.83	0	0	4	8	5
5. I felt involved and had a sense of being in the scenes displayed with my peers.	***4.41***	0.62	0	0	1	8	8
6. Using Kumospace, allowed me to navigate and join different conversations in the room.	***4.53***	0.62	0	0	1	6	10

Engagement

Students perceived improved connection and engagement while using the VR platform (Kumospace) with their class. In particular, 94% reported that "Using Kumospace improved my informal connection with colleagues", while 88% agreed or strongly agreed that "using Kumospace improved my feelings of community".

Table 3

Summary of Engagement Survey Responses

Engagement *(questions adapted from NSSE Student Engagement Survey)*	***Median***	***Standard Deviation***	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
7. Using Kumospace improved my informal connection with colleagues. *(i.e. I learned new things about my colleagues we wouldn't typically share in a work call).*	***4.47***	0.62			1	7	9
8. Using Kumospace for this event, improved my feelings of community.	***4.35***	0.70	0	0	2	7	8

Motivation

Findings revealed high motivation by participants to engage with their peers and explore the VR space. In the survey, 94% "felt motivated to use Kumospace to engage in conversation with my peers" and 94% agreed or strongly agreed that they were "motivated to explore the Kumospace VR room and features available". Most notably, a significant 100% of participants reported that the VR platform "was more fun to use than other videoconferencing systems" that they typically utilize for school or work. Therefore, the use of such platforms may hold potential for improved motivation to engage and enjoy the opportunity to connect.

Table 4

Summary of Motivation Survey Responses

Motivation	***Median***	***Standard Deviation***	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
9. I felt motivated to use Kumospace to engage in conversations with my peers.	***4.59***	0.62	0	0	1	5	11

Table 4 Cont.

Motivation	*Median*	*Standard Deviation*	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
10. I was motivated to explore the Kumospace VR room and features available.	***4.53***	0.62	0	0	1	6	10
11. Kumospace was more fun to use than our videoconferencing system.	***4.65***	0.49	0	0	0	6	11

Social Connection

Although participants overwhelmingly reported that they "enjoyed using Kumospace as the social environment" with 100% who agreed or strongly agreed, only 76% thought that "using Kumospace improved the quality of interactions between me and my colleagues". However, it was clear to see that all participants placed importance on the need and desire to connect with their peers in such ways, as 100% reported, "I think it's important to socially connect with my peers/colleagues and that it improves our working relationship".

Table 5

Summary of Social Connection Survey Responses

Social Connection	*Median*	*Standard Deviation*	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
12. Using Kumospace improved the quality of interaction between me and my colleagues.	***4.18***	0.81	0	0	4	6	7
13. I enjoyed using Kumospace as the social environment.	***4.60***	0.51	0	0	0	7	10
14. I think it is important to socially connect with my peers/colleagues and that it improves our working relationship.	***4.77***	0.44	0	0	0	4	13

Satisfaction

The survey results overwhelmingly identified high levels of satisfaction, as 100% agreed or strongly agreed that "Overall, I am satisfied with the usability of this technology" and "Overall, I'm satisfied with the participant experience in Kumospace". Interestingly, participants also demonstrated a desire to utilize the

platform again with 100% indicating "I would like to use Kumospace in future sessions for social exchange". Finally, 82% indicated a preference to use Kumospace over Zoom for connecting informally with their peers.

Table 6

Summary of Satisfaction Survey Responses

Satisfaction *(questions adapted from Njoroge, Norman, Reed & Suh, 2012)*	***Median***	***Standard Deviation***	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
15. Overall, I am satisfied with the usability (ease of use) for this technology.	***4.71***	0.47	0	0	0	5	12
16. Overall, I am satisfied with the participant experience in Kumospace.	***4.71***	0.47	0	0	0	5	12
17. I would like to use Kumospace in future sessions for social exchange.	***4.71***	0.47	0	0	0	5	12

Advice

In the open-ended questions, student participants shared advice for future facilitators and participants who may use Kumospace. The emergent themes pertained to 1) a need for training to learn the platform, 2) intentional use of the VR space with topical discussions or breakouts, and 3) the desire to make using the VR space fun for participants. Pertaining to the need for training, participant comments included:

> *"Provide a little tutorial at the start to help acclimate to the interface."*
>
> *"Explain the basic ideas of communication within the space (sound circle), activities and movement (arrow keys to move, etc.)".*
>
> *"Use the map to orient yourself to others within the room."*
>
> *"Make sure you know how the circles (for sound) work for being able to interact with others."*

Several ideas were also shared that pertained to the intentional use of the space and included the following recommendations:

> *"Consider using Kumospace for week one, as it is a good way to conduct a meet and greet with new students."*
>
> *"Possibly design the areas of the space to promote topical discussions."*
>
> *"It would be fun to break up in groups in the different rooms and then meet back in the main room for final notes….to decentralize the group into different rooms - then once the class is more familiar with each other, the informal use could be integrated more fully."*

Finally, comments were shared to ensure that the VR room remains a fun and engaging space to connect:

> *"Make sure that you are creative and it doesn't become "gimmick-y" and more of a hassle rather than something cool, fun, and new."*
>
> *"Just continue to keep things light and encourage exploration in the space and congeniality among colleagues. Encourage learners to become familiar with the platform and make it fun!*
>
> *"Explore…it's fun and interactive. Have fun, turn off mute, enjoy the exciting platform, explore the room and designs. Have fun, wander around and just try it out."*

Overall, the VR space was well-received by the online graduate students and was perceived to benefit their digital literacy, confidence, presence, motivation, and satisfaction.

Discussion

The first goal of this study was to better understand how learners (fully online graduate students) perceive the use of VR as a platform to informally connect and engage with one another. Additionally, the investigator sought to determine VR impact on learners' perceptions of their digital literacy and motivation to explore such tools in the future. Results found that students perceived an increase in their confidence using VR and improved digital literacy. With an abundance of free access to information and emergent technology in the knowledge economy today, the importance of building our learners' capacity for digital literacy is essential (Santos & Serpa, 2017). In fact, 95% felt it improved their digital literacy, improved their understanding of virtual reality, and increased their confidence for using virtual reality in the future. Additionally, 100% will consider using VR technology in the future based on the experience. Therefore, the use of VR in this study led to student perception of increased digital literacy, improved confidence in their abilities with technology, and a desire to utilize such technologies in the future.

While many definitions for social engagement exist, this study sought to focus on the community- and relationship-building aspects for such engagement through informal exchange. Research suggests that social engagement should be understood and explored as an outcome of higher education (Van den Wijngaard et al., 2015), and that such engaged classroom communities can reduce anxiety and create a greater sense of belonging (Grossman et al., 2012). Likewise, findings from this study indicate a perceived improvement in the learners' connection and engagement while using the VR platform. In particular, 94% reported improved informal connection their colleagues while 88% experienced an improved feeling of community. Eriksen (2012) and Cunliffe (2016) unearth the importance of such relationships as a way to help students become more 'authentic' and 'self-aware'. Furthermore, participants identified a strong sense of presence during the VR experience, as 94% felt involved and had a sense of being in the scenes displayed with their peers. Results align with research by Berki (2020) which found that presence positively related to learning outcome. Therefore, such findings have potential to inform future teaching practice and uses for such VR to support social engagement, indicating that VR may serve as a good platform to foster motivation, informal connection, and engagement.

Although participants overwhelmingly (100%) reported that they enjoyed using Kumospace as the social environment, only 76% thought it actually improved the *quality* of interactions with their classmates. This finding could have resulted from strong existing connections with their cohort members prior to VR use or could reflect a lower impact on the quality of interactions in the VR platform. Evidence from the research (Makransky et al., 2019) suggests that while VR does lead to greater presence, it does not necessarily lead to greater learning or improved learning outcomes. However, in a sample of over 100 university students, Makransky and Lilleholt (2018) found that immersive VR use predicted presence and positive emotions. Likewise, in this study it was clear to see the importance that all participants (100%) placed on the need and desire to connect with their peers and the belief that socially connecting improves their working relationship. Therefore, it is recommended to use VR for informal connection, celebratory events, or during sessions that aim to foster relationship-building rather than a means to directly improve learning outcomes.

The second goal of this study was to ascertain the impact on their satisfaction and motivation for such engagement using the VR platform. Previous research (Herrero et al., 2014) of VR use and its impact on emotion and motivation have found significant increases in positive emotions, motivation, and self-efficacy. Likewise, the findings from this study revealed high motivation by participants to engage with their peers and explore the VR space. In the survey, 94% of participants felt motivated to use VR to engage in conversation with their peers and were motivated to explore the VR features available. Most notably, 100% of participants reported that the VR platform "was more fun to use than other videoconferencing systems" typically utilized for school or work. Therefore, the use of such platforms may hold potential for improved motivation to engage and enjoy the opportunity to connect. Likewise, as research (Chen et al., 2016) indicates, VR use can increase user satisfaction and ensure usability. Findings overwhelmingly identified high levels of satisfaction, as 100% of participants were satisfied with the usability of this technology and with the overall experience in the VR space. Interestingly, participants also demonstrated a desire to utilize the

platform again with 100% indicating "I would like to use Kumospace in the future sessions for social exchange". Finally, 82% (14 out of 17) indicated a preference to use Kumospace over Zoom for connecting informally with their peers.

The final goal aimed to identify lessons learned (for participants and facilitators) for using this platform and to determine whether using the VR platform would impact their perception of (and interest in) using VR in the future. As previously mentioned, all participants indicated improved confidence in using VR and shared an interest in using VR in the future. Additionally, recommendations included intentional design and use of the platform, advanced training for users, and creating a focus on fun, informality, and connection.

Conclusion

Although more significant research is needed with larger sample sizes, various disciplines and program levels, and a dedicated instrument created to assess pre and post VR use, this study serves to unearth how it can be applied to improve the learner experience, to foster engagement, connection, and digital literacy. The use of VR in this study led to student perception of increased digital literacy, improved confidence in their abilities with technology, and a desire to utilize such technologies in the future. Such findings have potential to inform future teaching practice and uses for such VR to support social engagement, indicating that VR may serve as a good platform to foster motivation, informal connection, and engagement.

Instructors should be mindful of the goals and intention for such VR use in their classes, as the study also revealed that VR may lead to greater presence, but that it does not necessarily lead to greater learning or improved learning outcomes. Therefore, it is recommended to use VR for informal connection, celebratory events, or during sessions that aim to foster relationship-building. This might include the first live class session, a student-faculty meet and greet prior to the beginning of the semester, a class presentation or end of term celebration. Instructors may also consider utilizing the VR space as an optional "virtual coffeehouse" for students to informally connect or as an alternative space to conduct office hours and student consultations online. Participants from this study offered creative ways to design intentional and meaningful experiences using the platform (such as designating areas of the VR space for topic-based discussion or decentralizing the VR space into different rooms to explorations or adventures). Hence, there is also opportunity for instructors to *partner* with student participants to co-create appropriate uses for VR in their class to foster connection, engagement, motivation, and meaning.

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Appendix

Survey of Student Perceptions on Using Virtual Reality (Kumospace)

	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
Digital Literacy					
1. Using Kumospace improved my digital literacy and understanding of virtual reality (VR).					
2. Using Kumospace increased my confidence for using virtual reality in the future.					
3. I will consider utilizing virtual reality (VR) technology in the future.					
Presence (questions adapted from Slater et al., 1994; physical space/ engagement from Lessiter et al., 2002)					
4. In the virtual environment I had a sense of being there.					
5. I felt involved and had a sense of being in the scenes displayed with my peers.					
6. Using Kumospace, allowed me to navigate and join different conversations in the room.					
Engagement (questions adapted from NSSE Student Engagement Survey)					
7. Using Kumospace improved my informal connection with colleagues. *(i.e. I learned new things about my colleagues we wouldn't typically share in a work call).*					
8. Using Kumospace for this event, improved my feelings of community.					
Motivation					
9. I felt motivated to use Kumospace to engage in conversations with my peers.					
10. I was motivated to explore the Kumospace VR room and features available.					
11. Kumospace was more fun to use than our videoconferencing system.					

Social Connection (instructor created)					
12. Using Kumospace improved the quality of interaction between me and my colleagues.					
13. I enjoyed using Kumospace as the social environment.					
14. I think it is important to socially connect with my peers/colleagues and that it improves our working relationship.					
Satisfaction (questions adapted from Njoroge, Norman, Reed & Suh, 2012)					
15. Overall, I am satisfied with the usability (ease of use) for this technology.					
16. Overall, I am satisfied with the participant experience in Kumospace.					
17. I would like to use Kumospace in future sessions for social exchange.					
18. In comparison, I prefer to use _____ for live sessions to socially connect with peers.	1 zoom		2 Kumospace		
Open Ended Questions					
What advice would you give a facilitator using Kumospace? What advice would you give participants using Kumospace? The use of Kumospace would be more effective if….. Please share any additional comments:					

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Volunteering in the Camp Setting as a Learning Tool: Graduate Students Share their Experiences

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Abstract. Experiential learning in the field is central to the training of many helping professionals, and field education is the signature pedagogy for social work. Service-learning offers another opportunity for graduate students in the helping professions to get hands on training. Volunteering would also offer a hands-on learning experience but appears to be less common. This study interviewed 14 master of social work (MSW) students who volunteered at a healing camp for bereaved children and adolescents to explore their lived experiences. The study revealed both professional and personal themes, and these were compared to themes divulged by similar students participating in service-learning courses. Based on this study, the researchers concluded that volunteerism can be a valuable means for graduate students in the helping fields to experience personal and professional growth.

Experiential learning in the field has been central in the training of many helping professions such as counseling and education (Atkinson & Murrell, 1988; Burns & Danyluk, 2017). This emphasis on experiential learning is also evident in social work education, where both internships and service-learning projects are important ways for social work students to acquire skills in the profession (Bogo, 2015; Kropf & Tracey, 2002). Indeed, The Council for Social Work Education (CSWE) is a strong proponent of social work students volunteering in the field to learn about the profession and gain practice experience in real life settings (Council on Social Work Education, 2020). However, studies on graduate students' lived experiences in a volunteer setting other than service-learning and internship settings are scarce. This study explores the lived experiences of 14 graduate social work students as they spend a weekend volunteering at a healing camp for bereaved children and adolescents.

Background

Direct experiential learning has long been considered central to the training of various helping professionals such as counselors (Lee & Kelley-Petersen, 2018), educators (Burns & Danyluk, 2017), social workers (Kropf & Tracey, 2002) and nurses (Merritt & Murphy, 2019). Service-learning combines a community field experience with academics (Donaldson & Dougherty, 2011). Kolb (1984) viewed learning as a

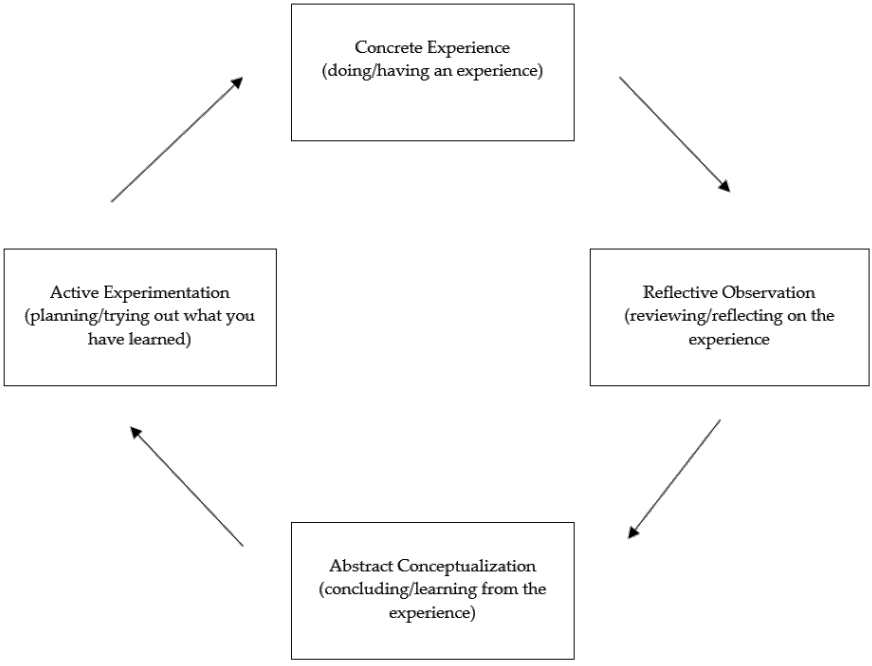
process where knowledge is created through the transformation of experiences. Learning is a continual process, and knowledge is created by reconstructing experiences into existing cognitive frameworks, which change the way a person thinks and behaves. The reconstruction of experiences is facilitated through a process of apprehension or comprehension. Apprehension is participation in the experience, and comprehension develops in abstract conceptualization that occurs outside of the actual experience.

For learning to occur, experiences must be transformed. This transformation happens through either extension or intention (Kolb, 1984). Extension is a process achieved by active external experimentation; intention is achieved through the reflections on the experience. To facilitate the process of taking an experience and transforming it into new ways of thinking and new behaviors, Kolb (1984) presents four stages in the learning cycle: concrete learning, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation (see Figure 1). Supplementing the classroom teaching, internships and service-learning with volunteering may be one way to aid in the learning cycle for students in the human services field. Volunteer experiences can foster the process of apprehension and comprehension while facilitating transformation through extension or intention.

For learning to occur, experiences must be transformed.

Figure 1

Kolb's Learning Cycle



Note. Adapted from "Kolb's Learning Styles and Experiential Learning Cycle," by S. A. McLeod, 2017, Simply Psychology, https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html. Copyright 2017 by Simply Scholar Ltd.

Literature Review

Researchers examining the influence of service-learning experiences on graduate level counseling students have demonstrated the benefits of professional growth and skill acquisition for the participants (Lee & Kelley-Petersen, 2018; Midgett & Doumas, 2016). Counseling students participating in a service-learning project with refugee families reported increased appreciation for the needs of these families through the lens of their specific cultural context (Midgett & Doumas, 2016). Similarly, community counseling students experienced gains in their inclusion of social justice advocacy skills after participating in a service-learning assignment in a human development course (Lee & Kelley-Petersen, 2018). Using survey research methods Merritt and Murphy (2019), explored the potential professional benefits of service-learning for ten Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students. These students worked in a service-learning clinic specifically for nursing students as a part of their advanced studies. Results of the study revealed general gains in participants' skills in diagnostic formulation and self confidence in working with diverse clinical populations (Merritt & Murphy, 2019). Additional support for the integral role of service learning was strengthened in a study of 42 graduate students taking a Psychology of Education course. Specifically, Stanke et al. (2019) used a quasi-experimental study design to evaluate students understanding and recognition of the benefits of service learning. Upon exposure to the pedagogical influences of service learning, study participants indicated increased recognition of the practical benefits of service learning for educators.

In social work, internships (Bogo, 2015) and assigned service-learning experiences provide students with beneficial exposure to similar but complimentary direct practice experiences (Kropf & Tracey, 2002; Lemieux & Allen, 2007). Some studies have examined the impact of service-learning among graduate social work students. In a quantitative study, 24 graduate social work students were enrolled in a service-learning class while serving as camp staff in various roles such as counselors, kitchen staff and photographers at a burn camp for children (Williams et al., 2002). A social work self-efficacy scale showed statistically significant increases in the students' perceived self-efficacy at the mezzo and macro levels, but not in micro practice skills. Forty-five students in a graduate social work program participated in a service-learning component of a course on diversity and oppression (Maccio, 2011). The service-learning project consisted of finding a gap in the services provided at their internship sites and then creating a service or product to fill the gap. The students' expectations of a positive service-learning experience were fulfilled, and service-learning was found to be beneficial to their overall social work education.

Qualitative studies on service-learning also show promising outcomes. A study of 21 graduate social work students participating in a burn camp that used journals, focus groups, and course evaluations revealed themes of students enhanced learning about self and the profession of social work (Williams & Reeves, 2004). Mitschke and Petrovich (2011) asked 28 graduate social work students to write a self-reflection paper after having partnered with a free community health clinic for Latino immigrants and Burmese refugees to produce low-literacy, multi-lingual resource brochures for these populations. Themes revealed included values analysis, where

students appreciated the opportunity to examine biases; knowledge application; increased awareness of cultural competence concerns and the challenges and resources available to this population; and increased motivation to serve. Students reported an increased sense of civic responsibility, motivation to serve, an understanding of the process and implementation of social work services and described these as personally challenging during the endeavor. In a study designed by Pierpont et al. (2001), 18 graduate social work students participated in a service-learning project interviewing families, service providers, administrators, planners, or consultants of a System of Care (SOC) program. Themes of learning from program participants and learning about policy were reported. The students saw the importance of client input in policy development and seeing the perspectives of clients and administrators. Berrick and Durst (2014) examined the experiences of 25 Title IV-E graduate social work students serving as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) volunteers (Caliber Associates, 2004). Overall, students found this process to be positive, and they described it as a valuable learning experience.

While the literature regarding service learning in the education of helping professionals is significant, there is a noted gap in the literature addressing the role of volunteering as a part of education in these helping professions. While essential to professional preparation, typically service-learning involves the completion of courses for credit towards a professional degree and fall outside of a more traditional understanding of volunteerism as there is no expectation of overt or direct gain for the volunteer (Allen & Mueller, 2013).

The profession of social work has its roots in a tradition of service to vulnerable and marginalized people(s) and communities. For example, the early efforts by the "friendly visitors" could be viewed as altruistic volunteerism and in turn foundational to the evolution of professional social work practice (Gladden, 2018). One informative study did closely examine the experiences of volunteer undergraduate and graduate social work students in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. In their study, Plummer et al. (2008) determined that students who volunteered in these situations had strong commitments to the values of the social work profession.

Social work educators and practitioners have emphasized the importance of volunteer and service-learning activities by graduate students. However, service-learning opportunities are not offered at all graduate mental health programs. Since the number of nonprofits in the health and human services arena is increasing (McKeever, 2018), volunteering offers an additional opportunity for learning. Therefore, a closer examination of volunteering by graduate students is warranted. To contribute to this growing body of knowledge, the purpose of the current study is to describe in depth the lived experiences of MSW student volunteers at a healing camp for bereaved children. The primary research question posed in this study was what are the lived experiences made by MSW student volunteers at a healing camp for bereaved children?

Volunteer Setting

The volunteer setting was an overnight weekend healing camp for children and adolescents who have lost a parent or sibling to death. The camp serves 30 children

ages 6-11 and 30 adolescents ages 12-18 at a time and is held with no repeat campers three times a year. While at camp, which uses a trauma-informed approach, the campers participate in typical camp activities such as a ropes course, canoeing, archery, and a talent show. In addition, the campers are divided into groups of 7-8 campers according to age and type of loss for participation in six trauma-focused grief counseling sessions. These sessions are led by a clinical social worker who is assisted by a co-leader, a Master of Social Work Student. The camp also provides a parallel experience for adult caregivers, typically a parent or grandparent, over the weekend, where they can process their own grief, learn about children's grief and support each other. The adult caregivers' group is also led by a clinical social worker. The camp is free of charge to all participants.

Methods

In this study, 14 Master of Social Work students from a social work program with a clinical specialization in the Southeastern United States were interviewed to explore their experiences as volunteers at an overnight healing camp for bereaved children. Institutional Review Board approval was obtained from the university by the research team: the founder of camp and director of the social work program (co-PI), a professor from the social work program who has volunteered several times as a clinical group leader (PI), and another professor specializing in child development in the same the social work program, who is not involved with camp (co-PI). Additionally, two graduate research assistants participated in the analysis of study data. This qualitative study, using the social work students' own words, contributes to the literature on social work education by presenting the impact the students' experiences had on both their educational and personal growth. The researchers used the case study design which bounded the sample from one year's three camp sessions by time and place (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The design allowed for a focus and the inclusion of multiple participant voices. The researchers posed the following questions to the participants: 1) What prompted you to sign up as camp volunteer? 2) What was it like to be a co-counselor at camp? 3) What was your greatest challenge? 4) What was your greatest personal benefit? 5) How, if at all, did your volunteering contribute to your social work education? The answers to the questions were analyzed with a focus on themes and categories verbalized by the participating students.

Procedure

This study used a purposive sample. All students (15) who had participated in camp as volunteers over the past year were contacted by the researchers via email explaining the project and asking if they were willing to participate. Fourteen responded. One email was returned with an explanation that the address was invalid. Ten of the students had graduated from the program at the time of the interview, three were finishing up their second year and one their first year. All but one were in their second year of studies when they volunteered to participate as camp co-counselors.

Students who agreed to participate were sent a follow-up email to set a date and a time to meet. The research team held semi-structured interviews with

participating students after they had signed informed consents. Some of the participants were interviewed in a neutral setting (library, coffee shop, park), whereas others were interviewed in the researchers' offices.

The interviews lasted 40-50 minutes and were conducted over a two-month period. They were audio recorded and later transcribed by two graduate research assistants. After transcriptions, the audio recordings were deleted, and the transcriptions were stored in one of the researchers' offices in locked drawers. The researchers made field notes during the interviews that were also securely stored. Pseudonyms for the participants were used during transcriptions and analyses of the data. The researchers used the constant comparison method, probing for more information as it emerged in the interviews with subsequent study participants (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Although saturation of data (Polit & Beck, 2006) was reached after 8 interviews, the researchers completed interviews with all willing participants.

Participants

All study participants (N=14) were female and ranged in age from 25 to 57 at the time of their participation in camp. Of these, nine were in their 20's, two in their thirties, and three in their fifties. Five were Black, eight White and one LatinX. Study participants were all graduate level social work students. One student was in their Generalist year of study while the remaining were second, Specialization year students at the time of volunteering. Volunteer applications screen out participants who have experienced a recent loss, but none of the students fell into this category. Students participated in mandatory camp training reviewing grief theories and trauma-focused grief interventions. Supervision and debriefing were provided ad hoc during the camp sessions and 7-10 days after the camp sessions.

Analysis

The researchers included the PI and co-PI's and two graduate research assistants who used an inductive approach to reveal themes of the impact of volunteering at camp, finding a systematic interpretation of the interviews and field notes (Ezzy, 2002). Together the two graduate research assistants first transcribed, then reviewed the transcriptions and highlighted and color-coded responses that they felt were similar. The PI and co-PI's each used different copies of the transcripts, which they read and re-read. The PI and co-PI's looked for clusters, stressing consistencies and variations, to generate themes. The themes discovered by the graduate research assistants and the PI and co-PI's were compared by the researchers and coded. Large themes were then divided into various categories. Thus, because the researchers used both inductive and deductive analysis and both internal (PI and one co-PI) and external (one co-PI and graduate research assistants) researchers, trustworthiness was added to the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Patton, 2014).

Results

The themes and categories drawn from the participant interviews are presented in terms of the impact the students' experiences as volunteers had on both

their educational and personal growth. Themes disclosed included *Challenges, Professional Growth, Career Choices, and Camper Transformation as Personal Benefit*. The theme of *Challenges* had three subcategories: *bearing witness, sleep deprivation,* and *disciplinarian vs therapist*. *Professional Growth* had five subcategories: *group dynamics, grief, suicide, being present,* and *skills application. Career Choices* and *Camper Transformation as Personal Reward* had no subcategories.

Challenges

Most of the participating students experienced challenges during their volunteer work. These challenges included the categories of *bearing witness, sleep deprivation,* and *disciplinarian versus therapist role*.

Bearing Witness

One of the most prominent challenges for the students, and expressed by all students, was bearing witness to the pain that the bereaved campers shared around their losses. Jenny, a young woman who lost her own mother when she was ten years old, stated, "It [listening to stories] was really emotional. It was very hard…it was hard not to get too emotionally invested. You kind of have to keep yourself at a distance". Tina, a young woman in her 30's with no previous intimate losses stated, even though camp turned out be exactly as she anticipated, bearing witness was a difficult task, "…having to listen and take in every story but not -re-traumatizing yourself by listening was challenging". She disclosed that she cried the whole way home after leaving camp Sunday afternoon. Processing these feelings with the camp director the following week was both needed and helpful to the student. Ellie, who denied having experienced loss, commented:

> The stories are definitely hard sometimes. There's this one camper who her story was a violent murder of watching her father get decapitated and dismembered and those kind of stories are hard to hear in the moment, but its healing to that person and helpful to that person…

The fact that it was helpful for the camper to share the devastating process of her loss made it more bearable for the student volunteer to hear.

Sleep Deprivation

Another challenge mentioned by the majority of the student volunteers was not getting enough sleep. Ellie stated, "It is just an emotionally draining weekend and then you also are not getting a lot of sleep, so sleep deprivation combined with just a lot of emotional overload is very tiring…". Ellie took the day after camp off from work to regroup, wash clothes, eat, and not talk to anyone. Ruth, a middle-aged woman who lost her sister as a teenager and subsequently three more siblings in quick succession, laughed when she shared it was difficult to have bath houses separate from the sleeping cabins but, "The worst part was just not getting enough sleep, but that's just the nature of working with high schoolers who are up late talking and giggling".

Disciplinarian Versus Therapist

Most of the students struggled with the concept of not being disciplinarians with the campers. They understood the concept of the trauma-informed care approach but found it to be a struggle not to intervene as a disciplinarian. Kate, a young student who came to camp to learn about grief and loss, commented that, "I guess when there was a point when I felt like I needed to do that [discipline], I felt I couldn't because it would ruin the rapport. So that's kind of difficult at times. But I understand why". Bella who is in her mid-50's had this to say about the difficulties of standing back and not be a disciplinarian:

> …but a couple of them, a couple of the children were actually quite challenging to the point of endangering themselves and others so it's difficult at camp because we are not disciplinarians at camp, we are therapists and not really friends, we are there as support and it's difficult when they are out of control. I had one that was completely out of control. It is difficult to know where that line is to become that person, the enforcer or disciplinarian, or the one who needs to kind of say okay, like I get it, but this is not acceptable.

Bella sought help from the camp director with this particular child, and the child was excused from the following group session to assist the camp director with other duties. This assignment was so boring that they returned to group, and his participation notably improved.

Professional Growth

Every student volunteer mentioned the learning that occurred at camp benefited their professional growth. The following subcategories impacted their professional learning: *group dynamics, grief, suicide, being present,* and *skills application*.

Group Dynamics

As volunteer co-counselors participating in group, it was not surprising that they reported learning a great deal about clinical group dynamics. Ruth, who at the time interned at a cancer clinic, expressed what she learned about important group dynamics:

> I also learned just group dynamics and how to handle…one time he [group member] just overreacted in an angry manner to something that another kid in the group was saying…I mean it was over the top…so she [lead counselor] just never lost focus on the one kid who was talking because it was an important moment. So how to handle situations that were uncomfortable or maybe inappropriate…so this was really interesting to see a group with some challenges in it, where the behavior was challenging…I haven't had that at my internship….

Jenny agreed that camp provided opportunities for learning about group dynamics, "We are in groups class right now. It very much applied to what we learned recently…and that [camp] was a real-life application".

Grief

By nature of volunteering at a healing camp for bereaved children and adolescents, the student volunteers stated they became aware of the grieving and bereavement process for children. Esther, a student volunteer in her late twenties, who disclosed that she has no personal experience with grief herself, said that "I've learned in this program that it's important to distinguish between, 'Oh, they are just acting out because they are kids', and 'Oh, they really are grieving and need some help'. Everyone is different, everybody grieves differently". Kandi, a student volunteer in her mid-twenties, claimed, "I definitely learned about grief and it's OK to talk about it. Talking about it means that you are in some form of moving towards and accepting what happened and being able to talk about it".

Suicide

The volunteer students thought they received new and vital information about the complexities of suicide. Many of the students had a conventional view of suicide. They tended to blame the suicide victim for their actions without recognizing the complex and overwhelming pain the individual was experiencing. Kandi explained how what she had learned opened her eyes:

> I'm surprised that I didn't say it to begin with now that I know it, but I learned that it can be very offensive, and you really shouldn't say a person "committed suicide". And I hear that so much, but after it was explained to me that it's "died from suicide" because it is caused by a mental disorder. I thought that was really important. I wish everyone in the world would know that it's not "committed suicide" because committed suicide give suicide a negative connotation…so a lot of family members like to hush it, "oh don't tell him that dad committed suicide", or "she doesn't need to know that". So, it was really interesting to see that a lot of the kids' paperwork says how their loved one died, and it will say suicide but in parentheses, "but she doesn't know".

Kate had a similar experience and found it useful in her work as a co-counselor:

> One of the things I remember learning is how to get away from saying "they committed suicide", and start saying that "they died from suicide". And that whole conversation was interesting to have, because one of the kids in my group her father did die from suicide, so she just felt a lot of guilt like kids do and like "why would he do that"? and "I should have made him happy". So being able to talk to them and be like "you know, he probably had depression and that is not something you can control".

Being Present

Another important lesson learned from volunteering at camp included the skill of being present with clients. Karen, a second year MSW student volunteer, realized that she may have tried to rush things when working with the children:

> Just being present with them in their moment and not trying to rush it…I learned patience. Being in this field, I want to help immediately…and being patient and letting people sit in silence and being comfortable in the silence when they are dealing with something or talking about something, that is really important.

Kristi, who after graduation ended up working in foster care, acknowledged an important lesson from camp about being present, "It's ok to not necessarily know what to say, but just be there and create that safe space and safe environment…to sit in silence".

Skills Application

The final subcategory under *Professional Growth* was *skills application*. Several of the student volunteers stated that they have been able to apply what they had learned at camp in their internships and other professional settings. Esther has used the skills she acquired at camp in her work at a children's hospital:

> … a lot of times I will go into situations with a minimal consult for transportation, and it turns out "I don't have transportation because I was in a car accident, because my husband died". Just a spiral of things will come out. With camp I have been able to navigate those situations better…some people who are not getting these type of skills…they might kind of brush over it and not be able to talk to families about what they are going through.

Tina, who now works at a children's residential treatment facility, described how she was able to assist a young teenager, who had lost her brother, thanks to her experience at camp:

> I will give an example of when I actually checked into my camp education. I had a case where the kiddo had lost her sibling and that was a huge part of why she was struggling emotionally with suicidal ideations…her acknowledgement [of her loss] happened around the one-year anniversary, so I wanted to do something for her…I asked her, "do you want to do a balloon release"…I drove to [grocery store]…then I asked, "Is there a message you want to release in the balloon"? and she lit up and we released the balloon in the middle of the parking lot at [treatment facility]. Afterwards we talked about whatever she wanted to talk about…and at the end she was like, "Ms. Tina, I have not shared that story with anybody, I appreciate you listening to the entire story", so I remember thinking this is camp, but one on one.

Career Choices

The volunteer experience at camp also influenced the volunteers' future career choices. Although this was not true for all of the student volunteers, half of the participants mentioned this as an outcome of their camp experience. Reagan, who now works with oncology patients, stated, "I didn't even realize that I enjoy doing stuff with bereavement, maybe enjoy is the wrong word but you know. It [camp] definitely boosted my career interest because now I do a lot with bereavement". Esther reported similar feelings:

> It [camp] has touched me in my work. Now I'm looking into doing hospice which I would never had imagined I would do, because I've worked seven years with kids in healthcare. I would never have thought about the late stages of life…they need somebody to be there…so in a lot of ways, it has really affected me.

Camper Transformation as Personal Reward

All the student volunteers mentioned that they benefitted from the volunteer experience on a very personal level. Everyone stated that it was satisfying to watch the children transform during camp and know they had been a part of it. The transformation experience of the campers during their weekend at camp was most meaningful to the students. Tina had this to say about the transformations she witnessed in the children and how meaningful it was to her personally,

> Seeing the kids at the end. There is a big difference between the kids on Friday versus the kids on Sunday. You can see there's a transformation in a matter of three days…not wanting to be there, especially the older kids. They look livid on Friday and by Sunday morning it's all smiles, all engagement, and they are thanking you for the whole weekend…that part is the most meaningful – you see a huge difference.

Bella felt a powerful and intrinsic reward as she witnessed the transformation the campers experienced and for having been part of it:

> I have never ever, ever, ever in all my years as a mom, as a parent, as a person, or therapist even, seen such a quick transformation from such a distraught, down not good place to a place of hope and enlightenment. There's just a feeling of, it's almost like an empowerment…It is an amazing thing to see the kid who is a nasty, rotten, angry, confused child on Friday and see him on Sunday smiling and having friends. All that is just one of the most rewarding things I've ever done.

Discussion

In this study the researchers wanted to answer the research question what are

the lived experiences of MSW student volunteers at a healing camp for bereaved children and adolescents? The study revealed professional and personal growth-related themes: *Challenges, Professional Growth, Career Choices, and Camper Transformation as Personal Benefit*. Subcategories under Challenges included *bearing witness, sleep deprivation*, and *disciplinarian vs therapist*. Subcategories under *Professional Growth* included *group dynamics, grief, suicide, being present*, and *skills application*.

Examining the lived experiences of these volunteers revealed a profound impact on their personal and professional growth. The MSW student volunteers were able to make connections and apply what they were learning in the classroom while simultaneously practicing new clinical skills. The students' learning was thus transformed through extension and intention (Kolb, 1984), where the students participated in active external experimentation taking part as co-counselors (apprehension) and internal reflection (comprehension) during de-briefings and in the follow up interviews. In the category of *skills application* and the theme of *career choices* an increase in self-efficacy was noted among the students, which is at the heart of direct experiential learning.

Findings in this study correspond with themes found in Williams et al.'s (2002) study, where students experienced an increased sense of self efficacy and growth. Interestingly, the current study revealed increased clinical practice skills, whereas Williams et al. (2002) found study participants did not report an effect on micro level practice skills. This may be explained by the fact that the camp in this study provided a clinical curriculum for its participants that the student volunteers helped deliver. The current study findings are similar to those of Williams and Reeves' study (2004). Their study found that students engaged in a service-learning project at a burn camp felt that they learned more about the nature of the social work profession. The student volunteers in the current study not only increased their clinical knowledge but also considered new practice arenas. The findings in the current study also parallel the results reported by Lee and Kelley-Petersen (2018), Merritt and Murphy (2019), Midgett and Doumas (2016) and Stanke et al. (2019), who revealed that service-learning lead to professional growth and/or skill acquisition among graduate counseling, nursing and education students. What this study does have in common with the service-learning experiences referenced in the literature is that both service-learning and volunteering are valuable educational experiences for graduate students (Lee & Kelley-Petersen, 2019; Maccio, 2011; Merritt & Murphy, 2019; Midgett & Doumas, 2016; Mitschke & Petrovich, 2011; Pierpont et al., 2001; Stanke et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2002; Williams & Reeves, 2004). The volunteer experiences reported by the participants profoundly impacted their professional identity development. Professionally, the students applied new skills in practice. Personally, the students learned to bear witness to and appreciate the profound impact grief, loss, and suicide had on the campers.

This combination of professional and personal growth experiences helped the students see themselves, their clients, and the social work profession in a new way. Their experiences fostered an exploration of themselves as professionals that impacted where they saw themselves in future practice, opening areas not previously considered. This professional development was not just beneficial for the bereaved children but meaningful for the students as well.

Limitations

The students who participated in this study are enrolled in a Master of Social Work program, where two of their professors are involved with the camp – one is the founder of the camp, and one volunteers as a clinical group leader. Although the third professor is not involved directly in camp activities, it is possible that the students felt they needed to answer the researchers' questions in a way that reflected a positive attitude towards camp to please the professors or in hopes of a more positive grade. To mitigate this possibility, the researchers adhered to strict qualitative research methods.

Volunteer applications revealed that three of the students had previously experienced significant loss in their lives. However, these losses were not recent. It is possible these students experienced camp differently, whether in a positive or negative light. In this study, the participants were not asked about specific countertransference reactions. Even though countertransference did not emerge as a theme in the analysis and was not overtly evident in the group sessions with the children, a few students recognized this was an issue for them. Supervision with the lead counselors and the camp director immediately after group and after the weekend was helpful.

Although interviews provide in-depth information about the lived experiences of the social work students who volunteered at a healing camp for bereaved children and teens, only fourteen student volunteers participated in the study (N=14). The purposive but small sample of participants in this study makes the generalizability of study findings to a larger population questionable (Merriam, 2002). However, this study generated important additional information for the future study of social work students volunteering, and the process of natural generalization may become evident (Stake, 2000).

Finally, all of the student volunteers in this study self-identified as women and many were in their 20's. This may have impacted their experience of camp, but it was not specifically explored by the researchers.

Implications for Future Studies

In this study all of the study participants were social work students, female, and predominately White. Future research with a more diverse population both regarding gender, ethnicity, and discipline would provide additional data for analysis and add to the limited body of research in this area. An outside researcher, one not connected to the school or camp programs, would also be a consideration.

Also, exploring the lived experiences of student volunteers while considering additional variables such as prior volunteer experience and familiarity with the population served would be of interest in the future. The types of emotional investment and motivations of the participants could reveal more nuanced findings and additionally informative study findings and conclusions Future studies specifically examining the experience of student countertransference in similar practice settings would provide informative outcomes, enhancing the knowledge base in the area of study.

Implications for Education

The results of this study have important implications for graduate education. Bereavement camps and other specialty camps are becoming more prevalent and popular as methods for support and intervention for a variety of populations (McClatchey & Wimmer, 2018). The specialty camp setting offers a meaningful healing experience for the camp attendees and professional growth experience for the student volunteers. For these students, volunteering in this and similar settings gives them a meaningful real-life opportunity to develop and practice skills they are learning in the classroom.

This integration of theory and practice is invaluable for students as they graduate from the role of student to that of professional social workers. As volunteers, students in this study experienced the four stages of Kolb's learning cycle (1984). Concrete learning occurred in orientation to the camp curriculum. Reflective observation was evident in supervision. Abstract conceptualization occurred in the classroom and orientation to a trauma-focused approach, and active experimentation took place in vivo during group sessions. Volunteering would thus serve as an additional opportunity for graduate students in human services professions to be further invested in the four stages of the learning cycle (Kolb, 1984).

Social work, education, nursing and counseling programs would do well to connect with specialty camps to offer their students this type of lived experience. Not all graduate programs offer service-learning projects, and the current study highlights the importance of providing and encouraging volunteering within the educational experiences of graduate students. Volunteer opportunities provide unique learning experiences for students. With the pressures and performance anxieties related to grades and academic pressures removed from volunteer experiences, students can focus on their learning. Students who participate in volunteer experiences can bring knowledge gained into the classroom in a variety of ways such as reflection papers or presentations to their class or cohort about their volunteer experiences. These presentations can be a way to share experiences and recruit future volunteers. Graduate programs, with the help of students, could provide and maintain information on volunteer opportunities for students in their communities.

While volunteer learning experiences are beneficial to students, the ability to volunteer while completing a full-time master's program is a luxury that not all students have. Many students are juggling employment and family responsibilities while attending classes and completing field internships hours and may not have the time or ability to volunteer.

It is important to note that volunteering does not involve completing class assignments or receiving grades. Therefore, when volunteering to complement their education, students need to have an opportunity to reflect on their experiences to transform their learning (Kolb, 1984). Debriefings and personal interviews can facilitate this process.

Conclusion

In this study the examination of the lived experiences of MSW student

volunteers at a healing camp for bereaved children delineated important themes and distinct subcategories collected from the researchers' interviews of the study participants. These experiences are described from the point of view of students immersing themselves in an 'up close and personal' clinical experience that challenged their nascent professional practice skills and gave them an awareness of their own personal reactions to and understandings of grief, loss, and bereavement.

Our study suggests that meaningful social work education requires the student to practice the balancing act of gaining clinical experience while repeating the process of exposure to, and joining with, the client and their struggle (Hepworth et al., 2013). Clearly, serving as a witness to a child's unique bereavement journey was unexpectedly challenging and encouraged thoughtful introspection and reflection. By helping bereaved children reauthor and reframe their painful grief narratives, the students were able to accompany the children on a path to healing from tragic loss and a need to grieve. *Camper transformation as personal reward* and *being present* powerfully impacted the student volunteers in some similar but also uniquely personal ways.

The social work tradition of learning by doing is indeed central to the development of professional skill and identity (Hepworth et al., 2013) and is reflective in Kolb's learning theory (1984). Volunteering can provide graduate students in the human services field an additional opportunity to apply newly learned and developing skills.

The Council of Social Work Education (2020) is a proponent of students volunteering and states, "Volunteering is a great way to learn more about the field. Volunteer work can help secure scholarships and work-study programs because it demonstrates your dedication to the field". Graduate students, though frequently overwhelmed with the challenges inherent in the helping professions, may recall and reconnect with their initial interest in and growing commitment to their field by volunteering. Thoughtful reflection on the findings of this study points to the complex challenges of practical skill development while remaining authentically present with acutely vulnerable and traumatized clients.

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"The story of human learning is a beautiful tale woven into the tapestry of our distant, our recent, and – indeed – our own personal past" (p. 5).

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Learning, Course Satisfaction, and Community in the Time of COVID-19: Student Perceptions of the Switch to Emergency Remote Teaching

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Abstract. This multiple descriptive case study explores how university students responded to their Business Communications course's transitioning to an emergency remote course during the spring semester of 2020. Thirty-nine students completed an end-of-semester questionnaire that recorded their impressions of learning and course satisfaction. Nine of those students also participated in semi-structured interviews about these topics. The data revealed that most students enjoyed and felt they learned more from their in-person course, they missed learning from their peers, and they missed the community that was created during the in-person class sessions that were suspended due to university-sanctioned COVID-19 protocols. This article discusses the need for instructors to integrate continuous interactive community into online courses and the need for universities to provide training for online instructors in this essential component in course preparation and execution.

In 2010, some scholars presciently advised, "with warnings of impending pandemics, universities need to be prepared to deliver courses in alternative ways to ensure continuity of instruction" (White et al., p. 34). In March of 2020, universities got to test this preparation or lack thereof when, due to sudden and unexpected COVID-19 protocols, all in-person courses switched to asynchronous online instruction. This situation presented a unique opportunity to assess the preparedness of universities and teachers by evaluating the perceived learning and course satisfaction differences of students during spring 2020. Like many other institutions, our university offered mostly in-person courses before the pandemic; as a result, many faculty members were not trained to implement the best practices in online education until the switch to remote learning. While our university began to train and address online course design after the switch to remote learning and in the summer that followed, it is instructive to consider the effects of having in-person instructors pivot to teach emergency online courses.

Other studies have begun to examine student learning (Lemay et al., 2021) and engagement (Castro & George, 2021) during this switch. Our study seeks to add to that body of knowledge by revealing the insights of student perceptions and experiences transitioning from in-person to online learning when they did not choose the latter and when these courses were taught by instructors accustomed to in-person teaching. Most in-person college students experienced this challenge in 2020. Our study provides a snapshot of what students likely experienced and provides recommendations on how to better prepare for future similar situations.

The following literature review provides a grounded research foundation for contextualizing the situation of how university students responded to the implementation of emergency remote teaching as a pandemic protocol. Because the course in this study functioned as a flipped classroom, the following review will briefly describe this pedagogical strategy and then summarize the differences in student learning, motivation, and enjoyment in online courses versus in-person courses.

Literature Review

Flipped Classes

The setting for the study is a highly interactive flipped-model Business Communications course. Students prepared for each class meeting by spending approximately one hour reading a text, an article, or watching a lecture posted on their Learning Management System. This pre-class preparation enabled students to engage in meaningful discussions and activities for a 50-minute class session three days a week. Research has shown better learning outcomes, student perceptions of learning, and student engagement in a flipped classroom model as compared to a traditional classroom (Baepler et al., 2014; Berrett, 2012; Deslauriers et al., 2011; Haak et al., 2011; Kong, 2014; Loveys & Riggs, 2019; Missildine et al., 2013). The flipped classroom model allows for active, deep learning, in which students interact with each other and the professor to apply the concepts they have learned about before class. Flipped classrooms such as those in the present study incorporate elements of online courses, such as readily available recorded lectures with in-person elements of discussion and group work activities. Since this study examines a switch from in-person to emergency remote teaching, it is relevant to consider which modality—online or in-person—research has shown to be superior for student learning and course satisfaction.

Online Versus In-person Classes

Several studies have analyzed, with mixed results, which kind of course—in-person or online—enables students to learn more effectively. Some studies have found that in-person students perform better on exams than online students in the same course (Arias et al., 2018; Bettinger et al., 2015; Gibson, 2008), while other research shows students' grades as the same in both types of courses (Stack, 2015). Another study found that, although online students perform as well or better than in-person students in some evaluative measures (Means et al., 2009), in-person students demonstrate higher-level problem-solving skills than online students (Dendir, 2019).

In addition, Stark (2019) found lower levels of motivation to succeed in online versus in-person students. Online students believed their course was not as interesting and helpful as students in the same in-person course (Stark, 2019, p. 243). Further, online students reported that they sought less assistance from their classmates and their instructors than students in in-person courses (Stark, 2019, p. 244). An apparent weakness of online courses is the challenge of integrating meaningful interaction amongst students and sometimes also with the course instructor.

Some research shows that students enjoy the interaction in in-person courses better than in online courses, and flipped classrooms, in particular, allow for these in-person social interactions such as discussions and group application activities (Crews & Butterfield, 2014, p. 44). As a result of the desire for interaction, students have been found to feel greater satisfaction in their in-person courses than in their online courses (Gibson, 2008; Toufaily et al., 2018). Online students have reported less exposure to effective teaching practices and lower quality of peer and faculty interactions (Dumford & Miller, 2018). Though students tend to enjoy interactions with their professors and peers, students do value the flexibility of online courses (Crews & Butterfield, 2014). Also, some research indicates that when online courses are designed to incorporate student interaction, student satisfaction is as high in online courses as in in-person courses (Driscoll et al., 2012).

In many studies, comparing in-person and online courses has been problematic due to self-selection bias in the studies' sampling protocols (Zimmerman, 2020). Students typically register for the course modality that they prefer. The spring of 2020 allowed for an unusual study because the students did not elect to take an online course. Previous research has evaluated planned online environments, a modality that students chose. It should be noted that the emergency remote teaching of spring 2020 was different from online courses, which instructors usually design in advance (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Hodges et al., 2020). Therefore, one should not expect the excellence of regular online courses to be consistent with emergency remote teaching. This study contextualizes the spring 2020 student experience and addresses to what extent this emergency remote experience was similar or dissimilar to what research has found on planned online courses. This study can help us understand some best practices applicable to online course design and facilitation. It is also valuable to understand students' perceptions during emergency remote teaching to prepare better plans in case of a future disaster. According to Hodges et al. (2020), "the possible need for [emergency remote teaching] must become part of a faculty member's skill set, as well as professional development programming for any personnel involved in the instructional mission of colleges and universities" (para. 26).

The theoretical frameworks used to evaluate students' perceptions of their course modality's change are cognitive learning (Frymier & Houser, 1999, p. 8) and course satisfaction (Crosby & Stevens, 1987). These frameworks guided the questions we asked the students in both the questionnaire and focus-group interviews.

Research Questions

Guided by the review of literature, the overarching purpose of the study, and the applied theoretical frameworks, the following research questions were posed as the focal frame of inquiry for this multiple descriptive case study:

1. Were students more satisfied with their in-person or remote courses, and why?
2. How did students perceive that the quantity and quality of their learning changed when transitioning from an in-person course to an asynchronous online version?

3. How did students' perceptions of formerly interactive courses versus lecture-oriented ones change when they switched to a remote format?
4. Did the students' sense of classroom community, from their interactive flipped classroom the first half of the semester, continue when they transitioned to emergency remote teaching?
5. What were students' most significant challenges in switching from an in-person to an online course?

Methods

According to Creswell and Poth (2016), the qualitative research paradigm emphasizes an inductive inquiry process exploring and understanding social and human problems. Grounded in the qualitative research paradigm, case study methodology can provide an in-depth look into complex social phenomena in real-life contexts (Yin, 2013). Therefore, the rationale for this study's application of a multiple case study research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) includes the "real-life" unique circumstances where a global COVID-19 pandemic had disrupted human interactions and institutional operations. Consequently, educational institutions were forced to disband in-person instructional models and immediately implement online technology-enabled teaching models.

Since this course was already being conducted using a flipped classroom model, students continued to access the content online but missed the in-class activities and discussions when the course switched to an asynchronous online format. Essentially, the course became only pre-class activities on the Learning Management System, such as watching videos and completing assigned readings. What was lost in this course was the in-class application of the learning material. Due to the sudden pivot from an in-person to an online model of learning and instruction, the professor did not add additional synchronous meeting requirements or discussion boards. Students' required and monitored interactions during the remote portion were through four peer reviews on a discussion board. In groups of three or four, students also had to finish the group project they started at the beginning of the semester. During remote learning, these groups were instructed to communicate virtually to complete checkpoints for their project, but the instructor did not monitor their communication. Students continued to receive audio and written feedback on assignments from their professor and were encouraged to email or call her when they had questions.

During the switch to emergency remote teaching, our university began offering resources on online teaching to faculty members. The Academy for Teaching and Learning launched a website called "Keep Teaching" that included text resources about online course instruction. The university also offered Online Teaching Commons, an informal support group for instructors, and webinars on topics such as PowerPoint slides for online courses.

We applied two sampling protocols in this multiple case study to obtain the most comprehensive data. The first round of sampling involved a criteria-based purposive sampling protocol (Patton, 2002) drawn from 39 students enrolled in a Business Communications course at a private university in the southwestern United States. The 39 students were provided an online questionnaire with four open-ended

questions, asking their perceptions of cognitive learning and course satisfaction (see Appendix). The second round involved nine students who chose to participate in semi-structured interviews that extended their perceptions of the impact of a switch from an in-person classroom instructional model to an unelected online instructional model on their cognitive learning and course satisfaction.

The qualitative data collection protocol for this study involved semi-structured interviews conducted via Zoom by one of the study's authors, who also served as an instructor for the Business Communications course in which the students were enrolled. Pattern matching, within-case framework analysis, and cross-case thematic analysis were the three data analysis protocols used to establish qualitative data trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The narrative data were coded using a pattern matching process applied during both the framework within-case and thematic cross-case analysis procedures (Miles et al., 2014). Although qualitative case study data do not allow for statistical generalizability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Stake (1978) explain that a case study can be a powerful tool for establishing theoretical generalizations based on personal experiences.

The narrative data presented in the following results and discussion sections represent the perceptions of how university students in a Business Communications course responded to the suspension of an in-person instructional model and the switch to an online instructional model during the 2020 spring semester.

Results

In Table I: Within-Case Analysis, a summary of all nine focus-group participants' answers to questions about their perceptions of learning and course satisfaction is provided. Afterward, four of the most insightful heterogenous cases are discussed, highlighting each participant's perceptions on how transitioning from an in-person classroom experience to an asynchronous online experience impacted his or her sense of course satisfaction and overall effect on cognitive learning. Vic's responses are essentially representative of the five other cases.

Table 1

Within-Case Analysis

Student Participating in Focus Group Interview	Perception of Learning	Perception of Course Satisfaction
Andrea	Greater in-person due to distractions at home	Missed socializing with classmates and community in the classroom
Charice	Greater in class because she learned from classmates in discussion	Missed interaction and discussion with classmates
Brandon	Learned a lot more in class because of the ease of asking questions	Doing group work in class and seeing each other was more fun than virtual communication

Table 1 Cont.

Student Participating in Focus Group Interview	Perception of Learning	Perception of Course Satisfaction
Heidi	Learned more in-person due to discussions	The in-person class allowed her to meet new people, which was more enjoyable than seeing just people's names in an online context
Vic	Learning through discussing in class is more engaging than doing the work at home	In-person classes are more engaging and enjoyable
Sara	Talking about the material in class helped her learn better	Enjoyed groupwork more in class than online
Ernest	Learned more in class because he was able to pay better attention	Enjoyed the social aspect of talking to his friends before, after, and during class
Ginny	Discussing and problem-solving in class was engaging and solidified the material in her long-term memory	Enjoyed in-person class more because of interaction with classmates and instructor and convenience of understanding and completing assignments
Andy	Learned more in class because the interaction with classmates and instructor made him more motivated to care about the subject	Preferred in-person class because of the routine it provided and because online he missed seeing friends and maintaining a relationship with the professor

Case One: Andrea moved from her university in central Texas to her family's home in Chicago when the university transitioned to emergency remote teaching. Suddenly, she found herself responsible for not only school and work but also hefty family responsibilities. She explained that her family faced challenges of aging grandparents, which heightened her domestic duties. For example, she regularly cooked dinner for her father and siblings and did laundry for the entire household. Andrea emphasized that she enjoyed in-person learning over online learning. Calling her situation "tumultuous," she admitted that her coursework was challenging to balance with her other family responsibilities. Andrea also missed the community that her class provided for her:

> I think that there's so much of a social aspect that I get from college…. I've been able to meet so many different characters in college, and that really affects how happy I am. The sociability aspect of our class (I met so many people in your class…), and I think that really affected how much I enjoyed it because I enjoyed the people in it. I'd go in every day excited to not only learn

> the material but also talk to these people who are maybe not friends yet but acquaintances that I enjoy. There's a sociable aspect that you can't get online.

Andrea conceded that, in contrast, she did not miss as much her more traditional classes that mainly consisted of lectures.

Case Two: Charice is an international student from Nigeria who, unlike Andrea, could not go home during the pandemic because of limitations on international travel. Though she admitted being distracted by family concerns that her parents were out of work and her grandparents were staying with them, she was in her off-campus apartment completing her online courses. Charice admitted that she does not usually enjoy online classes. Like Andrea, Charice believed she was learning and enjoying the course more when meeting in class because of the frequent discussions and group work conducted during class. She stated that while she was learning from her professor and the posted content materials, she was not learning from her peers, which compromised the depth of her learning. Charice was also bothered by the inefficiency of communication through technology, explaining that a lag exists between when a message is sent and when a message is received. She emphasized that her group communicated much more quickly when meeting in class rather than through video conferencing or group texting.

Case Three: Brandon is a student from out of state, but, like Charice, he had to stay in his off-campus apartment throughout the pandemic because he contracted COVID-19 through his workplace. He volunteered that everyone at his workplace near campus contracted the virus, and his case was asymptomatic, though he felt tired. He admitted that the worst result of acquiring the virus was the lonely nature of isolation in his apartment for two weeks. Like Andrea and Charice, Brandon also believed that he enjoyed the course and learned more from the in-person class, primarily because of the distractions he experienced in his apartment. Brandon agreed with Charice that communication was more efficient in person. He liked visiting the professor's office hours or speaking to her after class instead of emailing her. Brandon commented that he enjoyed seeing his classmates in person, and he admitted that being in class was "a lot more fun than shooting a text or Facetiming not as often." He missed in-person class participation.

Case Four: In contrast to the previous three students, Vic represents the other five focus group students. When his courses moved online, he traveled home to continue his studies. Vic and all the other students interviewed believed that he learned and enjoyed the course more when it met in person. He admitted that, like Brandon, procrastination was a great temptation for him at home. The regularity of in-person class meetings kept him accountable to complete assignments and think about the course multiple times each week rather than waiting until the deadline to do the readings, watch the videos, and complete the assignments. Vic also admitted that being physically present in a classroom kept him accountable to participate meaningfully in a discussion. He stated,

> Being in the classroom helps you learn more. It…forces me to engage and participate and now that I'm sitting in my room with nobody around me…I

> just feel like I'm not personally engaged. So, I…go through the motions and read the assignments and just do them and then say that's that.

Vic was not the only student who described the online portion of the course this way. In the questionnaires, students described the remote version of the course as "going through the motions," "busywork," and even "an absolute chore." When the course transitioned to an online format, it became less meaningful and enjoyable.

Being alone in an online environment was demotivating for Vic, unlike the in-person classroom that helped him with accountability and engagement. Vic elaborated that

> being in-person and having all those kids around you and doing those exercises…even if you don't know those people and you don't speak to them outside the classroom, it makes you more comfortable with them in-person because…you're all…there and you all know what to expect. You all know each other. Like how we all think and what everyone has to say. And I think it's a very community-based feel and…not having that anymore, it just…totally changes the feel of the course. And it…totally changes…the motivation to do it.

Table 2: Cross-Case Analysis shows common themes that emerged in the open-ended questions that 39 students completed on the questionnaire and the transcripts of the nine focus group interviews. This table also indicates how frequently each theme was referenced during the focus groups and in the combined questionnaire data.

Table 2

Cross-Case Anaylsis

Common Theme	Frequency of Theme
Students noted various benefits of in-person learning with others.	34
Students enjoyed interacting with each other and the professor when meeting in the classroom.	25
In-person classes provided a helpful routine and spaced-out assignments to minimize procrastinating and cramming, which happened in the online version.	17
Classwork became burdensome and seemed irrelevant online.	11
Distractions at home hindered learning, and in-person classes enabled focused learning.	7

Through both within-case and cross-case analysis of the narrative and questionnaire data, five themes emerged as significant data points that align with the study's research questions and the theoretical framework of student learning and course satisfaction:

1. Benefits of learning with others
2. Enjoyment of relationships, community, and social interaction
3. Challenges from a lack of routine and structure
4. Loss of the course's overarching purpose
5. Distractions at home in contrast to in-person classes that enable students to focus

These themes will be discussed in answering each of the study's research questions.

Question 1: Course Satisfaction

The students in this study largely enjoyed in-person meetings more than remote learning. Only two of the 39 students surveyed enjoyed the online version more; one of these students specified that his or her satisfaction was due to the flexibility and convenience of an online course. However, in the questionnaire and focus group interviews, 37 out of 39 students reported enjoying interacting and building friendships with their peers and their professor in the classroom. They found accountability in their in-person classes helpful, and they felt they could manage their time in an in-person class better. Also, all nine focus group students reported that the sense of community they built during the first part of the semester in the in-person class declined and caused them to be less satisfied with the course when it transitioned to an emergency remote format. For example, one focus group student, Ginny, reflected that online, she felt "left on my own." She acknowledged that although the remote version helped her become more independently motivated, she admitted, "I'm not enjoying it nearly as much without the interaction."

When students in the focus groups admitted that their sense of community was lost during the last half of the semester, we asked them if discussion board assignments may have helped. Out of eight students who answered this question, six admitted that required discussion boards would feel like drudgery rather than an enjoyable aspect of the course. One student admitted that discussion board assignments might be helpful, and one other student thought that discussion boards would not be pleasant but that they may be beneficial for accountability and learning.

Question 2: Quantity and Quality of Learning

In both the questionnaire data and the focus group interviews, students saw multiple benefits of learning in-person with others, such as accountability, ease of asking questions, discussion, and being forced to talk about concepts. Students said they did their work more thoroughly in an in-person class because they didn't want to feel embarrassed during discussion. Also, the format of in-person classes made students see the course as essential and worthwhile. Once their courses started meeting remotely, the importance of the course content was diminished for students.

Question 3: Difference Between Interactive and Lecture Classes Online

In addition to Andrea's admission that she did not miss her lecture-oriented

courses as much as her interactive ones, another focus group student, Sara, indicated that for this flipped course, she preferred meeting in person. However, in other lecture-oriented courses, she liked the emergency remote versions. Sara shared,

> I just feel the other courses…being online was okay because all we would do in the in-person courses are read the professor's PowerPoint presentations. But now he's reading the PowerPoints on our computers. Online was better because I could stop and take notes and do it on my own time. In this course, we wouldn't necessarily have lectures. We had more discussions.

She also believed that she learned more when her flipped classroom met in person than when the course transitioned to an online format. According to Garrison (2017), past research showed no difference between in-person and e-learning outcomes when in-person classes had the goal of merely conveying content verbally because in both types of courses students are left to absorb and interpret the course content individually (p. 87). Most participants in another study comparing online versus in-person lecture-oriented courses indicated that they preferred the online version because of convenience and easy access to lectures (White et al., 2010). This finding explains why Sara and Andrea liked their lecture-oriented courses more when they were online versus their interactive courses, which they enjoyed more in-person.

Question 4: Continuing Classroom Community

Even though students were completing projects in groups of three to five during the emergency remote portion of the semester, all nine students in the focus groups reported not experiencing community and meaningful interaction in the remote version of the course and noted that, as a result, they were not learning as much when the course became online only. Importantly, our study shows that in-person courses uniquely offer students opportunities to build relationships organically through pre-and post-class conversation.

Question 5: Greatest Challenges of the Transition to Remote Learning

Students widely agreed that meeting in person helped them manage their time more effectively because they had set routines and fewer distractions. Students perceived that an established class schedule was conducive to learning because it forced them to fill up their days and space out their workload throughout the week. In synchronous classes, time is set aside for students, which helps them pace themselves through the journey of mastering concepts. When participating in courses online, students reported that they often "crammed" too much material into one set time instead of pacing themselves. They believed that spacing out the material would help them learn it better.

Additionally, students believed that the in-person classroom environment allows them to focus. Whereas at home, they were distracted by personal lives, other

people, entertainment, and procrastination, in person they focused on their professor, their learning, and the content of the course.

Students also found that collaborating with other students for their group projects was more efficient and enjoyable when meeting in person. This finding is consonant with other research that online courses deter collaborative learning (Dumford & Miller, 2018) or make collaboration more time-consuming (Lee et al., 2016). Probably, students needed training to use online meeting tools and accountability to utilize them regularly. Still, asynchronous online courses pose the challenge of students scheduling times to meet rather than having in-person class time for their group work.

Discussion

Confirmed by narrative data, this study presents the need for online instructors to be creative and thoughtful in their efforts to go beyond posting static course content. Moreover, the study serves as a guide for educators as they prepare to be more effective in future emergency remote teaching situations.

The Need for Community for Learning

This study reveals the error in assuming that learning happens in an isolated context in online (or emergency remote) courses. According to Garrison (2017), the most significant mistake of traditional distance education design has been the assumption that students learn apart from a community. Echoing Garrison's belief, Wenger (1998) explains that learning is fundamentally social and consists of both participation in and reification of concepts:

> Learning is a matter of engagement: it depends on opportunities to contribute actively to the practices of communities that we value and that value us, to integrate their enterprises into our understanding of the world, and to make creative use of their respective repertoires. (1998, p. 227)

Charice's reflection in the focus group shows this reality:

> I was learning more in class when in person and also just because of the nature of our course, discussion-based. You would teach us, and we would all discuss and have the group work, so I think that worked better for me—the kind of learning that I do. Online learning is very personal, so I'm learning from you, but I'm not learning from other people's experiences and what they contribute.

Other students in the present study had similar comments, such as "I miss seeing my friends [and]…bounc[ing] off the ideas of other classmates and hear[ing] what their contributions are." Another student admitted, "For me, it's just easier and more effective to process the material through interacting and discussing." Rather than assuming that online learning means isolated learning, instructors must find ways to establish collaboration in their online courses as they would in in-person courses. As Hewson (2018) notes, it is tempting for online instructors to get into a content-

publishing mentality, which does not give students the interactive experience they enjoy and need for deep learning.

Students in this study indicated that they missed social presence, which is "the ability of participants to identify with a group, communicate openly in a trusting environment, and develop personal and affective relationships progressively by way of projecting their individual personalities" (Garrison, 2017, p. 25). Asynchronous, text-based online courses have a particular challenge of cultivating social presence due to students' lack of immediacy with one another and with their professors (Garrison, 2017, p. 26). Therefore, instructors must be creative with ensuring that social presence is achieved in their online courses. As Garrison (2017) asserts, students must feel that they belong to a meaningful, cohesive community of co-learners. Because of how crucial social presence is in the learning process, online instructors must consider how best to facilitate community in their courses. Online instructors should determine how they will build social presence at the outset of creating a new course, with activities such as team projects (Budhai & Skipwith, 2017, p. 62). Social presence might also extend to include the instructor's presence, which professors can enhance by sending a personalized text to students (Robertson et al., 2021). Students in online courses want a connection with their professors, and they want to connect with their classmates, too. They will be more engaged in a course if they feel connected to the people in it with them (Buelow et al., 2018). Research has shown that student engagement increases student satisfaction, enhances student motivation to learn, reduces the sense of isolation, and improves student performance in online courses (Martin & Bollinger, 2018).

The Necessity of Planning and Training

As one might expect, this study confirms previous research that failing to plan for collaborative learning is detrimental to students' learning and satisfaction (Hodges et al., 2020, para. 10). The necessity of pivoting to emergency remote teaching sacrificed planning for interaction, which sacrificed learning.

An online course must be designed with community-building in mind. The community of inquiry framework is well-suited to guide online instructors in their course creation, as instructors consider developing social presence within their online courses. Well-designed communities of inquiry enable students to share ideas and personal reflections and apply the content to their collective experiences (Garrison, 2017, p. 23). Thus, students in a community of inquiry make the content personal and meaningful (p. 23). As some other instructors have demonstrated, finding ways to create a community in an online course should be a primary goal (Hulett, 2019).

Therefore, if a university must switch in-person courses to an online format, the university should provide training in community-building before the next crisis that converts in-person instructors to online teachers. Faculty members like the first author, an in-person and online instructor for over eight years, perhaps don't in practice realize what research shows about the importance of community in learning. The pandemic exposed this lack in this instructor's course. It is well-documented in the literature that professors of online courses need technological training and instructional design support (Blau et al., 2018), but it is also crucial that universities

provide training on community-building, which is essential yet challenging in remote courses more so than in-person courses. Other research has shown that, unlike in our findings, students showed equal satisfaction in online courses compared to in-person courses when the online courses were designed to promote a high degree of interaction between the students and the instructor and among the students themselves (Driscoll et al., 2012). The disparity between that study and the present one reveals ineffective course design in the latter due to the abrupt shift and the instructor's ignorance about the importance of online learning communities. With emergency remote teaching, instructors did not have time to plan excellent online courses (Hodges et al., 2020, para. 4). Nevertheless, this disparity underscores the need for training online instructors and empowering them to use tools that promote frequent, meaningful interaction in online courses. Instructors can have significantly better outcomes with students if they plan for socialization in their classrooms (Irwin & Berge, 2006, p. 6). As Vlachopoulos (2020) opined, "technology itself doesn't guarantee an effective—or pleasant—learning experience. This can only be achieved through systematic training initiatives…" (para. 11).

The Need for Continual Community-Building Throughout a Course

A worthwhile finding of this study is that initial community-building will not sustain itself all semester. Research has shown that icebreakers are helpful for learner-to-learner engagement in online courses (Bollinger & Martin, 2018), but instructors should not expect that an icebreaker is sufficient for learner-to-learner engagement throughout a course. A learning community that is built must be cultivated. In this study, students had an interactive flipped classroom for the first half of the semester; even so, it wasn't enough to sustain learning and enjoyment throughout the semester. There must be continual community-building and mutual learning opportunities throughout the semester.

As instructors must put forth intentional effort to find meaningful ways for students to engage with each other, they should not assume that discussion boards are a fix-all for community building. One focus group student described a sentiment that was common to multiple focus group students, that discussion boards are "not at all like going and sitting next to someone and…getting to know their name and just chatting, so…they turn into another assignment." Another student agreed and said that discussion boards are a "checklist item" and that "there wouldn't be a whole lot of heart behind that." Research has shown that when students post discussions asynchronously, they are less engaged than in real-time conversations (Irwin & Berge, 2006). Also, because text-based discussion boards do not allow facial expression or body language richness, these media do not promote ideal engagement (Budhai & Skipwith, 2017, pp. 73-74). Students consider them beneficial when discussions are structured with guiding questions or prompts to deepen their understanding of the content (Martin & Bollinger, 2018). Incorporating videos as part of discussions may also help due to the richer communication medium. The quality of discussion board questions matters, as well. Instructors can promote learner engagement online by creating thought-provoking questions, which have a real-world application to significant social issues and allow students to apply their personal experiences and

read others' personal experiences (Buelow et al., 2018). When discussion board questions are not high quality, they may appear to students as busywork (Buelow et al., 2018). Finally, if instructors are actively involved in discussions, learners might have a greater sense of belonging (Peacock & Cowan, 2019). Mere interaction is insufficient to make an online course effective; students must interact in highly intellectual, social, and emotional ways (Lee & Bonk, 2016). However, as our study found, a weakness inherent in online education is the lack of informal, spontaneous conversation that students naturally engage in when they sit next to each other.

Conclusion

Colleges and universities need to prepare for future events that might cause courses to transition quickly to an online format, and this study reveals some of the areas that may need additional preparation. Universities should train not only online faculty members but also in-person instructors who need to prepare to teach online in another emergency. Training should include creating and facilitating meaningful interaction between students or communities of inquiry. Students also need training in remote communication tools and probably direction and accountability from their professor to regularly collaborate with their group members.

While all case study researchers should be cautious in drawing broad conclusions from a small data set, this study is supported by an extensive literature review coupled with a robust analysis of data pulled from a highly reliable participant sample. The study's participants' perceptions and experiences confirm the importance of semester-long interactions to promote deep learning and student satisfaction. Consequently, if an emergency remote version of a flipped classroom consists of only the posted course content, students will miss the most beneficial parts of the course, which balance both depths of content exploration and breadth of experiential application. Students in this study may have been more sensitive to the loss of the highly interactive learning community than students who may have never experienced this environment and therefore are less inclined to note the absence. However, this study has confirmed other research that online courses without thoughtful and meaningful interactions lead to negative impressions from student participants (Tang et al., 2020).

Therefore, this study underscores the importance of using creativity to build community among students. Whether instructors plan online courses or face an emergency online course like what they experienced in the spring of 2020, institutions need to ensure that proper pedagogical training about community-building is in place. Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed weaknesses in our response systems in providing quality learning and teaching delivery models. However, we may now attempt to better prepare for a future contingency and train in-person instructors in creative methods that promote students' sense of community and, thus, academic success.

Whether instructors plan online courses or face an emergency online course like what they experienced in the spring of 2020, institutions need to ensure that proper pedagogical training about community-building is in place.

Disclosure Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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Appendix

Questionnaire and Interview Questions for Participants

1. When did you feel you were learning more in our course: when it was meeting in person or since it has been online? Why?
2. Have you enjoyed our course more as an in-person course or as an online course? Explain.
3. Did you think about the course content more when we were meeting in-person or since it has been online? Explain.
4. Are you spending more time watching videos, doing the readings, and completing assignments on the course now, as an online course, or did you spend more time completing work and assignments on the course when we met in person? Explain.

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Learning, Student Well-being, and the Classroom: Reimagining a Class through Focus on Community

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Abstract. Observations of low student motivation, siloed learning, student loneliness and anxiety, along with a disconnect between classroom learning and life application inspired the authors to explore possible causes. They studied the correlates of classroom-community-life connection and implemented their learning in the revision of a language and culture course. Their work has resulted in a shift in teaching, one that moves away from a purely academic outcome to one that prioritizes community. Approaching teaching and learning through this community lens, the authors are discovering new excitement in their learners, higher levels of student engagement, and increased student motivation to learn and connect learning to their larger life context.

The process of learning and teaching is both surprisingly simple and deeply complex, and decades of teaching reveal insights at often unexpected points in time. Not long ago, we both stood in front of a new class and experienced an epiphany that has changed everything about our teaching, something that seems obvious enough but is easily forgotten in the midst of the planning, execution, and evaluation that belong to the teaching process. Like many college instructors, we teach certain classes that are required for graduation. Such classes bring a broad spectrum of students together, students representing a variety of interests, expectations, life backgrounds, and no particular central bond.

One semester, this reality became especially apparent. The group that we encountered in our introductory language and culture class represented a broad spectrum of our university's student population in terms of age, gender, socio-economic status, and race. As we informally surveyed the class on the first day, we learned some important details. One was that without exception every student had enrolled due to graduation requirements and that the goal of the vast majority of students was merely earning "good grades" in the class. Another detail was the thought-provoking realization that many of the students were carrying with them negative memories of the course's subject matter from high school experiences. We also found no up-front evidence of students desiring to be in the class, and although everyone was polite, little to no excitement was noticeable. As is often the case at the beginning of the semester, students, upon entering class, scanned the room for familiar faces and sat near those people. Those who knew no one sat alone, shuffled into the group of other equally unknown students or remained anonymous in the presence of those who had gravitated toward each other. There we stood in the first stretch of a semester-long course. We were prepared to share a topic that we are both passionate about but to a group of students who, out of disconnection or general disinterest, ran

the risk of merely going through the motions or entirely detaching themselves from the deep learning and from one another. We thought especially about students who were clearly alone, outside of the pack, carrying memories of negative experiences. We pondered what we could do for them.

Initial Ponderings

Experiencing this phenomenon, we engaged in a process of deep observation and even deeper reflection on the meaning of our experience. In doing so, we began to sort out what we knew and then proceeded to ask ourselves questions. We knew that we would be meeting with these students roughly three hours each week for fifteen weeks. We knew that the students needed to earn credit for the course in order to graduate. We knew that we very much wanted to share our excitement of the course's content with our learners and do so in a way that allowed them to truly learn, not merely earn passing grades. Furthermore, we desired our students to experience an enjoyment in learning through our classes and to develop a connection between the content and life that would point at lifelong learning. Beyond all of this, we sensed a deep level of compassion for the students, especially those who appeared to be alone that first class, and for several thereafter. For in studying the students in front of us each class meeting, we saw eyes, some filled with anxiety, others loneliness and still others detachment, but why? What combination of factors could possibly result in this outward despondency?

What was our best response to these observations? Did the outward signs that we observed represent what we thought they did? Were we looking into faces filled with anxiety? Were the looks that we saw looks of loneliness? What could be causing it? What could we do to positively affect it? Moreover, was what we were observing an isolated phenomenon, or could it be that others were seeing it as well, at our institution and in other places?

Initial Responses, Catalyst for a Study

In reflecting on this phenomenon, both individually and together, we realized that we stood at a nexus and desired to design a solution to the challenge. Our journey of discovery started during the Fall semester of 2016 and continues to the present. A timeline of our study is included in Table 1.

Table 1

Study Scope and Timeline

Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Summer 2017 – Fall 2017- Spring 2018	Summer 2018 – Fall 2019 - Spring 2019	Summer 2019 – Fall 2019 - Spring 2020
LIN 100 class "epiphany" moment	Explored "community"; used ice-breakers	Reading and Meta-Analysis started	SoTL Project #1: *Students as Members of the Learning Society*; survey constructed; surveys collected in LIN 100 classes	SoTL Project #2: *Establishing a Learning Collective in LIN 100;* the class "reimagined"

The course we were teaching was Linguistics (LIN) 100, *Language in Culture* which was first offered in Fall 2014. This team-taught course brought together a linguist (Michael) and a language content expert (Brian). Michael taught language learning theory and applications while Brian taught class sections in French and German. Michael earned a PhD in Linguistics while Brian earned an MA in Education with teaching qualifications in French and German. The course was designed to be hands-on, reflective, and practical. The course also was offered as part of the world language and global studies requirement at our university.

In that first semester, our initial response was to find a way to satiate our curiosity. We yearned to know more about our students, where they called home, what excited them, what skills and talents they possessed. And so, we began conceptualizing possible ways to answer some of these questions. We made it a point to open classes with ice-breaker questions and listened to how students answered. From there, we worked toward drawing students into groups for work in class, to mix even more ice-breaker activities into our teaching, and to reach out to students more than we had previously done. And so we did, recognizing some observable responses in certain students, but the benefits were limited. Most students joined in the activities and became more animated during the process, but upon returning to academic learning, the energy in class returned to something very similar to its previous state.

We decided to take the next step in studying our classes--learn the chemistry of the whole and try to develop that sticky substance that could potentially bond individuals to one another, establish an authentic sense of belonging among the students and us, and link our work to life beyond our direct learning space. How could we draw students together, though? How could we help them see the connection between their learning in our classes and life beyond the classroom? How could we positively affect the troubling looks that we observed in many eyes? How could we encourage the students in our class toward becoming a learning community that could act as a catalyst for growth?

Observations

In seeking out answers to these questions, we decided that we also needed to learn whether our observations were merely ours or if what we were experiencing held broader implications. We developed two research questions that guided our discovery process. First, does (a sense of) community have an impact on student success (i.e., both academically and emotionally)? Second, what are the characteristics of a class embodied with 'community'? This conclusion led us to explore in two specific directions. One was to perform a meta-analysis on topics related to our questions. We searched to verify and validate our perceptions of student challenges with loneliness, anxiety, and depression. We read broadly on learning communities, collaborative learning, and factors contributing to a person's sense of belonging to establish a better understanding of the scope of our study. In our reading, we found that the question of anxiety had received a great deal of focus, as studies show the extremely high levels of student loneliness (Diehl et al., 2018; Pijpers, 2017) and anxiety (Pisarik et al., 2017) among college students. We also found a broad spectrum of work on the topic of collaboration, benefits of collaboration, challenges (Gadgil & Nokes-Malach, 2011;

Sumers et al., 2005) to the practice, and teacher competencies (Brookfield, 2015; Kaendler et al., 2015) necessary to effectively implement it.

Secondly, as part of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) projects (Pasquale & Pickerd, 2018, 2019), we constructed our own survey to learn from student experiences and perspectives on a variety of factors connected to learning: environment, community, relationships, atmosphere and their effects on student disposition to the material, other students, and desire to learn (see Appendix A). We also included a selection of questions to learn about the connection of the instructor to a sense of community. Ultimately, we wanted to learn about the meeting point of learning, community, relationships, and well-being.

From this initial survey we discovered a great deal. Reading through responses to the qualitative questions, we were able to begin painting a picture of student preferences, attitudes, responses, wishes, and factors that weighed heavily into students' learning, sense of belonging/connectedness, and desire to invest. Some of the connected ideas that emerged were unsurprising, words such as *application*, *fair*, *organized*, and *interest in material*. Such ideas could be easily surmised without a survey. What drew us even more into our results were other words and ideas: *community, connection, caring, joy, laughter, enjoyment, trust, vulnerability, interaction, accepting, needs-recognition, personal, life-application, openness*. Other descriptors specifically connected to what students want their instructors to be: *humble, approachable, prepared, planned, sets the tone, models, welcomes, present, knows names, passionate*.

Discussion

As a result of our 2018 SoTL project, we developed a list of descriptors as a guide to how we re-imagined our class. Analyzing survey text responses, we noticed numerous themes and ideas emerge to describe a class that is effective. First, we analyzed the results with a word repetition technique. These are words or phrases that emerged frequently from student feedback and survey results. The most common themes and associated words are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Word Repetition and Emerging Themes

Theme:	Associated Words/Phrases:
Hospitality	Hospitable, friendly, welcoming
Authenticity	Authentic, real
Trust	Vulnerable, vulnerability, trusting
Interdependence	Collaboration, work together, depend on other
Life-connected	Common, one another, relationship

According to our original survey and results, we found the following as it relates to community in the classroom. First, it must be *hospitable* (Burwell & Huyser, 2013; Loewen, 2016). Students entering the learning space must be able to gain a sense that the place in which they will be learning and the instructor who will be teaching the course welcomes them into the space. The next characteristic is *authenticity*

(Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Ramezanzadeh et. al., 2016). Everything about how the instructor plans and facilitates the course, approaches the students, and engages in the material must communicate a real, honest, and true interest in the subject matter, the call to teach, and the student. Another requirement for a community-driven classroom is *trust* (Huddy, 2015). Vulnerability and trust are key building blocks of connection. Knowing that one can trust another allows one to risk vulnerability and open up to others' thoughts and ideas. Then comes the combination of positive *interdependence and collaboration* (Kelly, 2002). People who can work together, depend on each other, and accomplish goals together are also able work through other challenges together, build resilience, and support one another which are important ingredients in community. Finally, there is the requirement for a class to strive to be *life-connected* (Beck et al., 2017; Barkley & Major, 2020). Connecting course material to a larger life context draws students to a greater focus beyond themselves, helps them identify common goals, and relate to one another, the course, and the instructor.

Everything about how the instructor plans and facilitates the course, approaches the students, and engages in the material must communicate a real, honest, and true interest in the subject matter, the call to teach, and the student.

We believe that drawing these qualities together and employing them in every aspect of course creation and facilitation works toward achieving both our students' well-being and learning goals. As instructors who highly value their students, we desire their success and well-being in all areas. Their academic well-being ranks high for us, for certain, but on the way to helping students achieve this success, we would be remiss if we were to ignore the many factors that feed into that success, especially factors that we can reasonably play a role in positively influencing.

Our study revealed high levels of connection between learning and community in the learning environment. This understanding emerged in the form of student responses to questions about instructor roles in one's sense of belonging, willingness to invest, and learning in general. Likewise, the results clearly communicated a strong tie between these same areas and the student-to-student connection in a class. Given this information, we are drawn to respond in a positive way. We are inclined toward building an environment in which students can achieve their goals, in which they are encouraged to invest, in which they experience a sense of hospitality and belonging, in which they can know those around them, and in which they can be known (Palmer, 2010). We desire for them to reap the benefits of a learning and work space that helps them grow in learning and develop as individuals though community.

Next, we wanted to see if there was any change or progression in how students viewed our classes. We compared our final class evaluations and student feedback from the LIN 100 courses from Fall 2016 until Spring 2019 semesters. We randomly selected five student evaluations per class in order to see what words or themes emerged and if there were any changes. The list of common words and phrases that emerged are presented in Table 3.

In analyzing the results of our word repetition study from the Fall semester of 2016 through the Spring semester of 2019, we observed a telling trend that corresponded directly with our work. In the beginning of our study, before we began

Table 3

Word and Phrase Progression

Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019
Enthusiasm	Enthusiasm of	Productive	Teammates	Building
Passion of the	the instructor	work	Learn about	relationships
professor	Instructor	All	each other	Collaboration
Enjoyed	shares own	contributed	Be ourselves	Community
group	struggles (in	Journey	Banned	Not afraid to
projects	learning	Getting to	together	fail
Energy of the	language)	know others	Need to be	Learning
professor		Sharing ideas	intentional	together
Working in				
groups				

to intentionally integrate a focus on community into the classroom, the words and themes that surfaced in our study tended toward instructor focus with an infrequent mention of group work. Students noticed the "passion of the professor" or the "energy of the professor." As our reading, study, conversation, and implementation of our learning grew, however, student responses shifted. The instructor as an individual no longer was mentioned. Rather, the focus became the class, i.e., the community. Students began naming descriptions of the environment and how it positively affected them. They mentioned the descriptors *belonging* and *team*, rather than *alone*, *vulnerability*, or *benefitting from one another*. In essence, students were experiencing what we desired for them, i.e., learning and growing as a result of community.

The goal of our students' learning and success is, after all, aimed at preparing them for success in life: vocational (or professional) and life in general, and in both of those areas of life we see individuals having to live and work in varying types of community. We also see them needing to work in collaboration with others in an assortment of ways. By building our teaching and learning with a focus on community, we can aid our students in both. We can model community for them from within our work together, for it is in working together, through easy and challenging times, that we come to show our true selves and learn to work well with others. Likewise, it is in collaborating that we learn to collaborate. Leaving compartmentalized mindsets behind and understanding that there are times when we must share our insights and experiences to the benefit of others (and ourselves), we learn community and build skills for working effectively with others. We learn what works and what doesn't work. We become part of a community through our shared efforts and shared selves. We build success in our learning, and we grow in our well-being. Sharing this with our students helps them develop a mindset that works to their benefit, their success, and their well-being.

At the beginning of our discovery process, we began with questions about student anxiety, depression, and disconnectedness. We dove into how to address them, who was affected, and how these aspects related to class outcomes. We read, learned, applied, discussed, and did so again. Along the journey, which we thought was linear, we learned that this process was actually messy and meandering. We have learned that

what we really desire is an "atmosphere" that causes students to "want to be there" and one that likewise causes us as instructors to "want to be there" as well, all of which becomes independent of the subject or the particular group of students.

During this process our understanding of *community* has evolved. At first, for us, community related mainly to the classroom environment. As we explored and asked what that "sticky substance" was that got at success, we re-read classics such as Dewey (1938) and Vygotsky (1978) on learning communities, but these definitions did not match what we were trying to get at. Each of these works argued that community and belonging were essential, but what does that look like and what are the essential components? Zhao and Kuh (2004) discuss learning communities as programs, especially containing a residential element. Tinto (1997) suggests that community involves collaboration. Further work on "communities of practice" (Wenger, 1998) was related (e.g., the importance of engaging in learning with a group) but also did not encapsulate what we wanted to see at the classroom level, which includes the elements of relationship building. Then we tried to conceptualize what learning in community was and how students learned successfully. Initially we coined terms like "learning collective" and "learning society" to try to explain that learning in community was highly interdependent. What we ended up with was not just that learning together was important but crucially learning happened *through* community, that is, *community-driven learning*.

How is Community-Focused Learning Implemented? Our Class Reimagined

We have included and involved every aspect of teaching and learning, and since it is the role of the instructor to set the table, so to speak, the work of building a learning community begins during the first stages of conceptualizing and planning a course. As we laid out the framework of our course, *community* necessarily ranked high on our list of objectives. It stands equally with other key curriculum and learning outcomes and makes up the foundation of student well-being in the course. And just as all aspects of a course look back to the learning objectives, everything involved in the course refers back to our community-building objectives as well.

So as we revised our syllabus, chose our materials and sources, and designed the flow of a course, we constantly asked ourselves how each element would work toward encouraging and building community between ourselves and students and among the students, between the students, and in the connection of the material to life (for example, see Appendix B). When we organized our pacing guides, including assignments, due dates, and timing, we considered relationship. The manner in which we build learning support for and among our students must speak to our understanding of the group (see Appendix C). Likewise, how we evaluate learning must take positive feedback and community-building into consideration.

In redesigning our course, we also considered the physical atmosphere of the learning environment. The classroom is, after all, our shared workspace with our students. It is where we sit and stand, listen and share, create and apply. It is where we challenge ourselves and one another, and the physical space in which we work can encourage or hinder all of the above. It includes the physical arrangement of the space and what it communicates about our vision of learning and the juxtaposition of student

and instructor, student and student. It comprehends the aesthetic nature of the room, the lighting, the temperature, and the sound. It understands that each of these factors, though small or perhaps seemingly insignificant, plays into the activity of learning, teaching, togetherness, and ultimately a sense of welcome, belonging, and community.

Once a class begins, or perhaps even a bit before, we considered our introductions, how we started with that first greeting, how we welcome students into the learning space for the very first time, and each time thereafter. This was our first and ongoing opportunity to bring community into live action with our students to extend hospitality through our first words, our first expressions. It is where we established first personal contact to introduce ourselves and begin community with students. Those first greetings, our first exchange of words, our reading of body language and faces offer us an important opportunity to begin understanding students and allow them to begin gaining a peek at who we are. And in as far as we continue to employ this understanding, we continue to model what we desire for our students.

To do so, we needed to look beyond ice-breakers and class add-ons that are often recommended to improve the feel of a class and offer a façade of community. We needed to shift the entire ethos of the class and develop a set of standards such as to have a new lens through which all aspects of the class would be seen (before, during and after). We wanted community to embed the very fiber of our class. Our desire to establish community is far broader than the outward sense of welcome at the beginning of each course meeting. It extends into the marrow of our work with students. When we build assignments and create discussion prompts, we build on community or tear at its foundations (for example, see Appendix D). The care with which we build an assignment or prompt a discussion to include individual and collaborative elements among students and between students and ourselves can build community. The extent to which we arrange elements that challenge students to depend equally on others in their teams builds community. Helping students to envision something beyond themselves through the assignment or discussion and connect learning to life draws a broader vision of their work and encourages them to connect their academic work to life and their collaboration in class to how they can work in this manner beyond school. This might include built-in challenges in which students must work past differing perspectives on how a problem will be solved. It may also involve reaching individually and collectively outside the team for resources and experience to bring the learning to light and application.

Establishing rubrics and using them for assessment can also offer a strong opportunity to build community (see Appendix E). Inviting students to participate in creating a rubric, applying it to the material, its life-connection, and thinking together through practical application can offer a profound space for dialogue in which students and instructor collaborate and consider and respect each other's points of view in an important manner. Doing so not only welcomes a deeper sense of membership in the group but also a stronger bond among its members. This type of work permits students to gain understanding of the instructor's vantage point in the learning process while simultaneously giving the instructor an opportunity to listen to the students' needs, concerns, and ideas--the reward of which is knowing and being known in yet another way.

As students work through individual assignments, collaborate on larger projects, and complete stages of the course, we learn to interact, encourage, and connect to the vision and goals established for the assignment, the project, the course, and life. How we look for positives in student work to highlight and affirm, how we redirect misgivings, address missed deadlines, and reinvest students in the community of our learning requires us to consider our wording, our posture, our timing, and place of interaction. Choosing well-thought-out words that give students a good name to live up to will build relationship and community. Likewise, wisely considering when and where to discuss an area of growth may take more effort on our part, but the dividends gained can do a great deal to build a deeper sense of belonging by showing how we value each student in the group. Taking time to regularly and consistently interact with students and participate in their collaborative learning shows our desired involvement in their development beyond what a lecture-based "stand and deliver" mindset would offer. Moreover, doing so places us in a much stronger position to encourage students toward excellence in their work and strong assessment outcomes.

Assessments are, of course, necessary, and this represents another place for us to teach beyond the lesson, further build community, and affirm belonging. The manner in which we word our responses to student work, understanding that assessments are truly a checkpoint along the road. Even final assessments are. They punctuate learning and give opportunity to say, "Here is where we all are right now, and here are some areas to focus, redouble efforts, and grow." If we believe that learning takes place in community, and that we, as instructors, are a part of that community, then assessment speaks of all in the community, not merely any one individual student or collaborative group. We are in it together and all can benefit from an opportunity to grow through community-building.

Conclusion and Next Steps

In the course that sparked our first inquiry we have engaged in an extensive revision process. We reconsidered our materials to truly represent what we desire students to take from our course into life. We reimagined our curriculum-related and life-connection course goals as well as our well-being objectives. In designing the syllabus, we have created a learning cycle that represents pre-class learning to familiarize the students with what will be presented in class so that students are already somewhat familiar with the material. Students also complete individual work related to the pre-learning. In class each week, we arrive early to greet students as they arrive. We work together to arrange our work space in a manner that suits our learning.

Once class starts, we begin by checking in with students to learn about how life is progressing. Sometimes this means that we hear good things other times it means that someone shares a struggle. Then, we review the previous week's lesson and transition into new themes. We move from large-group learning to oscillating and shifting small-group application, and then collaborative wrap-up. Each class session is designed to connect to life, for students to draw the learning into their lives and use it to discover more about the lives of their classmates. This work is relatively easily accomplished in our class, since it is a course on language and culture. We discover

how the mind acquires language and how culture and language influence one another. Then we solidify the learning and apply it to actually practicing a language.

All related topics are able to be knit into life and be used as a catalyst for self-reflection and collaborative learning that connects people to each other and the learning to life. In as far as building a course like this in a manner that incorporates community seems very intuitive, it might be just as easy to leave it out. The difference is in the intentionality involved. We intend to draw students in. It is our intent to build an environment that encourages belonging. We strive to model hospitality. We aim to specifically connect learning to life. We do this because it is our desire to positively affect what we say that first class session from that day forward for the sake of student well-being, overall growth, and above all--community.

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Appendix A

Classroom Learning Community Questionnaire

Questions:

1. When do you feel most invested in your learning in a class? Which factors play a role?
2. When do you sense the greatest connection to a class?
3. Would you categorize yourself as an introvert or an extrovert?
4. What motivates you to be a part of a community in the classroom?
5. How does the learning structure of a course play a role in the sense of community in a class?
6. To what extent do the activities designed in the course play a role in the sense of community in a class?
7. Which classroom learning tools and props best augment the sense of community?
8. To what extent do the relationships among students in a class play a role in learning (in general)?
9. How does *relationship* to other students affect your personal learning?

10. To what extent does the relationship between the instructor and students affect your commitment to learning?
11. Does this change from one type of class to another?
12. Does the physical layout of the learning space play a role in the sense of community in a class? (e.g., rows, circle, etc.)
13. Does class size play a role in the sense of community in a class (e.g., small vs. large classes?)
14. To what extent does the approach-ability of the instructor play in the sense of community in a class?
15. When it comes to having a sense of belonging, to what extent does it matter whether you have had the instructor in a previous class?
16. How can an instructor best help you achieve a sense of community in a class?
17. How important is it that the instructor knows each of the students' names?
18. How is *community* affected by what the instructor DOES – before class (e.g., planning), during class (e.g., strategies in class), and after class (e.g., debrief, etc.)?
19. Rate how your purpose for being in a class plays a role in your sense of community (general required/elective/major requirement).
20. Rate how your interest in a subject plays a role in your sense of community.
21. In what way does the time of day (of the class) factor into your learning?
22. To what extent does class meeting frequency play a role in your sense of community in class?
23. What aspects of a class best contribute to community?
24. What level of importance do students perceive between a sense of belonging and their willingness to invest in a given class?
25. What relationship exists between that sense of belonging and academic student success?
26. How do you see technology playing a role in community building? Where does it stand in the way?

Appendix B

Vision Statement of Community in Syllabus

We are very excited to be working with you in LIN 100 Language and Culture. For over 20 years, we have enjoyed the gift of working with foreign language students. Some have come to us with an unquestionable gift and penchant for learning language and applying it immediately. Some have needed to struggle through self-doubt and personal hurdles before finding that first success. Others have recognized their ability and simply needed to find connection with language through community. The beauty has come through seeing learners of many age groups find success (some modest, others quite considerable) in learning language. Our vision for this class is that together we grow into a community of learners that experience a true sense of belonging through life-connected and authentic, learning experiences that are founded on trust, positive-interdependence, and hospitality. As we work toward this goal, it is our desire that each of our individual personalities, gifts, and backgrounds will weave their way into the fabric of this community.

Appendix C

Building Pre-Class Survey and Post-class Assessment

By means of assessing the impact of classroom community, we have established a pre-class survey and a post-class assessment. The pre-class survey is designed to establish a baseline of students' previous experiences with the subject that will be learned, their engagement with the topic, their strengths, and their weaknesses.

Pre-Class Survey Questions:

1. What level of previous engagement have you had with learning language? (Choose all that apply.)
   [None / One high school course / Two or more high school courses / Some college / Life experience]
2. How would you rate your level of language-learning confidence upon entering this course?
   [1 = very low; 3 = medium; 5 = very high]
3. Please tell me about your areas of strength and weakness in learning a language as you perceive them.
4. Help me understand how I can encourage you in your learning?
5. Which factors play the largest role in your learning success?

The post-class assessment is designed to learn the following:

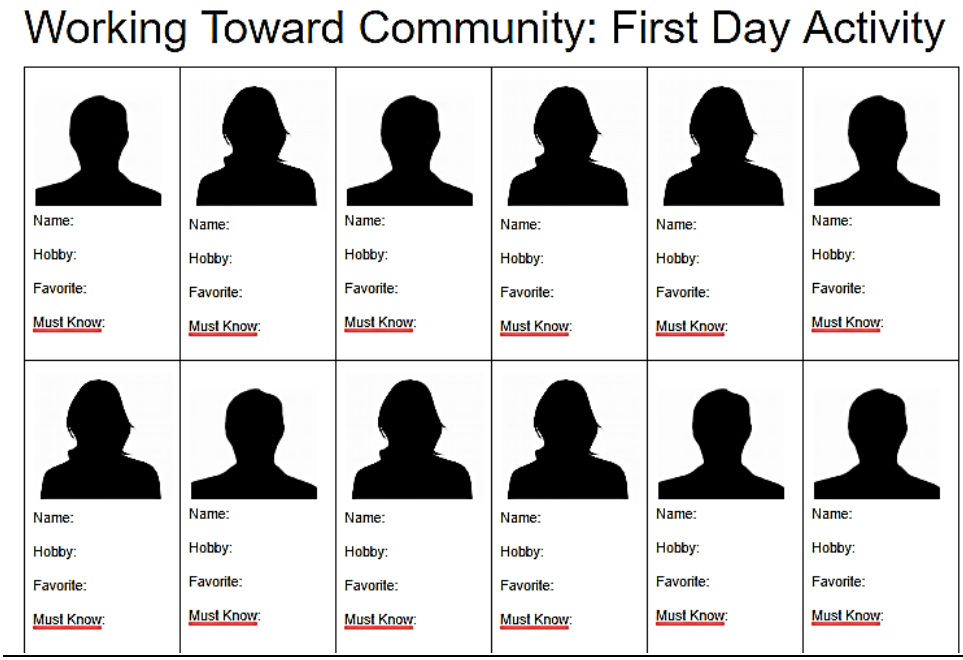
- how each student has changed and grown as a result of the class
- students' sense of belonging in the class
- what factors played a role in establishing that sense of belonging
- how classroom community and a sense of belonging have played a role in their learning

Post-Class Assessment:

1. In reflecting on our work together this semester, how/in what ways would you say that you have changed/grown as a result of this course?
2. In what ways has your picture of language learning in connection to life changed or grown?
3. In what ways has your picture of language and culture changed or grown?
4. Please share how community and belonging in this learning community have played a role in your learning?

Appendix D

First Day Activity



Shifting the typical first-class meeting from a syllabus preview and question and answer time, we have intentionally re-envisioned it into a time to begin getting to know each other. To achieve this, we took our class list and manipulated the instructor's and each student's pictures into a table with four questions below each: Name, Hobby, Favorite, Must Know. The goal in doing this was to encourage the instructor and the students to immediately begin moving around the classroom space, and one another, and to begin connecting all faces with names as well as to begin connecting classmates' names and faces with important details about them. Upon completing the task of filling out these sheets. The class reshuffled away from the seats they had chosen upon entering the class, which were in most cases near people whom they already knew. From that point, we began a game of speed and recognition. We began by moving toward a student at random and asking, "Who is this?" and gaining an answer. Then, we named someone in class and asked one of the other questions about this person, and then another student another question, etc. Then, the first person who had been named stood up and followed the same pattern that we had modeled. By the time we finished this process, and each person in the class had played my original role, the comfort level of the class had already increased. Consequently, all were in a position to begin the next activity of answering some questions on the reverse side of their own sheets and then joining in new groups to begin sharing about themselves.

Our goal and vision in conducting this type of activity on the very first evening, before launching into our actual curriculum are to model that coming together and

establishing hospitality, sharing, and looking to relationship play an integral role in learning and will, in the end, augment the curricular learning.

Languages you have learned (or tried)?
Reason(s) for learning?
What went well/Challenges?
Where have you succeeded in learning well?
What factors helped you to succeed?
Tell something funny or exciting that has happened to you, ever.
What is something that you dream of doing someday?
Where is a place that you would love to visit?
What are 3+ gifts that you have that you can use to serve others?
What are 6 great reasons for learning another language?
What have you learned about our LIN-100 community today?
What should others know about you to best understand you?

Over the course of the semester, we design and build intentionally collaborative practice in class with the goal of engaging students in learning material through each other and coming to know each other through the material. Our vision is that as the semester progresses, all students will experience opportunities to know and be known through the positive interdependence of learning together, regardless of natural introvert or extrovert tendencies.

Following is the final collaborative practice for the semester. It serves as the remaining bookend in a series of learning that started with the previous activity that we share above. In this final piece, students will engage in both divergent and convergent thinking to integrate top-tier learning from the semester into this work.

This final culminating community activity is intended to be a part of a celebration of our learning together, building of community, and expressing gratitude for one another. On our presentation day, we share these presentations with the larger class while partaking of a meal together. This activity is followed by a time for sharing favorite memories from the time spent together, greatest challenges overcome and an invitation to continue the community and relationships built through our time together.

Appendix E

Culminating Community Activity

Each week, we have been practicing our learning by collaborating in class and getting to know each other through our learning. Our goal for this final *Pratique Collaborative* (Collaborative Practice) is to find that person (or those two people) in class whom you have had less opportunity to encounter and get to know that person (or those two people) by bringing together our learning from the past 10 weeks into a final in-class *pratique.* This work will also transfer into our final project.

Our task today is to brainstorm with your team all of the lessons that we have covered so this semester. What are the themes? The questions? Your personal responses? What culture have you learned about? How is it similar to your home culture? How is it different?

Then creatively develop a manner in which you can get to know each other through the work, share about yourselves with others in the class, and accomplish it through class material. In doing so, please also demonstrate some of the cultural learning from the semester as well as other important learning insights from our readings texts from the course.

Your presentation can be bi-lingual, as our language is still limited, but what can be done in our target language should.

Brainstorming Space:

Please share your thinking here. Boxes will expand as you type.

Themes:
Questions:
Responses:
Culture:
Reading Connections

How we could build it: (Divergent thinking...Just getting ideas out...anything goes)
How we decided to build it: (Convergent thinking...Putting it together...How we will do it)

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The Good Game: Developing Feedback Skills through Action Learning

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Abstract. Students, especially those from recent generations, typically encounter difficulties providing and receiving feedback. Hence approaches to teach students feedback skills are valuable. This article explores perspectives related to learning feedback by (a) examining the process of feedback, (b) showing how Action Learning as a pedagogical component is supportive of developing feedback skills, (c) explaining a student-led game, "The Good Game," as a tool for learning feedback, and (d) discussing issues and factors related to developing feedback skills among recent generations.

Feedback is generally defined as "knowledge of results" (Neubert, 1998). Providing and receiving effective feedback is well established as a valuable skill for improving behavior and performance. Even with this knowledge, it is still challenging for many individuals to be comfortable with providing and receiving negative or constructive feedback (O'Malley & Gregory, 2011). Since learners have been acculturated to value "being right" on tests and in front of their peers, they can have a negative emotional response to negative feedback; therefore, they may experience shame and feelings of inadequacy or dismiss the feedback altogether when it points out failures or errors (Trope & Netter, 1994). Overcoming this learned behavior can be a challenge, but it is essential in preparing individuals for the world of work.

For the past 16 years, the University of Central Missouri's (UCM) undergraduate Management program has focused on developing self-sufficient learners through action learning. Management faculty intentionally adopted learner-centered course designs that incorporate learner-centered attitudes and learner-centered relationships (Wohlfarth et al., 2008). Course designs are based on Kolb's (1984) work on action learning as a framework for learner development; thus, classrooms have moved from focusing on the instructor to focus on the learner.

UCM's Leadership course employs a workshop-based, action learning format that asks students to integrate knowledge and skills from a broad variety of previous course work and professional experience. In this learner-centric class, students are asked to design and deliver training activities focused on developing leadership skills

in terms of behaviors. They are encouraged to apply action learning principles in their designs, leading to organically created "games". These games and activities are based on students' perceptions of workplace problems; thus, new games are constantly created in the class space. One example, "The Good Game," provides a glimpse into the experience of only receiving positive feedback and serves as a starting point for a comprehensive dialogue on feedback. In recent years, The Good Game is run more frequently, evidence that the newest generation may place higher value on feedback.

This paper explores perspectives related to learning feedback by (a) examining the process of feedback, (b) showing how Action Learning as a part of pedagogy is supportive of feedback, (c) explaining The Good Game as a tool for learning feedback, and (d) discussing issues and factors related to developing feedback skills among newer generations.

Feedback

Decades of research indicate that performance improvement is unlikely without knowledge of the results of one's actions. For example, Ammons (1956) stated that "knowledge of performance affects the rate of learning and level reached by learning," so that, when it is present, learning is "almost universally" improved (p. 283). Feedback of some form appears critical to improving performance. Latham and Locke (1991) view performance improvement as a reaction to the evaluation of and reaction to the difference between an outcome and a personally valued goal. Thus, both the presence of a goal and the knowledge of results contribute to performance.

Feedback can take several forms. It can be gained through the personal investigation of potential discrepancies between goals and outcomes due to the nature of the task itself, by actively seeking others' reactions, and so forth. Additionally, feedback can be gained through information supplied by others as part of an effort to improve job performance. Many factors can influence the effectiveness of feedback provided by others: personality characteristics, attributes of the person giving the feedback, the relationship between the feedback giver and receiver, affective reactions, and so forth (for a detailed overview, see the Kluger & DeNisi, 1996, meta-analysis). Although positive feedback may increase motivation by signaling a commitment to goals, negative feedback increases motivation by creating awareness of the lack of progress toward achieving goals. In either case, feedback helps people self-regulate their behavior, improving performance (Finkelstein et al., 2016).

The distinction between the effects of positive and negative feedback has been a topic of research for at least fifty years. The *feedback sign* (positive or negative) impacts the perception of the person accepting the feedback, known as *selection response* (Levy, 1989). Feedback with positive sign is often recalled more accurately than feedback with negative sign (Feather, 1968; Ilgen, 1971; Ilgen & Hamstra, 1972; Shrauger & Rosenberg, 1970). Since most feedback is provided to elicit a behavioral response, sign becomes important in regulating goal and task behavior for self-regulation and organization-wide changes (Podsakoff & Farh, 1989). However, both positive and negative signs have desired effects (Arvey et al., 1984), so organizations need to incorporate both signs (Van-Dijk & Kluger, 2004). However, managers on the front lines of giving and receiving feedback may delay, distort, or avoid giving negative feedback (Fried et al.,

1992) in situations where they have a low-trust relationship with subordinates or feel the subordinate might challenge or resent the feedback.

In the classroom, learners may be reluctant to provide negative feedback to their peers for several reasons. First, they may feel a less personal stake in their peers' performance than co-workers' since success is closely related to co-workers' performance in a work setting. Second, learners may not feel equipped to manage others' emotional responses, so they may act to protect themselves from the discomfort of those reactions by sugar-coating or soft-pedaling any errors or faults that they see in peer performance (Murch, 2016). Third, since peer evaluation is often a component of team-based activities, they may fear that openly surfacing negative assessments might lead to recrimination in the form of lower peer evaluations of their performance and lower grades (Jackman & Strober, 2003; Murch, 2016). Together, these create a shared stigma around negative or critical feedback (Trope & Netter, 1994). Additionally, the history of negative feedback in learners' lives might also impact their perspectives on the value of peer feedback. In both classrooms and the workplace, individuals may find that a lack of experience in providing feedback may make the task seem difficult.

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Team members' reluctance to provide detailed critical feedback is a group phenomenon (Fried et al., 1992). Instead of individually resolving the issue, one approach is to work at a group level to help learners see the value of critical feedback. The Good Game activity surfaces the shortcomings and difficulties associated with purely positive feedback, providing a shared experience for undergraduates to reflect upon and refer to when tasked with giving feedback to peers. As with many human interaction skills, giving and receiving feedback are skills that can be learned (Jackman & Strober, 2003; London, 1995; London, 2003) and seem particularly suited to the action learning tenet that experience generates knowledge.

Action Learning

Marsick and O'Neil (1999) define *action learning* by examining three underlying theoretical practices originating from the Scientific School, the Experiential School, and the Critical Reflection School. The Scientific School is based on questioning as a means of problem solving. The quality of the questions in the problem-solving process is at the core of action science (Argyris et al., 1985). Through the Experiential School, learners follow a pattern of attempting an action, reflecting on the outcomes with those involved, and attempting another action considering the changes discussed. The Critical Reflection School is essential in action learning because it moves the learner beyond fundamental reflection and blindly trying another action. Through critical reflection, learners look more closely at their perceptions, analyze them for flaws, and adjust accordingly (Marsick & O'Neil, 1999).

Students at UCM engage in the scientific school of active learning by making games, creating discussions, and engaging in topics that examine traditional education's role in their development. In this model, instructors provide broad topics for discussion and intentional problems for students to solve. Students are then responsible for finding/selecting games and creating/delivering those games (Revans,

2011). Inviting students to help choose, create, or develop class topics and activities is a form of collaborative learning and power-sharing (Ares, 2008; Revans, 2011). When students design activities like The Good Game, they participate in experiential learning, increase their self-awareness through debate, controversy, or conflict, and make choices about the content. Developing activities like The Good Game leads to higher content outcomes (Bright et al., 2016). When students are responsible for leading and designing the curriculum, they develop self-awareness and better understand content (Ares, 2008; Bright et al., 2016). Additionally, leading peers through games leads to higher self-efficacy and greater self-awareness (Bright et al., 2016).

Critical skills like self-efficacy and self-awareness are needed when reflecting on one's actions or when giving and receiving feedback from others (Bipp & Kleingeld, 2018). UCM faculty intentionally develop learning opportunities that push learners to apply knowledge through action in a way that best makes sense to them. Through frameworks provided by the Experiential School and the Critical Reflection School, students become their own guides and build self-sufficiency as learners. They demonstrate their growth in these areas through projects such as the Leadership Development Plan (LDP; Appendix A). For example, one student's LDP referred to feedback he had received about difficulties he had when responding quickly to pressing, ambiguous situations (Appendix B). He recognized that this issue annoyed customers at his workplace and did not reflect well upon the company. He devised a plan to ask mentors to help him with this issue by presenting him with novel problems and demanding a quick response. Another student found his lack of offering feedback was causing him to take on responsibilities that were not his own (Appendix C). He also realized he was not seriously considering feedback from others. Both students participated in The Good Game in their respective classes; one acted as facilitator and the other acted as participant. The Good Game has been reliable resource for students to teach themselves and their peers about feedback.

The Good Game

The Good Game activity was introduced in 2005 by students in the MGT 4320 Leadership course. Instructors do not design, select, nor deliver learning activities in the course; however, The Good Game, or a parallel activity, has been given more attention in the past five years with students selecting and running the activity at least yearly (see Generational Differences in Feedback). During The Good Game, students take on one of three roles: learner, facilitator, or participant. Learners begin by selecting a participant (by volunteer or other means) and sending them out of the room. It is critical that the participant not hear the ensuing discussion. Facilitators communicate that the audience is to select an action-based task the participant must perform, for example, picking up a trash can or writing something on the board. The task can be made more difficult by involving repetition such as completing seven push-ups. While learners decide the task, the facilitator steps out of the room to communicate to the participant that they will need to perform an action-based task. Ideally, the facilitator does not know the task and reenters the room with the participant when the learners indicate they are ready.

During this exercise, the only word learners may say is "good," so the feedback sign is exclusively positive. The participant will start the game confused, looking for what they must do, and begin with simple actions. When they are headed in the right direction, learners simply say "good." If the participant is moving away from the objective, learners say nothing. After some time, the participant realizes that symbolically this silence is negative feedback (Jackman & Strober, 2003; London, 2003; Murch, 2016). However, due to the lack of overt negative feedback, the participant and the learners often experience frustration and agitation. Facilitators should encourage the participant to complete the objective, but we have seen participants give up and sit down with learners.

Upon completing the task, the facilitator must decide if learners need exposure to another round to solidify their experience or if they are ready to move into a discussion of key takeaways. The decision on the group's next learning experience is usually based on time constraints and learners' developmental levels. Learners with some experience in giving/receiving feedback generally are ready to debrief and discuss the questions after one round. With less-experienced learners, or with plenty of time remaining, another participant could take part in a second round of The Good Game.

In that second round, we recommend allowing learners to use the word "bad" for participant actions that stray from the objective. The use of the word "bad" as an overt negative feedback sign helps less experienced learners see that the first round's uncomfortable silence acted as negative feedback. Although the participant already knows the game's basis, the task objective changes, leaving a significant challenge. However, re-running the game clearly shows learners that both forms of feedback are crucial to achieving the task quickly and with less frustration, providing an excellent segue into the discussion questions.

At UCM, we require facilitators to create their discussion questions and map these questions to the learning objectives they plan to cover through the game (Appendix D). We recommend potential adopters take a similar approach: mapping discussion questions to meet their specific content or learning goals. Historically, UCM students have used the activity primarily to discuss Kouzes and Posner's (2017) exemplary leadership practices, but the activity is suitable for any situation where individuals learn to give and receive feedback. Following the activity and discussion, facilitators hold a debriefing session to evaluate how they ran the game, whether the game met objectives, and what the class would change in the future. These components give facilitators and students a chance to examine why they chose the game and how their discussion questions, in conjunction with the activity, helped their peers meet learning objectives (see Appendix D).

The nature of The Good Game generates discussion around feedback principles. Participants consider the need for providing a balanced, authentic view of a person's skill set (O'Malley & Gregory, 2011). Although many people in the newest generations seek praise for tasks completed (Meister & Willyerd, 2010; Olson, 2009), it is essential for them to learn the damage that is caused by providing exclusively positive feedback (Van-Dijk & Kluger, 2004) and to understand that negative feedback has a place in increasing effort toward performance-based goals (Podsakoff & Farh, 1989; Bipp & Kleingeld, 2018).

Discussion

While UCM students experience feedback in multiple courses throughout their major, the Leadership course forces students to reflect on their ability to give and receive feedback in high impact/high stakes situations such as team-based Fishbowl Feedback recordings (Appendix E) and the individual LDP (Appendix A). These reflections follow The Good Game and each comprises 15% of the class grade. As action-learning teachers, we came to realize that four aspects of feedback are salient to learning from The Good Game: the perception of the recipient of feedback, the feedback source, generational differences in feedback, and silence as a form of feedback.

Perceptions of the Feedback Recipient

It is possible that the emphasis on evaluation encountered by millennials and neighboring generations through initiatives like No Child Left Behind might trigger discomfort with negative feedback (Whitney & Candelaria, 2017). As a response, many universities provide goal-setting support through offices such as Accessibility Services, the Counseling Center, Advising, Learning Commons/Tutoring, and so forth. These services can help reduce academic anxiety and discomfort with feedback and can help students understand their motivations and perceptions of feedback. O'Keefe et al. (2013) distinguish between "mastery" and "performance" motivations toward achieving learning goals. Mastery motivation is characterized by an internally focused interest in learning for the sake of learning due to an intrinsic interest in the subject matter. On the other hand, performance motivation results from externally focused interests such as a desire to do better than others, to gain a good grade, or to avoid a poor grade.

An example of mastery motivation/internally focused interests occurs in UCM's Integrative Business Experience (IBE) course developed by Larry Michaelsen (2006). In IBE, students develop a product concept, operate a company, sell the product, and donate all proceeds to charity. This course provides many students their first experience with 360-degree feedback. Students realize the importance of feedback early and use the feedback to foster success in structuring the organization, selling the product, and achieving charitable ends rather than focusing on a "good" grade. Performance motivated/externally focused orientations tend to be adopted when students perceive the classroom to have a strong evaluation focus. In contrast, mastery orientations tend to be adopted when the material is engaging, an evaluation focus is present, yet harsh evaluations are absent (Church et al., 2001).

The perception of feedback as a form of evaluation, with negative feedback seen as harsh evaluation, impacts students' emotional state (Värlander, 2008; VanSchenkhof et al., 2018). While feedback is traditionally defined in the literature as "knowledge of results," the way that knowledge is received can affect the response and future performance of the person receiving the feedback. Feedback preparation activities, like The Good Game, help students become more amenable to the role of feedback as a developmental process (Värlander, 2008).

The Good Game helps students actively reflect on their emotions behind positive and negative feedback through overt feedback signs: the word "good" and the

use of silence (see Discussion). The sign of the feedback (Van-Dijk & Kluger, 2004), that is whether it indicates success or failure, impacts future effort through individuals' regulatory focus. Through practice across classes such as IBE and Leadership, students become less sensitive to providing and receiving negative feedback, evidenced by Appendix B and C. Students practice Feedback Seeking Behavior (FSB) (London & Smither, 2002) by giving and receiving feedback, becoming more comfortable with it (Värlander, 2008).

One issue complicating the effect of feedback is that the positive or negative sign of feedback may be seen as praise or criticism, both of which could have potentially problematic impacts on performance (Kohn, 1993/2018; Waples, 2015). The receiver's likelihood to engage in FSB decreases after a negative feedback sign (London & Smither, 2002), especially if the receiver is driven by performance motivation (Waples, 2015). Thus, feedback receptivity is based on sign (Ashford & Cummings, 1983) as well as specificity (Waples, 2015). Participants who end up quitting the Good Game, sitting down, or just refusing to complete the task exhibit a performance-based reaction to silence as a negative feedback sign and a lack of specificity. The participant quitting, or ending FSB, is a negative feedback sign telling learners, or feedback providers, they are doing a bad job.

The Feedback Source

Manuel London (1995) uses "constructive" and "destructive" as descriptors of feedback that highlight the relationship between feedback provider's and receiver's roles in determining outcomes. Feedback can be perceived as constructive or destructive depending on the attributes of the feedback and the relationship between the feedback provider and receiver. For example, while managers may see feedback as "knowledge of results," they may fail to see/understand that it can be seen as praise or criticism, both of which could have potentially problematic impacts on long-term performance (Butler, 1987; Harackiewicz et al., 1987). A more "judgment-free" form of feedback, which consists solely of an auditory signal, can be used to trigger significant improvements in learning various skills (Pančocha, 2018). Teaching with Acoustical Guidance (TAG) consists of purely objective positive sign feedback by providing a "click" or another auditory signal when behavior approximating that desired is exhibited. The "click" is only provided as the behavior becomes progressively closer to what is desired (Arnall, et al., 2019; Schenk & Miltenberger, 2019).

A key attribute of effective feedback is its specificity, that is, how narrowly it focuses on a particular action (Waples, 2015). TAG provides a clear focus on a specific action by providing guidance when the action occurs. The approach is similar to the Good Game, where a particular action is highlighted with the word "good." However, the acoustic guidance in TAG is also coupled with a follow-up verbal explanation and behavioral modeling, which helps the receiver direct and sharpen behavior toward the desired objective.

Also, there is often an inherent assumption that the feedback being provided is accurate. The feedback source is attributed with possessing special knowledge or skill, enabling them to provide incontrovertibly true input (London, 1995). However, this "infallibility assumption" is not necessarily the case (Ilgen et al., 1993), as appraisal

ratings used for feedback are fallible. London (2003) exhibits that social and situational factors from both the giver and receiver of feedback greatly influence accuracy. In addition, the image or impression one tries to create for themselves or the recollection of observed behavior causes major biases that skew feedback (London, 2003). Factors such as subjectivity in the selection of data forming the basis for feedback, incomplete knowledge due to access or self-censorship in the reporting process, bias due to the perspective of the feedback giver, and other factors can reduce feedback validity.

A potentially useful approach to manage feedback source fallibility is to frame the act of giving feedback as "testing perceptions" rather than providing unassailable knowledge of results. Testing perceptions reduces the implicit voice of authority inherent in providing feedback and further signals that information disconfirming the feedback is being sought. Instead of investigating the effects of "feedback," instructors should follow the lead of Argyris et al.'s (1985) theory of action science and research testing perceptions. Testing perceptions are defined as a scientific process of observational analysis coupled with an invitation for the receiver to provide disconfirmation and alternative perspectives; testing perceptions might provide insights into the feedback process and potential avenues for increasing its effectiveness. Additional research could investigate the effects of framing on the person providing feedback. It seems possible that individuals tasked with providing feedback would be more likely to identify their perspective as infallible than those tasked with testing perceptions.

Because The Good Game provides participants with only limited information from the feedback source, either "good" or silence, testing perceptions is not included in the game, so the receiver may be inadvertently led astray by erroneous guidance. To work through the meaning of this fallible feedback, facilitators pose discussion questions that often address the participant's inability to test perceptions (Appendix D). Using this experience, students can investigate giving feedback to their peers in the Fishbowl activity (Appendix E) and research the validity and reliability of feedback provided during the LDP process (Appendix A).

Generational Differences in Feedback

Students in our classes find or custom-design learning activities without instructor guidance. As action-learning teachers, we intentionally present real-world problems, or conditions, that they need to solve in order to learn from each other (Revans, 2011). Any activity could be used to discuss feedback: The Good Game is one example and debuted in 2005. From 2005 to 2015, The Good Game was run 5 times over 27 class iterations. More recently, from 2015 to 2021, it was run 5 times in 11 iterations, which leads the authors to ask (Revans, 2011): Why is The Good Game being applied more frequently?

There appears to be a significant difference in how the newer generations of millennials and post-millennials accept feedback compared to previous generations of Boomer and Gen X (Zemke et al., 2013). Millennial and post-millennial generations exhibit a high level of *entitlement* or "A stable tendency toward highly favorable self-perceptions and a tendency to feel deserving of high levels of praise and reward, regardless of actual performance levels" (Laird, 2015, p. 89; see Table 1). Consequently,

the newer generations are more predisposed to receiving positive feedback even when negative feedback may be more applicable to the situation.

Current generations seem to struggle with negative feedback more than those in the past (Zemke et al., 2013). For instance, Donohue explains that Generation X, with their can-do attitude, appreciates negative feedback so long as they have the freedom to explore the solution themselves (TEDx Talks, 2016). However, newer generations struggle with acting on negative feedback, but they enjoy receiving feedback due to their defining principle of wanting to pursue change (Anderson et al., 2016; Rubin Postaer & Associates, 2018). Presenting negative feedback in a manner that shows how a change in actions can be beneficial to the recipient or the organization is often better received by newer generations (Anderson et al., 2016). Millennial and post-millennial generations would rather have a coach or friend (Jenkins, 2019; Pasko, 2017) than a boss or manager (See Table 1).

In delivering negative feedback, Brown et al. (2016) posits the "emotive tactic" as most effective to address the emotions and feelings surrounding negative feedback. Essentially, the manager becomes a helper by asking the employee how they feel they performed over the last quarter and how they feel they can adapt to overcome challenges. Given the characteristics of the newest generations, emotive tactics can ameliorate tensions for managers.

Like their Generation X counterparts, millennials want some form of evidence tied into their feedback. Brown et al.'s (2016) "evidence and emotive tactic" may work best since millennials want their leader to become a friend, build trust, talk them through their performance, show them statistics to back claims, and work with them to find a solution. Millennials prefer feedback in real-time. Small feedback sessions or daily feedback briefings go a long way in helping millennials develop their skills and change workplace behaviors to better themselves and the company overall (Adkins & Rigoni, 2016; see Table 1).

Generation Z simply prefers the emotive tactic. Generation Z has an inherent trust aspect and will believe what experts or supervisors say but prefer that they, and everyone around them, are treated with the utmost respect and regard (Rubin Postaer and Associates, 2018). While millennials prefer feedback of any variety as fast as possible (Zemke et al., 2013), Generation Z prefers constant, formative feedback from a peer in the workplace. Generation Z does not resist authority relationships but requires human connection, "[m]eaning that Generation Z could only work for superiors who manage to develop a strong working relationship with their subordinates" (Iorgulescu, 2016, p. 49; see Table 1).

Millennial and post-millennial generations need to understand that negative feedback is vital for performance improvement (Anderson et al., 2016). While millennials are often perceived as a generation with little taste for negative feedback, they are open to critique if it is framed around company or personal goals (Anderson et al., 2016). Generation Z may be even more sensitive in their approach to negative feedback, as this technology-based generation prefers their feedback delivered in-person (Jenkins, 2019). As an action-learning activity, The Good Game provides helpful visual stimuli for Generation Z to grasp the importance of negative feedback. In addition, this game responds to the newer generations' desire for frequent feedback with immediate answers of "good" or silence.

Table 1

Generational Differences in Feedback-related Work Characteristics

Characteristic	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	Generation Z
Work Values	Success Oriented, Loyal to Career	Seek Work/Life Balance	Self-Reliant and Team Oriented	Work Hard and Grow Fast
Work Motivators	Appreciation	Autonomy	Making a Difference	Social Connection
This Generation Works Best When Pursuing	Personal Achievement	Team-Oriented Goals	Career Advancement, Working in Teams	Personal Image
Feedback Preference	Annually, Well-Documented	Frequent	Instant	Constant, Formative & Peer

Note. Adapted from "Work Values and Preferences by Generation" by N. Sutton Bell and H. F. Griffin, 2013, as cited in R. P. Pasko, 2017, *Work-Related Attributes and Retention: Comparing Millenials and Other Generations*, p. 41 [Doctoral dissertation, University of Dallas]. Copyright 2017 by UDigital Commons. https://digitalcommons.udallas.edu/edt/5

Silence as a Form of Feedback

Feedback is essential to improving performance; however, since the process is traditionally initiated by supervisors, it is often thought of as active or proactive. Silence is not consistently recognized as a mechanism of performance feedback (Kingsley Westerman & Smith, 2015). However, realizing that silence is a form of feedback can help an individual seek clarification and possibly resolve an unspoken issue. During a presentation, listeners may be silent because they do not understand, or something is not resonating with them. Encountering silence, the presenter can test perceptions or clarity by asking, "Let me check, I'm not hearing any feedback. Unless I hear otherwise, I'm assuming that this means there are no questions or issues. Am I wrong?". Unfortunately, the lack of protest is not often seen as a form of negative feedback, rather a confirmation that everything is going well (Murch, 2016). Acquiescence is the reluctant acceptance of something without protest. Quiescent silence, or self-censorship, is not acquiescence. Both reluctant acceptance and silent non-acceptance are issues which can result from the fear of repercussions, the avoidance of conflict, the perception feedback is not welcome, the assumption only experts or authority figures can provide feedback, or even the feeling of frustration because of the belief that speaking up will not make a difference (Kingsley Westerman & Smith, 2015; London, 2003; Michaelsen et al, 2004; Murch, 2016).

Many managers see providing negative feedback as difficult, so they avoid it (London, 2003). As a result, managers may self-censor their negative reactions and

remain silent. The absence of negative feedback can be seen by the "receiver" as evidence for good performance, thus removing the need for further feedback, even though the opposite may be true. Reducing the avoidance of negative feedback in an organization can improve productivity and enhance learning (London, 2003). Murch (2016) recounted the story of a manager who asked for feedback on a report during a meeting. Since no one commented, he assumed the meeting was successful, and everyone was on the same page. Predictably, when constituents later discussed their thoughts about the meeting, they felt the presenter provided little room for input. An acquiescent agreement can result from the desire to avoid conflict, possibly because of a perception of a lack of safety (Kingsley Westerman & Smith, 2015). Self-censorship can also result from personal emotions, such as fear or anger (Jackman & Strober, 2003; Murch, 2016; Van Dyne et al., 2003).

In The Good Game, learners come to recognize their peers' silence as negative feedback, teaching that they are not correct in the base assumption that silence means approval. However, with no guidance on how to correct their actions, the participant becomes frustrated, similar to employees' feelings in the workplace. In either setting, the role of silence in the feedback process is not well-explored.

Fresh Questions

Learners exploring the value and meanings associated with feedback could build a dialogic learning space (Matusov, 2009), creating a place where the perceptions and meanings held by all learners are valuable, and generational differences provide fodder for thoughtful rumination. As interdisciplinary teachers and experts, we must follow the pursuit through exploratory insight (Revans, 2011); we must test our perceptions and check for disconfirmation (Argyris et al., 1985). Thus, action learning leads to action research towards Revans' (2011) set of "Fresh Questions." Our experiences with the Good Game suggest several Fresh Questions on feedback:

- What does the word "good" mean? In guiding others, constituents must develop a shared understanding of the symbolic usage of positive "sign". UCM students cite their use of gratuitous praise with peers as an attempt to foster good relationships as opposed to providing specific, actionable feedback (Appendix D & E).
- Why is The Good Game being run more frequently in our classes by our millennial and post-millennial students? Current UCM students and the popular literature (Jenkins, 2019) indicate that millennials and post-millennials prefer a relationship where managers act more as coaches and friends than bosses, suggesting a different approach to feedback is needed.
- How might educators help students see mistakes as not being crimes to be punished? Helping others to understand and manage emotional reactions toward feedback could point toward alternate developmental approaches. UCM students report that they tend to receive "constructive" (negative signed) criticism with a negative emotional response, limiting their learning (Appendix C).

- What is the role of silence as a mechanism for feedback? Supervisors use silence to get their point across, as do subordinates. However, the intentional use of silence is not well-understood (Kingsley Westerman, & Smith, 2015). Learners need training to recognize silence as a form of feedback to understand why everyone is quiet to determine what others are NOT saying.
- Why is this task/game so hard? What are the barriers and obstacles toward feedback as perceived by the receiver? Feedback orientation refers to an individual's receptivity toward feedback and consists of many factors (London & Smither, 2002): the propensity to seek feedback, propensity to process feedback mindfully, sensitivity to others' views, belief in the value of feedback, and a feeling accountable to use the feedback. While the Good Game serves as a starting point to foster receptivity, it is unclear which elements of feedback orientation the newest generations most need to develop, welcome, and appreciate.

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Appendix A

Leadership Development Plan (LDP) Instructions & Example

Overview

The purpose of this assignment is for you to look ahead at your career, or at least your next job, and make choices around specific leadership skills that you want to improve on. How will you make these improvements? Make a plan!

Step 1: Three Skills on BlackBoard

Post the following on the "Leadership Skill Ideas" discussion thread on Blackboard:

1. Three leadership practices (behaviors) you believe you need to work on. (Please use the terminology from Kouzes and Posner.)
2. A brief statement on why you think each of these skills needs development.

Step 2: Comment on Each Other's BB Posts

1. Read each other's posts. Comment on them, be constructive.
2. Give examples of how you have seen the leader struggle with that skill/behavior.
3. If someone posted something that you don't feel they need to work on, say so and give an example of how they do it well, or how it does not impact others.

Step 3: Select at least Three Constituents

1. Select three sources of information to give you open, honest feedback on your developmental skills from "LDP Ideas".
    a. Who are you asking for feedback on your leadership skills?
    b. Why are these people ideal?
    c. Aim for at least 3 different sources, so 3 or more people who know you in different venues of leading.
2. Sources people have used in the past: Interviewing their current manager, past manager, teammates. A short survey of clients, co-workers, managers. Phone calls with past managers, current managers, regional managers. Emails with HR, direct managers, co-workers. Video chats with leaders in different positions who knew the student as an employee. Request for a formal performance review (which never really happens in small businesses). etc...
3. The key is to ask about those 2 or 3 leadership behaviors you honed down to in the LDP Ideas discussion board. Do not let the information flow wander, stay focused on those developmental behaviors you want feedback on.
4. Put your ideas for sources of information and how you will collect data, information, feedback from at least 3 sources in the discussion board entitled "LDP Constituents."
    a. How will you ask, survey, interview, phone call, etc.?
5. Comment on each other's ideas to help with gathering information.

Step 4: Constituent Feedback

1. Restate the names of the people you contacted and the questions you asked them.
2. What did they have to say about your developmental skills?
3. Post to the discussion board entitled "Constituent Feedback".
4. This step is a check-off for me to see you are making progress.

Step 5: The Leadership Development Plan (1-page maximum)

1. The Leading Behavior: You are now down to 1 or 2 leadership skills/behaviors you would like to work on
    - Things you can do something about
    - Use SOME ideas/words from the book
2. Proof: Who says this is an issue/problem/lack/etc?
    - Facebook Message
    - Interviews
    - Survey of Co-workers Family
    - Classmates, but not MGT majors
    - Performance Reviews
    - Immediate superior at work
    - Coach
    - Scouting
    - Church
    - Personality test
    - MGT Majors not in this class as one source
    - Subordinates
    - Owners
    - Regular Customers see the consistent behavior
    - Irregular for new ideas
3. Listen closely to see what people are saying
    - Observe the effects of things you are trying
    - Reflect on the feedback your constituents gave you
    - Plan how your will change your skills
4. Accountability - Hold yourself accountable! SMART format, right?
    - Pick someone to give you honest feedback, mentor not coach
    - Journal, professional
    - Swear jar thingy
    - Make time for self-reflection
    - Google calendar or other organizers
    - Share the messages with others, find an accountability partner
    - Professional groups/ Toastmasters
        - Formal one-on-ones with your manager
        - Make it MEASURABLE

Appendix B

Leadership Development Plan (LDP) Student 1 Example

Strengths

1. Leading by example (or Modeling the way)
2. Communicating clearly and effectively
3. Honesty and Open to Criticism or opposition to my ideas or decisions

Goals

1. Improve upon encouraging others and enabling them to achieve their goals and tasks. When in leadership positions I have received feedback that it is something I need to improve on, rather than taking things on myself.
2. Improve upon critical thinking speed in difficult situations with reason. I can usually make a good decision with enough time to slow down and think about why, but leaders and managers need to be able to do so quickly.

Proof

Issue 1: Peer Feedback (anonymous) from IBE class in Fall 2018. I was in charge of my company's finances and was good at it, but it was by far the most demanding position. I had a couple of people who would occasionally help me out, but I did not reach out to them or encourage them to be more involved or help more. On my peer review, I had two reviews stating that I should have reached out for help and encouraged others to help more. I had similar feedback when I was in charge of "Control" in XB class the semester after IBE.

Issue 2: When working at Dick's Sporting Goods I found myself in difficult situations where I did not know what to do and would have to reach out for help on the radio, which could take 5+ minutes to get an answer at times. This got better as time went on and I got more familiar with things but it would still happen on occasion. Not having answers and standing around reaching out for help does not make customers happy and hurts reputation (both mine and the company).

Issue 2: Making snap decisions is the name of the game in officiating sports. While I believe that I am decent for a first-year official, I know I have lots of room for growth. I have gotten very clear and immediate feedback from a coach a couple of months ago. We also have a rating system that comes out at the end of the season, and I scored a 6/10.

Resources/Possible Evaluation Team

1. Sedalia Referees Association- Members and leadership
   -Experience and wisdom to share from a large number of members
2. Lorin Walker- Mentor and Class Professor

-Large variety of job experience and career development advice

3. Organizational Policy Team

-Working on a large group project together throughout the semester

Accountability

- I plan on acquiring a large dry erase calendar (or making my own), so I can better schedule what I need to do and see it every day.
- (Issue 2) Have someone give me a difficult or odd scenario that I have to respond to quickly and accurately (referee situation or work situation).
- (Issue 1) Have close contact with my class organizational policy team and work on encouraging others or enabling them to participate. I would then have them send feedback to Lorin Walker (instructor and my mentor) for him to interpret and give me advice.
- Make time daily for self-reflection and think about what I could have done better/improve on.
- (Issue 2) Get into contact with Dennis Hagadorn (ref association) and have him interpret my evaluations and give any advice.

Appendix C

Leadership Development Plan (LDP) Student 2 Example

Date: 12/02/2020

Re: Leadership Development Plan

The three leadership skills I honed down at the beginning of class were delegation, creativity, and feedback. Our classmates then responded if they agreed or disagreed. After reading the comments and thinking about their motivations, I determined that I really did not have any problem being creative. But, all my peers agreed that delegation and feedback were two weaknesses. I find myself not delegating work that should or could be delegated. It's not because I am selfish, but because I want to see that everything is completed on time. I know that if I do it, it will get done. Giving feedback was another thing I could work on, I am afraid to express my feelings. I do not like to give negative feedback. I like to keep people happy, so I do not want to be the one who brings up the negatives. But I know it is important that people receive feedback as this is the only way they know how they are doing on the job.

I decided to interview my former boss, my current manager, and a teacher. In all three interviews, I started by discussing the objectives of the interview. We began our dialog by covering the skills I was good at, then we focused on things I could improve on. I asked all three the same question before telling them the two leadership skills I had selected: "What are two leadership skills that you think I could work on"? To my amazement, all three of them said "I think you could work on making others take responsibility and I think you could let others know how you feel". As I analyzed those identical responses, I thought to myself "making others take responsibility"? That sounds a lot like delegating. "Letting others know how you feel" sounds a lot like giving feedback. I then told them what my classmates had said I needed to improve on and they all said, "that is exactly what we are talking about." These constituents from different aspects of my life agreed that I was holding back. They could tell that I wanted to say more, but I didn't. My former manager said "Levi, you speak brilliantly, when you speak" and "You always know what to say". My current manager said, "Levi, I never told you this, but always felt bad because you were doing three employees' worth of work for one employee's paycheck". There were often times when I needed to just step back, take a break, and allow others to do their job. But, I wanted to ensure it got done and just did it myself. My three interviewees agreed that I was not a selfish person but maybe lacked trust in others. My former manager said "And I wish you would've just had trust in them and let them fail even if you knew they were going to. We see what really happens, you don't have to try and cover it up." Failure is not blind to all.

After reviewing the three interviews a couple of times (I recorded them all with permission), I concluded that I needed to improve on delegating and giving back feedback. To hold myself accountable for these two things I will make myself give feedback and delegate. When I work with someone, I will give feedback to the person I am working with regularly. I will address what I think is going well or they are doing well with. But I will also address what I think could be improved or what they need to change (in my opinion). I am going to ask them if I can give them feedback and if they agree, I will do it. I will not be offensive or negative. Just truly explaining my observations with evidence. This way they know exactly how I am thinking. With delegation, I plan on having more trust in people. I plan to do exactly what I am asked of and let others do what they are supposed to do. If they do not finish something, I will not let it bother me. I will simply focus on myself more, and let others deal with their consequences. If I see that I have overloaded myself, I will ask others to help. Vise versa as well, if others need help, I will help them. I will let others do more of what they are hired to do. I will allow others to do what they are delegated to do and delegate things that are not entirely my responsibility. Focusing on delegation and giving back feedback will allow me to become a better leader. This change will show others that I trust them and that I will speak my mind. I will not only give feedback, but I will ask for feedback in return.

Appendix D

Mapping Discussion Questions to Concepts

Name of the Activity: The "Good" Game

Activity Objective: Being able to give and receive feedback despite potential restrictions

Instructions:

- Select one member to stand in the front of the room and DO something (participant).
- The facilitator walks the participant into the hallway where they cannot hear.
- The facilitator quickly tells learners to decide on an action that they want the participant to take: for example, do 7 push-ups. Be realistic, please.
- The facilitator goes back into the hallway to tells the participant that they will come back into the room to take some action, without telling them the required action.
- The participant may not speak and must try to figure out what their objective is by moving around and taking advice.
- The facilitator and participant wait for a cue from learners that they have made an action/task choice and are ready.
- Facilitator ducks into the classroom and explains to the learners that they can only say "GOOD" when the participant makes a correct motion. No other words or non-verbal cues are allowed.
- The participant enters the room and the game begins.
- Once the participant has accomplished the task completely, we are finished!

Intended Discussion Purposes:

Initiate incremental steps and small wins to overcome big challenges
Conducting pre- and postmortems with your projects
Learn from your mistakes
Foster hardiness in self and others

Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest challenge in this activity?
- What types of communication did you use other than words?
  - Which type of communication was most effective?
  - In what ways did noise impact your efforts?
- How did you initiate incremental steps and small wins?
  - How did you build off those small wins?
  - In what ways were those small wins beneficial?
- To the member in front, what did you try that did not work and how did you learn from these attempts?
- To the member in front, what was most helpful from your team members?
- Life is not always about positive feedback, how do we (as leaders) deliver corrective feedback?

- What is our obligation as leaders when the system provides poor feedback (blank stares and "good")?
- How did negative feedback affect your understanding of the task?

- Looking back on the struggle of completing the task and knowing this game is not a competition, what do you think could have gone better?

DISCUSSION QUESTION	RELATION	LEADERSHIP PRACTICE
What was your biggest challenge in this activity?	Personal-best leadership experiences always involve some challenge. Leaders take charge of change	Challenge the Process Search for Opportunities Foster Hardiness
What types of communication did you use other than words? Which type of communication was most effective? In what ways did noise impact your efforts?	Listen deeply, discover and appeal to a common purpose, and give life to their vision by communicating expressively.	Inspire a Shared Vision Enlist Others Develop a Shared Source of Destiny
How did you initiate incremental steps and small wins?	The three essentials of experimenting and taking risks are initiating incremental steps and small wins, learning from mistakes, and promoting psychological hardiness.	Challenge the Process Experiment and Take Risk
How did you build off of those small wins? In what ways were those small wins beneficial?	Small wins build people's confidence and reinforce their desire to feel successful.	Challenge the Process Experiment and Take Risk Initiate Incremental Steps and Small Wins
To the member in front, what did you try that did not work and how did you learn from these attempts?	They provide a stable foundation that preserves gains and makes it harder to return to the way things were.	Challenge the Process Experiment and Take Risk Initiate Incremental Steps and Small Wins
To the member in front, what was most helpful	Small wins help leaders build constituents' commitment to a course	Challenge the Process

from your team members?	of action by starting with actions that are within their control, tangible, and doable	Experiment and Take Risk Initiate Incremental Steps and Small Wins
Looking back on the struggle of completing the task and knowing this game is not a competition, what do you think could have gone better?	According to Dick Nettell, "In today's environment, if you want to be successful, doing things the same way won't get it done…. if we're not willing to be innovative and do things differently, we are going to have the competition pass us like we're still sitting on the freeway."	Challenge the Process Search for Opportunities **The Leadership Challenge* Instructor's Guide
Life is not always about positive feedback, how do we (as leaders) deliver corrective feedback? What is our obligation as leaders when the system provides poor feedback (blank stares and "good")? How did negative feedback affect your understanding of the task?	Seize the Initiative Exercise Outsight "As long as you believe what you're doing is meaningful, you can cut through fear and exhaustion and take the next step." Push to give employees the opportunity to change, without forcing it. Giving the opportunity to take initiative results in unexpected positive changes.	Conducting pre and post-mortems (the activity debrief itself is a postmortem). Foster hardiness in others
If a second round: Why was the second round easier than the first? How did negative feedback affect your understanding of the task? Give an example of a time when negative feedback helped you in your career or schoolwork.	"If you can think of ways to improve the process, you should take it." This means you have to stop simply "going through the motions" when it comes to doing your job. It's a lesson all leaders need to learn."	Challenge the Process Innovate Solutions Inspire a Shared Vision

Appendix E

Fishbowl Feedback Instructions

Fishbowl Leadership Feedback

Peer feedback will consist of 3 sections: Giving feedback, Responding to feedback, and Improving feedback skills. For your Fishbowl Feedback, you will need to use Google Meet to set up a real-time feedback session with your partner(s). For help with Google Meet, click here.

Each person will get a chance to be in the "hot seat," so it doesn't matter who goes first. Work together to find a time that works best for all members of your team and ideally Nelson or Andi as well. Once you have a time set, task one person with setting up the meeting and inviting everyone else.

Giving Feedback:
To save us all from having to sift through a long video, please create a new video for each person receiving feedback. For example, if person 1 is receiving feedback first, person 2 and 3 should both give feedback to person 1 in a single video. Then stop that recording and start a new one before moving on to person 2, etc. This group should have at least 3 videos. These can be done one right after the other, or at different times or days depending on group availability.

- Consider both suggested improvements or opportunities to grow as well as positive feedback
- Be sure to use Leadership terminology
- Be sure to use real examples when possible

Responding to Feedback:
Each person that receives feedback will also be expected to reflect and respond to that feedback. You have two options of when you can do your responding to feedback video. You can either do it at the end of the same video you received the feedback or you can schedule a follow-up video with your peers instead.

- Do you agree or disagree with the feedback given?
- Do you see yourself making changes in future teams?
- If you wait for a second recording to respond to your feedback, you might rewatch your feedback video

Improving Feedback Skills:
Here is where the points come into play! See the document attached for instructions.

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"…teaching future faculty about SoTL is both a way to prepare future faculty to integrate SoTL into their careers, but it is also a way to help future faculty understand and value the roles of faculty members who focus on teaching within research-intensive institutions." (p. 11)

Reano, D., Masta, S., & Harbor, J. (2019). Changing future faculty's conceptions of SoTL. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, *13*(2), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.20429/ijsotl.2019.130203

Mindfulness and Gratitude: Does It Really Make a Difference for College Students?

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Abstract. Mindfulness is the intentional and nonjudgmental awareness of all thoughts, feelings, and sensations that occur in the present moment. Mindfulness has also been associated with higher levels of quality of life, sleep quality and duration, and life satisfaction and happiness (Chavan et al., 2017). Similarly, gratitude is a tendency toward appreciating the positive in life. It also has been associated with well-being, such as reducing anxiety, stress and depression, and increased life satisfaction (Lindor, 2019). This article takes these findings and explores them to determine whether consistent mindfulness activities and gratitude practices make a difference in the lives of college students, leading to a reduction in anxiety, stress, and uncertainty, as well as an increased ability to be present and to feel appreciation for their current lives.

In my role as the director of field experiences, I have the opportunity to work with approximately 75 students each semester who are in their junior or senior years in college, placing them in their first, second, and third field experiences required for their teaching certification degree. It was in this role that my journey toward mindfulness and gratitude began with a few simple questions that I posed to students in my college education courses. The questions were: "How many of you struggle with anxiety? How many of you struggle with focus and attention? How many of you feel stressed and overwhelmed? How many of you wish you could decrease your anxiety, decrease your stress, and improve your focus and concentration?" I had a sense that hands would go up when I asked these questions, but I was taken back when 66 students out of three classes, totaling 75 students, raised their hands!

…students attending higher education have to navigate changes to a new living environment and the additional stress of a new educational setting, with greater demands and new social pressures that can cause or increase mental health issues.

Although the results were surprising to me, they should not have been since college students are considered to be a high-risk population for mental health disorders, such as distress, anxiety, and depression (Chavan et al., 2017). These students attending higher education have to navigate changes to a new living environment and the additional stress of a new educational setting, with greater demands and new social pressures that can cause or increase mental health issues (Dawson et al., 2019).

Years before that day in my classes, I had started my own journey of dealing with these questions. In particular, how could I address and overcome anxiety, stress, trauma, focus, and concentration in both my personal and professional life? As I pursued various recommended ideas and strategies to try – from trusted mentors and

colleagues to my own personal counselor – they each kept recommending that I try the practices of mindfulness and gratitude.

What is Mindfulness and Gratitude?

Mindfulness and gratitude are consistently and positively associated with well-being in diverse populations. Maroney (2018) wrote that mindfulness is about being fully aware of what is happening in the present moment, both internally and externally. It is a conscious decision to pay attention to your body, mind, emotions, and external circumstances, and to do so from a nonjudgmental place – a place of noticing and letting go of anything that doesn't serve you (Maroney, 2018).

Gratitude, on the other hand, is a tendency toward appreciating the positive in life (Maroney, 2018). It is a mark of being kind to life by being aware of all that is around us, and when we are grateful, we acknowledge the people and situations in our lives and express thanks for them. Seeing and feeling gratitude today is one key to being resilient and successful (Wong & Brown, 2017).

When we are feeling grateful, our body calms, and we feel at peace in all realms of our lives. It is impossible to feel grateful and stressed at the same time. Lindor (2019) shared the basic principle in psychology called "Reciprocal Inhibition"; we cannot feel two contradicting states at once. The best part about gratitude is that it is easy to access in little time and, when combined with a mindfulness practice, can help us stay in touch with all we have to be grateful for in our lives.

With this foundation of research, I began to believe that by introducing these practices to my students, it would provide them the tools needed to reduce the anxiety and stress they experienced and to help them become more present in the moment, thus releasing them from regret of the past and fear of the future. I also believed that by finding the time to integrate these practices into my education courses, I would serve as a model for how aspiring teachers could provide these same tools to their future students and classrooms.

What are the Benefits of Mindfulness and Gratitude?

O'Leary and Dockray (2015) emphasized that mindfulness is associated with higher levels of quality of life, sleep quality and duration, life satisfaction and overall happiness. It is also associated with lower levels of stress, depression, and anxiety. In addition, Maroney (2018) shared these general benefits as they relate to practicing mindfulness with adults and kids:

- Self-acceptance
- Compassion for themselves
- Strengthened resilience
- Better focus and concentration at school and at home
- Increased self-esteem
- Improved social skills
- Better control of anger and hyperactivity
- Improved sleep (p. 119)

Although gratitude is not as widely used in practice as mindfulness, a growing body of gratitude research has found robust and consistent associations with well-being. Gratitude is so simple yet many people overlook its amazing benefits of reduced anxiety, stress and depression, as well as increased life satisfaction, positive affect, and health behaviors (McClary, 2018).

These positive effects make sense because when you think about what you are grateful for, you cannot help but feel more relaxed, fulfilled, and blessed, which leads to a greater capacity for learning and brain development. Fox (2019) wrote there were three ways gratitude benefits individuals:

1. **It can help relieve stress and pain**. Feeling grateful and recognizing help from others creates a more relaxed body state and allows the subsequent benefits of lowered stress to wash over us.
2. **It can improve our health over time**. Data suggests that because gratitude relies on the brain networks associated with social bonding and stress relief, this may explain in part how grateful feelings lead to health benefits over time.
3. **It can help those with depression**. Perhaps even more encouraging, researcher Prathnik Kini and colleagues at Indiana University found evidence of how the mental practice of gratitude may even be able to change and re-wire the brain. (p. 1)

What are the Benefits of Mindfulness and Gratitude in Higher Education?

The knowledge of the benefits of mindfulness and gratitude is transferable to any student – but especially a student in higher education. Bamber and Schneider (2020) explained how college students found mindfulness-based interventions to be beneficial and described them as a coping mechanism that regulated their stress, regulated their anxiety and emotions, improved learning, built relationships, and provided tools for future careers. In addition, Falsafi (2016) found reductions in stress and depression and increases in happiness were observed for gratitude and mindfulness interventions. The gratitude intervention was most effective for reducing stress, demonstrating a continuous decline over time, while the mindfulness intervention was most effective in reducing depression and increasing happiness (Skylar & Dockray, 2015). These findings indicate that mindfulness and gratitude interventions are potentially beneficial and could also be useful when combined to further improve mental health and well-being of college students.

Further, research led me to data that confirmed the impact that mindfulness and gratitude had in the specific context of learning, memory, and cognitive function. For example, Lynch et al. (2018) shared that mindfulness has been associated with improvements in working memory as well as reduction in mind-wandering and cognitive rigidity. It has been used for performance enhancement in sports and music, and there is growing evidence that therapists who promote mindfulness may achieve better therapeutic results.

In addition to performance in sports and music, Flaherty (2019) found that doctoral students who practiced mindfulness reported a statistically significant reduction in depression and increase in self-efficacy, hope, and resilience. In fact,

Semple et al. (2017) added that an even greater effect may be possible if students practiced more mindfulness consistently. Daily practice, such as those short 5-to-10-minute practices available through various apps, could be used with a positive effect.

How is Mindfulness and Gratitude Applicable to the Classroom?

With a greater understanding of the benefits of mindfulness and gratitude, both from a general benefit perspective, as well as from a higher education perspective, I began to briefly introduce mindfulness and gratitude practices to all of my aspiring teacher students (see Appendix). These practices consisted of mindfulness activities, such as mindful breathing, guided meditations, positive affirmations, mindful listening, mindful eating, mindful walking, and tapping. In the area of gratitude exercises, we reflected on three things of which students were grateful for from the past week in the areas of career, family, health, school, and spirituality. These practices generally were done during the first five to 10 minutes of class and the last five to 10 minutes of class.

While I felt like the activities were well-received, I was unable to ascertain the impact on the students, mainly because I never asked. As is the case when you introduce new concepts to students in class, there can be a wide range of reactions. While some students expressed appreciation for the practices, there were others who failed to acknowledge the practices. With this range of responses, it was difficult to determine its impact and effect.

However, this perception all changed when students completed my end of course evaluations. When asked about what they appreciated the most about the course, 22 out of 25 students per class mentioned their appreciation for the mindfulness activities and gratitude exercises, stating that it was a highlight of the course and had helped them cope with their anxiety, stress, and uncertainty when facing obstacles in their other college courses. For example, one student wrote:

> The strengths of this course were the mindfulness activities and the resources that were offered. Beginning each class with mindfulness activities would help bring me to a clear mental mindset and get me prepared for the lesson for the day. The resources that were provided during each class have been helpful as well for what I could plan for my future classroom and for my job that I am currently working at.

Needless to say, the results were surprising and encouraging!

As one semester turned into four semesters, students' end of course evaluations and behaviors in the classes continued to indicate the mindfulness activities and gratitude exercises were impactful and a significant aspect of my courses. In fact, it was something they looked forward to whenever they learned they were taking one of my courses. For example, due to the inclusion of the mindfulness activities and gratitude practices, a student wrote the following:

> I think the environment that a teacher provides for their students is so important. I loved that this class addressed all of the ways that we can make students feel safe, welcome, and ready to learn. This has honestly been one of

> my favorite education courses so far and I believe that it has a lot to do with my passion and the specific topics covered. (It is also great to have a professor teach a course where it is easy to tell that they are passionate about their content too!).

Comments like these only fueled my passion and desire even more to continue the mindfulness activities and gratitude practices and the impact it was having on the learning environment for my students.

In the spring of 2020, I designed each of my education courses to include a weekly mindfulness activity and a weekly gratitude journal exercise. During each class period held, I would start with a mindfulness activity and end with a gratitude journal exercise. The mindfulness activities expanded to include, EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) tapping, guided meditations, such as body scan meditations, mindful listening exercises, mindful eating, kindness walks, positive affirmations, and even yoga poses. For gratitude exercises, the focus was on listing at least three things they were grateful for related to their personal life, professional life (work), education life (school), physical life, and spiritual life. They were also challenged to keep a weekly gratitude journal as a reflective practice. These activities and practices were a result of personal exposure to such valuable resources like Mindfulness in Schools, Mindful.org, Beyond Consequences, Challenge to Change, The Tapping Solution, and The Imagine Project.

Things were going smoothly and students were responding well to the new format and then suddenly the pandemic of COVID-19 happened. Suddenly, we were thrust into an online-only format, and students were now facing even more anxiety, uncertainty, and stress beyond anything they had ever experienced before. Interestingly, as schools across the country transitioned to online learning, every leader, administrator, and mental health professional recommended similar things. Their recommendations included an emphasis on making sure that we, as a faculty, were checking in with our students to see if they were doing okay – not just academically but also emotionally. We were encouraged to help them find the positives in their life with so much panic and uncertainty going on around them.

As I listened to this advice from leadership and others in science, education, and mental health, I began to look at the current structure of my class and realized mindfulness and gratitude were exactly what students needed at this time and in the months ahead. In fact, the skills that I had been using over the last four semesters were a strong foundation of skills that students could use and build upon to help themselves and their future students during the COVID-19 pandemic. With this confirmation, I proceeded forward with my plan of having weekly mindfulness activities and gratitude journal exercises. I am happy to report that the remainder of the spring 2020 semester was very successful, both from a personal level, as well as a faculty level. I was able to support and encourage my students by providing practical tools through mindfulness and gratitude to help them with their anxiety, stress, and uncertainty.

Tips/Resources for Faculty

As students return to in-seat classes after the COVID-19 pandemic, anxiety,

stress, and uncertainty may still be their realities. With this in mind, I have continued to further my research on mindfulness and gratitude practices. In fact, research is now showing that students who practice mindfulness experience increases in optimism, emotional control, empathy, perspective taking, prosocial goals, and mindful attention. Brown School of Public Health (2020) wrote that mindfulness complements and strengthens social and emotional learning practices, skills and outcomes, and is an essential component in dealing with the daily physical and emotional stress inherent in teaching and being a student. With one in five children now having a diagnosable emotional, behavioral, or mental health disorder (Psychiatry Advisor Team, 2020), mindfulness can play a key role in addressing risk factors in children that lead to depression, anxiety, stress, lack of empathy, insufficient sleep, bullying, and difficulty with concentration.

With the research continuing to show these benefits, as well as receiving positive feedback from my students, I have continued to re-develop additional education courses to include mindfulness and gratitude as regular and consistent practices. It is the belief of many researchers that the most effective and sustainable way of teaching student's mindfulness is by training teachers, counselors and school leadership in the practice. In fact, Shapiro et al. (2008) concluded that teachers who practice mindfulness and fully integrate it into the daily lives of their classrooms and school cultures bring calmer and engaged presences to their students. Teachers who train in mindfulness are rated as more emotionally supportive and productive compared to those who do not practice mindfulness. Their interactions are more emotionally positive and the teachers demonstrate greater sensitivity to their students' needs (Chick, 2010). Teachers also make better use of instructional time, resulting in students being more involved in learning activities, and are better able to cope with stress given the pressure they are under, thus improving their performance and quality of life (Semple et al., 2017).

I am excited about taking the next step in pursuing the research and data even further with college students, in particular aspiring teachers, with the goal that consistent mindfulness and gratitude practices will have a universal impact on more and more students, not just at my current institution but across the country. The more tools we can provide college students, in particular student teachers, to combat the anxiety, stress, and uncertainty following the COVID-19 pandemic and the ever-changing cultural landscape, the better prepared they will be to share these practices with their own students and colleagues in the future. By introducing these concepts to my student teachers, it is my goal that they potentially integrate these skills and tools into their own classrooms with the ultimate goal of impacting the next generation of learners in K-12. The combination of mindfulness and gratitude is an important life-long skill set--one that makes a difference for students facing such anxiety, stress, and uncertainty, allowing them to be more present and feel more appreciation for their current lives.

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Appendix

Body Scan Meditation: Involves paying attention to parts of the body and bodily sensations in a gradual sequence from feet to head. By mentally scanning yourself, you bring awareness to every single part of your body, noticing any aches, pains, tension, or general discomfort.

Directions:
1. Get in position. Sit on the floor or in a chair, whatever is most comfortable.
2. Focus on how your body feels. Notice how you are feeling.
3. Move your attention slowly through your body.
4. When your attention wanders, notice that and return to the body scan.
5. Take in your body as a whole.

Beyond Consequences Institute: Their mission is to provide every child and student the opportunity to be parented and taught from a place of love, ending the myth that children can only respond, learn, and bond through fear-based techniques. They do this by offering educational materials, training programs, and valuable resources for parents, professionals, and teachers working with children impacted by trauma. (https://beyondconsequences.com/)

EFT Tapping: The emotional freedom technique (EFT) is an alternative to the traditional treatment for healing pain and emotional distress. EFT is commonly referred to as tapping or psychological acupressure. The practice consists of tapping with your fingertips on specific meridian points while talking through traumatic memories and a wide range of emotions.

Directions: (https://elemental.medium.com/)
1. Identify the issue. Name it. This will be the focus for the tapping (keep tapping)
2. Rate the intensity. How strong is it on a scale of one to 10 with 10 being the most intensity? (keep tapping)
3. "Tap in" and repeat. While still tapping, notice what you are feeling in your body; be present to it. Then think of a comforting phrase like, "Even though I am feeling all of this anxiety, I choose to relax and feel safe now. Do that two more times while still tapping.

4. Tap through the sequence points. Tap each point below on your body 8 times consecutively, repeating the comforting phrase three times as you do. Continue tapping and reciting while your work your way down your body:
   a. Eyebrow
   b. Side of the Eye
   c. Under the Eye
   d. Under the nose
   e. Under the chin
   f. Collarbone
   g. Under the arm (armpit)
   h. On top of the head
5. Repeat the sequence. This time, notice how your anxiety is lessening and fading away. Notice feelings of safety and calm growing in your body. End after three times through.
6. Rate the intensity. How strong is your anxiety now on a scale of one to 10? Repeat as necessary

Gratitude: A tendency toward appreciating the positive in life. It is a mark of being kind to life by being aware of all that is around us, and when we are grateful, we acknowledge the people and situations in our lives and express thanks for them. Seeing and feeling gratitude today is one key to being resilient and successful.

Directions:
1. Write down 5 things you are grateful for right now.
2. Write down 3 good things that happened today.
3. Write down 3 things that you are looking forward to.
4. Write the names of 4 people you are grateful for and why.
5. Write down 5 qualities you love about your job or school.

Guided Meditation: The process of meditating under the guidance of an experienced teacher or practitioner. This guidance is essentially an audible or visual narration of the meditation process, which may be given in person or remotely via audio, video or text.

Directions:
1. Set your intention.
2. Take time to relax your body.
3. Pay close attention to your senses.
4. Investigate what you are feeling.
5. Keep coming back to the body.

The Imagine Project: Their mission is to give kids a voice to bring positive change to their lives, and to future generations. The Imagine Project offers a free and simple 7 step "Imagine…." journaling process that provides kids a simple way to express their stress and/or trauma, as well as encouraging them to imagine a new story in their lives. (https://theimagineproject.org/)

Kindness Walks: A form of mindful walking where you are being aware of each step and of your breath while speaking positive affirmations that highlight the positive values about one's self.

Directions:
1. Choose a place to walk.
2. Start walking.
3. Pace yourself with small steps.
4. Combine your breath and your steps.
5. Say your positive affirmations while walking.
6. Be aware of your body, feelings, and emotions.
7. Live in the moment.

Meditation: A mental exercise that involves relaxation, focus, and awareness. Meditation is to the mind what physical exercise is to the body.

Directions:
1. Take the seat. Find a place to sit that feels calm and quiet to you.
2. Set a time limit. It can help to choose a short time, such as five or 10 minutes.
3. Notice your body. You can sit in a chair with your feet on the floor; you can sit loosely cross-legged; you can kneel – all are fine. Just make sure you are stable and in a position that you can stay in for a while.
4. Feel your breath. Follow the sensation of your breath as it goes in and as it goes out.
5. Notice when your mind has wandered. Inevitably, your attention will leave the breath and wander to other places. When you get around to noticing that your mind has wandered – in a few second, a minute, five minutes – simply return your attention to the breath.

Mindful Breathing: A very basic yet powerful mindfulness meditation practice. The idea is simply to focus your attention on your breathing—to its natural rhythm and flow and the way it feels on each inhale and exhale.

Directions:
1. Start by breathing in and out slowly. One breath cycle should last for approximately 6 seconds.
2. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, letting your breath flow effortlessly in and out of your body.
3. Let go of your thoughts. Let go of things you have to do later today or pending projects that need your attention.
4. Purposefully watch your breath, focusing your sense of awareness on its pathway as it enters your body and fills you with life.
5. Then watch with your awareness as it works work its way up and out of your mouth and its energy dissipates into the world.

Mindful Communications: They are dedicated to sharing the gifts of mindfulness through content, training, courses, and directories—helping people enjoy better health,

foster more caring relationships, and cultivate a more compassionate society. (https://mindful.org/)

Mindful Eating: Paying attention to our food, on purpose, moment by moment, without judgment. It is an approach to food that focuses on individuals' sensual awareness of the food and their experience of the food.

Directions:
1. Bring your attention to the item in your hand. Observe with curiosity as you pay attention and notice the color, shape, texture, and size. (Pause)
2. Now place the item between your fingers and feel the texture, temperature and ridges. You may notice smoothness or stickiness. (Pause)
3. Take the piece of food and bring it toward your nose and smell with your full awareness. (Pause)
4. Place the object (fruit or chocolate) into your mouth without chewing or swallowing it. Notice the flavor and texture. Notice the physical sensations within your body, especially your mouth and your gut. (Pause)
5. Next take just one bite and notice the flavor, notice the change of texture. Notice the parts of your mouth that are involved in chewing. Notice the sound and movement of chewing, as you continue to notice the sensations and flavor. (Pause)
6. When you are ready, swallow this item and notice the path that it follows from your mouth and throat into your stomach. Notice the sensation and taste that may linger in your mouth. Connect again to your body and your breath and notice your experience in this moment. (Pause)

Mindful Listening: A way of listening without judgment, criticism or interruption, while being aware of internal thoughts and reactions that may get in the way of people communicating with you effectively.

Directions:
1. Close your eyes.
2. Try not to get drawn into judging the music by its genre, title or artist name before it has begun. Instead, ignore any labels and neutrally allow yourself to get lost in the journey of sound for the duration of the song.
3. Allow yourself to explore every aspect of the track. Even if the music isn't to your liking at first, let go of your dislike and give your awareness full permission to climb inside the track and dance among the sound waves.
4. Explore the song by listening to the dynamics of each instrument. Separate each sound in your mind and analyze each one by one.
5. Hone in on the vocals: the sound of the voice, its range and tones. Don't think; hear.

Mindfulness: Being fully aware of what is happening in the present moment, both internally and externally. It is a conscious decision to pay attention to your body, mind, emotions, and external circumstances, and to do so from a nonjudgmental place – a place of noticing and letting go of anything that doesn't serve you.

Directions:
1. Let go of past and future thoughts.
2. Accept the present moment.
3. Meditate.
4. Get in touch with your senses.
5. Practice mindfulness during routine activities.

Mindfulness in Schools: Their charity, Mindfulness in Schools Project, is an established provider of mindfulness training for schools, delivering world-leading curricula for classroom-based mindfulness. Their materials are based on rigorous research in clinical psychology and neuroscience, written by teachers for teachers, and used successfully in a wide range of educational contexts. (https://mindfulnessinschools.org/)

Mindful Walking: Walking while being aware of each step and of our breath as well as the environment around us...Mindful walking can release our sorrows and our worries and help bring peace into our body and mind.

Directions:
1. Choose a natural object from within your immediate environment and focus on watching it for a minute or two. This could be a flower or an insect, or even the clouds or the moon.
2. Don't do anything except notice the thing you are looking at. Simply relax into watching for as long as your concentration allows.
3. Look at this object as if you are seeing it for the first time.
4. Visually explore every aspect of its formation, and allow yourself to be consumed by its presence.
5. Allow yourself to connect with its energy and its purpose within the natural world.

Mindful Yoga: Applies traditional mindfulness teachings to the physical practice of yoga, offering a means of exercise that is also meditative and useful for reducing.

Directions: (https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-yoga/)
1. Tadasana – also known as "Mountain Pose"
This pose is the foundation for all standing postures. It is so seemingly simple that it is often not practiced mindfully. It is an excellent posture to help bring awareness to all areas of the body, as well as the mind, to see if it is wandering off.

Stand up tall with your arms at your sides. Press all four corners of your feet into the ground, distributing your weight evenly between both feet. Imagine your pelvis as a bowl with its rim level, both side to side and front to back. Elongate the spine, keeping the lower ribs from jutting out, gently lifting the chest and opening the heart. Relax the shoulders down your back. Keep your chin parallel to the floor and your ears centered over your shoulders.

2. Vrikshasana – also known as "Tree Pose"
The classic balancing posture, Tree Pose helps focus your mind on finding balance on one standing leg. This is another simple pose that has the tendency to let the mind

wander off. As well, since it is a balancing pose, the loss of balance may cause one to experience feelings of defeat or judgment, should they be unable to maintain the balance (posture to be completed on each side).

Standing tall with your arms at your sides, start to shift your weight to your right foot. Inhale while lifting the opposite leg, rotating it externally. Use your left hand to help guide the sole of your left foot onto your inner right thigh. Bring your hands to your chest in Prayer position.

Your left foot should be pressing firmly into your right thigh and right thigh pressing firmly into your left foot. Maintain this pose while breathing in and out.

3. Anjaneyasana – also known as "Low Lunge"
Low Lunge is a stretching posture which improves balance, concentration and core awareness. During this pose, it is common to lose conscious awareness of the breath, or it might evoke a desire for the pose to be over, making it a great exercise in mindfulness. (posture to be completed on each side)

Starting from Downward-Facing Dog Pose, step your right foot forward and place it beside your right thumb, lining up your right knee over your right ankle. Lower your left knee down to the ground, ensuring to place it behind your hips. Raise your torso and sweep your arms above your head, palms facing one another, biceps beside your ears.

Allow your hips to settle forwards and down until you feel a stretch in the front of your left leg and psoas muscle. Draw your tailbone down, lengthening your lower back and engaging your core muscles. Begin to draw your thumbs into the back plane of your body as you reach up with your heart, shifting your gaze upward for a mild backbend.

4. Supta Baddha Konasana – also known as "Reclining Bound Angle Pose"
A classic restorative posture, this is a great ending posture for mindful yoga practice, acting as a segway into meditation as it brings awareness inward. In this posture, the mind might start to wander due to physical discomfort in the inner thighs and groin.
Starting from Corpse Pose, bring the soles of your feet together, and let your knees fall open. Imagine that your inner groins are sinking into your pelvis. Extend your arms out by your side, angled at about 45 degrees from the sides of your torso, palms facing up. Start to relax your face, chest, shoulders, hips, and feet. Allow your knees to drop further, as you go deeper into the pose.

Positive Affirmations: Statements that affirm something to be true, positive affirmations are positive phrases or statements used to challenge and eliminate negative or unhelpful thoughts that would hold one back.
Directions:
1. Choose a negative thought and write out its positive opposite.
2. Make your affirmations only a few words long.
3. Start your affirmations with "I Am"

4. Write your affirmations in the present tense.
5. Write as though you are grateful for already having and being what you want.

The Tapping Solution: Their mission is to empower the world to live a happier life by reducing the amount of stress, anxiety, and overwhelm experienced on a daily basis. It was created to provide people with the opportunity to release stress and find balance in their lives, all at their own fingertips. (https://thetappingsolution.com/)

Brant Winn, PhD *has worked in education for 28 years as a teacher and administrator, both in public and private K-12 schools and higher education. In his roles as Director of Field Experiences/Assistant Professor/New Faculty Support Associate at Park University, Brant pours himself into his work with education students while teaching face-to-face and blended courses focusing on the topics of trauma-informed, mindfulness, resilience, and student engagement. Brant also provides faculty development for full/part time faculty around the country, mentoring them in the development of new teaching and learning strategies that respond to the increasingly complex needs of students and adults.*

Call for *InSight* Papers

Volume 18: *Scholarly Teaching and Learning*

InSight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching is a scholarly publication designed to highlight the work of postsecondary faculty at colleges and universities across the United States. It is a refereed scholarly journal published annually by the Faculty Center for Innovation (FCI) at Park University that features theoretical and empirically-based research articles, critical reflection pieces, case studies, and classroom innovations relevant to teaching, learning, and assessment.

InSight articles focus broadly on Scholarly Teaching in the higher education environment. Faculty are encouraged to submit original manuscripts that showcase scholarly teaching processes or critically discuss the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) as a scholarship paradigm. While reports of scholarly teaching projects are welcome, *InSight* is also committed to continuing broader conversations about SoTL's value as a tool for advancing student learning and demonstrating faculty commitment to teaching.

Faculty are encouraged to submit manuscripts related to:

- Challenges/Responses to the SoTL paradigm
- Developing institution or discipline-specific understandings/definitions of SoTL
- Status reports of SoTL's role in a particular discipline (and what other disciplines might learn from the report)
- Guidance to faculty new to SoTL (on developing inquiry questions, determining methodologies, making SoTL work public, etc.)
- Examples of SoTL projects at the college/university course or discipline-level
- Intersections of SoTL and service-learning, eLearning, learning communities, and other learning initiatives
- Future directions in SoTL
- Cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional collaborations for promoting SoTL

Submission Requirements

- IRB – Any studies using human subjects or artifacts as examples should submit Internal Review Board (IRB) approval or exemption.
- STYLE – All manuscripts must be formatted in APA style.
- LENGTH – Manuscripts may range from 2,000 – 5,000 words (not including abstract, references or appendices). Authors are encouraged to include appendices that promote application and integration of materials (i.e., assignments, rubrics, examples, etc.).
- ABSTRACT – Each manuscript must be summarized in an abstract of 50 to 100 words.
- AUTHOR – Each author should provide his/her full name, title and departmental affiliation, campus address, telephone number, and email

address. Each author must also include a brief biography (no more than 100 words per author).

- FORMAT – All manuscripts must be submitted in Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format and follow the journal's formatting guidelines (single spaced, justified alignment, 9 pt. font, Helvetica Neue for headings, and Palatino Linotype for the body). Do not include personal identifiers within the manuscript. Include contact information only on a separate cover sheet. Each manuscript will be assigned a unique identifier for blind review processes.

Submission Process

Manuscripts will be submitted via *InSight's* submission/editorial platform, Scholastica. Click on the "Submit via Scholastica" button, located on the *InSight* website at http://insightjournal.net/, or submit via the Scholastica website at https://submissions.scholasticahq.com.

Submission Deadline

All submissions must be received by 4:00pm on March 1, 2023 (CST) to be considered for inclusion in Volume 18. However, submissions are accepted on a rolling basis.

Review Procedures

Submissions will be subject to a double-blind peer review. A manuscript is evaluated based on relevance, practical utility, originality, generalizability, clarity, significance and the extent to which the subject matter contributes to the ongoing development of the scholarship of teaching and learning. Review process and publication decisions will require approximately 12 weeks. Referees' feedback and editorial comments will be provided to the author when revisions are requested. For additional information regarding the review process, please visit https://insightjournal.net/peer-review-guidelines/. FCI retains the final authority to accept or reject all submitted manuscripts. The publication will be distributed both in print and online in fall 2023.

Copyright

Manuscript submissions are accepted with the assumption that they neither have been nor will be published elsewhere. Authors and FCI will hold joint copyright to all published manuscripts.

Contact

All inquiries should be directed to: innovate@park.edu.

Please visit our website at: http://insightjournal.net/.

Call for *InStruct* Papers

We invite submissions for *InSight's* new section, ***InStruct,*** that focuses on practical teaching strategies accompanied by short essays associating the instructional material to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL). The purpose of *InStruct* is to showcase the innovation of all higher education faculty (full-time, adjunct, distance, online, undergraduate, graduate, etc.), and to provide a repository of research-based teaching and learning materials that could be used or adapted by instructors from a wide array of disciplines. The goal is to provide a space to celebrate and share pedagogical content that demonstrates the practical application of SOTL principles.

Pedagogical materials might include but are not limited to innovative assignments, lessons, classroom activities, course designs, or service-learning projects. Submissions should include the relevant teaching artifacts such as prompts, lesson plans, any audiovisual materials, etc.

Teaching and learning content needs to be accompanied by or embedded in a short reflective essay (1500-2000 words) that situates the instructional materials in the scholarship on teaching and learning. Given *InSight's* interdisciplinary audience, teaching material should be useful or easily adaptable to other disciplines.

Any inclusion of student artifacts or examples will require proof of IRB approval or exemption by your institution (and we strongly encourage getting student consent to publish student work).

Editorial Process

All submissions to *InStruct* will be blinded, then peer-reviewed by editorial board members based on relevance, significance, originality, clarity, practical utility, generalizability to other disciplines, and grounded in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

More detailed information on our review criteria can be found at: https://insightjournal.net/peer-review-guidelines/.

InStruct uses rolling submissions. Accepted pieces will be published online as soon as they are prepared for final publication. We will also include titles, abstracts, and links to the full online article in *InSight's* annually printed publication, available in early fall. Any *InStruct* articles accepted prior to April 30th each year will be included in that year's volume of *InSight*. Those accepted after April 30th, will be rolled over into the next year's volume of *InSight*.

Submission Requirements

- STYLE – All manuscripts must be formatted in APA style.
- LENGTH – Reflective essays may range from 1500-2000 words (not including abstract, references or accompanying instructional materials).
- ABSTRACT – Summarize your submission in an abstract of 50 to 100 words.
- AUTHOR – Each author should provide their full names, title and departmental affiliation, campus address, telephone number, and email address. Each author must also include a brief biography (no more than 100 words per author).

- FORMAT – Reflective essays should be submitted in Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format. Do not include personal identifiers within the manuscript. For teaching artifacts, examples, or activities, please stick with non-proprietary or easily accessible formats, for example, mp3/mp4 for audio/video, jpeg, gif, or png for images, PDFs /Word documents. For submission of web or other kinds of digital content, contact the editors to discuss the best form of submission.

Submission Process

Manuscripts will be submitted via *InSight's* updated submission/editorial platform, Scholastica. Click on the "Submit via Scholastica" button, located on the InSight website at http://insightjournal.net/, or submit via the Scholastica website at https://submissions.scholasticahq.com.

Copyright

Manuscript submissions are accepted with the assumption that they neither have been nor will be published elsewhere. Authors and FCI will hold joint copyright to all published manuscripts.

Contact

All inquiries should be directed to: innovate@park.edu.

"The teacher is most a teacher when not-teaching, but when creating pedagogical worlds where students have the responsibility to begin to learn how to learn" (p. 6).

Altany, A. (2022). A SoTL memoir. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, *16*(1), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.20429/ijsotl.2022.160102

QUICK TIPS: PREPARING MANUSCRIPTS FOR *INSIGHT*

The following "Quick Tips" provide suggestions and guidance for preparing manuscripts for potential publication in *InSight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching. InSight* is a peer-reviewed publication highlighting the scholarly contributions of postsecondary faculty. As is the nature of refereed journals, acceptance and publication of original manuscripts is a competitive process. The goal of the following information is to assist faculty in preparing manuscripts in a manner that maximizes the chances of publication.

Preparing the Manuscript

The organization and style your manuscript will be largely dictated by the type of submission (e.g., theoretical, empirical, critical reflection, case study, classroom innovation, etc.). Thus, while guidelines will follow to assist you in preparing your manuscript, the key to successful submission is clear, effective communication that highlights the significance and implications of your work to post-secondary teaching and learning in relation to the target topic. To prepare and effectively communicate your scholarly work, the American Psychological Association (2019) provides the following general guidelines:

- Present the problem, question or issue early in the manuscript.
- Show how the issue is grounded, shaped, and directed by theory.
- Connect the issue to previous work in a literature review that is pertinent and informative but not exhaustive.
- State explicitly the hypotheses under investigation or the target of the theoretical review.
- Keep the conclusions within the boundaries of the findings and/or scope of the theory.
- Demonstrate how the study or scholarly approach has helped to address the original issue.
- Identify and discuss what theoretical or practical implications can be drawn from this work.

There is no mandatory format for *InSight* articles; rather authors should organize and present information in a manner that promotes communication and understanding of key points. As you write your manuscript, keep the following points in mind:

- Title - Generally speaking, titles should not exceed 15 words and should provide a clear introduction to your article. While it is okay to incorporate "catchy" titles to pique interest, be sure that your title effectively captures the point of your manuscript.
- Abstract - Do not underestimate the importance of your abstract. While the abstract is simply a short summary (50-100 words) of your work, it is often the only aspect of your article that individuals read. The abstract

provides the basis from which individuals will decide whether or not to read your article, so be certain that your abstract is "accurate, self-contained, nonevaluative, coherent, and readable" (American Psychological Association, 2020).

- Body - Within the body of a manuscript, information should be organized and sub-headed in a structure that facilitates understanding of key issues. There is not a mandatory format for *InSight* articles; rather authors should use professional guidelines within their discipline to present information in a manner that is easily communicated to readers. For example:
    - *Empirical investigations* should be organized according to the traditional format that includes introduction (purpose, literature review, hypothesis), method (participants, materials, procedures), results, and discussion (implications).
    - *Theoretical articles and literature reviews* should include an introduction (purpose), subheadings for the relevant perspectives and themes, and a detailed section(s) on conclusions (applications, recommendations, implications, etc.).
    - *Classroom innovation and critical reflections* should be organized via an introduction (purpose, problem, or challenge), relevant background literature, project description, evaluation of effectiveness (may include student feedback, self-reflections, peer-insights, etc.), and conclusions (applications, implications, recommendations, etc.). If describing classroom-based work, please include copies of relevant assignments, handouts, rubrics, etc. as appendices.

The limited length of *InSight* articles (manuscript should be no more than 5000 words, not including abstract, references or appendices) requires authors to focus on the most significant, relevant factors and implications.

- References - Select your references carefully to ensure that your citations include the most current and relevant sources. As you select your references, give preference to published sources that have proven pertinent and valuable to the relevant investigations. The goal is not to incorporate ALL relevant references, but rather to include the most important ones.
- Tables, Figures, Appendices & Graphics - Authors are encouraged to include supporting documents to illustrate the findings, relevance or utilization of materials. Particularly relevant are documents that promote easy, efficient integration of suggestions, findings or techniques into the classroom (such as rubrics, assignments, etc.). Supplemental information should enhance, rather than duplicate, information in the text.

The importance of clear, effective communication cannot be highlighted enough. Many manuscripts with relevant, original, applicable ideas will be rejected because authors do not communicate the information in a manner that facilitates easy understanding and application of key points. The value of a manuscript is lost if readers are unable to

overcome written communication barriers that prevent use of the knowledge. With this in mind, authors are strongly advised to seek informal feedback from peers and colleagues on manuscripts prior to submission to *InSight*. Requesting informal reviews from relevant professionals can highlight and correct many concerns prior to formal submission, thus improving chances of publication.

References

American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Author.

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Journal manuscript preparation guidelines*. https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/resources/manuscript-submission-guidelines

"The rapid changes and unpredictability of the modern world call for learners who will be able to transfer their earning. Rote learning of factual information will not, by itself, equip learners to effectively apply it to new situations" (p. 6).

McTighe, J., & Silver, H. F. (2020). *Teaching for deeper learning: Tools to engage students in meaning making*. ASCD.

"The reflective practitioner experiments with new strategies and methods in an informal and student-centered way, both improving instructional delivery, and over time, developing higher levels of awareness and expertise" (p. 31).

Geller, A. E., & Eodice, M. (Eds.). (2013). *Working with faculty writers*. Utah State University Press.