High Impact Practices in an Online Sport & Exercise Psychology Class

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Ask the Question (set a goal for self)

- Students are asked to set a goal for themselves that they hope to achieve by the end of the semester.
- Goals must be written in a format that
  - Provides a specific goal (lose 10 lbs., not lose weight)
  - Is readily quantifiable and can be replicated (and can’t be falsified easily)
- Can be achieved in the time span available (will take at least 6 weeks to achieve, but can be completed 5 days before the final paper is due)
- Is challenging, but not impossible to achieve
- Has meaning for the student
- Students post their goals on discussion board with a brief discussion of their motivations for goal and other personal information they wish to share.
- Feedback is given by instructor (and peers) and students are allowed to rewrite goal in order to meet assignment guidelines.

Discuss Progress & Problems

- Progress reports are given through the semester via discussion board prompts and responses detailing positive events, problems (aka – “gremlins”) they are experiencing.
- Students are also asked to provide suggestions and ideas to their classmates to assist them in achieving their goal.
- Students must provide useful and factually correct suggestions to their classmates.
- Students evaluate suggestions they are given.
- Cheerleading is allowed, but at a much lower point value than suggestions.

- Feedback is provided to students by classmates and the instructor.
- Information that is factually inaccurate is corrected and students are provided with links and article providing correct information.
- A reflective paper is submitted at the end of the semester describing the students’ experiences throughout the semester and discussing components of the assignment.
- In their paper, students discuss:
  - what their goal was and the motivations for it.
  - the gremlins they faced and the ways in which they dealt with these issues
  - how they will use what they learned with future clients/patients/athletes/students.

Reflect on Experiences & Future Use

“Taking this course has helped me learn to use several behavioral changes. It has influenced me a bit. I didn’t think I could do that within a course. Some of the classes that I have taken in the past, I just learn it and it really doesn’t have an impact on me. In the meaning of where I can take from what I learned and generate it in my own life. Courses like this don’t really don’t come around. I could imagine how it would’ve been if I would’ve taken this course in person.”

“At the beginning of this session I wasn’t going to plan on taking this serious, I figured it was something I will blow off and just continue being lazy. When reading the other classmate’s goals and situation it really opened my eyes, every classmate’s story was a lot similar to mine. I believe we are doing this as a class and that really encouraged me to try my hardest in this goal. Also some of the response from my classmates helped encourage me to continue to exercise and eating habits. As for reminders I always have sticky notes around me to remind me of goal. I also saved a quote which says “If you are persistent, you will get it. If you are consistent, you will keep it. It is easy getting to your goal but it’s hard to stay consistent. I got this from other students and kept reminding me of the big picture of my goals. Thank you professor Webb for assigning this task for us, it really opened my eyes in what I accomplish. I feel like a different person because of this assignment and hopefully I can continue with my exercise and eating habits.”

“Honestly, I took this class because I needed a credit, but I never expected to get so much out of a simple assignment such as setting a goal. The biggest thing I learned is that it was never about achieving the goal, but what I went through in the process and how I dealt with adversity. It’s about what I can take away and what I can do better next time. A goal isn’t meant to show you the difference from where you started to where you finished, but to help you grow into the person you want to be.”

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