Team Final Report on Teacher and Student Learning at Oswego High School with Sharon Kane

EDU 525 - Cultivating Learning Communities through Mindful Language and Literacy

Teacher Participant Names: Heidi Conland Sheffield

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

   I followed the majority of the plan with the exception of providing essay examples and modeling essay grading as students are familiar with this type of writing task and how to use a rubric for grading.
   I added an article titled "Harnessing the Incredible Learning Potential of the Adolescent Brain" by Katrina Schwartz. I read this with students and we had class discussions about it.
   The librarian did a lesson with students on using the databases and accessing legitimate news websites as their essays had to refer to an article.
   Additionally, Dave Parisian, who does Heart Math, is coming in as a guest speaker.
   Finally, students will work on writing counter claim paragraphs for essays.

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning: We examined our reflections and found the following:

   Based on the data from responses to questions about writing, students shared that they liked to have choice and wanted to write about topics of their own choosing. They also need time and practice to improve their writing.
   Students agreed with the content of the article "Harnessing the Incredible Learning Potential of the Adolescent Brain" which pointed out that quality is always better rather than quantity when it comes to school work. They also like to be challenged. These things came up in the class discussions we had about the article.
   Students benefit from instruction in how to access library databases and accessing legitimate news websites so that the articles they use for support in the essay are accurate and informative. They also need guidance with introducing and explaining quotes, so a hand-out and practice earlier in the year helped with this.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning: We examined _____ and found the following:

   The quality of essays was better as students chose their own topics and then had time to work on essays. The essay grades reflected this as there was improvement compared to when they wrote an argumentative essay about a topic that was not of interest related to a piece of literature we read earlier in the year. The quality of the writing showed that they were more mindful about what they were writing about as they chose their own topic.
   Keeping the essays for a period of time and then handing them back for students to grade themselves was helpful as it seemed most students were honest in looking at their writing and comparing it to the rubric. They were also able to write about what they were most proud of and what they still needed help and/or improvement on and these reflections were accurate for the most part. Students were mindful when it came to examining their own writing and where it fit on the rubric

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

I decided to consolidate evidence of my work and findings using Storify, which is available online at https://storify.com/cazwizzle/suny-oswego-project-smart-mindful-literacy-project. This work provides samples of the course-based tweets sent out from @USHGcazwizzle for US History & Government, and @CJcazwizzle for Criminal Justice.

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning: We examined our reflections and found the following:

I was able to extend the reach of my tweets by using #hashtags which resulted in more views by my students and the general public. I also found that I was able to provide quick responses and encouragement to students who tagged my course Twitter accounts. Examples and evidence are available online in the Storify I created at https://storify.com/cazwizzle/suny-oswego-project-smart-mindful-literacy-project.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning:

I examined Twitter analytics regarding impressions and engagements that generated from individual course tweets and found the following:

My efforts to promote mindful literacy using Twitter course feeds extended well beyond the immediate students in my classes. For example Professor Kane discovered Neil DeGrasse Tyson's reply to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address after she began following @USHGcazwizzle and shared it with others.

While my first few months tended to average ~1,000 impressions/month from ~20 tweets sent from each Twitter course feed, I was able to increase that reach by March 2015 such that @USHGcazwizzle earned 2,800 impressions from 30 tweets and @CJcazwizzle earned 8,300 impressions from 81 tweets.

Analytics of my Twitter activity for each month from October 2015-March 2016 are available online in the Storify I created at https://storify.com/cazwizzle/suny-oswego-project-smart-mindful-literacy-project

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

As a part of our project we visited several local historic sites within the City of Oswego including museums, monuments and historical markers. We first researched historical locations within the city via several websites and local history books. After compiling a list we set out to research and visit locations to give ourselves an understanding of the historical information available at each historic site.

Once our list was made we spent several days traveling around the city visiting sites and creating a database of locations for students to visit which included the physical address, hours of operation and any cost that may be associated with the visit.

The purpose of our project was to have students be **mindful** of local history so we asked them to take a "selfie" while at a historic location and then type a brief description with their picture about what they learned during their visit using the hashtag #OHSHISTORY. As a part of the project we also created sample Twitter/Instagram posts for students to mirror with their own research about the various historic locations. Most students were unaware of the massive amount of history located within their very own community.

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning: We examined our reflections and found the following:

We began this project with extremely high hopes of student participation and growth. Although we as teachers were able to experience the enormous amount of local history that the city of Oswego has to offer through our travels and research, we also learned that our theory of high participation levels was flawed. We thought that by using Twitter and Instagram as a medium for student participation that many students would jump at the opportunity to participate in this project. However, we learned that this project had the opposite effect. As we drew closer to the end of the project we realized that participation was almost nonexistent, this troubled us. We then informally asked our students why they were not taking advantage of the opportunity. The overwhelming response that we were given was that students were reluctant to participate in this project because they were worried about being ridiculed by their friends and other people that would see these pictures posted on social media. Some students said that they could not get rides to the sites or just didn't have the time, but most said that they did not want to be picked on for participating in a project like this. In fact the one student that did participate asked when she could delete the picture of herself at Fort Ontario. In trying to incorporate 21st century skills and social media into this lesson on being mindful of local history we found that high school age students will be hesitant to participate due to fear of ridicule and harassment by their peers. This was not at all the result that we had hoped to get out of this project; however the result will be useful in the planning of future projects in history classes.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning: We found that using social media as a tool to encourage students to explore local history, although new and of the times was a failure. Very few students benefited from this because they just did not participate. Theoretically students would have gone out and explored the local sites and would have gained an appreciation of the community they live in, but in reality social media was not the correct tool to encourage participation. Listening to student conversation about the project and the reasons for not participating was interesting. In communicating with the students we discussed the impact of peer pressure and the ramifications of it. In this case we made clear to the students that their fear of ridicule and harassment may have had a negative impact on their grade in class. Although this was a volunteer assignment the students would still have been given extra credit points, improving their grade in class. Now we have to use this information and try to develop a new strategy if we want to use social media in the future. Some ideas include having students email pictures and having the teacher post them themselves or having the photos sent directly to a photo bucket or class shared shutterfly account.   There are many different avenues to move forward with a project like this and the only way to gauge success is to try them.

Teacher Participant Names: Patricia Kuhl, Carrie Patane, Billie Jo Peterson

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

~ Addition of Art Teacher to team (Billie Jo Peterson) who produced all of the artwork by hand.

~ Students were given choice to complete 2 (rather than 3) pages to color and journal.

~ Students were volunteers from Mrs. Patane's and Mrs. Kuhl's silent study hall rather than classroom

   students.

~ Students from this graduate class who participated in the completion of the sample pages were included in

   the trial participation group. Music was played in the background as they worked to complete their pages.

~ Students were polled via conversational feedback solicited upon completion of page(s) they completed.

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning: We examined our reflections and found the following:

As a result of our discussions, we came to realize the necessity for incorporating mindful activities into the daily schedules of both the students and the teachers. Through the activities ("Mindful Seeing", "Mindful Breathing" exercises) and instructional offerings ("Heart Math" with Dave Parisian, readings from the Math and Physics Devotional works to name just a couple), informative discussions during class, as well as the opportunity to share and contribute thoughts, ideas, and projects with each other, we have discovered the importance of planning and implementing activities that address mindful literacy in ELA and Art and to actively seek out ways to combine the two content areas as often as possible to achieve this goal as they do share qualities that create a natural link between them.

The quotes we selected for encouraging the journaling process deliberately connect with the devotionals which were shared in class. By adding quotes which illustrate the mindful behaviors of the philosophers and other modern day theorists, we can connect science, literacy, and art in an interdisciplinary fashion. Providing the opportunity to analyze the way these disciplines are all interconnected can create an abundance of mindful experiences for any classroom.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning: We examined the completed sample pages from 11 Study Hall Students, and from 15 adult students from this class and found the following:

~ Students' informal comments were consistently in agreement that the act of coloring in a quiet setting did establish an atmosphere conducive for contemplative and reflective thought processes to occur.

~ Input from students determined that more time would be needed if this activity were to be incorporated into a class period as in the Study Hall, students took at least two class periods to complete the artwork but did not complete any of the journals. Adult students from the graduate class were given about 20 25 minutes and although they were consistently working, they could not complete the artwork and, as was the case with the study hall group, did none of the journaling. We determined that this was a positive result as it demonstrated that all participants were being deliberate and thoughtful ("mindful") about their choices of color and combinations of selected colors, choice of medium (gel ink, colored pencils, crayons, or markers). We felt this was indicative of the type of skill and thought process desirable for accomplishing an activity such as this.

These coloring book images were drawn in part as a way to mindfully reinforce vocabulary in the art room. I can envision many ways to use these and other images in my classroom. Color Theory, the Elements of Art and the Principles of Design are just a few topics where mindful coloring could be helpful. When these pages are introduced in a classroom setting and in a mindful way, students may learn and retain new vocabulary more easily. They will be focused on the information being presented as well as the process of coloring. There are also opportunities for additional applications. Coloring book imagery can be used in science, math, English, history or any other discipline. If you can't imagine it, just ask an art teacher!

Being able to color without the stress of actually drawing an image appeals to many, students and teachers alike."Coloring definitely has therapeutic potential to reduce anxiety, create focus or bring [about] more mindfulness" says Marygrace Berberian, a certified art therapist and the Clinical Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator for the Graduate Art Therapy Program at NYU (© 2016 Cable News Network. Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.). Although, there are some who say that just the act of coloring is stressful because they worry about, "What if I go outside the lines? " and, "What if I color the wrong colors?" I believe with the proper introduction and coaching anyone can use mindful coloring to reduce stress and become more focused and relaxed.

<mark>Teacher Participant Names: Gretchen Fronk</mark>

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:
The only change from my action plan is that the final Little Library has not been completely built yet, and so not mounted to the wall and filled with books. This third library is currently being built, but it is taking quite a while given the logistics of it. The third library is very large (six feet tall by four feet wide) and includes many odd angles and doors.
Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning: We examined our reflections and found the following: 1. The one striking observation, which I was not expecting to this extent, was just how long it took for students/adults to begin using the Little Libraries. It took a couple of weeks before I began to see books "leaving" the libraries. I think the obvious reason for this was because the libraries were something new; shying away from the unknown is not uncommon.

2. The main goal of creating these libraries was to get more books into the hands of students. Here at OHS, we have a growing population of Spanish speaking students. In light of this population, I wanted to include books written in Spanish, because these are difficult to come by, so being mindful of this need, I included books in Spanish. Shockingly, these books never were borrowed! I am slightly at a loss to explain this.

3. What I was encouraged by was the round of graphic novels and magazines that I used to fill the libraries at one point. These left the libraries like hot cakes!!

4. Even though advertising was done via the school newspaper and school morning show, I had more success promoting the Little Libraries through word of mouth and one-on-one conversations. People were more interested and many immediately took a book to borrow following these conversations.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning: We examined _____data_____ and found the following:

1. Students will read about what they are interested in. I put out a variety of reading materials for students to pick from, yet over and over the books taken revolved around superheroes in comic books and the trendy film of the moment, *Star Wars*. The one rotation of books that I consciously put out to test my theory on this was when I saw the largest amount of reading materials borrowed/taken. Actually, within one hour of putting these pieces out, half of them were gone!!!! I was surprised at how quickly they went, but not surprised they went. Of the ninety-five books placed for borrowing, twenty-six were borrowed and returned and many never were returned. Of the twenty-six borrowed, fourteen of them were either about *Star Wars* or were graphic novels and magazines. This is over half of the total borrowed books leading me to conclude that students will and do read, they just want to read what they are interested in.

2. I loved the conversations that I had with random students regarding the books housed in the Little Libraries. They all thought it was a great idea, even though we have a nice library here in the building where books can be borrowed and used. What they said was to have books near their study hall rooms and lockers was a benefit; they liked the close and easy proximity. They also liked the idea of not having a return due date to worry about.

3. Students were most likely to borrow books that had vibrant covers and catchy titles. I began to put out more and more of these out and they would be the first taken.

*****Please see attached photos*******

KEY CLUB'S LITTLE LIBRARY

Take a book. Read it, then return it or pass it along to a friend.
Donations always welcome. Please drop off in room 202.

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Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

I read a book entitled "The Everything Stress Management Book" by Eve Adamson. Chapter four of this book teaches how to determine your personal stress profile (PSP). The components of the PSP include: your stress tolerance point, your stress triggers, your stress vulnerability factor, and your stress response tendencies. I completed the Personal Stress Test from the book and calculated my Personal Stress profile

Students in my Pre-AP Biology class were given a survey asking them to list their top three stress triggers in the Oswego High School and their top three stress triggers in our Pre-AP Biology class. I then had Dr. Dave Parisian come in to each of my Pre-Ap classes and give an eighty-six minute presentation on HeartMath. During this presentation Dr. Parisian discussed the influence of stress on the cardiovascular and nervous systems. He discussed the importance of heart rate variability (HRV) and allowed some students to calculate their own HRV.

After Dr. Parisian's presentation I had each student read the chapter on how to determine your Personal Stress Profile. Each student completed their own personal stress test and evaluated the data to determine their personal stress profile.

I analyzed the data from my PSP, the student survey, and each student's PSP. We then had a class discussion on the interpretation of the results and strategies to improve wellness in a class with motivated, high academic students.

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning: We examined our reflections and found the following:

Some students who have achieved high academic ranking at the middle school and elementary levels find it difficult and stressful during their acclimation to the rigors of a high school schedule. I conducted a survey to find out if there were common stress triggers among these high academic students. Two classes of Pre-AP Biology students ranked homework as their number one stress trigger while attending classes at the Oswego High School. Both of these classes ranked tests as their number two stress trigger. Students in these classes similarly ranked a rigorous schedule (not enough time to perform tasks) as their third top stress trigger they experience.

The same students in this Pre-AP Biology class were asked to rank their top stress triggers in our class. The majority of students ranked the daily (learning) objectives as the biggest stressor. Each day the students write down the objective(s) in a designated section of their binder. They are required to answer or address these objectives by the next class period. These objectives are graded as part of their homework/class work grade. The second and third top ranked stress triggers for these students in my class were tests and labs, respectively.

Reflecting on what I have learned, I have created a classroom with greater flexibility. Students are given more flexibility on tests (time, environment, and make-up). They can also do test corrections to increase their grade by ten percent. We also spend more time on labs and strive for higher level learning. During these labs we often listen to relaxing music and take time to reflect.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning: We examined _____ and found the following:

We examined the results of a personal stress test to determine our stress tolerance point, our stress triggers, our stress vulnerability factor, and our stress response tendencies. There was a wide range of student learning based on the analysis of this data. Many students found that they could not tolerate a great deal of stress, but they do manage it quite well. The data suggests that some students do suffer ill effects of stress.

They have an inability to concentrate, feel anxious, depressed, and even self-neglect. Many students learned that they suffer from obsessive worrying and their trigger is often some type of social stress. A large percentage of the students found that their stress response tendencies are to ignore the stress.

Based on the student learning we have discussed strategies and reflected on Dr. Parisian's HeartMath presentation.

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

My action plan changed from a potential video streaming, to using Google Cultural Institute (Art Project). https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/home. I learned to navigate through the site in order to determine how my students would benefit most from using it. My project encompasses Mindfulness and Visual Literacy.

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning: We examined our reflections and found the following:

Upon reflection, video streaming would not have suited my needs as well as GCI did. Thanks to Google Street View (indoor technology), my students were able to (virtually) visit a museum, view the works of art in far greater detail than the naked eye (because the images were photographed using "gigapixel") and take in the city sites while exploring the outside of the museum using google maps. Many students will never have an opportunity to travel to different parts of the world to visit museums/galleries. This site is a great way for us to get a "sneak peek", with the hope to travel there one day. In light of our current budget, access to funding for such field trips is non-existent.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning: We examined my collection of data and found the following:

I wanted the students to be "mindful" while on their virtual walking tour of the museums and galleries. I developed a series of questions in the form of a "Guess Where" to enhance the way they access or experience the works of art.
1. Who created *The Starry Night*?
2. In what museum or gallery is this work of art located?
3. If you zoom in to the artwork, what do you see?
4. What types of media did the artist use?
5. What is the artists' subject matter?
6. How does this artwork make you feel?
7. Who else has artwork displayed in the same room?
8. Have you seen any of this artwork before? If so, where?
9. Have you ever been to this museum/gallery?
10. Using Google Maps, what is a nearby landmark?

Upon data collection, what I noticed is that as the students were viewing the artwork, they were actually enjoying the experience…they were not rushing through to answer the questions. The students had to be mindful of using their "visual vocabulary" when answering the questions and that is getting easier for them each time they complete a "Guess Who" worksheet, or in this case, the "Guess Where". The students have also asked me if they can go to the Google Cultural Institute site when finishing up early so they can just explore. I think that is also a great experience for them to just see where their exploration takes them and let that percolate in their minds. I see many, many possibilities for future lessons with this project.

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

Our original action plan had stated that we would use CiTi BOCES technology to video conference with someone who works at the Globe Theatre in London, England. However, as our project was underway, we found out that we could not video conference through CiTi as there was a limited number of spots for the video conferences. The spots had already been filled by other people which meant that CiTi didn't have any more funds to allocate to our project. This means we had to be mindful of the accessibility of the technology that our district has, because we had to resort to using what we had within our building.

Another change in our plan had to do with the location. Since CiTi was no longer able to fund our project, we had to find other theatres, artistic groups, or academic staff in the performing arts and/or others with an educational degree on Shakespearean literature or theatre. Gina and I then had to search the internet at reach out to anyone who had programs that were willing to work with high school students. After reaching out to a dozen or so theatre affiliations, we then needed to find the best price as we had a very tight budget to work with.

We were finally able to set up a date and time with Gail Winar—Master Teaching Artist who works in New York City.

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning: We examined our reflections and found the following:

The first thing we noticed was that the students seemed very uncomfortable and nervous to ask Gail their questions. This surprised us because we had the students do the research on suggestive topics that we had listed for them. They then had to come up with two questions they wanted to ask Gail. We compiled the list of questions into categories and gave the list to the students ahead of time so they could look over the questions. We even mentioned the reason we were doing the research ahead of time; it would help us prepare for the session, and the students wouldn't have to come up with questions on the spot. They could have been shy because they have never done something like this before. This fits with the topic of mindfulness because this shows how our students need to be mindful as to how they communicate with others. While communicating with Gail, they should be more formal than they are with their friends. We could have students be mindful of how they may feel when doing this assignment again, and we could possibly start class with a mindful breathing exercise to get them calm and focused.

We wanted to video record the session; however, we did not think of it ahead of time because we would have needed to send out a permission slip to the students' parents. We did take pictures, but again we couldn't have their faces in any of them as we did not know who did not turn in a consent form in the beginning of the year. We need to be more mindful about the procedures that are required from the school district when it comes to taping and recording our students.

Lunch was also an issue. The period that we were able to hold the video conference was during a lunch period. This meant that some of the students had to either quickly eat their lunch and then head down to the room, or if they brought their lunch, they could eat it in the room. We did tell them that they were not allowed to raise their hand to be called on (to ask a question) while eating.

Another issue was that it was hard for Gail Winar, the expert we were video conferencing with, to hear the students in the back of the room. Our technology teacher said that next year he would have a microphone hooked up, so the students could pass that around.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning: We examined _____ and found the following:

After reading the reflection responses from our students, we found that they wanted more information on the Elizabethan Era and how people lived their day-to-day lives. For most of the students, this meant having a longer conference time; we had approximately 40 minutes to speak with Gail. We then thought that we didn't want it to be too long as we saw that we were losing some of our student's interests. We believe that if we had about an hour, students would have been able to ask a few more questions on the history of the time period.

We gave our students a speech about etiquette, and how we would want to be perceived as a school district. Often time American teenagers have a negative view placed upon them by society; we wanted Gail to know that our students do take education seriously and know how to interact with others on a more professional level. They were very well-behaved during the presentation. Every student in there adhered to the proper etiquette required.

Students asked a good deal of questions on the topic of actors/actresses in general. They were very interested in Gail as an actress and what it entailed to be an actor/actress. We would then have to be mindful of the acting world and what that world encompasses.

Teacher Participant Names: Laura Bateman and Elizabeth Crannell

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

 While working our way through our project, we decided to incorporate student responses on index cards to use as a display in our classroom.   We thought this would be way to continue to remind the students about our topics from our #motivationalmonday video, such as goals, being thankful, etc.

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning: We examined our reflections and found the following:

Through this project we learned, keeping consistent with a #motivationalmonday video each week, brought students into our classroom on Mondays engaged and eager to see what we would be watching. An example of this, was one of the long weekends, when the students came in on a Tuesday and at least one student in each class entered the room saying " It's Tuesday, but don't we still get to watch our motivational video??"

Analysis of Data on Student Learning: We examined _____ and found the following:

We examined our results from the student surveys at the end of the year, and we found that 87% of the students chose a 4 or 5 out of a 5 point scale stating how much they enjoyed the motivational videos. Overall, they didn't think we should change anything. Some of the comments they used in their reply to "Motivational Monday was _____" included, "it was my favorite part of math class" and " it was interesting and fun" 89.5% of the students stated they would like to have motivational Monday as part of their math class next year.

When we incorporated a student response card to get our students thinking before the videos and then reflecting after the videos, 100% of the students actively participated in the activities.

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

I originally worked with my local level students asking them to write down "their" definition of a physics term. I would then collect the paper and read them to the class. Many misunderstandings were revealed but more really good general understanding of vocabulary that we could then make more specific about the physics terms.
After Dave Parisian presented to our class I was hooked on the Heartmath, he came to my AP Physics class and presented to them. It was a very powerful presentation for the class

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning:

I feel like I learned a lot using the Heartmath techniques. I would find myself in a stressful situation in my classroom or my personal life and just start deeply breathing and envisioning a more positive situation. It worked I found feeling less stressed and more focused.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning:
The survey basically asked students if they found Heartmath useful, if they used it outside of class, if so how did it help them. Some students, 4 of 14 or 29%, reported that they did not believe in the concept and did not use it outside of class. Four other student reported being neutral, they used it in class and sometimes outside of class but were not huge believers. Six of the 14 or 49% reported they used it often. One student stated he used it almost nightly to "calm down after work or playing sports", four student stated they used it to calm themselves down before tests in other classes, there stated they used it before sports game to get into a winning mindset