

Pedagogy for Fostering Holistic Outcomes in the Arts and Sciences

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The LifeWorks program for integrative learning fosters the growth of whole students, providing them tools for self inquiry and relationship building.

Our courses and workshops integrate scholarship, creative expression and embodied practices such as mindfulness and self reflection to help students connect their academic work with their core values and goals.

Lifeworks students gain a strong sense of personal and collective identity, and deepen capacities—including presence, courage, and compassion—that will help them contribute to an increasingly interdependent world.

IDENTIFIED STUDENT NEEDS

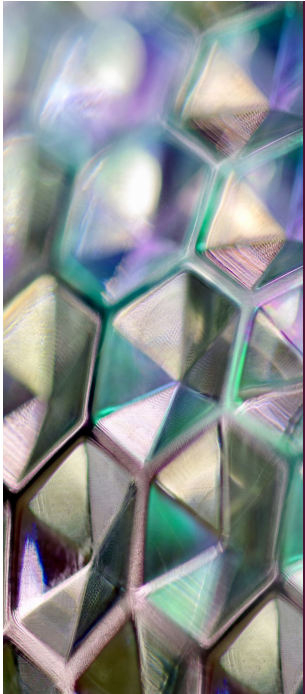
- To learn as a “whole student”, with attention to mind, body, and spirit
- To acquire not just knowledge and methods for a profession but to also cultivate natural human capacities such as courage, resilience, creativity, empathy
- To develop inner resources and skillful means for creating meaningful lives and communities in an increasingly complex and interdependent world.

CORE INNOVATION

Integration of self-inquiry process into traditional learning by combining traditional scholarly inquiry with creative expression and contemplative and other embodied practices.

TWO PATHS

- Interdisciplinary courses focused on providing orientations and skills for cultivating whole person
- Discipline-specific courses, listed in their home departments, that adopt LifeWorks pedagogy to connect the course's content with cultivation of the whole student (usually seminars)



Practices



PRACTICE I: REFLECTIVE ESSAYS

Colleges have been accused of being ‘poverty pimps,’ using the surrounding community as ‘pockets of needs, laboratories for experimentation, or passive recipients of expertise’ (Bringle, Games, and Malloy 1999, 9). Katira (2006) wrote of her experiences as a university representative at the intersection of university–community partnerships:

There is a rumbling within the communities that I work with regarding the exploitative nature of universities. One of my mentors within the community, a black female community activist, openly accuses the university of pimping the poverty of the community to acquire funds, which the community never sees.’ (81–82)

Poverty pimpin’ is only a more recent form of turning a profit from black and brown bodies. Cheryl Harris (1993) in her seminal article *Whiteness as Property* explicated the many ways that, historically, black bodies created significant wealth for white families under slavery. Even Harriet Beecher Stowe profited from slavery indirectly; in writing about slavery to abolish it, she also created wealth for herself. Ironically, black abolitionists, such as Sojourner Truth, were unable to raise the same amount of financial backing for their abolitionist work. (Cann and McCloskey 2017)



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Reflect upon the student activities in which you are involved and the ways those activities involve (or do not involve) local communities.

Imagine a lunch conversation with someone in the local community. It could be a town official, a parent, a young person, a shopkeeper, a teacher, police officer, someone living on the street, etc. Write an excerpt from that lunchtime scene, focusing on the dialogue that takes place between you two.

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Standard Question

Given the findings on the town & gown relationship of colleges in the study by Cann and McCloskey, why do colleges engage or ignore town/gown relationships? What priorities do such relationships serve?

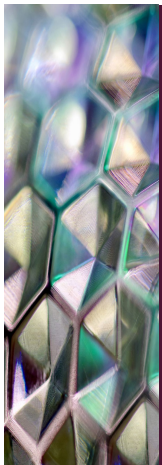
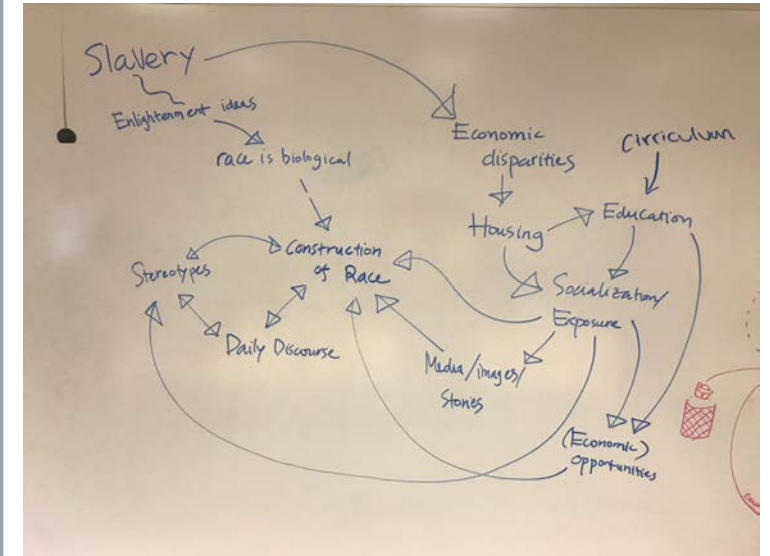
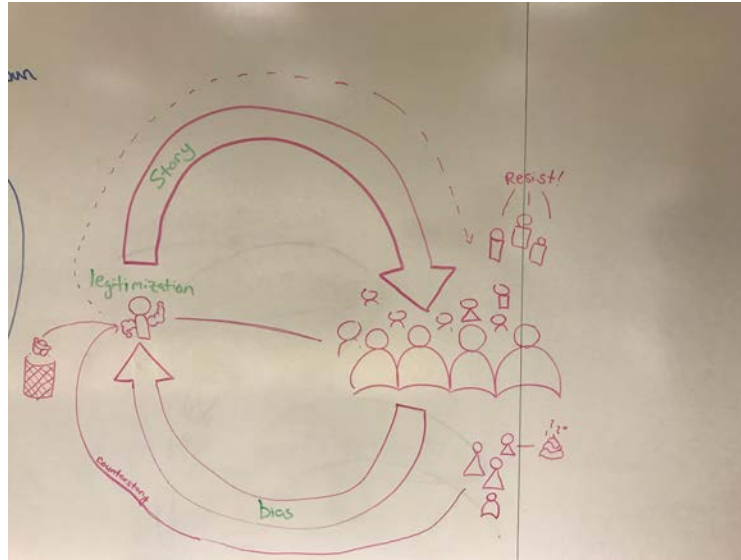


PRACTICE I: REFLECTIVE ESSAYS - EXAMPLES

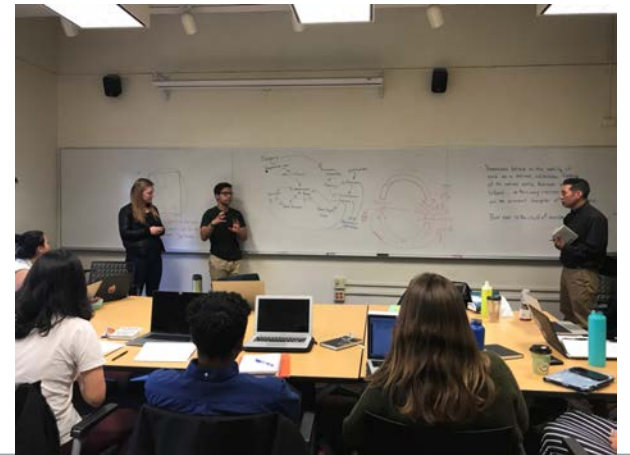
Inspired by *Bell and Martinez*: Write about an idea for a fictional story that reflects some aspect of your experience with race and schooling. If inclined, write a paragraph setting the scene for your story.

Inspired by *Hannah-Jones/Morris, Episode 3*: Record a 5-minute journal entry in which you reflect on a favorite song and its meaning in your life. Upload a link to your file.

Inspired by *Coates*: Write a draft paragraph (or two if you wish) of a letter from you to a younger sibling, cousin, or friend, in which you are offering them your view of the world.

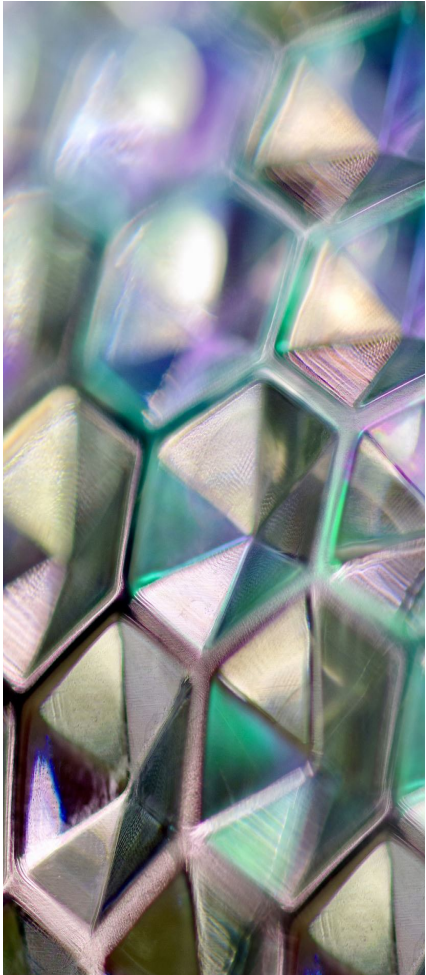


PRACTICE 2 DRAWING



PRACTICE 3

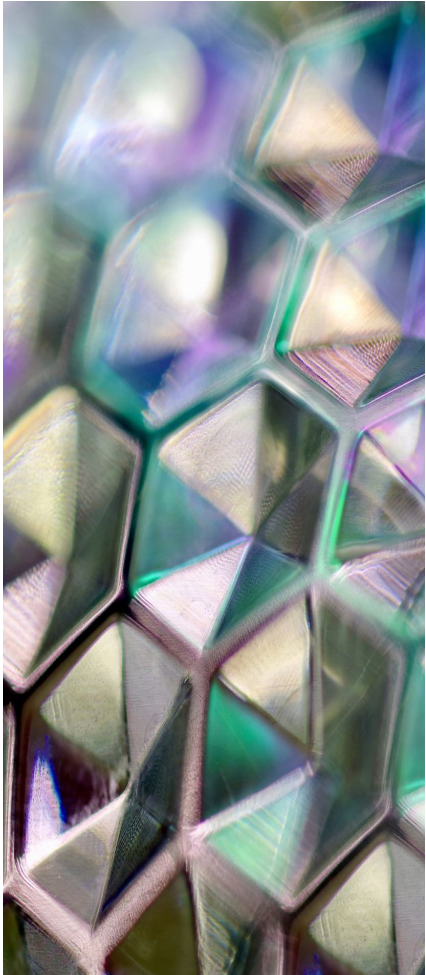
INTIMATE READING



- A form of Reflective Writing especially suited to humanities vs. social sciences class.
- Emphasizes producing not just a **reasoned opinion** of what text is, but how it articulates and/or engages something in a student's **experience**.
- Typical Prompts:
 - Where do I find myself here?** What do I identify with? How does an idea or event here connect to an experience I've had?
 - What specific question does it surface in me?** How does this point to a question, struggle, issue I'm in touch with right now?

PRACTICE 3

INTIMATE READING



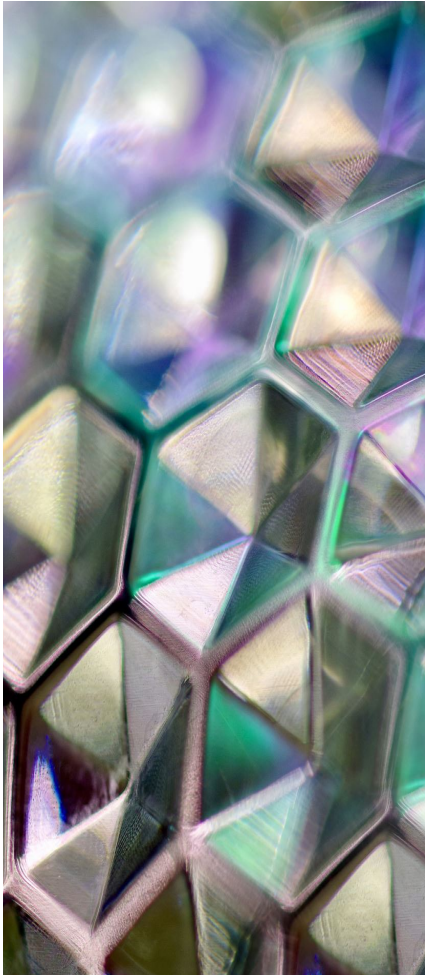
Sample Text: Michal Pollan, “Why Mow?:The Case Against Lawns”

With our open-faced front lawns we declare our like-mindedness to our neighbors—and our distance from the English, who surround their yards with "inhospitable brick walls, topped with broken bottles" to thwart the envious gaze of the lower orders. The American lawn is an egalitarian conceit, implying that there is no reason to hide behind hedge or fence since we all occupy the same middle class. We are all property owners here, the lawn announces, and that suggests its other purpose: to provide a suitably grand stage for the proud display of one's own house. Noting that our yards were organized "to capture the admiration of the street" one landscape architect in 1921 attributed the popularity of open lawns to "our infantile instinct to cry 'hello!' to the passerby, [and] lift up our possessions to his gaze."

Of course the democratic front yard has its darker, more coercive side, as my family learned in Farmingdale. In commending the "plain style" of an unembellished lawn for American front yards, the mid-century designer/ reformers were, like Puritan ministers, laying down rigid conventions governing our relationship to the land, our observance of which would henceforth be taken as an index to our character. And just as the Puritans would not tolerate any individual who sought to establish his or her own backchannel relationship with the divinity, the members of the suburban utopia do not tolerate the homeowner who establishes a relationship with the land that is not mediated by the group's conventions. The parallel is not as farfetched as it might sound, when you recall that nature in America has often been regarded as divine. Think of nature as Spirit, the collective suburban lawn as the Church, and lawn mowing as a kind of sacrament. You begin to see why ornamental gardening would take so long to catch on in America, and why my father might seem an antinomian in the eyes of his neighbors. Like Hester Prynne, he claimed not to need their consecration for his actions; think of his initials in the front lawn as a kind of Emerald Letter.

PRACTICE 4

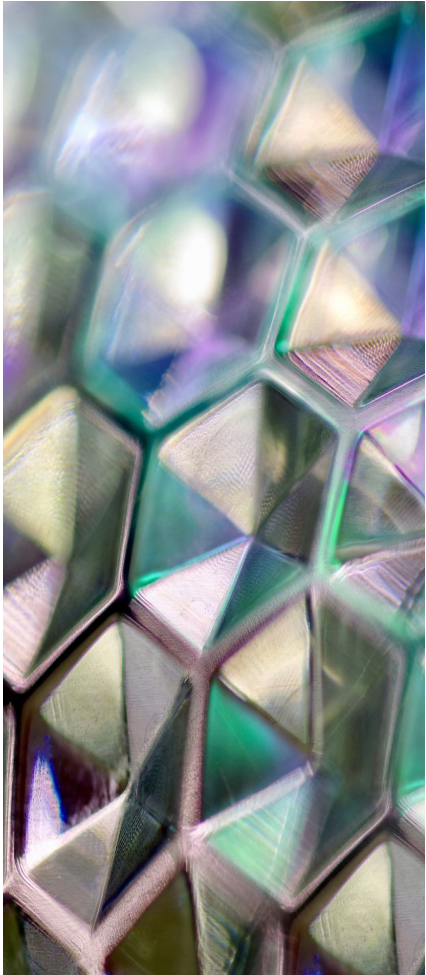
EATING MEDITATION



- Sensate-grounded practice that can be used to cultivate contextual awareness of systems and networks
- Can also be used to help students to reflect on how they connect to their research
- Invariably produces gratitude
- Typical Prompts:
 - How does this full **attention** affect our whole body, mind?
 - How might it be **different** than if you ate normally?

PRACTICE 5

INTERNAL DIALOGUE



- Meta-cognitive practice that surfaces mind habits that affect learning
- Helpful to use as students move from critical to creative process, when the critical faculties often turn inward.
- Can be used to help students distinguish between healthy and unhealthy forms of self-talk and motivation.

- Typical Prompts:

Name a time when you struggled and/or failed and criticized yourself for it. Describe as specifically as you can how you talked to yourself.

Imagine a friend bringing a similar situation to you. How would you talk to a friend in this circumstance? What's the difference between the two?

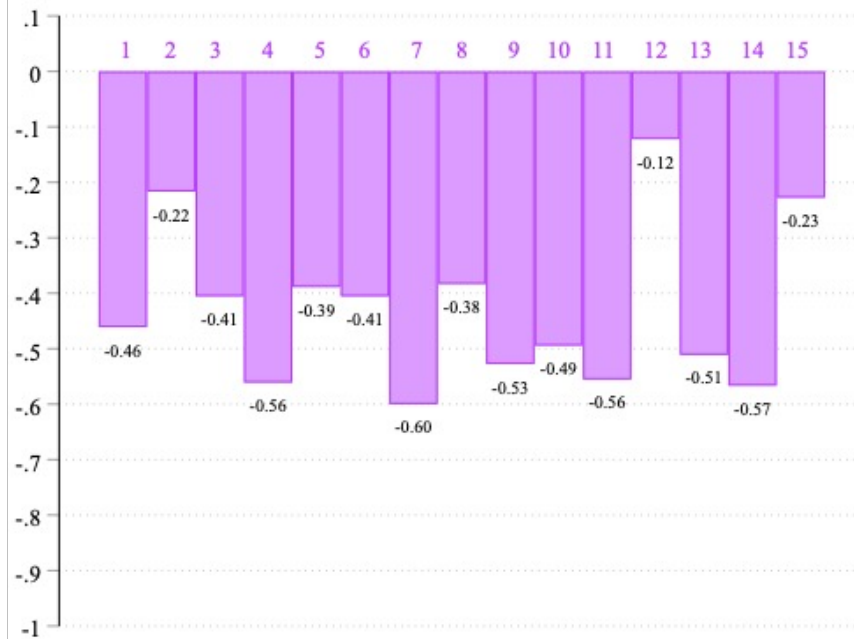
IMPACT OF LIFEWORKS PEDAGOGY

- Pre-Post assessment of LifeWorks courses
- 10 courses offered from 2018 – 2020
- LifeWorks outcomes: Emotional, cognitive, and physical wellbeing; sense of purpose and meaning
 - Positive and Negative Affect Schedule
 - Mindful Attention and Awareness Scale
 - Vitality Plus Scale
 - Presence of Meaning in Life Questionnaire
 - Personal Growth Initiative Scale

IMPACT OF LIFEWORKS PEDAGOGY

- *INCREASE in positive affective states; DECREASE in negative affect*
- *INCREASE in mindfulness and attention*
- *STRONGER sense of meaning and purpose*
- *GREATER capacities for creative expression, forgiveness, and sharing with others*
- *IMPROVEMENT in sense of wellbeing and orientation towards personal growth*

Mindfulness Attention
& Awareness
Observed Mean
Post-Pre Changes



Notes. 1. *** $p = 0.01$, ** $p = 0.05$, and * $p = 0.10$, corresponding to results of paired, one-tailed t -tests comparing the observed differences (black bar labels) to < 0 .

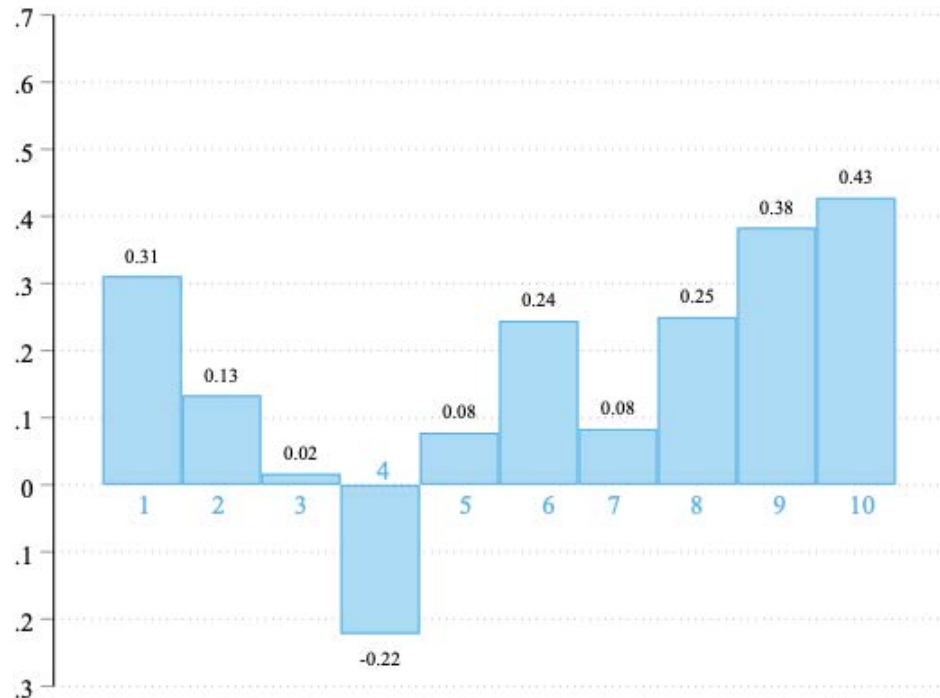
2. Analytic subsample $n = 180$ students with non-missing post-pre data in four LifeWorks courses (Spring 17/18, Fall 18/19, Winter 18/19, Winter 19/20).

Key

1. I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until some time later.***
2. I break of spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else.**
3. I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.***
4. I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.***
5. I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.***
6. I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it the first time.***
7. It seems like I am "running on automatic" without much awareness of what I am doing.***
8. I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.***
9. I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with that I'm doing right now to get there.***
10. I perform tasks automatically, without being aware of what I am doing.***
11. I find myself listening with one ear, while doing something else at the same time.***
12. I drive places on "automatic pilot" then wonder why I went there.
13. I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past.***
14. I find myself doing things without paying attention.***
15. I snack without being aware that I am eating.**

IMPACT OF LIFEWORKS PEDAGOGY

Vitality Plus
Observed Mean
Post-Pre Changes



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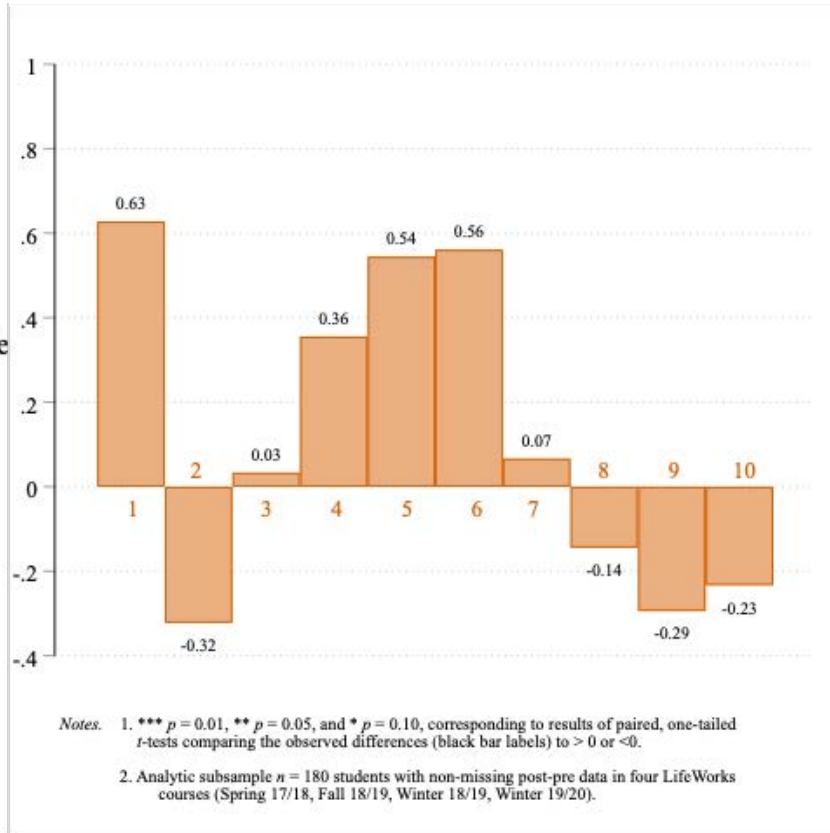
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Key

1. Fall asleep slowly - quickly***
2. Sleep poorly - well*
3. Feel tired/drowsy - Rested
4. Rarely hungry/Excellent appetite***
5. Often constipated - regular
6. Often achy - No aches***
7. Low energy - Full of energy
8. Often stiff - Rarely stiff***
9. Restless - Relaxed***
10. Don't feel good - Feel good***

IMPACT OF LIFEWORKS PEDAGOGY

Presence of Meaning in Life
Observed Mean
Post-Pre Changes

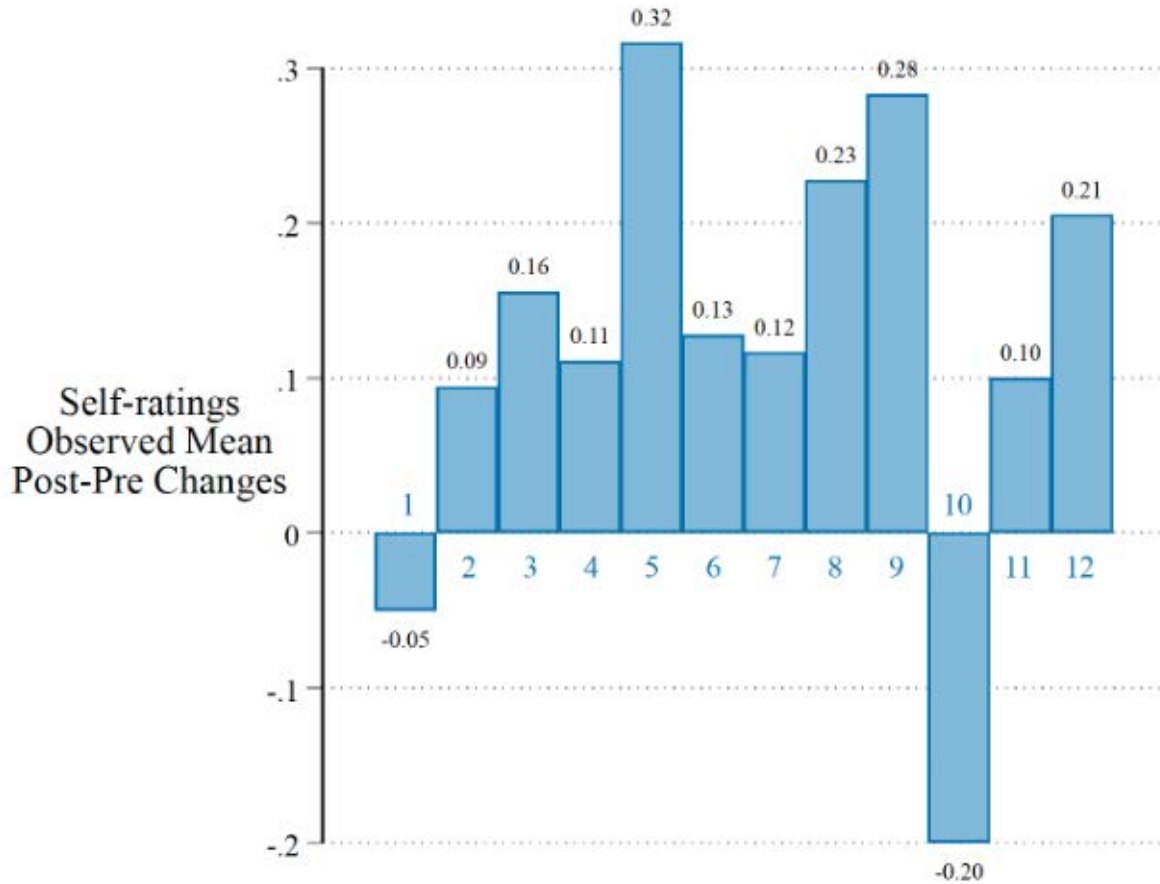


Key

1. I understand my life's meaning***
2. I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful.***
3. I am always looking to find my life's purpose.
4. My life has a clear sense of purpose.***
5. I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.***
6. I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.***
7. I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant.
8. I am seeking a purpose or a mission for my life.
9. My life has no clear purpose.**
10. I am searching for meaning in my life.**

IMPACT OF LIFEWORKS PEDAGOGY

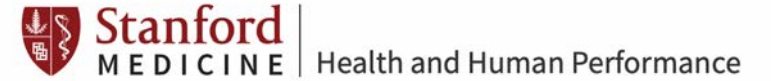
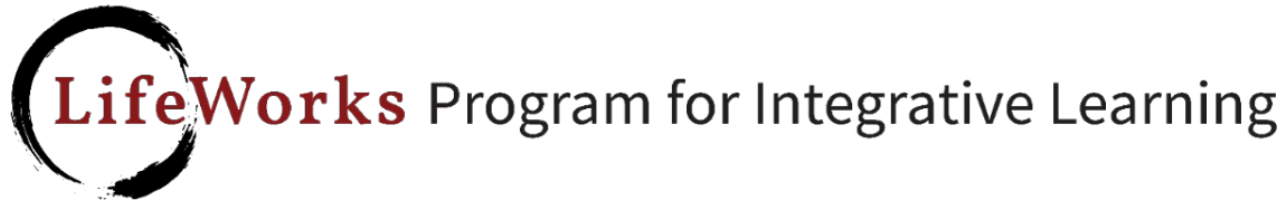
IMPACT OF LIFEWORKS PEDAGOGY



- Key
1. Academic ability
 2. Kindness*
 3. Deep listening***
 4. Concentration*
 5. Creative expression***
 6. Understanding others***
 7. Empathy*
 8. Forgiveness***
 9. Openness to sharing***
 10. Self-criticism***
 11. Compassion*
 12. Self-understanding***

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Pedagogy of the LifeWorks Curriculum

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Interested in adopting LifeWorks pedagogies into your course?

Interested in recommending courses to your students?

Interested in cross-listing your course with LifeWorks?

Contact:

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