

Artefact 2
Final Project
Adult Learning Project: Happiness for Retirees
MAIS 602: Doing Interdisciplinary Research
December 18, 2021

Summary

This 12-week course for newly retirees was my final project for this class. This project approached happiness in a variety of different ways. The three overarching themes were the body, the mind, and the spirit. I am fascinated with the mind/body connection and the role that emotions play in learning. The literature I found also highlighted a third component of the “spirit” - normally I steer away from this topic preferring to focus on psychology or science - spirituality is too abstract for me, but I chose to challenge myself with this additional abstract topic that was touched upon throughout the research.

I chose to include this project as an artifact because it highlights my skills as an adult learning professional. I have been working as an educator for the duration of my career and some of the steps in the planning process change and evolve when dealing with adult audiences. There are also aspects of the planning process that have become second nature to me, clearly articulating each one helped me reconnect with the planning process.

I enjoyed connecting the theme of happiness to a variety of different activities and

disciplines including enjoying the symphony, visiting an art gallery, spending time outdoors, playing video games and many more. Exploring a variety of topics was easy for me. I realize that I excel in the brainstorming phase. I now realize that I was experiencing first semester jitters and would have benefited from a longer editing process.

As a student, I had a lot to prove to myself. I did not set aside enough time to complete this project. I should have set aside 3 weeks to complete it, not 3 days. I learned a very valuable lesson in time management. I adapted my schedule and would work on my final projects throughout the semester highlighting a change in my student methodology.

Within the project, I wish I had focused on making a clear participant profile. I had an idea of who the participants were, as they were based on real people, but I did not articulate that in the program. This was a blind spot that I did not notice. If I had articulated it, I would have realized that my ambition of the direction of the program was too grand. I can tell that at this time I was in a strange headspace. I had spent a lot of time exploring the downtown of the city that I lived in and did not recognize that it would be difficult for others to travel as fast, and as far as I had. I was also rebelling against the covid restrictions. At this time, things as simple as walking from one place to another were restricted. And although I respect what we had to do to keep people safe, I was looking forward to exploring my city as I had prior to the covid restrictions.

Lastly, I am not sure if this program would be feasible. I think each program at each

separate location would work, or I should re-work it as a “Happiness in the City” conference with each organization having a chance to speak. I have worked at many alternative learning organizations, and I don’t see any of them supporting this 12-week pilot. I see a disconnect between my program goal and its presentation. A conference would work much better, as it would help connect the audience to each different organization, but without the time commitment or the cost.

I am proud of the concept of this program and see the changes that I would make with a renewed sense of accomplishment. I do think that there are great ideas here and the exploration of the concept of “happiness” is aligned to my academic goals.

Adult Learning Project: Happiness for Retirees

BACKGROUND

I am fascinated with the idea of happiness and have based my career around its exploration and its role on the learning brain. I also follow the work of Dr. Laurie Santos, and was inspired by her course “Happiness and the Good Life” at Yale University. This course teaches students what the science of psychology says about happiness. Her course inspires students to make wiser choices and live a life that’s happier and more fulfilling.

I am also interested in my own brain body connection and am a regular gym goer. My gym of choice is YMCA, whose core value is to promote and engage health and wellness in the community. I attended a pilates class mid week, in the afternoon. This class was filled with active seniors, many celebrating their new adventure into retirement. This pilates class was incredible and unique in that the instructor discussed the muscle groups she was focusing on in a scientific, almost medical manner. She talked about the connection between the body and the breath in a way that provided information about the exercise and its positive effects on the mind as well as the body. With this knowledge on my mind, I attended a brainstorming session for new programming for adults while working for the Public Library. I came up with a program that would leverage the work of the library in the community by pairing with organizations throughout the city to provide fun and educational programming for new retirees. I believed in the strength and uniqueness of this project and wanted to explore

it further in the context of my final project for Program Planning, Evaluation and Instructional Methods Course.

For this exploration I will take the role of the Program Manager for Adult Programming, and I will use the Public Library as the setting. While I have worked in Public Libraries, this project will assume a generic Canadian city with a population of a million. The library is assumed to be in a downtown location.

The Project is a 10 week pilot program exploring Happiness in many forms. There will be 3 overarching themes explored: the body, mind and spirit. Each class will connect with a partnering organization, the objective for each class is to introduce the students to the concept of happiness as it is expressed through the spotlight organization.

LEARNING COMPONENTS

Context

The Individual

For four decades, Dr. George E. Vaillant, professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, talked with hundreds of seniors taking part in the “Study of Adult Development”. The study asked participants what made retirement enjoyable, healthy and rewarding four key elements emerged (Skerrett, 2012):

- 1) Make Friends: you don't retire from a job, you retire from daily contact with friends and colleagues. Establishing a new social network is good for both mental and physical health
- 2) Play: playful activities can help one relax and let go, while establishing new friendships and reinforcing old ones
- 3) Be creative: activating your creative side can help keep your brain healthy. Creativity can take many forms, tapping into creativity may also help you discover new parts of yourself.
- 4) Keep Learning: like being creative, ongoing learning keeps the mind active and the brain healthy.

There are additional factors that individual retirees might face: if their job was stressful, unrewarding or tiring, retirement may come as a relief. If an individual has a strong social network or a good relationship with a partner or spouse they may do better in retirement than someone who has an unhappy home life. This program will help build the individual's social network while also introducing them to opportunities within their community that they might enjoy. Participation from the individual students can end with their attendance in the class, or they could choose to connect with the partnering organizations and continue activities that they enjoy.

The Organization

The Mission of the Public Library is a great fit to support this type of program. According to the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, Libraries believe they are a gateway to

knowledge and provide a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development for the individual and social groups. The Public Library is a living force for education, culture and information and is an essential agent for the fostering of spiritual welfare through the minds of its patrons.

The mission of the public libraries that would pertain to this program are:

- Supporting individual and self conducted education as well as formal education at all levels.
- Providing opportunities for personal creative development.
- Promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations.
- Ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information
- Providing adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interests groups
- Facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills

The public library would be an ideal location for a program like this, particularly at a location that is connected (via a short walk) or many partnering organizations in the neighborhood. Libraries are innately designed to build social capital, they change and evolve along with the communities they serve. The success of this program in a library would not solely be judged by the number of participants it brings in, or the amount of revenue it generates (although all those points are looked at) - they are equally measured against the *good* that it does in the community.

The Wider Environment

Healthy active seniors are a measure of a healthy city. Yvonne Michael, an epidemiologist from the Drexel University of School of Public Health, analyzed data from a large health survey in Southern Pennsylvania and found that those living in areas with greater social capital had significantly higher physical mobility scores than those living in lower social capital neighborhoods (Suttie, 2014). In another study, Michael looked at how social capital related to positive health seeking behaviors and found that Adults in these neighborhoods were more likely to get screened at the recommended age, suggesting earlier diagnoses and treatment for serious diseases.

Brian James, an epidemiologist at the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Centre in Chicago, found that helping seniors to stay engaged with their community and help them continue to make positive contributions to the community is invaluable. The cognitive decline was 70 percent less in people with frequent social contact than those with low social ability. This class would help seniors by being a meeting ground for ideas and activities, instead of the individual participants connecting with each organization individually. (Suttie, 2014)

Partnerships

- Developing partnerships with neighbouring organizations is at the core of the program.
- The Manager of Adult programming will contact neighbouring organizations and outline the plan.
- If the partnering organization agrees, a contract will be drafted outlining commitment, goals, schedule, objectives, and overview of the project and the program.
- Senior management may want to further support this partnership by reaching out and thanking the organization for the partnership.

Needs Assessment

The needs assessment was conducted by the Manager of Adult programming. Their role is to seek new partnerships and programming opportunities. Through conversations, surveys and by attending the Downtown Community Engagement conference they created a document which found that:

- The YMCA in the downtown core, noted that senior participants wanted opportunities to “sample” classes. They noted that going to different classes throughout the day was not ideal. They noted that when they did offer “sample

classes” the attendance was astronomical.

- The downtown contemporary gallery noted that they would love to have more Adult and Senior Visitors between the hours of 2pm-5pm. School groups normally leave by 2pm and the galleries are empty, and their adult staff is scheduled to work from 2pm-9pm.
- The local theatre group noted that this past summer they ran a pilot program for a “Senior’s Summer Acting Camp”. The Seniors then performed this at the local Fringe Fest. The pilot program was so successful that they received funding to run several summer acting camps this following summer.
- ATCO updated downtown businesses on the recent upgrades to their facilities and noted that they will be able to increase programming by 75%
- AHS presented on the declining health of seniors living alone downtown and urged organizations to think of Seniors in both paid and volunteer roles. They also urged organizations to think about financial accessibility for seniors.
- Surveys that were conducted with Senior Library Patrons noted they wanted classes which had more scientific and psychological content.
- With conversations with local organizations it was found that the Natural History Museum would like to partner with the library in exchange for the library providing their baby and me classes on the gallery floors.

Project Structure

- The class is a pilot project to see if a class like this would be beneficial and sustainable.
- Each class is 1.5 hours long, and would class would run for 10 sessions
- The project can take up to 16 people (but can handle 20 if needed)
- The participants would meet in the Community Classroom (which has been booked for 12 sessions, freeing up the space a week before and a week after).
- This class would introduce senior participants to organizations within walking distance of the Library, some classes will take place at the organizations, but all participants will meet at the library and walk there together.
- Participants will register via the Library's booking system. As with all the library classes, students can do this in person at the library, online, or on the phone.
- There is no cost for participants.
- The class will be advertised on the website, and throughout the branch where the class takes place.
- Students will self identify as "retirees".
- All classes will be done in person as one of the main goals is to create connections.

Week 1-4 Theme: Mind					
Partner Organizations	Connect to happiness	Activity 1	Activity 2	Going Further	Location
University (Department of Psychology) Contact: Dr Web	Dr. Web will introduce the class to the 4 pillars of happiness and showcase his research on happiness	Dr Web will play psychology games: 1) Help the class remember each other's names 2) Understand how the brain works	Manager of Adult programming will introduce the class to the other activities that they will be participating in, and encourage the class to keep a journal	Dr Web will introduce the class to a MOOC course that he is running (intro to brain science) that anyone can take for free	Library Community Room
ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen Contact: Marianne Miller	Marianne will discuss the properties of food under 4 categories: Nostalgic Indulgent Convenient Physically comforting	The class will make 1 healthy dish disguised as comfort food.	Class will sit together and eat as a group, Marianne will show some fun tricks to good food photography	Marianne will introduce the class to cooking classes and cooking events run out of the Blue Flame Kitchen. Marianne will also introduce their volunteer program	Meet at Library Community Room and walk to location (7 minutes indoors)
BioWare (video Game Developer) Contact: Asha Dev	Asha will introduce the class to what Bioware does (develop video games) will introduce the elements of video games that engage players the most	The class will get a tour of the world class facility and	The class will go to the test lab and play some of the games	BioWare is actively recruiting players to test the latest games. They currently have a giant inventory of learning games and VR games specifically for seniors. Some of these	Meet at the Library, walk to BioWare (10 minutes, indoor, but have to cross 1 street)

				testing opportunities are paid.	
Improv Theatre Contact: Mike Moore	Mike Moore with go through the history theatre, vaudeville and clowning and entertainment	Class will watch and play some improv games	The theatre group will do a panel discussion about some their experiences in comedy	Mike will tell the class about volunteer opportunities, classes, and events they can attend.	Meet at library Community Room, Move to the library theatre

Week 5-7 Theme: Body					
Partner Organizations	Connect to happiness	Activity 1	Activity 2	Going Further	Location
YMCA Contact: Anise Ng	Anise will present on the health benefits from regular exercise	Anise will tour the participants through the facility	Anise will lead the class through a pilates class discussing how the brain and the body are connected through each move	Anise will show the different memberships available, and volunteer opportunities	Meet at Library Community Room and walk to location (7 minutes indoors)
Natural History Museum, Department of Ornithology Contact: Dr Lisa Ray	Dr. Ray will talk about how spending time in nature boosts mood and calms nerves	Dr Ray will play a game with the participants matching local birds to their songs	Dr Ray will teach the class some fun and quick sketching techniques she uses in the field to identify birds	Dr. Ray will introduce a program run out of the Museum that takes students through the local parks	Library Community Room
Junior University (neighborhood preschool that does intergenerational learning and play)	Ana will talk to the class about being playful and the way in which her organization embraces	The class will play a game that they play with the children.	The children knew that Ana was coming to visit the Seniors at the Library, and they sent letters.	Ana will invite the seniors to the many ways they can participate at the preschool	Library Community Room

Contact: Ana Smith	playful learning and intergenerational play		The class will respond to the children's letters		
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Week 8-10 Theme: Spirit					
Partner Organization	Connect to Happiness	Activity 1	Activity 2	Going Further	Location
Pet Access League Society Contact: Carol Hath	Carol will discuss the many ways that pets boost our mood and ways in which PALS helps in the community	Class will watch the dogs do a presentation Class will watch Carol train the dogs and the ways in which dogs help in different situations	Class will be able to interact with some of the dogs	Carol introduces the many volunteer opportunities available at PALS from administration to carrying for the dogs	Library Community room, then class will move to the theatre
Art Gallery Contact: Roger Cortez	Roger will highlight the ways in which art has a positive impact on the brain including lowering anxiety and boosting critical thinking skills	Class will tour the gallery	Roger will take the class into a classroom and give them a short art lesson	Roger will introduce all the classes available, including films and speaker series. Roger will introduce the volunteer opportunities	Library Community room, then walk to the gallery (across the street)
Symphony Umberto Ricci	Umberto will explore the different ways in which music boosts our mood	Class will listen to a selection of "happy" music	Class will walk around the symphony doing activities from the Instrument Petting Zoo	Umberto will introduce the all the classes for adults at the symphony, volunteer opportunities and accessible programs	Library community room, then walk across the street

Goals and Objectives

Program Goals:

- Build partnerships with neighbouring organizations located in the downtown core.
- Develop a unique class opportunity for Older Adults
- Increase social capital of participants in the class.
- Highlight the work of the Library as a place for learning, socializing and community building

Program Objectives

- Increase Social Capital of the students: Students will make friends with one another and make connections with a representative for the partnering organization.
- Acquiring New Knowledge: Students will be introduced to partner organizations to study the concept of happiness by visiting galleries, understanding volunteer opportunities, taking part in recreational activities.
- Enhancing cognitive skills: Students will learn new methods to track their own happiness, and construct learning stories. They may choose to do this with online blogs, TikTok videos, twitter, Instagram, facebook or/and youtube.
- Changing attitudes: students will be out in the community using service organizations in unique ways, expanding the concept of “senior” or a “retiree”
- Changing feelings: Students will look at “happiness” through a critical lens and begin to understand what happiness means in the community and in their own

lives.

Learning Techniques

- Learning circles _ when discussing ideas or sharing journals
- Panel discussions - when there are more than 1 guest speaker (improv team)
- Reflections - the class will participate in reflective exercises such as listening to music or looking at art
- Movement - class will participate in several movement activities throughout the course
- Lectures - Most of the classes will begin with a lecture style introduction
- Games - a variety of games will be played throughout the course
- Making - the class will participate in creative activities such as cooking, making art, and letter writing

Learning Plan Template

The Manager of Adult programming will work with the representative of the partnering organization to hit 3 main points in the class. All partnering organizations must link the activity back to happiness and introduce the class to opportunities at the organization.

Learning Transfer

Recreational, informative classes pose a challenge for learning transfer. In the book, *Palaces for the People* by Eric Klinenberg (CITE). Described library staff as being “aggressively welcoming”, they know to engage participants of the class when they see them on the floor and ask them if they are still using the lessons learned in the class. The answers will be shared with the Manager of Adult Programming.

The learning stories and photographs that the marketing department took can be used to create a bulletin board in the library. Added to these learning stories could be “talk back” walls engaging patrons in discussing happiness.

Evaluation

- Define the purpose of the evaluation, and how the results will be used (these results will determine if the pilot project is successful)
- Identify how the evaluation will be conducted
- Determine which data collections will be used
- Determine the criteria that will be used to make judgements about the program
- Define how the information gathered from the evaluation will be used

Evaluation for Participants			
Week 1	Week 4	Week 10	1 Month After
<p>The first week will introduce the concept of “happiness” and how it will be explored in class. The students will engage in a conversation analyzing and critiquing their classroom to see if it promotes happiness (are there plants, is the temperature ok, the acoustics etc. The findings will be used to set up the class for the rest of the semester. This type of active evaluation and engagement help the students connect to the material discussed in class.</p>	<p>Members from the marketing team will be on hand to take photos of the class participants.</p> <p>Some will be asked for short interviews discussing what they are learning and if they are practicing the lessons learned in class.</p> <p>Students will be asked if any of them want to share their journals with the marketing team or with other students</p>	<p>Members from the marketing team will be on hand to take photos of the participants.</p> <p>Some will be asked for short interviews discussing what they are learning and if they have used the lessons learned in class.</p> <p>Students will be asked if any of them want to share their journals with the marketing team or with other students</p>	<p>Some will be asked for short interviews discussing what they are learning and if they have used the lessons learned in class.</p> <p>Students will be asked if they have participated in any of the organizations introduced in class.</p> <p>Students will be asked if they continue to keep a journal and if they would like to share it with the marketing team and/or the Manager of Adult programing</p>

Evaluation for Participating Organizations		
Before	After the class	1 Month after
The representative from each organization will highlight their goals and their own measure for success.	Directly after the class (or the next day) they will be invited to ask a few self evaluations about how the class went and if they wish to participate again in the future. And if they have an organization or member of the community that would also be a good fit for this type of class.	The partnering organizations will be asked if any of the participants visited or engaged with the the organization.

Budgeting

- A budgeting plan will be developed using the formula model ensuring that the model and the terminology used within it follows the organization’s process
- Estimate the cost of the program, and prepare a program budget
- Develop a contingency plan (financially)
- Ensure that the funding model is in place.
- Research similar funding models.

Staffing | Personnel

The program would fall under the responsibility of the “Manager of Adult Programming”. Their role is to meet the programming needs of adults in the community, they work as a liaison between the library and local business, service organizations and residents.

They help support the library’s website and social media presence and promote the work of the library locally, nationally and internationally.

They respond to:

1) Director of Community Engagement: Oversees external partnerships and the role of the library in the community. In this case, they will be interested in the partnership with the external organizations. Their objective is to seek partnerships that complement the mission of the library while maintaining equilibrium with cost vs benefit to the organization.

2) Director or Customer Service: Oversees the customer experience within the library. In case it would be the experience of the participants in the class including the booking system, the spaces they use and the overall experience they have while in the library(the classroom, the navigation through the library including elevators, hallways, the lighting, temperature security, noise, parking, bathroom facilities, etc). Their objective is to provide a class that is enriching to the participants, providing a service that is needed in the community. They are also concerned with customer service and

Both of these Directors can support the program by:		
Before	During	After
Presenting and advocating this project to the board of directors and the CEO.	Ensure that a representative from Senior Management stops by the	Assist in thanking the partnering organizations.

Allocating enough funds to help support the program	classes to introduce themselves	Assist in the evaluation
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Additional teams that will be involved are:

- **Development:** Often organizations who donate money are also looking to donate time, and this might open up programming partnerships. Although this is always at the discretion of the Manager of Adult Programming they might be a push from the development team from time to time. The Development department also works closely with the marketing team to gain high quality documentation from a library service standpoint. They may ask class participants for interviews or first hand accounts of the experience in the class.
- **Volunteer Department:** Volunteers are always looking for creative ways to help out at the library, the department offers a variety of roles. The roles that might be helpful for this class are:
 - **Community Experts:** volunteers with specialized skills that help design or host workshops, events or instruction sessions.
 - **Forms Completion Volunteers:** these volunteers help patrons fill out forms and may even help some patrons sign up for this class.
 - **Media Mafia:** this team of volunteers helps gather information to tell stories of the library. They work closely with the marketing department to gather interviews, photographs and comments and

they also work closely with the programming team to ensure that they are doing so through the learning and marketing lense.

- A/V Department: This class relies heavily on external partnerships. Often external partners may want to use audio and visual equipment to teach their classes. During the planning phase and through conversations with external partners the Manager of Adult Programming will alert the A/V department on when and where their services are needed.
- Operations: Adding a new class will mean updating the operations department. This includes:
 - Security: will the external partners require parking passes, or will they need access to the loading dock if they are bringing large items
 - Custodial: might need to revise their schedule if this class happens in a formally empty classroom.
- Marketing team:
 - Before: they will need information about the class including duration of the program, length of individual class. They may pop into the class from time to time to take professional photographs and they may do formal and informal interviews with the participants during and after the class. (After the class they do so with permission from the participants as outlined in the evaluation forms).

- For Pilot programs such as this one, the marketing team often pairs up with the volunteer department to help participants compile “learning stories” which include photographs, short video interviews or comments from the participants
- Planning Assessment and Research Department: is in charge of compiling and analyzing data including attendance, student demographics. They pair that data with additional analytics such as weather, time of the year etc. Their statistics and information will help the Manager of Adult programming compile a report. They are also instrumental in helping analyze data for the needs assessment report.
- All Staff: All staff will be updated on an overview of the class, this may be done at an all staff meeting, a managers meeting, and or an update on the internal WIKI. After the program the Manager of Adult programming will update the staff on the findings of the class- what was learned, fun things that happened and whether or not this program will happen again. If not, they will normally offer alternatives in the community in case patrons want to know more, and if so they will update the staff on when the course will be happening again, and the general topics that will be discussed.

They supervise:

- Public Programmers: there are 5 public programs that deliver all of the public

programming, both registered and drop in. If this class surpasses the pilot stage and becomes a regular class, the public programmers will be Trained to teach this class. Due to the fact that this class is a pilot, The Manager of Adult programming will run this class. There are a few classes where additional personnel will be needed and those will be scheduled ahead of time.

- Library Assistants: the library assistants are the librarians that sit at the desk answering questions and checking books in. They are the ones that tell patrons about programming and help connect patrons to services.

Due to the fact that both of these teams are working face to face with the public, their understanding of this programming is monumental. Everyone they see is a potential donor, a potential program participant, a potential volunteer or a potential co-worker.

Administrative Tasks

Formating

- Ensure that the format of the class is appropriate for the learning activity
- Ensure that everyone is aware of the goals and objectives of the program
- connect to the idea of “happiness” is the main goal of the class
- Develop a backup plan to account for weather, scheduling conflicts and issues outside of the planner’s control

Managing Details

- Ensure that facilities are suitable and can meet the physical needs of the students
- Negotiate contracts, manage expectations, arrange for reciprocal partnership opportunities
- Anticipate any problems that might arise

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