

Teaching for Inclusion & Equity Intermediate Badge Artifact

Edward Garrido

Department of Psychology

Class: Adult Psychopathology (PSYC 2500; 74 undergraduate students)

Goals: Results from several recent, large-scale epidemiological studies have pointed to a significant number of college students (20%) reporting recent suicidal ideation (Drum et al., 2009; Lu et al., 2019). Moreover, almost half of undergraduates (47%) and graduate students (46%) surveyed did not tell anyone about their suicidal thoughts, and an even greater number reported not seeking professional help (Drum et al., 2009). Consequently, this assignment had four primary goals:

1. To raise awareness regarding the risk factors that might affect mental health among students on a college campus.
2. To raise awareness of the potential barriers that students might experience in discussing their issues with others or getting help from professionals on campus.
3. To raise awareness of the mental health resources available to students, specifically on the campus of the University of Denver.
4. To evaluate whether existing mental health resources on DU's campus were adequate to serve students' needs given the knowledge gained through this assignment.

Approach: Firstly, two new learning objectives were added to the Adult Psychopathology class syllabus, 1.) "Students will develop a greater appreciation and understanding of the mental health challenges faced by college students, as well as obstacles they may face in getting help for these challenges" and 2.) "Students will evaluate mental health resources available to them on the University of Denver's campus and make recommendations towards possibly improving these resources."

Secondly, in the context of an early quarter, general discussion of the field of adult psychopathology, students were engaged in a discussion of the possible risk factors that they face when it comes to their mental health, as well as the potential barriers they may run up against in seeking help from others on campus. The purpose of this discussion was to generate questions for a survey that students would administer to other students later in the quarter.

Thirdly, after an electronic survey had been generated, students administered it to 3 fellow undergraduate students, along with performing their own review of the literature and services offered on the DU campus. Finally, students presented the results of their literature review, data collection, and services assessment/critique/change recommendations at the end of the quarter in the form of a 5-7 page report.

Assessment Summary: During the last week of the quarter, students in the class were sent an anonymous Qualtrics link to a survey designed to obtain their feedback on the assignment. The

survey was designed to directly evaluate whether the learning objectives outlined above had been met. The link was sent to all 74 students, but responses were obtained from only 29 students (39%). The response options for the 5 Likert-scaled questions were arranged along a 6-point scale ranging from, 0 = “Not at all” to 3 = “A Moderate Amount” to 5 = “A Great Deal.”

When students were asked, “How much did the term paper assignment in this class add to your knowledge of the risk factors that college students face for mental health issues?”

- ▶ 22/29 (76%) reported “A Moderate Amount” or greater

When students were asked, “How much did the term paper assignment in this class add to your knowledge of the barriers that college students face in getting help for their mental health issues?”

- ▶ 23/29 (79%) reported “A Moderate Amount” or greater

When students were asked, “How much did the term paper assignment in this class add to your knowledge of the protective factors?”

- ▶ 21/28 (75%) reported “A Moderate Amount” or greater

When students were asked, “How much did the term paper assignment in this class add to your knowledge of the services provided here at DU for students' possible mental health needs?”

- ▶ 26/29 (90%) reported “A Moderate Amount” or greater

When students were asked, “How much did the term paper assignment in this class add to your knowledge of how adequate or inadequate the mental services are here at DU?”

- ▶ 23/29 (79%) reported “A Moderate Amount” or greater

Reflection and future considerations: In thinking about the quantitative feedback gained from the Qualtrics survey, as well as anecdotal evidence shared by a handful of students, I do believe the assignment was a success. I believe that it allowed students to step out of their “comfort zone” and play the part of researcher, collecting data from others. In the process, I believe students learned more about the mental health difficulties faced by their peers and themselves. Students may be generally aware of the struggles they face, but until they have put some serious thought into these issues and how they cope with them, my thought is that they are likely to dismiss or downplay their struggles. In future iterations of this assignment, I plan to improve on it by chunking it into smaller, more manageable pieces. It was my observation that a good number of students were leaving it to the final week before it was due. Also, rather than simply performing a post-assignment assessment of the learning objective variables, next time I would like to perform a pre-assignment assessment as well in order to gauge change. Finally, I would like to invite staff from the Health and Counseling Center (HCC) to class next time to give students a presentation on the services they offer, as well as to hear students’ thoughts on how the HCC’s service could be possibly improved.