



***Michael Brent &
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Philosophy

Philosophy & Life Outside the Classroom

The Challenge

To discover whether assigning new readings in a philosophy class would enable students to make connections to issues outside the classroom

The Approach

I added readings that directly engage with topically relevant issues (e.g., the ways that prejudice hinders our ability to share knowledge) while Marie, my student partner, created and administered a survey to gather comparative data across the term

How it Went

We learned that the change in readings, by itself, did **not** correlate with how students responded to the statement “This professor makes content relevant to my life”. Their responses to that question remained constant throughout the quarter. This suggests that my repeated and explicit attempts throughout the quarter to have students make connections class content and issues outside the classroom was as effective as the readings.

Advice for Others

The challenge to make abstract topics applicable to students’ lives outside the classroom can be addressed by faculty directly, through the questions they ask during class and the types of work they assign throughout the quarter. The readings alone are not necessarily sufficient to achieve this goal in the absence of other efforts.



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