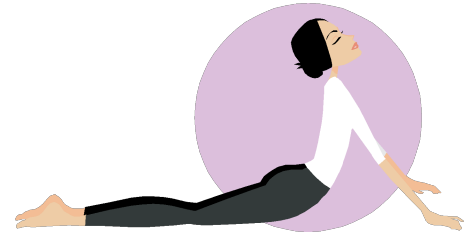


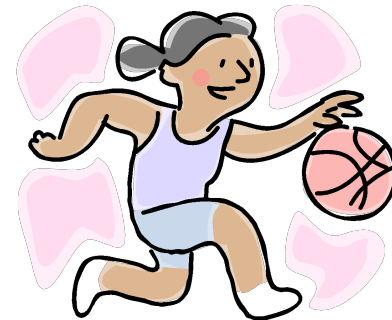
MANAGING STRESS!



Healthy Eating



Mindfulness



Physical Activity

By: Ariel Vezina
Nicole D'Ambrosio

INTRODUCTION

In order to capture the true essence of constructivist theory, as well as create a holistic and collaborative learning experience, we worked closely together in the creation of this course design. Ongoing discussions through comments posted on Google Docs, Blackboard and C2C provided the open communication we needed to ensure optimal collaboration.

We chose this course design because we felt it offered students a variety of tools with which they could learn from one another and alongside their teacher. A variety of face-to-face activities coupled with two online learning tools encourages the students to be flexible and to play an active role in their learning. These activities and assignments allow the students to work and acquire knowledge through both individual and group work. This will ensure that most, if not all, of the students' needs are being supported and met in terms of their own individual learning styles.

The online tools chosen were purposeful in nature as they both offer unique learning opportunities. Moodle is a tool that many students are familiar with in schools today. It offers a space for online chats, student collaboration and ongoing journaling/blogging; all key components in our course design. Jilster is a tool that students may not have used before. It is a website on which users can co-create and publish online magazines. We felt that having students create their own magazine would be motivating and exciting for students. Both tools are easily accessible and manageable by both educators and students.

INTRODUCTION CONTINUED...

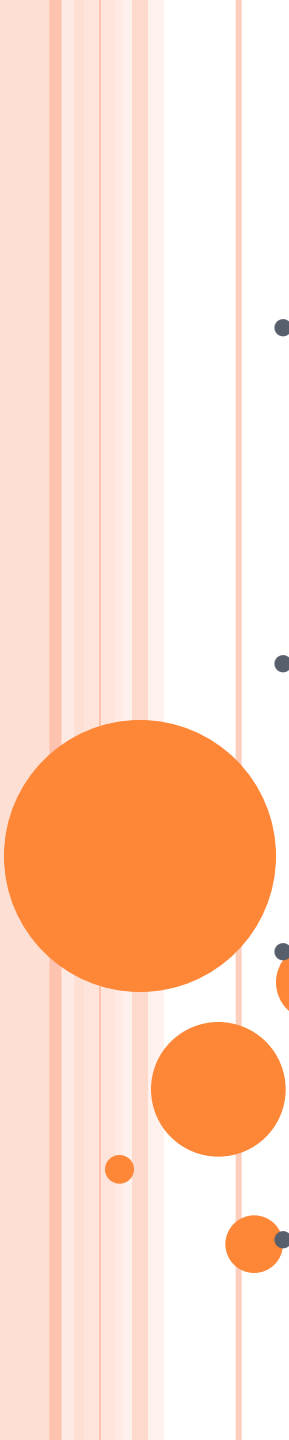
This course has been designed for Grade 5 students. It addresses several expectations from the Healthy Living, Writing, Media and Oral Language strands of the Grade 5 curriculum. That being said, it can be modified quite easily for other grades.

We wanted to design a course that would be engaging and motivating for students with a topic that is relevant and important in their lives. Stress is something that most students will experience at some point in their educational journeys. We wanted to address it within this course in such a way that the students will take away knowledge and understanding of the topic, along with the tools used.

More importantly, we designed this course to target and meet a variety of different students learning styles and needs. In designing this course, we pictured the students at the centre of their learning and knowledge construction, with the educator as a guide throughout the process. We wanted the students to feel important, successful and confident in the course hoping this type of communal learning environment would encourage more collaboration and participation.

[Partner Reading Assignment Paper:](#) Ariel Vezina & Nicole D'Ambrosio

The tenets of constructivism:

- Learning is a social function
 - Dewey (1944): working with other students creates a community setting, helps them build knowledge collectively as well as individually
 - Vygotsky (1978): learning happens when working with peers and with an expert, gain knowledge from those who have it
 - Knowledge must be constructed
 - Every student has their own perspective
 - Learning means assimilating knowledge with previous experiences and creating a new understanding
 - No one correct meaning, all viewpoints are different
 - Students must be active learners
 - Students must feel they have a sense of autonomy in the learning process
 - Students build concepts through reflection, construct their own understanding of concepts
 - An authentic context must be provided
 - This helps students see the usefulness of what they are learning
 - Can apply what they have learned to a real life situation
 - Essential, improves learning
- 

OUTLINE OF UNIT

Constructivist Approach to Learning

Topic: Healthy Living- Stress Management

Grade: 5

Length of Course: Six weeks/ 11 Lessons

Type of Course: Blended online and F2F

Platforms used: Moodle and Jilster

Technology Requirements: Assume students have previously used Moodle in the classroom and are aware of its functions/tools. An available laptop cart or a computer lab.

Expectations



- Participate in ongoing chats with members of your group
- Show support and accountability to all members of the group
- Become informed about ways of coping with stress i.e., physical activity, healthy eating and mindfulness
- Complete weekly journals to develop self-reflective skills
- Navigate and function both Moodle and Jilster to create a magazine
- Present the final product with the members of your group

Group Grades		Individual Grades	
Final Magazine Product:	40 %	Ongoing Blog in Moodle/ Self Evaluation:	15 %
Oral Presentation:	30 %	Peer Evaluation:	15 %

GRADE 5: CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Healthy Living

Personal Skills (PS)*

1.1 use self-awareness and self-monitoring skills to help them understand their strengths and needs, take responsibility for their actions, recognize sources of stress, and monitor their own progress, as they participate in physical activities, develop movement competence, and acquire knowledge and skills related to healthy living (e.g., Healthy Living: describe some of the factors or situations that cause them to experience stress)

Critical and Creative Thinking (CT)*

1.5 use a range of critical and creative thinking skills and processes to assist them in making connections, planning and setting goals, analysing and solving problems, making decisions, and evaluating their choices in connection with learning in health and physical education (e.g., Healthy Living: describe how the media can influence their food choices)

Writing

Research

1.3 gather information to support ideas for writing, using a variety of strategies and a range of print and electronic resources (e.g., interview people with knowledge of the topic; identify and use graphic and multimedia sources; keep a record of sources used and information gathered)

Organizing Ideas

1.5 identify and order main ideas and supporting details and group them into units that could be used to develop several linked paragraphs, using a variety of strategies (e.g., making jot notes; following a writing framework) and organizational patterns(e.g., chronological order, comparison, cause and effect)



CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS CONTINUED

Media

Producing Media Texts

3.4 produce a variety of media texts for specific purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions, and techniques

Metacognition

4.1 identify, with some support and direction, what strategies they found most helpful in making sense of and creating media texts, and explain how these and other strategies can help them improve as media viewers/listeners/producers

Teacher prompt: “Reflect on the media product(s) you have created. What did you learn from the process? How will that influence your next effort?”

Oral Language

Clarity and Coherence

2.3 communicate orally in a clear, coherent manner, presenting ideas, opinions, and information in a readily understandable form (e.g., present an argument that has a clearly stated purpose, point-by-point development, and relevant supporting details)

Non-Verbal Cues

2.6 identify a variety of non-verbal cues, including facial expression, gestures, and eye contact, and use them in oral communications, appropriately



ONLINE PLATFORMS USED

Moodle

Jilster

Moodle

Jilster



Dougiamas, Martin (2012)

Image retrieved from: Moodle Community site <http://Moodle.org>



Kroodsma, Anja (2014)

Image retrieved from Jilster, 2014



UNIT PLAN

Lesson	Activities	Materials
<u>1</u>	What is Stress?	Mind Map: 5 pieces chart paper, markers Projector/Computer: video on stress Placement Activity: 15 construction paper, tape
<u>2</u>	Components of a Magazine	5 magazines, chalk, white board markers
<u>3</u>	Components of a Magazine Article	Projector/Computer, Worksheet: components of magazine, 5 types of magazine articles, worksheet: for types of magazine articles.
<u>4</u>	Introduce Jilster/ Assign Groups	Jilster treasure hunt activity
<u>5</u>	Group Brainstorm	Computers with Moodle, magazines
<u>6, 7, 8</u>	Work on Magazine in class	Rubric/Success criteria: final magazine product, computers for Jilster and Moodle
<u>9</u>	Magazine Due and Presentations	Rubric/Success criteria: oral presentation
<u>10</u>	Magazine Presentations	Rubrics: oral presentation, a class to present to
<u>11</u>	Peer Evaluations	Peer evaluation forms

Lesson 1: What is Stress?

- Mind Map (15 mins)
 - Divide class into groups of four, each group member will create a mind map for the question “What is Stress?”
 - Class discussion: What were common themes that came up? What are the main sources of stress for young adults?
- Video on stress (10 mins)
 - Watch video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnpQrMqDoqE> up until 1:40, then discuss as a class
- “How to deal with stress” brainstorm (25 mins)
 - Class breaks into groups again, each group does a placemat activity* to brainstorm stress management strategies
 - Groups given three pieces of construction paper, write one strategy per piece, post them on wall titled “Stress Management Strategies”

*See Appendix A for explanation

Lesson 2: Components of a Magazine

- What are the elements of a magazine article? (30 mins)
 - Hand out a magazine to each group of four students (each magazine is unique)
 - Ask groups to work together and to identify the elements of their magazine (ie: title, table of contents, advertisements, etc)
 - Have one member of each group write their findings on the board
 - As a class discuss the commonalities and/or differences between what each group found
- What makes you want to read a magazine? (15 mins)
 - Have students do a Think, Pair, Share* where they discuss what makes a magazine **popular**
 - Discuss as a class, create a mind map on the board as students offer suggestions (ex: <https://www.text2mindmap.com>)

*See Appendix B for explanation

Lesson 3: Components of a Magazine Article

- Main elements of a magazine article (5-10 mins)
 - Pull up a magazine article on the projector, brainstorm as a class the main components (ie: title, author, date, images, introduction, conclusion)
 - Students write these components in their notebooks
- Expert groups- types of magazine articles (20 mins)
 - Break class into groups of four, each will be assigned a type of article (ie: opinion, how-to, profile/interview, exposé, human interest)
 - Each group will fill in their part of the worksheet by using computers to find main elements of their type of article
- Presentation of article types (20 mins)
 - Groups will present their type of article to the rest of the class (must provide an example on the projector)
 - Students take notes on worksheet

Lesson 4: Introduce Jilster/Assign Groups

- Treasure hunt on Jilster (individual) to familiarize themselves with the website.
- Jilster Treasure Hunt

Jilster Scavenger Hunt

I

Group Members: _____

1. Find the tab that at the top of the page labelled 'How it Works.' Click on it. In the menu on the left hand side there are 5 links. Click on 'Instructions and Facts.' Find 'Working in the Online Bidding Room.'
How many steps are there in the process? _____
Step 6 is the final step? _____
2. From this page, find the 'More information' section at the bottom. Click on 'Starting as editor.'
List the 9 areas to consider when working in the 'Online Bidding Room.'
1 _____ 6 _____
2 _____ 7 _____
3 _____ 8 _____
4 _____ 9 _____
5 _____

Browse and review all areas!

3. At the top of this page there is a link entitled 'To Your Magazine.' Click it! What are the four options listed on the left side of the page?
1 _____ 5 _____
2 _____ 4 _____
4. Click on the 'Start Magazine' tab. Fill in the information below!
Add your:
- Title _____
- Number of pages _____
- SKIP DELIVERY DATE _____
- SKIP SHIP TO _____
- Insert due date _____
- Make sure "editors are allowed to view 'previews' of all pages" is checked off.
- Click Save _____
5. Play with the pages, settings, themes, pictures, fonts etc... on the different pages to become familiar with the layout and tool.
6. Have fun and enjoy the process!!!

- Assign groups

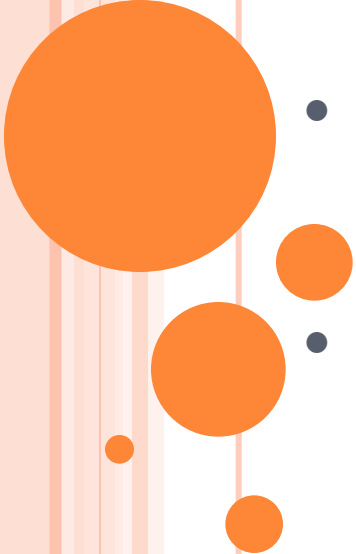
Lesson 5: Group Brainstorm

- Groups brainstorm ideas for magazine (mind maps, graphic organizers, etc)
 - Flip through magazines, look at online magazines
- Students assign tasks within group (maybe give a sheet on which tasks there could/should be)
 - Post on Moodle blog who is doing which task
- Make goals for next class
 - What should each person have done for next class?
 - Post these goals on Moodle blog, students can continue to communicate through Moodle at home
- Teacher circulates to check on progress, begins to schedule groups for their “check ins”
 - Note: “check ins” are meetings the teacher has with each group to assess progress, if group is working well together, to address questions, etc

Lesson 6, 7, 8: Work Periods

- Review the expectations for the magazine by going over the rubric with the students, and creating success criteria.
- During Lessons 6, 7, 8 the students will have this opportunity to work amongst their group members designing a magazine on 'Managing Stress.'
- The last 15-20 minutes of every period, have the students create a reflective post in their online journals in moodle about:
 - any new learning
 - any questions
 - experiences working in a group
 - next steps/ goals
- During weekly check-ins, teachers will have read and responded to their journals. Meet with the groups to provide ongoing feedback on their progress.

Lesson 9: Magazine Due and Presentations

- Magazine will be due.
 - Create success criteria with the students based on oral presentation expectations.
 - Inform the students they will be presenting their magazines to students in another class.
 - Post success criteria in a visible place within the classroom.
 - Allow the students to meet with their groups and practise their magazine presentations for the full period.
 - Circulate providing positive and constructive feedback, referring back to the oral presentation success criteria created.
- 

Lesson 10: Magazine Presentations

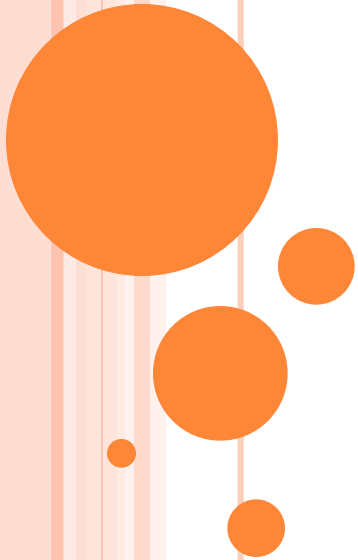
- Allow the students to meet with their group members for 5 minutes at the beginning of class to prepare for their presentations.
- All groups will present to the students in a different class during this period.

Lesson 11: Peer Evaluations

- Discuss expectations for the peer evaluations.
- Distribute the peer evaluations ...or offer the link online through moodle???. Either way is good to me... Maybe they could fill out the peer evaluations online? I will put in a peer and self evaluation template on next slide.

Links to Assessment and Evaluation

- [Ongoing teacher check-ins](#)
- [Final Magazine Rubric](#)
 - [Success Criteria for rubric](#)
- [Final Oral Presentation Rubric](#)
 - [Success Criteria for rubric](#)
- [Peer Evaluation](#)



Discussion Questions

1. What are the advantages and drawbacks of implementing constructivist principles in a course?

- There are many advantages to the constructivist principle including but not limited to:
 - Students sharing knowledge provides them with a greater database of information (“Often students in their weekly assignments alluded in their commentary to points made in previous assignments by other students.” (p. 123))
 - Allows for authentic learning both inside and outside of the classroom, which motivates students (“...students were actively engaged in publishing their work” (p. 123))
 - Helps students gain multiple perspectives (“Alternative perspectives are viewed by most constructivists as an effective approach to knowledge construction and as a way to deepen one’s understanding of a subject” (Spiro et al., 1992; p. 128))
 - Dewey- Education is supported and nourished by actions (Chao & Stovel, 2002, p. 116)
 - Vygotsky- education often functions as a social process and this aspect of socialization helps students learn (Chao & Stovel, 2002, p. 116).
- Drawbacks to constructivist principle:
 - Constructing knowledge using past experiences, can potentially lead to misconceptions (ex: in science).
 - Educators must monitor discussions and information being exchanged closely to ensure students are learning the correct information and not sharing misconceptions
 - Student may not be open to a constructivist learning format (may prefer to work alone)

Discussion Questions continued...

2. What are some foreseeable problems if you were to follow the same principles in your course?

- In order for students to be able to work on our assignment at home, they must access a computer. However, not all students will be able to do so. This puts their learning experience at a disadvantage.
- Educators must ensure that their students needs, passions and interests are at the centre of their learning or the constructivist approach will not work. This requires a lot of preparation and research on the part of the educator.
- If teachers do not check-in with students, there may be problems in regards to knowledge construction and collaboration.
- The constructivist approach might not meet all students learning styles. A balance between group and individual work would allow for students of all learning styles to succeed. Furthermore, allowing students to choose their own groups might also encourage collaboration.

Discussion Questions continued...

3. What are the benefits and challenges in integrating technology into a conventional course in higher education?

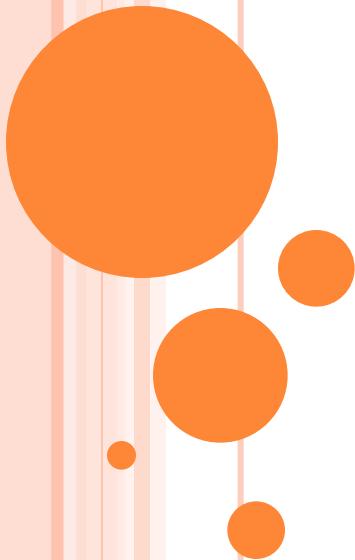
- Advantages: (Kassop, 2003)
 - Student centred learning
 - The availability and flexibility of technology allows students to write more often
 - Highly interactive discussions
 - Geared to lifelong learning as discussions are relevant
 - Enriched course material as allows teachers to share more resources
 - On-demand interaction and support services
 - Immediate feedback from peers and teacher
 - Flexibility - students can complete coursework on their own time
 - Intimate community of learners
 - Faculty development/rejuvenation
 - Disseminate information easily - can share resources and ideas
 - Build off of each other's knowledge by exchanging and discussing ideas
 - Breaking up a large class into chats makes it easier for students to participate.

- Disadvantages:
 - Instructors need training with the technological tools
 - Students who bring their own devices may be distracted and it may be difficult to ensure they are doing work
 - May limit students that do not have technology.
 - Other technological drawbacks include lack of student's technical abilities, setting up IT support for large scale forums, Wi-Fi access and software access.

Discussion Questions continued...

4. How can you ensure that students have a valuable learning experience?

- Balance groups, tools used and topics covered.
- Creating authentic learning experiences is important and should play on students passions and interests whether it is through videos, drama, or music.
- Using a diverse range of assessment and evaluation tools will create a collaborative and holistic online learning community.
- Integrating appropriate online learning tools allows students at various technological levels to feel both successful and challenged throughout the learning experience.



Personal Thoughts About the Article

After individually reading the chapter, we met online and discussed both the reading and the discussion questions. The answers below are a culmination of our responses and discussion online.

Personal thoughts about the article:

We both felt the article defined constructivist principles clearly while providing a practical example of learning through the use of a case study. It was informative and the case study offered a lot of insight into this particular learning style. It clearly linked the principles discussed to specific examples within the case study, allowing us to understand how these principles function in practice. What's more, the author's insight on how the educator and the students had positive learning experiences showed us that these principles are beneficial in the classroom.

We felt that it would have been interesting to read more about the challenges that may have presented themselves throughout the case study. While the author touches on some students' issues with access to technology, other challenges faced by the teacher or the students were not highlighted. It would be helpful to know if the use of constructivist learning and technology in this case study created barriers in learning and to offer solutions to such issues. Furthermore, it would have been useful to read about alternative ways of assessing and evaluating students with regards to constructivist principles rather than traditional methods of assessing through essays and examinations.

Overall, the article was extremely informative and helped us better understand constructivist approaches and how they can be integrated in the classroom.

Conclusion

Educators' integration of the constructivist theory and of collaborative and holistic educational learning opportunities can be beneficial to our students' knowledge and achievement. We felt as though the article clearly demonstrated the positive impacts that this form of learning can have on our students at any level. From the reading, it was clear that both the students and educators enjoyed the experience and developed new skills while challenging previous conceptions.

Traditional forms of education alone are not enough to support the 21st century learner in their quest to acquire knowledge, develop personal and social skills, and become technologically literate. It is now our goal as educators to become mindful of our practices and to ensure that our lessons consider our students' needs in order to best prepare them for the world in which they live.

A misinterpretation of collaborative learning is that it is simply group work. It is much deeper than that. It requires careful consideration of students' learning needs, as well as implementing opportunities for individual and group work. Collaborative learning requires deliberate integration of students' interests as they fit in the curriculum.

Holistic education requires teachers to challenge their previous understanding of assessment and evaluation tools. A holistic classroom should not rely solely on "traditional" assessment methods, such as essays and exams, but should instead strive to revamp it so that it addresses the needs of the students. Manjinder Dhillon, a student in our class, suggests that when writing essays, *"the topics should be something that pulls from their active learning, self-reflection and what the learner has gotten from what they learned (Dhillon, 2014)."* A holistic approach to assessment encourages educators to view and address the whole child through consideration of their learning styles, relationships, resiliencies and behaviours.

In conclusion, a collaborative, holistic, constructivist approach to teaching and learning is imperative in order to best prepare our 21st century learners to be present and participate in the world in which they live.

References/ Resources

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References/ Resources

Referenced Images:

Jilster Image: <http://www.jilster.com/>

Moodle Image: <http://pclosmag.com/html/issues/201201/page16.html>

Microsoft Images:

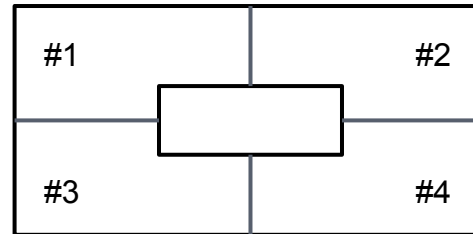
- Healthy Eating Image: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-ca/images/results.aspx?qu=healthy+food&ex=1#ai:MC900441872>
- Mindfulness Image: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-ca/images/results.aspx?qu=yoga&ex=1#ai:MC900440133>
- Physical Activity Image: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-ca/images/results.aspx?qu=running&ex=1#ai:MC900389138>
- Checklist Image: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-ca/images/results.aspx?qu=checklist&ex=1#ai:MC900439824>
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Appendix A: Placemat

Placemat is a cooperative learning strategy, it involves teamwork, oral communication skills and attentive listening.

*Place students in groups of 3-4, have them number themselves off (1,2,3,4, etc).

*Demonstrate to students how to divide up their piece of paper in a “placemat” fashion:



*Give students a topic to write about (ie: the elements of a short story), tell students they have two-three minutes to write down everything they know on that topic in their respective corners

*At the end of the two minutes, tell students to present to each other in their groups what they have written (round robin style)

*Groups will elect one person to write down in the middle square what points the students all had in common/what seems important to include. Note: some students may have unique points that are worth including in the middle, have them discuss and present their point to the group (communication skills)

*Finally, each group will elect one speaker who will read off three things off their middle square to the rest of the class. The other groups must use attentive listening to ensure that they do not repeat something that has already been said.

Appendix B: Think, Pair, Share

- Give students a question and ask them to think about it for about thirty seconds
- Have students partner up and exchange ideas
- Have pairs share their ideas with the whole class

