Wellness Literacy and Our Bodies

In Appalachian State University’s Wellness Literacy dance classes, students are discovering new approaches to personal health and wellness. Taught by various dance faculty, including Marianne Adams, Laurie Atkins, and Emily Daughtridge, students can choose from a variety of interesting course topics such as Gyrokinesis, Somatics, Pilates, Modern Dance, and Yoga as a Somatic Practice. These courses weave together various physical practices to create a well-rounded student learning experience.

Students in the Wellness Literacy dance classes complete a variety of assignments related to personal health and wellness. In most of the courses, students assess their personal and family history through the creation of a “Family Tree of Health.” This assignment helps students understand where they come from in terms of health history, which enables them to plan for where they would like to go.

In some courses, students complete a “Creating a Daily Practice” assignment that encourages them to choose a positive physical experience that works for them and engage in it every day for an entire semester. In a society where instant gratification is the norm, it can be extraordinarily powerful to engage in a discipline requiring consistency and increasing depth. The results of this daily practice are tangible as students report being naturally drawn to healthier foods, caring more for their bodies, allowing themselves to prioritize sleep, and making healthier decisions on weekends. They tend to feel both a physical and emotional shift as they become stronger in body and spirit. Adams, Atkins, and Daughtridge describe an “internal authority” they see emerge in students as they become empowered to make decisions based on their individual needs. Students learn to check in with their bodies and ask, “Is this really healthy for me? What would be most nourishing?”

In the Somatics course, students explore these questions by creating a “Nourishment Model.” The model is consistent with the dance program’s “Positive-Based Model,” focusing on what positives we can add to our lives rather than what we should remove. This Nourishment Model teaches students to adapt science-based principles of wellness for their personal use. They learn that nourishment doesn’t only come from food, but from all aspects of life. With this awareness, students are able to sustain their healthy habits and further integrate nourishment into their daily lives. At the end of the semester, the students in Somatics create a visual representation of their growth through “Body Drawings.” Using an outline of their body created in the first weeks of class, students are able to reflect on and cement everything they have learned throughout the course.

Wellness does not begin and end with one class – it is a lifelong process. The dance Wellness Literacy courses are designed to increase students’ awareness of their health and wellness and introduce them to new tools and possibilities, laying a foundation for deeper exploration and growth throughout their lives.
New Materials for ART2011

In summer 2011, Ilasahai Prouty and Rosa Dargan-Powers received a General Education Curriculum Development Grant to develop new materials for ART 2011: Introduction to Art. They focused on creating assignments that would introduce students to various artistic approaches through lecture and experiential engagement. After two months of work, they produced a collection of five detailed assignments that can easily be adapted by various ART 2011 instructors to meet the needs of their individual sections. Instructors of ART 2011 are encouraged to personalize the class based on their individual backgrounds while maintaining a level of continuity within the course and meeting the General Education learning outcomes. After developing the assignments, Prouty and Dargan-Powers created an ASULEARN site where they have shared the new materials with other ART 2011 instructors. They designed the site to serve as a forum where instructors can suggest modifications for the assignments and view/share examples of students' work. Through this forum, the curriculum development process has been brought full circle. As the feedback loop continues, Prouty and Dargan-Powers are hopeful that these assignments will become increasingly flexible and effective at providing students with a rich, hands-on experience in this large lecture course. To see the assignments Ila Prouty and Rosa Dargan-Powers created with their summer grant, visit: http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/2011-summer-grant-reports.

Service Learning at F.A.R.M. Café

Students in Jennifer Cohen-Jordan’s First Year Seminar class “Women’s Social & Environmental Activism in Appalachia” will soon be participating in some social activism of their own. Cohen-Jordan’s service-learning project this semester will be volunteering at the F.A.R.M. Café, a restaurant scheduled to open its doors in Boone in April 2012. Students in past semesters have had the option of volunteering with an organization in their hometown or with local organizations such as the Hunger Coalition, Humane Society, or Appalachian Voices. Their reaction to volunteering has been immensely positive, says Cohen-Jordan, for they learn about themselves while feeling a renewed sense of purpose. The opening of F.A.R.M. Café presents a real opportunity for Appalachian students to make a difference in their community. The name F.A.R.M. Café stands for “Feed All Regardless of Means.” According to the F.A.R.M. Café website, “Nearly 22% of Watauga County residents live at or below poverty level.” The mission of this organization is to “build a healthy, inclusive community by providing high quality, delicious meals produced from local sources served in a restaurant where everybody eats regardless of means.” The organization is able to assist those in need because it operates almost exclusively with volunteers. In April 2012, students in Cohen-Jordan’s class will join the ranks of these volunteers. After their volunteering experience, students will write a reflection discussing what they learned about the organization and about themselves, what the experience was like, and how volunteering affected their feeling of connection to community. For more information about F.A.R.M. Café visit their website at http://farmcafe.org/.

Summer 2012 Grant Proposals

The Office of General Education requests proposals for two sets of grants available for teams of faculty who teach courses in the Gen Ed Program.

Shared Learning Outcomes Development Grants for Faculty Teams
The purpose of this grant is to write shared learning outcomes for your course directly related to at least one of the four General Education goals. Assessment of the General Education Program has demonstrated that, in order to make our learning outcomes more authentic and meaningful, the various disciplines and courses across campus ought to articulate the specific ways that they address the four General Education goals. These grants represent the beginning of this process. Grant teams must consist of two or more instructors who have taught the course at least once in the last two years. Each instructor on the team will receive $250 pending completion of the terms of the grant. For details, visit: http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/grants.

Curriculum Development Grants for Faculty Teams
The purpose of this grant is to develop materials, methods, content modules, or assignments that address the General Education goals and that could be used by any instructor of your course, not only those working on the grant team. Grant teams must consist of two or more instructors who have taught the course at least once in the last two years. Each instructor on the team will receive $500 pending completion of the terms of the grant. For details, visit: http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/grants.
[Students] living together who share a class will talk about it. This means they take the topics from class further than they might if they didn’t live together and have time for informal conversation." –Mark Zrull, Psychology professor and member of the Brain Matters Residential Learning Community Leadership Team.

**RLCs Partner with FYS**

Students accepted into Residential Learning Communities (RLC) do more than live together – they learn together. Thanks to a partnership with First Year Seminar (FYS), students in some RLCs take one of their first classes at Appalachian State University with a community of familiar faces. There are twenty Residential Learning Communities on campus, ranging from academic-based communities like Brain Matters to interest-based communities like Service & Leadership. The First Year Seminar Program works with the Coordinator of Academic Initiatives & RLCs, Corinne Smith to identify instructors whose FYS topics are related to the themes of the various RLCs. In some of the RLCs, such as Outdoor, all the students take the same class with the same professor. In others, like Art Haus, RLC students choose from a selection of related FYS sections taught by different professors. When Smith stepped into the Coordinator position, only half of the Residential Learning Communities were linked with First Year Seminar courses. She has successfully worked with the FYS program to increase that percentage in order to enhance the emphasis on “learning” in the Residential Learning Communities. This program works to bridge the gap between the in- and out-of-classroom experiences. As a result, students in RLCs experience a more engaging, fulfilling, and connected first year experience at Appalachian.

**General Education Council Meeting**

The next General Education Council Meeting will be Friday, March 23rd at 3pm in 1118 Anne Belk Hall. The meeting is open to the campus community. To view the agenda visit: [http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/general-education-council](http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/general-education-council).

**Spring Workshops**

*The Office of General Education is sponsoring the following workshops for faculty (3/17/2012-5/6/2012):*

**Advising Students on General Education** - This workshop is for faculty who serve as advisors to students majoring in their department or program. We will review the General Education Program and discuss how advisors can use available tools and resources to ensure students have fulfilled General Education requirements. Facilitated by: Kristin Hyle, Assistant Director of General Education.

Offered on: 3/20 @ 11am; 3/28 @ 2pm 
Location: 1114 Anne Belk


**Designing Effective Research Assignments in First Year Seminar** - Looking for more “research” in your students’ research assignments? This workshop will provide insight into how students find and use information in the digital age. Participants will learn tips and strategies for creating effective research assignments and discover how collaboration between librarians and FYS faculty can result in more effective research assignments. Facilitated by: Kelly Rhodes McBride & Amanda Bird, Information Literacy Librarians.

Offered on: 3/21 @ 3-4:30pm 
Location: 028 Belk Library & Information Commons

Workshop Registration URL: [http://workshops.appstate.edu/detail.aspx?key=659](http://workshops.appstate.edu/detail.aspx?key=659)