

**Understand  
that we're  
human too!**

Enabling better  
campus mental health  
through teaching and  
learning practices

Murray Drew Professor, Agriculture and Bioresources

Nancy Turner Director, Teaching and Learning Enhancement

Peter Hedley Director, Student Affairs and Services

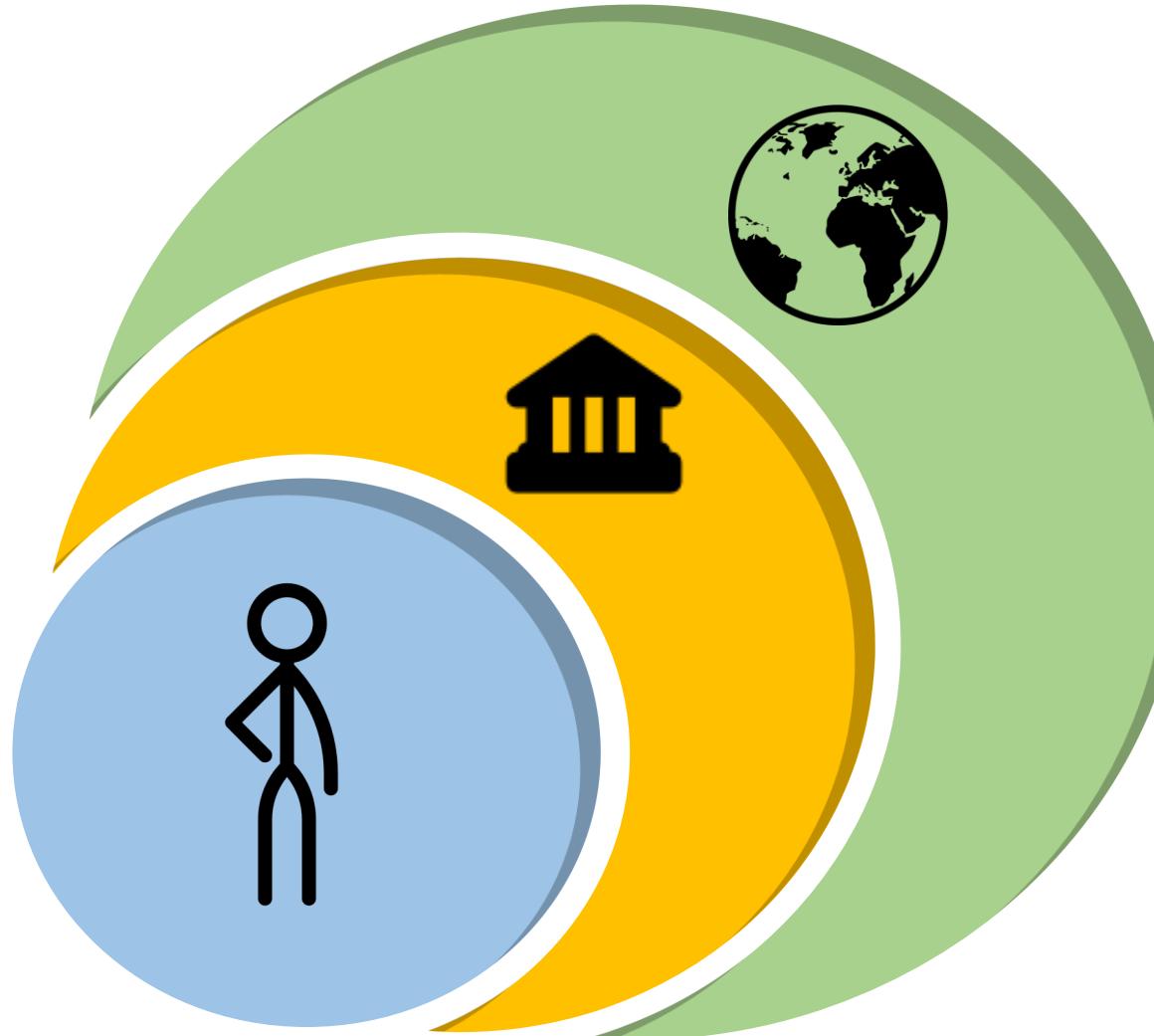


## Session Outcomes

By the end of the session, attendees will be able to:

1. Identify key ways in which teaching and learning practices can influence the mental wellbeing of students
2. Describe teaching and learning practices that enable well-being
3. Identify at least one teaching and learning practice related action that could be taken to improve the mental well-being of students

*“What in the world is going on  
with student mental health?”*



**WORLD/WIDER SOCIETY**

**POST-SECONDARY  
ENVIRONMENT**

**OUR STUDENTS**





BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

# WORLD/WIDER SOCIETY

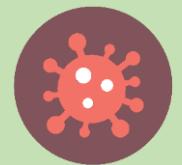


GROWTH IN GLOBALIZATION & POPULATION  
> INCREASED COMPETITION FOR  
RESOURCES/Jobs & PRESSURE TO SUCCEED

GLOBAL, ENVIRONMENTAL  
AND ECONOMIC  
INSTABILITY &  
UNCERTAINTY

SOCIETAL CHANGES >  
CHANGES IN COMMUNITY  
LIVING > SOCIAL ISOLATION >  
FOCUS ON INDIVIDUALISM

TECHNOLOGICAL  
ADVANCES:  
DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD



## POST-SECONDARY ENVIRONMENT



LARGER CAMPUS POPULATIONS >  
MORE IMPERSONAL > MORE  
COMPETITION & INDIVIDUALISM

INCREASED DIVERSITY > CULTURAL  
INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION  
NEEDED BUT MORE COMPLEX

POSITIVE SOCIETAL SHIFTS IN ATTITUDES  
TOWARDS MENTAL HEALTH > STIGMA REDUCED  
> MORE STUDENTS SEEKING SERVICES

MORE INVESTMENT IN  
WELLNESS & ACCESSIBILITY  
SUPPORTS BUT LIMITS EXIST

## IMPACT UPON OUR STUDENTS

CONSTANT DEADLINE &  
WORKLOAD PRESSURE AND  
FEAR OF FAILURE

### MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES & DISORDERS: ANXIETY, DEPRESSION & SUICIDALITY

POWER DIFFERENTIALS  
> STUDY-RELATED  
RELATIONSHIP ISSUES

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES  
OR EXPECTATIONS

FINANCIAL & FOOD  
INSECURITY, HOMELESSNESS

COMMUNITY, CULTURAL &  
SOCIAL DISCONNECTION >  
LONELINESS

ACADEMIC CULTURE:  
BARRIERS & STIGMA ABOUT  
ACCESSING SUPPORT

BULLYING, DISCRIMINATION  
& HARASSMENT

ADDICTIONS:  
BEHAVIOURAL &  
SUBSTANCE USE RELATED

COPING WITH PERSONAL  
LOSS & TRAUMA

PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES:  
LACK OF REST, EXERCISE,  
NUTRITION

UNCERTAIN FUTURE CAREER  
PROSPECTS

CULTURE SHOCK &  
IMPOSTER SYNDROME

**PROMOTION**

Ensuring a Supportive Foundation

Fostering a Healthy Culture  
and Environment

Raising Awareness and  
Maintaining Healthy Behaviors

**PREVENTION**

Identifying Risk and Responding Early

Developing Resilience and  
Self-Management Competencies

**INTERVENTION**

Providing Services,  
Training and Critical Support

# How can we promote wellness in an **UPSTREAM** way...?



PROMOTION



**...as well as identify and support in a preventative way MIDSTREAM..?**



PREVENTION



**...so that we're not waiting  
for crisis DOWNSTREAM  
before we intervene?**



## INTERVENTION



If we change what happens upstream,  
won't that change what comes downstream?



What are we  
missing in order to  
be genuinely  
**PROMOTIONAL**  
and **UPSTREAM?**

# Our Learning Charter

The University of Saskatchewan

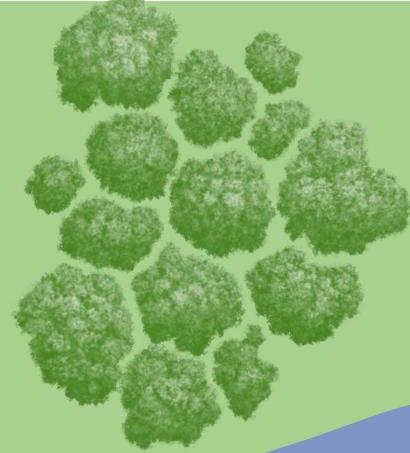
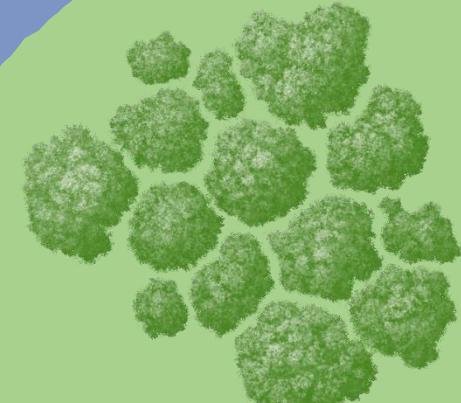
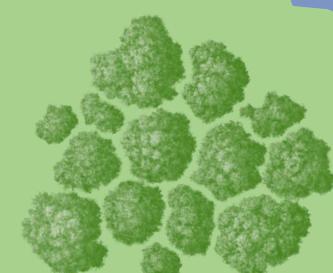


UNIVERSITY OF  
SASKATCHEWAN

## WELLNESS STRATEGY

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH FOR STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF

Confluence



## THE PROJECT

Learning and teaching practices that support student mental health and well-being

### STRAND 1

**STUDENT  
PERSPECTIVES**

**Rose Roberts  
LEAD**

### STRAND 2

**STRONG & PROMISING  
INSTRUCTOR PRACTICE**

**Murray Drew  
LEAD**

### STRAND 3

**KEY LEADERSHIP & SERVICE  
PROVIDER PERSPECTIVES**

**Nancy Turner &  
Peter Hedley CO-LEAD**



integrated case and toolkit for change in our learning environments to better support student mental health.

***Understand  
that we're  
human too!***

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

STRONG & PROMISING  
INSTRUCTOR PRACTICE

KEY LEADERSHIP & SERVICE  
PROVIDER PERSPECTIVES

## Striking the Balance

**'It is a key environment to advocate for the development of healthy and engaged people. There are well-defined links between academic success and student mental health. Research shows that settings like post-secondary institutions can be structured to have a positive impact on the mental health of students.'**



## Striking the Balance

Does multi-dimensional wellness support student retention and academic success?



Does the organization and delivery of academic programs support student wellness?

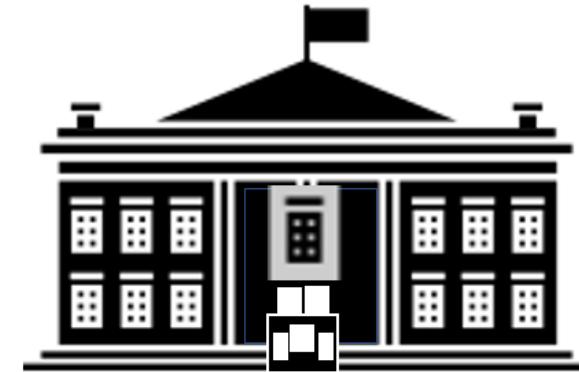
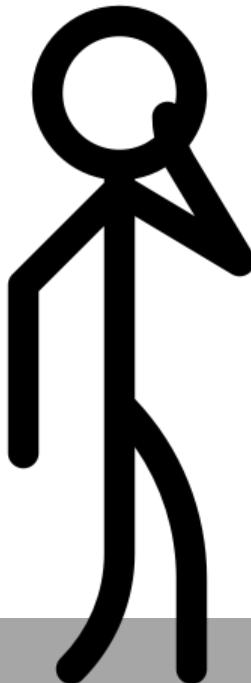


HEALTH AND  
WELLNESS

ACADEMIC STANDARDS  
AND INTEGRITY



“ Being a student has made it much more difficult to manage my mental health. The demands of the program often require sacrificing self-care time, which can be hard to handle.



**ABOUT**  
Mental Health



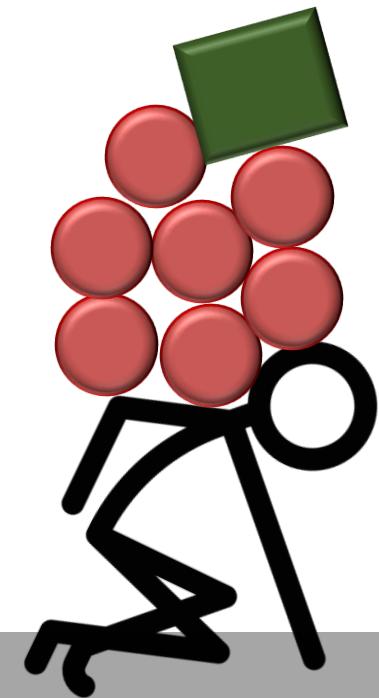
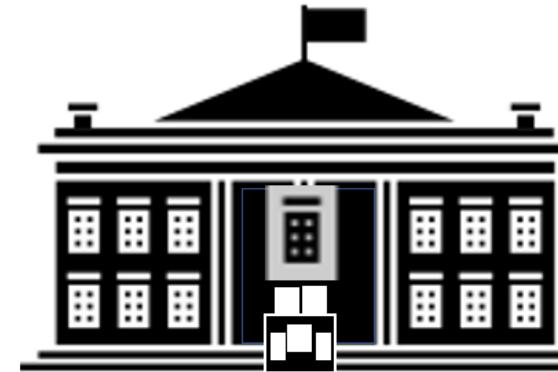
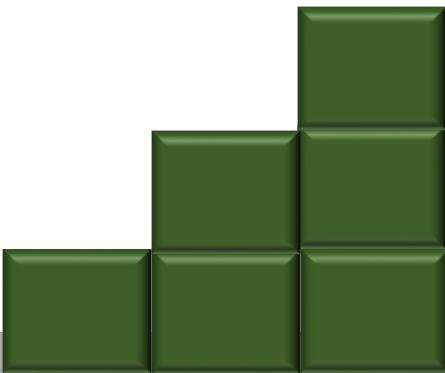
**FOR**  
Mental Health

Resources

versus

Stressors

Resources that  
feel like Stressors

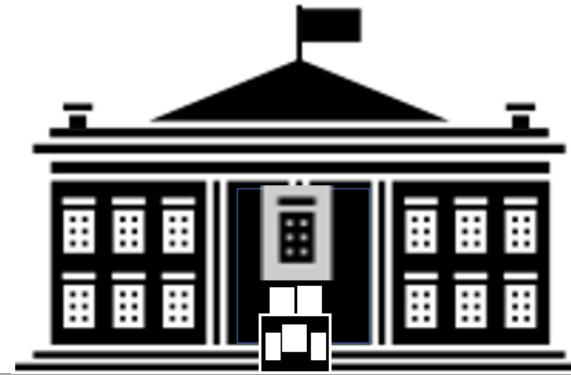


*I know where to go to  
get the help I need*

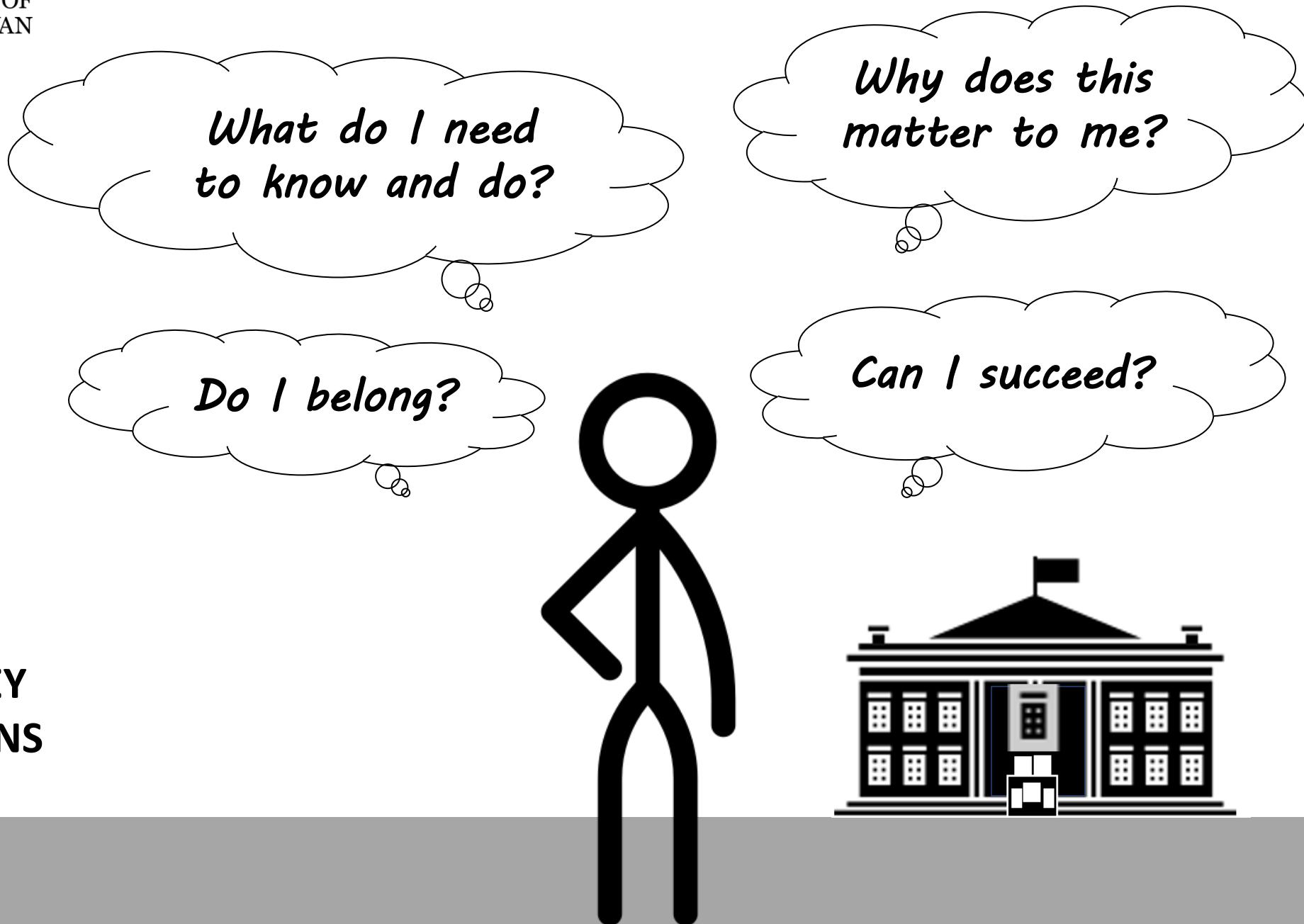
*I shouldn't even  
be here!*

*It's hard but I  
know what to do*

*What's point of  
any of this?!*



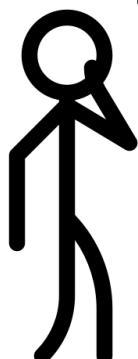
## FOUR KEY QUESTIONS



“

*I don't think the course load needs to be as heavy as it is. I get that you want us to be a master of everything or whatever but that's not reasonable. There's just so many other little things that are attached which just amplifies the stress and definitely decreases your mental health.*

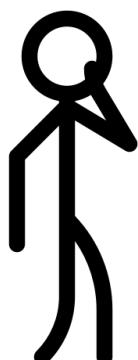
”



## Main Stressors

- Expectations not clear
- Curriculum overcrowded – not focused on essential Learning Outcomes
- Lack of structure/coherence in sequencing topics and tasks
- Assuming knowledge that has not been taught and practiced yet

*In first year, I was like “Am I even good enough for university? Do I even... can I even do this?”*



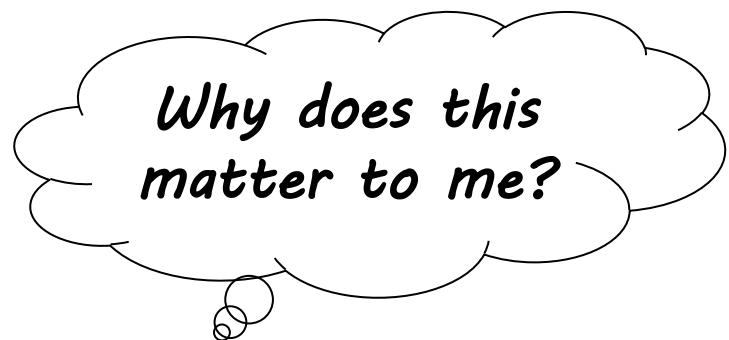
### Main Stressors

- Higher education experienced as impersonal
- Students unable to connect or “see themselves” in the environment
- Students feeling anonymous or even excluded
- Students find some delivery and feedback ‘style’ unintentionally or intentionally harmful to well-being and self-esteem

“

*If regurgitation is what is required on my first midterm then I'm just going to go memorize everything. But what am I getting from this class? Nothing. It's wasting time honestly.*

”



## Main Stressors

- Students feeling disconnected from environment and content
- Students unclear on why they are doing certain things and where the work will take them – relevance towards their goals
- Students acting primarily to achieve EXTERNAL rewards rather than being motivated by INTRINSIC factors

”

*I'm at the tail end of my degree and I just did a whole term of electives...It just feels like a bit of a cash grab to me.*

”

“  
*It's like so much of the rest of my life depends on what happens on a class-by-class basis like one mark, one evaluation, one course. It feels like it has a huge stamp on my future and it feels like that step-by-step anxiety is promoted a lot through the way our academics are organized and discussed.*

”

*Can I succeed?*



### Main Stressors

- Unclear or arbitrary ‘rules of the game’
- Constructive and timely feedback is not always provided
- Students not understanding what ‘good’ looks like nor how they might get there
- Students lacking control and/or flexibility in learning approach

*“I don’t  
know how”*

*“I don’t  
belong”*

*“I can’t  
succeed”*

*“I just  
don’t care”*



# Teaching and Learning Practice

Designing



Instructing

Assessing

Relating



## Teaching and Learning Practice

Designing

- Streamline content – *what is essential?*
- Purposeful organization and sequencing of curriculum
- Constructive Alignment...

# Constructive Alignment





## Teaching and Learning Practice

Designing

- Streamline content – *what is essential?*
- Purposeful organization and sequencing of curriculum
- Constructive Alignment
- Focus on outcomes that matter as part of longer-term learning
- Make explicit what is expected and why it matters
- Design for optimal student challenge



# Designing: Good Practice

## Introduction to Veterinary Physiology

Lynn Weber, Department of Veterinary Biomedical Sciences



- Knowing where students have difficulty and planning with that in mind
- Streamline content to focus on what is essential
- Planning for learning activities that are hands on and reinforce basic concepts
- Connect ideas to those learned in other classes and ensure sequencing of this course fits with others and there is no unnecessary duplication.



## Teaching and Learning Practice



### Instructing

- Active and engaging instruction
- Align learning activities with outcomes and assessment
- Enable student connection to each other and the instructor through learning activities
- Design learning activities that bring out diverse perspectives and experiences



# Instructing: Good Practice

International Studies 110

**Colleen Bell, Department of Political Studies**

- Instructional strategies focused on addressing student feelings of helplessness in a world wrought with conflict
- Used a project based approach to engage students in the research cycle of questioning, investigating and disseminating their findings in one of three themes: Climate Change, International Terrorism, Global Refuge Crisis.
- They learned academic skills and transformed their view of themselves as agents, empowered to make the world better through use of their skills.



## Teaching and Learning Practice



Relating

- Create inclusive and respectful environments for all
- Connect content and approaches to what is known about the students – their interests and experiences
- Make explicit what is expected and why it matters as part of process of learning and to what end (work, addressing societal needs, etc.)



## Relating: Good Practice

Animal Bioscience 110  
Murray Drew

Department of Animal and Poultry Science



## Teaching and Learning Practice



### Assessing

- Low or no stakes assessment as part of learning process with constructive feedback
- Provide flexibility and choice in ways students demonstrate outcomes
- Create clarity around expectations (self and peer assessment)
- Competency-based approaches to assessment



## Assessing: Good Practice

**INTS 102: Essential skills for studying science**

**Sandy Bonny, Indigenous Student Achievement Pathways**

- Student who opt into ISAP are looking for an academically robust, culturally-aware, small class environment
- Assessment is designed to address the gap in ‘implied skills’ or skills in and familiarity with the academic norms of exams
- On the midterm students use words from a previously supplied case study and vocabulary list, encouraging disciplinary rather than common word use
- For the second midterm, the students build their own vocabulary list from a case study developing skills and confidence in use of the disciplinary ‘tools’ of language



# Teaching and Learning Practice

Designing



Instructing

Assessing

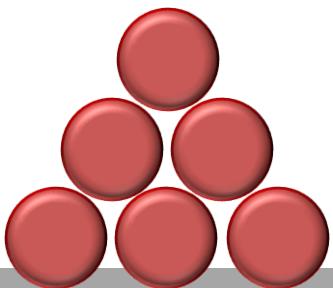
Relating

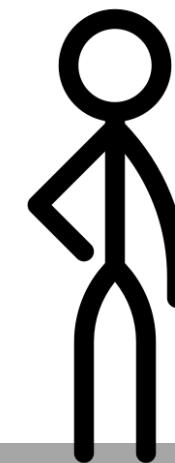
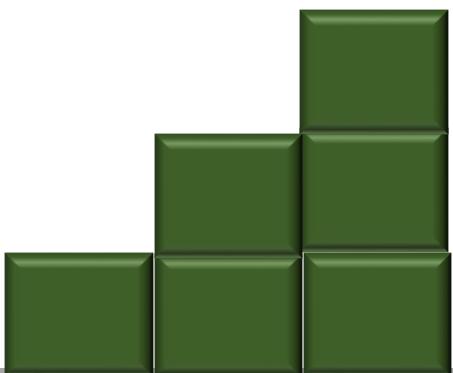
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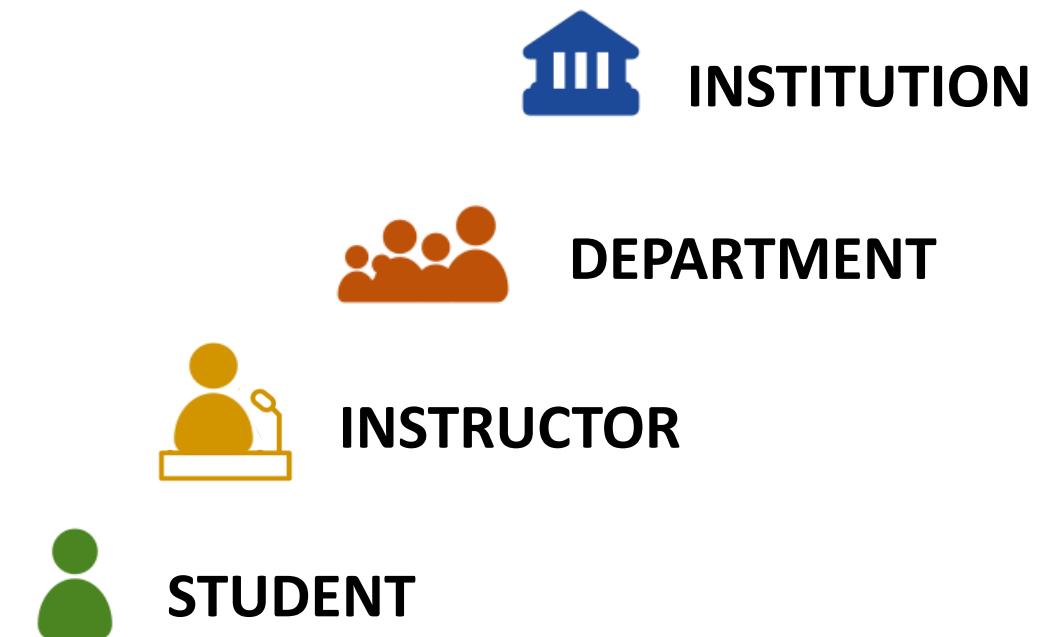
*“I can’t  
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# Context for teaching & learning practice

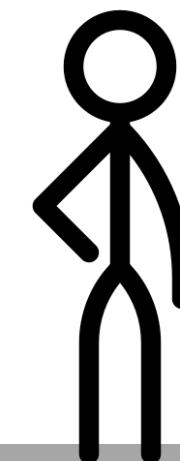


# Context for teaching & learning practice



- ✓ Design programs collaboratively
- ✓ Reward these activities
- ✓ Provide resources
- ✓ Create conducive learning spaces
- ✓ Develop enabling policies
- ✓ Provide enabling systems
- ✓ Provide developmental supports

# How do you teach to accomplish these things?



*I belong*





## Dr. Murray Drew

Last summer, I went to Iceland and rode an Icelandic horse on a tour through a lava field. I am the world's 2<sup>nd</sup> worst rider. Just ask the horse.

What I want to achieve is to inspire you to love animal science and get you involved with animal research.

(This is what I need from you to be successful) I need you to participate in class. Ask questions, challenge me, interact with your classmates. Take control of your education.

Thanks for doing this. I look forward to seeing you next month.





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## Dr. Natacha Hogan

This summer was a bit different for my family and I – we usually spend 3 weeks visiting family on Prince Edward Island where my husband and I grew up. But instead, we enjoyed exploring this beautiful province with lots of camping, hiking, bike-riding and paddle-boarding. Pre-COVID, I was fortunate to spending 5 months in Australia where I was visiting scientist in a research lab. And I also learned to surf – not well ☺.

I am looking forward to introducing you to some key animal body systems – how they help animals maintain balance and proper function.

What I need from you this term is to ask questions and be engaged – but most of all be patient and kind to yourself, your peers and your professors. Teaching and learning may look different this year but our goals are still the same!

Hiking with my family along the South Saskatchewan River



## Dr. Ryan Brook

This summer I have been hanging out with my wife, two kids, and dog Phoenix who is a Shepard/Husky Cross, camping, hiking, and canoeing. I have been very busy doing virtual research on invasive wild pigs, wolves, and caribou using trail cameras and GPS collar data. One interesting thing about me is that I'm a farm boy from Manitoba but I've also been around Canada's North quite a lot, including Pond Inlet, which is 2,680 km north of Saskatoon.

This year I'm really excited to introduce you to the interface between agriculture and the environment and talk and think about how animal production affects the environment and how the environment affects livestock production within a "One Health" context.

What I need from you this term is to work hard at being actively engaged in my short time with you and come with an open mind to be ready to think critically.

I am excited to see you in a few months!



1

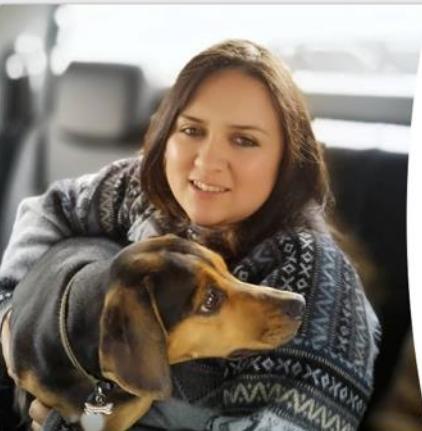


## Katie Harris FYRE project coach

**My name is Katie Harris. I am a graduate student in the Department of Animal and Poultry Science. I was born in a town called The Pas, which is a small Indigenous community located in Northern Manitoba, but I have moved quite a bit in my life to different cities and towns across the Prairie Provinces. I started my post-secondary education in 2014 at Lakeland College in Alberta, where I graduated in 2017 with a dual diploma in Conservation and Restoration Ecology, and Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation. I then transferred to the U of S, where I graduated in June of 2019 with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture in Environmental Sciences.**

I am now doing my master's program with Dr. Ryan Brook. I will be researching urban biodiversity occurrence within the City of Saskatoon, as well as determining social response of residents to urban wildlife. My study will be used to address the lack of urban wildlife monitoring information and minimize human-based threats to biodiversity, in order to implement biodiversity friendly urban planning strategies and minimize human-wildlife conflict.

2



## Alejandra Oviedo-Ludena FYRE project coach

**Hola my name is Alejandra; I am from Ecuador and with me in the photo is my crazy dog Chelita. These last few months I have been working on my wheat essays for my master's degree in Cereal Pathology.**

**One interesting thing about me is that I am the first generation to achieve a college degree. I grew up on a farm surrounded by chickens, guinea pigs, and goats. Sadly, I discovered that I am too sensitive to animals and preferred to work with plants (they don't cry).**

**I am truly passionate about research and my goal at U of S is to gain all the experience and connections necessary to improve disease management in my country. Some people told me that maybe this is a big dream, but the first step starts here. What I need to be successful is confidence and creativity. We will work together to make this class your best experience and I am sure you will fall in love with research just like I did.**

5

3

## Jenna Sarich FYRE project coach

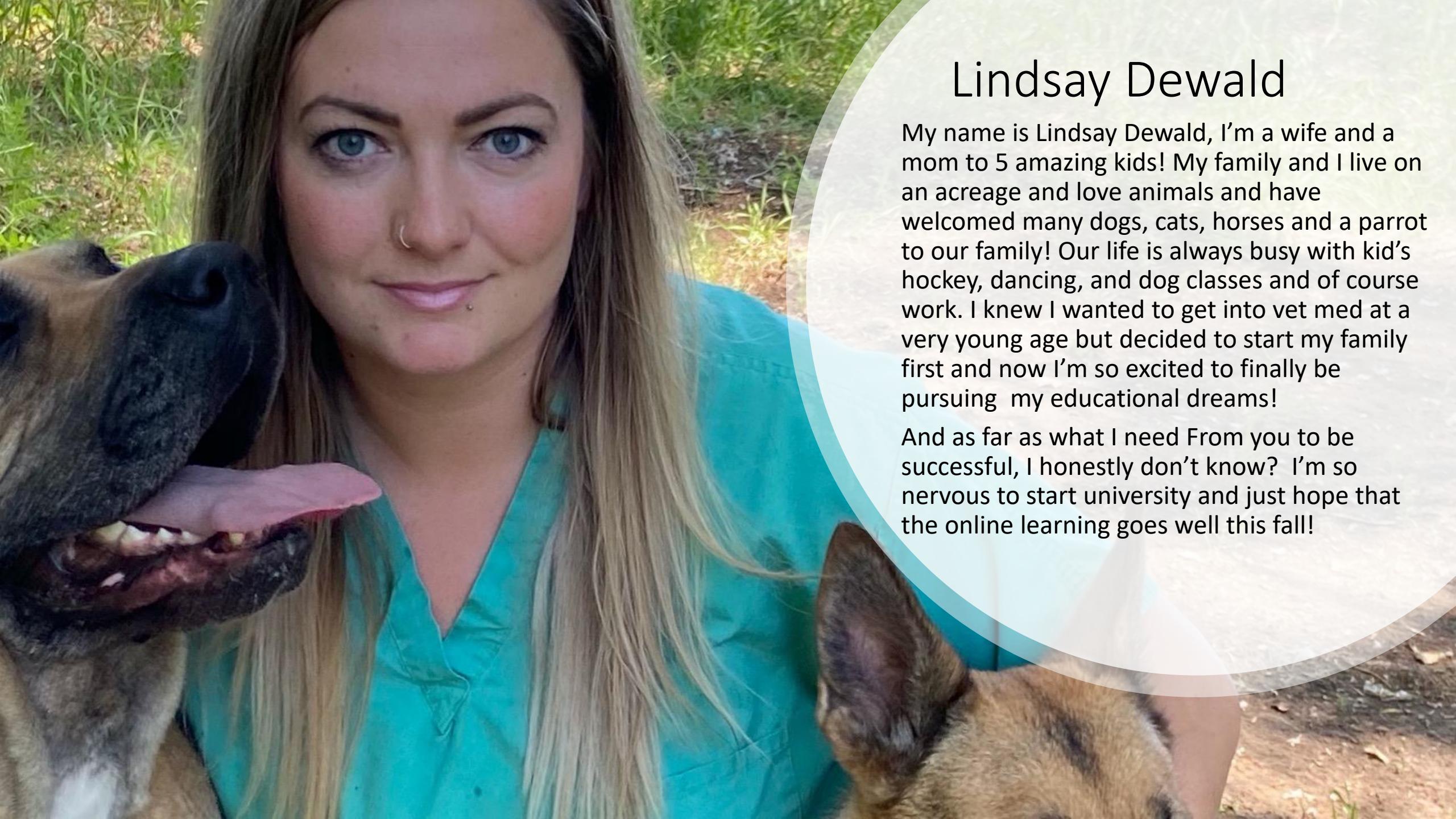
**Hi there, my name is Jenna Sarich and I am from small town Saskatchewan. In my photo is my 15-year old golden retriever Boots. This summer I have been working on my master's project studying ergot alkaloid toxicity in beef cattle. This included a 14-day *in-vitro* RUSITEC trial and lots of literature review. I am now waiting to start my feedlot trial at the new Livestock and Forage Center of Excellence (LFCE)!**

**I have had some interesting experience and the opportunity to work with animals in many different settings and environments. In high school I had the unique opportunity to halter break and train reindeer, while in my fourth year of university I went up to Churchill with Dr. Ryan Brook and executed a research project on polar bears! I have also worked in a swine genetics barn and on a very interesting trial with Agriculture Canada reducing methane emissions in beef cattle. I grew up riding horses and have owned many animals, I now have a hedgehog, horse, donkey, dog and many cats!**

**I am passionate about research and education. I believe learning is the best way to expand your mind. I am looking forward to helping you navigate this class and for you to discover the multiple career paths a career of animal science may take you! Once everyone is back at the university, I hope I can be a friendly face if you have any questions about animal (bio)science, as I have been through it all!!**

6





# Lindsay Dewald

My name is Lindsay Dewald, I'm a wife and a mom to 5 amazing kids! My family and I live on an acreage and love animals and have welcomed many dogs, cats, horses and a parrot to our family! Our life is always busy with kid's hockey, dancing, and dog classes and of course work. I knew I wanted to get into vet med at a very young age but decided to start my family first and now I'm so excited to finally be pursuing my educational dreams!

And as far as what I need From you to be successful, I honestly don't know? I'm so nervous to start university and just hope that the online learning goes well this fall!





## Fieke Krol

I am a Dutch exchange student. I study Animal Husbandry at the HAS University of Applied Science and I wanted to go abroad for a semester. The HAS selected me to go to Usask so that is where I am now. At home, my parents have a dairy farm where we milk 200 cows with 3 automatic milking systems. I enjoy living on a farm and working with cows, so I might take over my parents' farm within a few years.

I came to Canada to develop myself on a personal and educational level. I might lack in writing English, but I expect that the feedback will improve my writing skills.

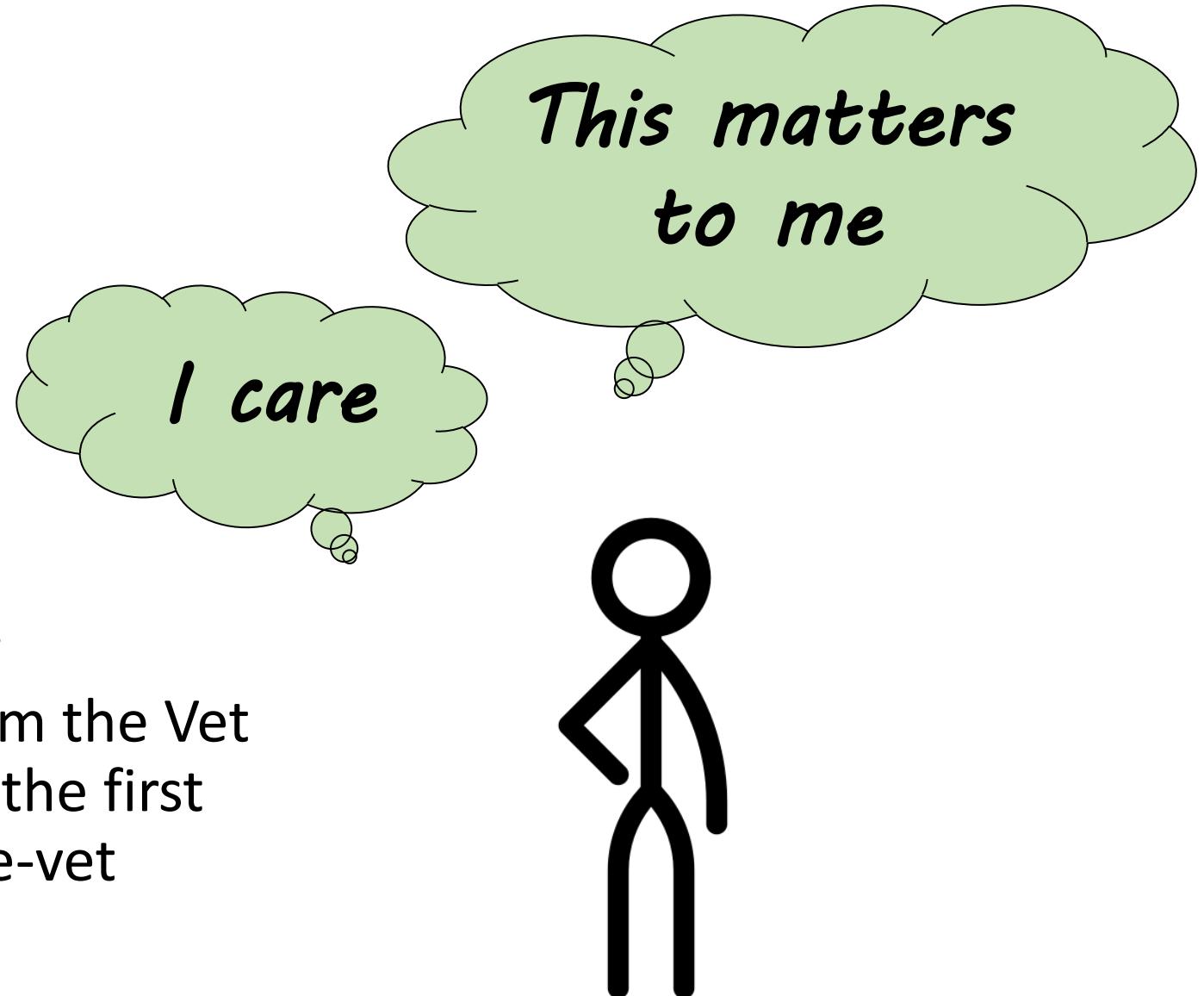
Hopefully, I will enjoy this semester!



## In-class debates

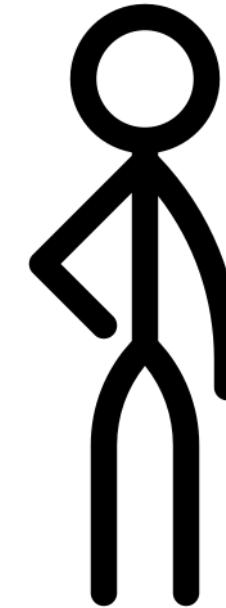
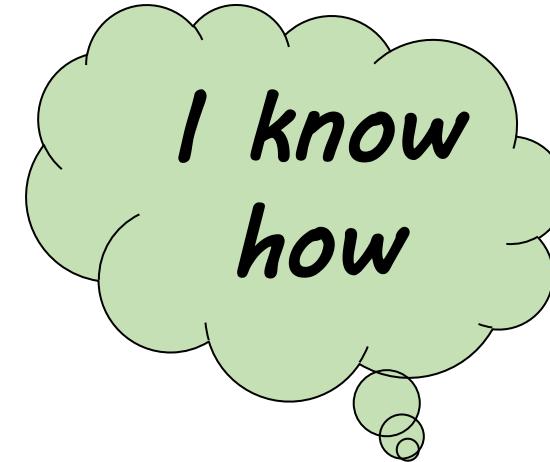
BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

- 90% female
- 90% want to be veterinarians
- Associate Dean Academic from the Vet college speaks to the class in the first week and tells them what pre-vet students need to learn
- We discuss non-veterinary careers



I will...

- explain how to be successful in the course
- provide examples of assignments and show how I mark them using a rubric
- provide feedback, allow for resubmission and remarking for most assignments
- Offer a choice in assignments

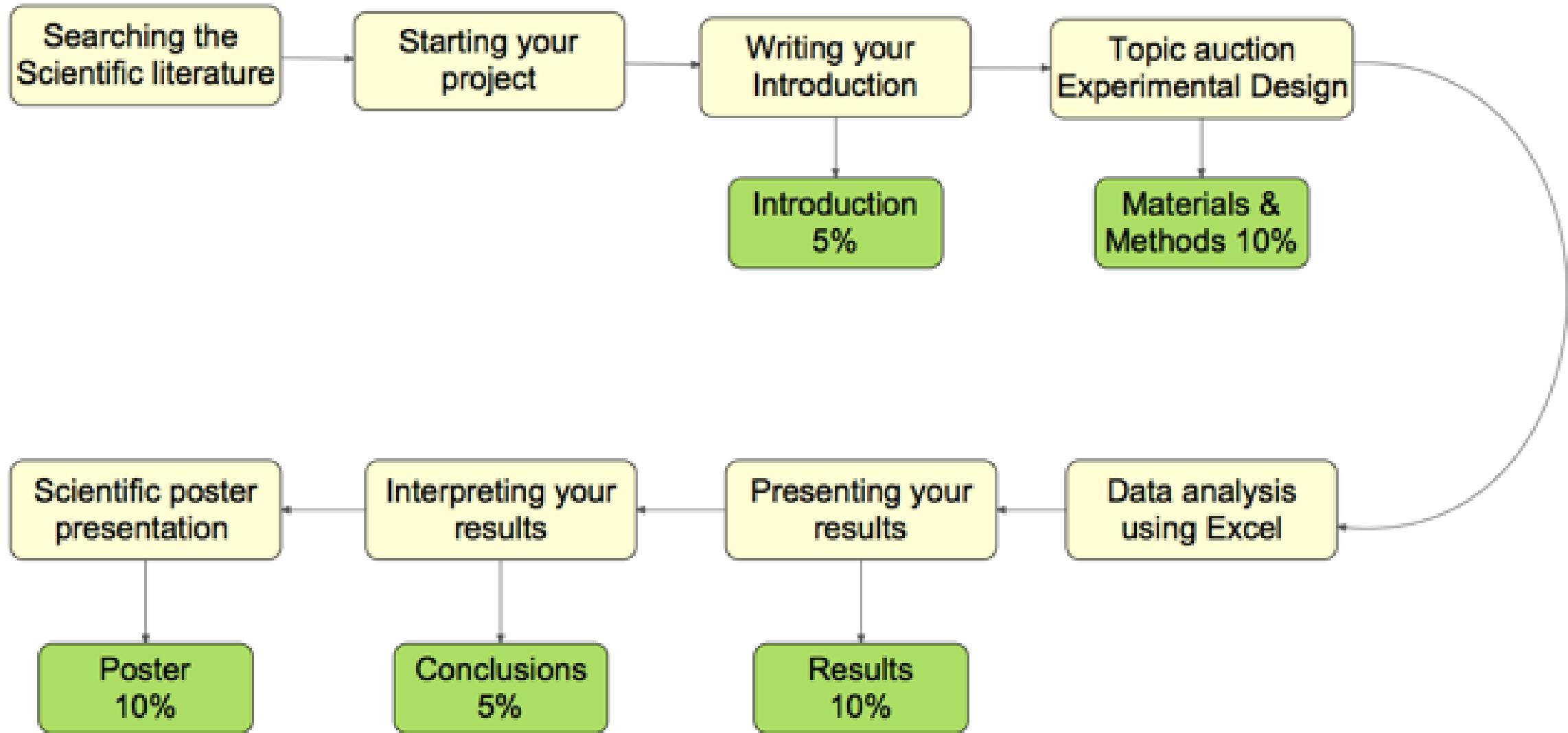


## Laboratories

- Students work in groups of 4
- Research project on a specific animal topic
- Research skills
  - Scientific literature
  - Science writing
  - Using Excel to analyze data
  - Learning the scientific method
- These skills will improve your performance in every course you take



# FYRE Project





# FYRE Labs

BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS



# Talking about mental health in class



# ADHD

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1 HYPERFOCUS

I'VE JUST SPENT 15 HOURS  
RESEARCHING THIS NEW  
HOBBY OF MINE...

WHICH WILL BE GONE BY  
THE NEXT WEEK.



2 WHAT DID I EVEN  
DO TODAY...

I'VE SPENT THE WHOLE  
DAY DOING NOTHING

BECAUSE I COULDN'T  
SPEND 30 MINUTES  
DOING MY ASSIGNMENT,

BUT I DIDN'T ALLOW  
MYSELF TO DO  
ANYTHING ELSE  
UNTIL IT WAS DONE...



3 I'M LOST



NEEDS TO WRITE  
AN EMAIL



OPENS UP  
THE LAPTOP



GETS DISTRACTED  
BY YOUTUBE



SHOPPING AD  
TAKES ME TO MY  
FAVOURITE  
ONLINE SHOP...

3 HOURS LATER...  
WHAT WAS I DOING?

## Depression



## Bipolar Disorder

FEELING SAD OR HOPELESS  
FOR LONG PERIOD OF TIME



PROBLEMS WITH MEMORY  
AND CONCENTRATION



THINKING ABOUT OR  
ATTEMPTING SUICIDE

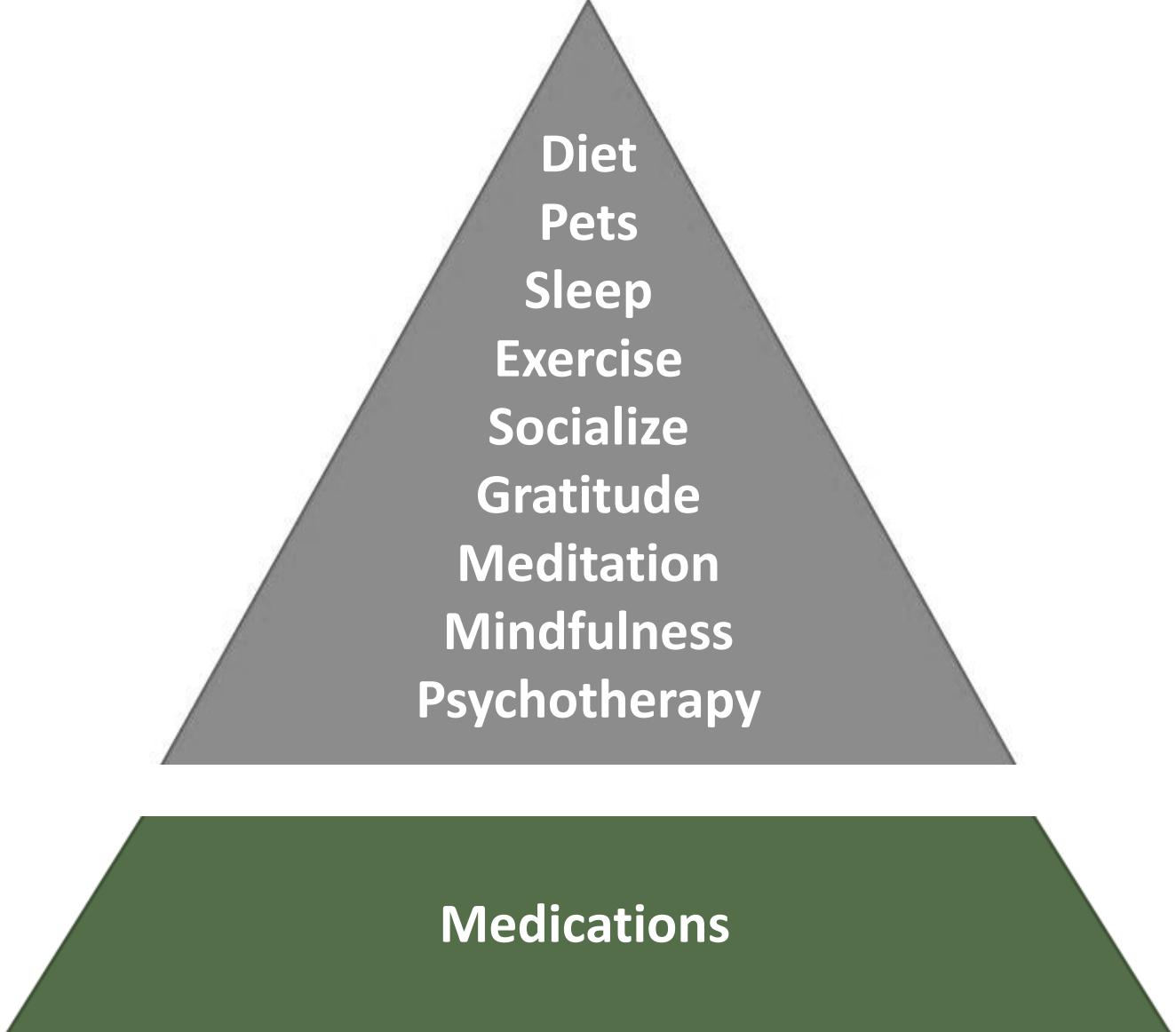


## Mania

TALKING VERY FAST  
WITH RACING THOUGHTS

HAVING OVERCONFIDENCE  
IN ABILITIES

ENGAGING IN RISKY BEHAVIOR  
(E.G. GAMBLING)



Diet  
Pets  
Sleep  
Exercise  
Socialize  
Gratitude  
Meditation  
Mindfulness  
Psychotherapy

Medications

## Meditation in Class



“I have enjoyed taking 3 minutes out of our lecture and dedicating that time to some mindful meditation”

BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

# Student Feedback

## What was beneficial?

“The professor making the point of getting to know us”

“It has allowed me to reconnect with myself and focus on the now”

“This was by far the least stressful science lab I have ever had”

“The class discussions with varying opinions, seeing from other points of view”

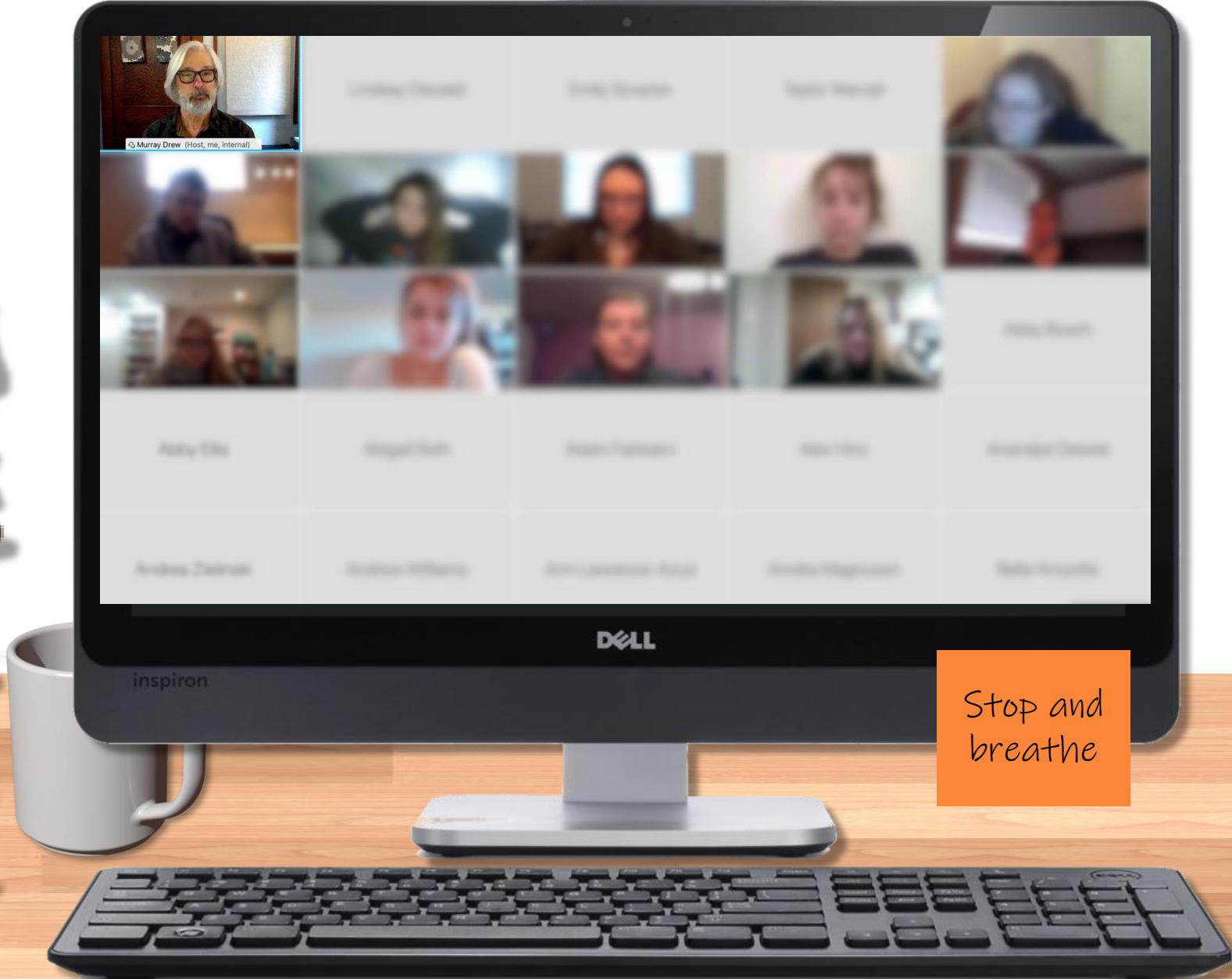
## Suggestions for improvement?

“Don't make us do debates and quescussions. They are more stressful than anything”

“Make us write real midterms rather than essays”

“More comfortable chairs (beanbag chairs would be wicked)”

“I have yet to learn anything, and find this class extremely stressful”



Stop and  
breathe



# Teaching during COVID-19

“

*The people who are good at taking breaks and doing things for themselves are few and far between which is...not good. That's exactly what university is promoting.*

*If you're missing out in your studying or missing out in your sleep or missing out on your friends, that's not good for anyone.*

*This is a generation we're creating. Nobody can take a break. Isn't there a better way...?*

”

## Session Outcomes

By the end of the session, all attendees will be able to:

1. Identify key ways in which teaching and learning practices can influence the mental wellbeing of students
2. Describe teaching and learning practices that enable well-being
3. Identify at least one teaching and learning practice related action that could be taken to improve the mental well-being of students

# Enabling better student/campus mental health through teaching and learning practices

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We'd love to hear what you think and what you're doing at your institution...

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