Brunson (continued)

and had overweight or obesity (82.1%). There were no within or between group differences in F/V intake or cognitions from baseline to post-intervention or post-intervention to LTFU (p<0.05).

Conclusion: These results suggest that HS did not improve F/V intake or cognitions, which is likely a result of several uncontrollable factors. COVID required the adaptation of HS to a virtual format. COVID also negatively impacted recruitment and retention, which resulted in an underpowered study. Also, the SNAP-Ed contract changed scope during the intervention to no longer include adults, so recruitment was cut short. Future research should include a larger sample. Researchers need to be flexible when working with community members and organizations, which could potentially impact research protocols and outcomes but preserves relationships for future partnerships.

**Funding:** USDA

Improving Student-to-Student and Student-to-Instructor Connection Through the Use of a Novel Community-Building Platform

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**Objective:** Compare student connection achieved through Yellowdig to that achieved through typical, online discussions.

**Use of Theory or Research:** Social identification, an important aspect of social identity theory, is the process of identifying as a group member. This process promotes feelings of connection, which is essential for student satisfaction, academic success, and retention. Online discussions are utilized to connect students, yet it is difficult to encourage participation beyond what is required. Thus, new methods are needed to improve connection in online courses.

**Target Audience:** Online, asynchronous students in the Nutrition Education Methods (NEM) course in the Master of Science in Nutrition Education program at American University.

**Curriculum Description:** Yellowdig is an online learning platform that leverages an understanding of human behavior and gameful technology to build healthy online learning communities. Unlike typical discussions where everyone responds to the same prompt, Yellowdig lets students share and discuss real-world content that they feel is relevant.

**Evaluation Methods:** A group of students (n=10) enrolled in NEM were sent a 5-question survey on the online discussions utilized in their previous graduate courses. From strongly disagree to strongly agree, students indicated feelings of connection to both classmates and instructors. Yellowdig was then implemented into NEM as a replacement for online discussions. At the end of the course, the same survey was conducted on Yellowdig.

**Results:** From the initial survey, 20% of students agreed that discussions allowed them to feel connected with their classmates; 50% strongly agreed the same. Additionally, 30% agreed that discussions allowed them to feel connected with their instructor; 20% strongly agreed the same. From the Yellowdig survey, 20% of students agreed that Yellowdig allowed them to feel connected with their classmates; 80% strongly agreed the same. Additionally, 40% agreed that Yellowdig allowed them to feel connected with their instructor; 50% strongly agreed the same.

**Conclusion:** The use of Yellowdig as a replacement for typical, online discussions allowed for a greater sense of both student-to-student and student-to-instructor connection.

**Funding:** None

Inclusion-Promoting Teaching Strategy: Can “Nudging” Activities Encourage Students to Record Their Name and Gender Pronouns?

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**Objective:** To explore if adding ungraded inclusion-promoting activities to the beginning of the semester course orientation module in two online nutrition courses “nudges” students to voluntarily record the pronunciation of their name and add their preferred gender pronouns for sharing within the course and campus community.

**Use of Theory or Research:** Learning the correct pronunciation of a person’s name and addressing them with their preferred pronouns is a sign of respect and helps foster a more inclusive learning environment. Research suggests that nudging, a behavioral theory used in marketing, can be an effective teaching strategy for encouraging students to complete an activity they otherwise might have ignored.

**Target Audience:** Undergraduate students enrolled in two asynchronous online nutrition courses taught by the same instructor at a Midwestern urban university during seven semesters (Fall 2021-Spring 2023).

**Course/Curriculum Description:** Beginning with the Fall 2022 semester, two ungraded, optional activities were developed and added to the course orientation module. One activity encouraged students to record the pronunciation of their name and the other to indicate their preferred pronouns. Students were told completing these voluntary activities was an important step toward helping create an inclusive learning climate.

**Evaluation Methods:** The data set was generated using each semester’s class roster (student’s pronouns and academic level) and the learning management system’s name recording tool. Data from 269 students (n=143; Before, n=126; After) were examined.

**Results:** Significantly more students recorded the pronunciation of their name, 72.1±4.1%; range 67.4-78.6% versus 12.9±9.7%; range 0.0-26.7% (p<0.0001), and more students indicated their preferred gender pronouns, 41.8±11.6%; range 32.1-60.7% versus 12.0±7.5%; range 0.0-23.3% (p<0.01), after the nudging activities were added to the course orientation module. There was no significant difference in the academic level between Before and After students.

**Continued on page 24**