Threading Environmental Sustainability into Occupational Science Education: An Undergraduate Course in Wellness and Sustainable Living

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Undergraduate Minor in Occupational Science | Courses

FIND YOUR PATH

HAPPINESS, PURPOSE, AND HEALTH.

USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy

University of Southern California
OT 312 Creating a Sustainable Lifestyle
Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

• Explain the relationship between environmental sustainability, wellness and daily occupation
• Describe how sustainable living and connection to nature can increase health and wellbeing
• Navigate the commercial and cultural dimensions of everyday life with regards to sustainability
• Provide peer education and health promotion activities related to sustainability
Common sustainable behaviors and lifestyle choices
Outline of Course Topics

• Lifestyle Redesign®
• Cognitive, psychological and physiological benefits of exposure to nature
• Stewardship, conservation and our relationship to nature
• Tempo, the pace of life and mindfulness
• Waste and “stuff”
• Healthy, sustainable food and where it comes from
• Transportation and the built environment
• Water, air and energy on the consumer level
• Chemicals in daily life
Daily activities and lifestyle choices affect health and wellbeing.

- **Self-efficacy** (Burke, 1977)(Gage and Polatajko, 1993).
Course Methods

- Readings, journaling, discussion
- Student presentations and small group projects
- Community outreach
Course Evaluation

- Increase in attendance over eight years
- Student self-report and discussion of behavior changes
- Peer education and health promotion activities related to sustainability

“This course should be required for every student.”
Community Outreach
Joint Educational Project (JEP)

- Students assigned to local under-resourced elementary school
- Students teach course concepts to first and second grade classes

Next Step: Community Garden

- Students have access to a university-owned community garden
- Plan to incorporate gardening into course activities this fall
References


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