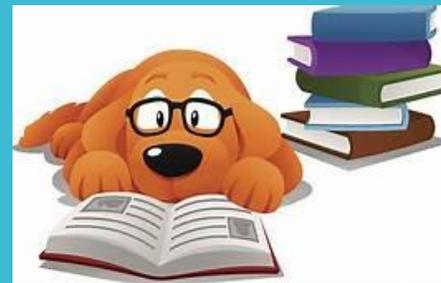


Incorporation of Animal Assisted Interventions Into Educational and Extracurricular Activities for Individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disability Enrolled in an Inclusive Post- secondary Certificate Program

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Our Teaching Innovation

- Collaboration between myself and Professor Sam Bear, an instructor in the Bethesda College (BC) program
- History of previous collaborations
- Prof. Bear's observations that contact with the university's Comfort Dogs had positive effect on BC students who directly interacted with the dogs
- Shared belief that contact with the Lutheran Church Charities K-9 Comfort Dogs would have a beneficial effect on the students in the Bethesda College (BC) program
- Prof. Bear is the instructor for a sequenced series of courses in the BC program titled "Adult Living Skills"

Our Teaching Innovation

- Includes the incorporation of the university's Comfort Dogs into BC student classes and extracurricular activities with the hope that the presence of the dogs, and the direct interactions that the BC students have with the dogs, will have a beneficial effect on the BC students and facilitate enhanced learning.
- Initiated fall of 2020

Lutheran Church Charities K-9 Comfort Dogs

- Trained at the level of a service dog but does NOT have that legal designation...
 - Receives daily training over a 12+ month period
 - 2000+ hours of training
- Focus of Training
 - 40+ Commands
 - Extensive socialization
 - Multiple handlers



Lutheran Church Charities K-9 Comfort Dogs

- Ministry plan
- Deployment
- Community outreach
- Sage: Helps to train students in AAT certificate program

Bethesda College of Applied Learning Certificate Program



- Two-year postsecondary certificate program
- Partnership between Bethesda Lutheran Communities and CUW
- Students receive a “blended” model of instruction centered on their intellectual, vocational, social, personal and spiritual growth

Bethesda College of Applied Learning Certificate Program



- Provides students with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to receive a post-secondary education.
- Prepares students for independent adult living by providing them a full range of college and life experiences.

Bethesda College of Applied Learning Certificate Program



- Sequence of formal instruction in four key areas:
 - **Academics**
 - Career Preparation
 - **Adult Living Skills**
 - **Campus and Community Life**

Bethesda College of Applied Learning Certificate Program



- Students in the program face challenges with their learning.
- Faculty and staff within the program indicate their students demonstrate difficulties with social and emotional engagement, communication, stress, anxiety and depression.
- These difficulties can negatively impact learning and ability to meet educational learning objectives.



Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI)

Animal Assisted Interventions

Animal Assisted Activities

Campus visits
Hospital visits
School visits

Animal Assisted Therapy

Occupational,
Physical, Speech
Therapy
Counseling
Social Work

Animal Assisted Education

Education
Special Education
Formal literacy
programs

Description of the Teaching Project: AAE and AAA

Animal Assisted Education (AAE):

- A handler brings Sage to the weekly Adult Living Skills class for the 1st year BC students, and to the Adult Living Skills class for the 2nd year BC students
- Students are offered time to pet Sage or to have him near them throughout the class
- Prof. Bear has collaborated with me plan learning activities in the course that incorporate Sage and make connections between canine body language and human emotions/non-verbal communication
- A handler bring Sage to several BC student study sessions over the course of the semester



Description of the Teaching Project: AAE and AAA



Animal Assisted Activities (AAA):

- A handler also brings Sage to a weekly optional extra-curricular activity called Bethesda Bonus Time where BC students gather for social interaction time (book club, games, craft activities, yoga, speakers, etc.)



Objectives for our AAI Program

1. Improve social skills
2. Decrease stress and anxiety
 - Which in turn may improve the ability of BC students to learn and meet their educational goals.

Supporting CUW Mission and Principles of Effective Education

- Consistent with the mission of CUW to help students develop in mind, body, and spirit for service to Christ in the church and in the world
- Principles of effective teaching and learning...
 - Active learning
 - Respect for diverse talents and ways of learning
 - Use of assessment and quality improvement

Support from the Literature

For individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), AAls result in...

- Increased social interaction and communication
- Improved control over emotions
- Decreased problem behaviors, autistic severity and stress
- Decreased observed anxiety; increased autonomous actions
- Improved feelings of safety and confidence
- High adherence rates for program attendance
- Enhanced motivation and engagement.

Support from the Literature

Dogs in the classroom: Findings demonstrate...

- Improved reading skills
- Improved academic reading attitudes
- Improved attitudes toward learning
- Decreased stress and anxiety
- Improved social interactions by enhancing motivation, engagement and learning

Measuring Impact

- Social Skills Improvement System – Rating Scale (SSIS-RS)
- Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI)

Thank you!

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