

To: Dr. Erika Paterson, Instructor of ENGL 301 Technical Writing UBC

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Subject: ENGL 301 – Research Proposal for a Formal Report

Introduction

University students are not meeting current public health guidelines on physical activity that support and sustain healthy living. Exercise is essential towards improving and maintaining cardiovascular health. University students spend over six hours a day in sedentary time due to preparation for assignments, lectures, and studying, which impacts their movement time during the day. Studies illustrate that increasing physical activity alternatives for university students resulted in lower stress levels and students felt more energized in their everyday life. Increasing movement or introducing new physical activity methods for university students in their everyday life can lead to physical and mental health benefits that can also support the student's academic wellbeing.

Audience

Undergraduate students at the University of British Columbia with low physical activity incorporated in their everyday schedule and are looking for ideas to increase their physical activity and practice better self-care.

Statement of Problem

Students returning back to on-campus university life or working in a hybrid model with their studies are managing the challenges of an in person or online course schedule no longer from the enclaves of their residential home. As stated by a study review performed at Colorado State University on university students, the environment can influence young people's level of engagement, because of access to fitness centers, gyms or other recreational facilities (Dodge, 2016)¹. During a more hybrid academic environment or needing to study for courses online, individuals are reaching their max screen time due to higher-stress environments for academic

¹ Dodge, J. (26 Sept. 2016). Study finds troubling evidence of teens' lack of physical activity. Colorado State University. Retrieved from <https://source.colostate.edu/study-finds-troubling-new-evidence-of-teens-lack-of-physical-activity/>

studies. This must be addressed better to provide healthy alternatives to reduce sedentary screen time outside of lecture time and encourage more movement in everyday life.

Proposed solution

In 2020, the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology produced holistic wellness guidelines for all Canadians that addressed daily physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for different age brackets. For adults between the ages 18-64 years old, moderate to vigorous physical activity that adds up to 150 minutes a week and lowering screen time to 3 hours a day is highly recommended. For young adults attending university, these parameters can be difficult to achieve due to studying and course schedules, living conditions, and limited accessibility to fitness centers/public parks for recreational use. It is important to provide university students with accessible and low barrier methods to increase their daily physical activity and lower their sedentary behaviour taking into account their unique circumstances.

Scope

To increase physical activity and lower sedentary behaviour by university students, I aim to investigate:

1. What is inhibiting university students at the University of British Columbia from increasing physical activity into their every day routine?
2. What is the primary reason behind prolonged sedentary behaviour by university students at University of British Columbia?
3. How can students incorporate more physical activity into their everyday routine if they are not athletes?
4. What is the financial impact of joining a fitness center/gym in the vicinity at the University of British Columbia?
5. How will increasing physical activity during the week impact students?

Methods

The methods for uncovering this information include interviews with five students at the University of British Columbia and an interview with Dr. Andrea Bundon, a health promotion professor from the School of Kinesiology. The information gathered from first-hand sources will be supplemented by secondary publications with research on exercise, cardiovascular health, and lifestyles of university students.

My qualifications

Academic and professional experience in exercise science and health aids the writer with being able to recommend and encourage physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviour. In June of 2022, the writer will complete their Bachelors in Kinesiology degree focused on sociomedical

sciences. I currently work in healthcare communications supporting oncology patients and my academic experience has been supplemented by ability to recommend exercise options for patients seeking an outlet. My enthusiasm for exercise and tried experiences with juggling a busy schedule provides me with a strong basis to support university students looking for methods to increase their physical activity outlet.

Possible Solutions

- Reviewing lecture videos or audio/reading materials for classes while on a walk outside or while running errands.
- Reviewing lecture videos/audio/reading materials while working out mindfully on an exercise bike or treadmill at a fitness facility.
- Sitting down with a schedule and scheduling 10 min. movement breaks throughout one's day.
- Going for a walk at lunch.
- Using technology viewing platforms to play home videos/Youtube workout channels between classes if able.
- Establishing a steady bedtime routine, with a consistent time and incorporating calming practices to ensure peaceful sleep.

Conclusion

University is a highly stressful time for students, oftentimes being the first exposure for students transitioning into young adulthood juggling a busy schedule and living on their own. Due to the transition period, students can resort to unhealthy eating habits, maintain poor sleep schedules and not carve out time for physical activity due to a heavy academic workload. It is important to provide university students with a vetted assessment of supportive resources that can act as a guide in promoting physical activity and lowering sedentary behaviour. By addressing the five areas of inquiry proposed earlier, the research collected will provide evidence of health benefits that allow university students to live fulfilling, healthy lives during their time at school.