

Personal Health and Fitness for Life- PEGNRL 192

Course Impacts and Content Assessment

Introduction

During the fall semester of 2004, faculty and academic staff instructors for the Personal Health and Fitness for Life (PEGNRL 192) conducted a student assessment. The objectives of the assessment were twofold. First, a set of questions were designed by the faculty and staff that regularly teach the course, in consultation with the department chair, that aimed to measure the knowledge gained by students on improving their physical and emotional wellness. Second, a set of questions were created that measured impacts on the student's perceptions of their self-value, confidence, and potential need to modify social and physical habits to improve their quality of life. Students completed the assessment through a pre- and post-test scenario done at the beginning and ends, respectively of their eight-week courses. Approximately 500 students participated in the pre- and post-surveys.

Discussion of Results

On February 7, 2006 the chair (Dr. Virginia Hicks) of the Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Coaching Department and one member of that department (Dr. Cara Sidman) met with the Associate Dean of Assessment (Dr. David Travis) to discuss the assessment results. It was immediately acknowledged that these data only reflect a short time period of assessment (two 8-week semester courses) and thus, shouldn't be considered a comprehensive examination of the PEGNRL 192 course. However, some tentative inferences were made based on the current data:

1. Students seem to demonstrate improved awareness of methods to maintain/improve physical health (e.g. exercising, stretching, eating habits, etc.).
2. Students did not seem to demonstrate improved social behavior and/or concern of social habits potential affect their physical health (e.g. sexual activity, drinking, etc.).
3. Students generally performed well on the content assessment, showing clear increases in knowledge of a wide range of topics that influence/control wellness (e.g. methods of exercise, nutrition, etc.).
4. Student lacked improvement, and even showed decreases, in social confidence and awareness.

Conclusions

Further discussions between Drs. Hicks, Sidman, and Travis yielded concern that somewhat different populations of students were included in the pre- versus post-tests, and may be reflected in the results. Additionally, it was observed that many of the issues

being addressed in these courses, and considered in this assessment, are only able to be briefly covered due to the course being only 1-credit and 8-weeks in length. In order to improve the impact of this course on students it may be necessary to consider making it a 2 or 3-credit course. Finally, Drs. Hicks and Sidman brought with to the meeting a copy of the recent ACHA-NCHA assessment done on roughly the same number of students enrolled in the PEGNRL 192 course. This assessment, completed in Spring 2005, investigated the physical and social behavior of UW-W students as a means to indirectly measure their physical, social health and safety in comparison to national standards. Although the national normals are not yet available, it was agreed that these findings, in combination with those found from the PEGNRL assessment piece, should be used to consider future modifications to the course. It is anticipated that the course assessment will continue to be done annually and the ACHA-NCHA will be done bi-annually.