Minimalism: Teaching and practicing the pursuit of less

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Learning Outcomes

- Discuss cultural and social pressures that contradict the ideas of minimalism and essentialism
- Introduce the ideas of essentialism and minimalism and how doing less better can lead to transformation
- Apply literature to higher education settings related to purposeful decision making (McKeown, Millburn & Nicodemus, Wright)
- Discuss practical strategies to implement
Why are you here?

What are your core values?
The Engaged Student

8 week study abroad in Italy and Spain

LeaderShape participant and on-site coordinator

Honors ambassador

Project Unbreakable

19-credit hours

Communication Sciences and Disorders student leadership council

Supplemental instruction leader

Student government’s Director of Women’s Affairs

Unpaid summer internship and part-time summer job

Double-major

GRE Prep Course

ElectHer planning committee member

Communication Sciences and Disorders student leadership council

Undergraduate research

Intramural soccer team

Tour Guide

CONNECT conference planning committee member

30 hours community engagement

Resident Assistant

Alternative Spring Break Trip

Tour Guide

8 week study abroad in Italy and Spain
The Engaged Professional

Co-leading an international study tour

Teaching Exploring Leadership as an adjunct faculty member

Managing a budget

Proposing and developing NACADA presentations

Creating annual reports

Advising team meetings

Supervising staff members; meeting one-on-one bi-weekly

Campus events

Orientation Committee Meeting

Assisting Administrators Committee

Attending local, regional, and national conferences

Advising students

Assessing the effectiveness of advising

Weekly staff meetings

Conducting research for publication

Weekly staff meetings

Attending local, regional and national conferences
Lean IN.
Do MORE with Less.
Make the MOST of your opportunity.
Get the MOST bang for your buck.
Seize every opportunity.
No regrets.
YOLO.
Why is this a problem?

- Too many choices
- Too much social pressure
- Idea of “having it all”
- Burnout

Greg McKeown, Essentialism (p. 13-15)
Minimalism?
Minimalism?

I can... but I won't

THE UNDERACHIEVER - A.K.A. SLACKER
Minimalism

“What Minimalism is really all about is reassessment of your priorities so that you can strip away the excess stuff – the possessions and ideas and relationships and activities – that don’t bring value to your life.” ~ Colin Wright

“Minimalism is a tool to rid yourself of life’s excess in favor of focusing on what’s important—so you can find happiness, fulfillment, and freedom.” ~ Millburn & Nicodemus
“IT’S NOT HARD TO MAKE DECISIONS WHEN YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR VALUES ARE”

- ROY DISNEY
Essentialism

“Essentialism is not about how to get more things done; it’s about how to get the right things done...It is about making the wisest possible investment of your time and energy in order to operate at our highest point of contribution by doing only what is essential.”

- Greg McKeown
Less but better.
Pause to discern what really matters.
Choose carefully in order to do great work.

Image from “Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less” by Greg McKeown
Priorities
Purpose
Passion

LIFE IS SHORT, CHOOSE HAPPINESS.
What do I need to do?
Why am I doing this?
What are my goals?
What brings me joy?
What commitments do I have?
Teaching the Pursuit of Less

Sharing Minimalism and Essentialism with Students

I smile to hide how completely overwhelmed I am.
What is your story?
Prioritize

- Don’t **major in minor activities**
- Ask yourself:
  - Does this align with my **goals**?
  - **Who** is making this decision?
  - How does this add **value** to my life?
Prioritize

- **GITS = Giant Internet Time Suck**
  - Avoid at all costs
  - Delete, password protect, unroll.me, etc.
  - Does not add value

How do you spend your time?
Purpose

● Set goals often
  ○ This month
  ○ This Year
  ○ In 5 years

● Focus!

● Get Support
  ○ Who can help me?
  ○ How can they help me?
  ○ Why should I develop this relationship?
Passion

- If it doesn’t add value, then why are you doing it?
- Define WHY
- Self-authorship
  - External formulas making decisions?
  - Reflection

LET IT GO

Disney FROZEN

IN THEATERS NOVEMBER 27
Minimalism

- Re-evaluate regularly
- Change your outlook!
- Find your perfect amount

Minimalism = the perfect amount of something
Practicing the Pursuit of Less

Applying Minimalism and Essentialism for Advisors
Do Less Better

- Commitments
- Possessions
- Housework
- Commute & Idle Time
The Power of NO

- Yes ≠ Default Response
- Release Guilt
- Change your Expectations
- Delegate
- Lower your Standards
Create Change

- Advocate for yourself!
- Ask the tough questions
- Change the culture

I have the power to create change.
Action Plan

1. What is one goal you have to practice minimalism and/or essentialism?
2. Who can help you achieve this goal and/or hold you accountable?
3. What is one commitment that doesn't add value?
4. Identify strategies to help you get started:
   a. ... this week
   b. ... this month
   c. ... this year
References

Thank you!

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