

# Can a Purely Social Intervention Positively Impact Student Learning Outcomes and Perceived Student Learning as Determined by Student Course Evaluations in an Introductory Sport Management Course?

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if a social intervention between a faculty member and a student would improve student evaluation scores and improve student learning outcomes. Retention studies and high impact practices cite the importance of direct contact between the college professor and the student. Students who attain a sense of belonging through a positive faculty/student relationship are more likely to be retained and can experience positive effects on student learning (Klingo et al, 2014; O'Keefe, 2013; Swecker, Fifolt & Searby, 2013; Morrow, et al., 2012). This study took place over the course of a college semester. There were two sections of an introductory course taught and students from one section, N=27, were invited to participate in a social intervention with the professor teaching the course. Students signed up for either a breakfast or lunch time slot over the course of the first nine weeks of the semester. Student and faculty met in a social setting for the meal. The purpose of the shared meal and conversations between student and faculty member was nonacademic, but the student could direct the conversation in whatever direction he or she desired. At the end of the semester, student evaluations on the intervention course were evaluated against the nonintervention introductory course and to the past five years of historical student evaluations. Specifically, questions about perceived learning were examined as well as questions about the enjoyment level of the course. Additionally, student scores on tests and assignments were compared both between the two sections and to the historical scores of students over the past five years. Results indicate that establishing a "social" relationship between student and faculty can have beneficial impacts on student self-reported satisfaction, faculty course evaluations, and learning outcomes.