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Doubt and Conviction: The Path to Meaningful Learning and Development

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Abstract: The Covid pandemic has impacted institutions and the people who inhabit them in unprecedented ways. It is demanding a wide variety of new forms of work and relationship and has siphoned energy and commitment from those activities central to our lives. The classroom is not immune to these effects as attention and commitment to learning have been impacted for both students and faculty. This paper is an attempt to rethink and re-interpret what to do on the first day of a course to maximize the potential that exists in that pregnant moment, especially in these turbulent times. To address these dramatic changes, details of an opening talk are offered that confront the new reality and provide a way forward. This talk is intended to capture students' curiosity and compel them to commit to the time together in the classroom. The impact of the talk is interpreted through deLuse's (2018) three-part model and Dweck's (2006) Fixed and Growth mindsets.

Keywords: knowledge, epistemology, pedagogy, teaching, first day, learning

The Covid-19 pandemic has had far reaching effects on virtually all people and organizations around the globe, including universities and their classrooms. Students, in particular, have suffered from disinterest and lowered motivation (Hicks, Caron, & Smilek, 2021). The use of technology mediated learning approaches have reduced engagement and increased negative learning experiences (Kutza & Cornell, 2021; Serhan, 2020). While the abrupt transition to online education brought many unexpected changes to the learning experience, the pandemic has also increased global anxiety and stress. Governmental interventions such as isolation and the accompanying risk to income-generating work has exacerbated the negative experiences for many. This is especially true for college students who are not known for their deep financial resources. All of this has generated greater fear, loneliness, depression, and anxiety which commonly rise during pandemics (DiGiovanni, Conley, Chiu, & Zaborski, 2004). Given the reduced interest and motivation of students it is natural to wonder what faculty can do to address their experience and stimulate interest and commitment to courses when all around them is turmoil, uncertainty, and confusion.

In response to the heightened challenges noted above, the first meeting of a new course is an especially ripe opportunity to prod and provoke students into being interested or seduced by the possibility of something, anything other than that which is taken-for-granted as to what should/could occur on day one. The first day is a chance to maximize students' curiosity and interest in the course for the balance of the term. Given this reality, the central question is how we can begin a course such that students might declare "that's interesting?" Davis (1971) said this is what people exclaim when they encounter information or ideas that conflict with what they have, for so long, accepted as truth. The new ideas are so compelling that they are unable to dismiss them without consideration. It is a reckoning moment for many.

To take advantage of this ripe moment to stimulate greater interest in the course, I began starting new terms by discussing the exciting possibility college offers students to learn what they don't know, that they do not know they don't know. This is, I think, the most interesting of the four quadrants of the Luft and Ingham (1955) model. The other three include, I know what I know, I know what I don't know, and I don't know what I know. All worthy questions but not near as interesting as

the fourth stated above. This question casts doubt on the veracity of what is known and raises another question regarding what could be known that has not been considered. Confessing our ignorance helps us doubt our convictions. This may very well be the best path toward new learning and offers a chance to reflect on taken-for-granted knowledge, often treated as given, and which stands as truth for them (and all of us). It is also a chance to stimulate their "epistemic curiosity" (Litman, 2008; Sternberg, 1994). This was defined by Litman as "the desire for knowledge that motivates individuals to learn new ideas, eliminate information-gaps, and solve intellectual problems" (2008, p. 1586). The confession creates a receptive frame for new ideas thereby reducing information gaps that could be holding students back from greater success now, and in the future.

In this paper I will discuss my first day approach and the intent to capture the potential of the moment to stimulate curiosity for the course, rather than what is often treated as a throwaway event. After the detailed description of the approach, I have included a section that reports the results of a pre/post measure of students' change in curiosity based on Litman's (2008) definition of epistemic curiosity above. I will then bridge this approach to deLuse's work as an interpretive frame for the classroom and connect to Dweck's work on growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) orientations among students in the wake of the challenges presented by the Covid pandemic. Dweck's ideas can encourage students to focus their attention on new ideas, learning, and curiosity while reducing the emphasis on the typical performance culture so common in college classrooms.

The Problem and the Literature

By the time students reach college they have spent countless first days in classes and have likely developed reliable means by which to approach the experience. Instead of reinforcing a common student perception of this day as meaningless, where little happens and which many may even skip, what might we do to stimulate greater intrigue, participation, and engagement in the course from the very beginning (Hermann & Foster, 2008; McGinley & Jones, 2014; Shor, 2013; Wilson & Wilson, 2007)? It is common to review the syllabus on the first day and this is a worthy task. Syllabi provide rich data on the course, expectations, assignments, rules, schedules, and details. Many also include notes on participation, class and group management issues, and how to succeed in that particular course (Eves & Redd, 2014). These concerns are top of mind for faculty, which is an important part of establishing expectations, but is that enough? What about student interests? Gilboy, Heinerichs, and Pazzagliaa (2015) and others (Ares, 2006; Handelsman, 2011; Watkins, 2005) found that using engagement activities can offer benefits to teachers and learners. Evidence shows that students who are motivated to learn and feel engaged and connected to the professor and the material improve their grades (Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White, & Salovey, 2012).

First day activities can have a pivotal impact on student motivation. This time offers a unique opportunity to leverage that rich potential and jumpstart the course with something provocative that captures the students' curiosities (Mancini, 2017; Robinson, 2019). Hermann, Foster, and Hardin (2010) found that what happens on day one impacts student engagement. For example, initiating learning contracts on the first day has been found to increase student engagement over the term (Chan & Wai-tong, 2000; Litchfield, Mata, & Gray, 2007). Basset and Nix (2011) observed that, along with course fundamentals, students preferred to gather professional information about the instructor, and personal information on their classmates and the instructor. Even a handshake on the first day has significant implications for student perceptions of male and female instructor skills. Of note is the positive impact a handshake had for female instructors, where male instructors were rated as less skilled (Wilson, Stadler, Schwartz, & Goff, 2012). Including something provocative, perhaps even

personal, initiates a norm that this is an exploratory space. Broad and deep discoveries are ok here and bringing all of oneself, the public and the private, to the room is encouraged.

Information about course difficulty and structure were important for those studied by Henslee, Burgess and Buskist (2006). While students are interested in learning "what the professor is like, who the other students are, how instructors and students will behave, and what climate will prevail" (Erickson & Strommer, 1991, p. 87), teachers can punctuate this by including some novel material that unexpectedly captures students' interest. This can increase autonomy in student learning (greater emphasis on student experience and involvement in the classroom) (Cheon, Reeve, & Moon, 2012; Reeve, 2016) which can be supported by the teacher, what Hunt (1987) might call an "inside out" approach to learning. In contrast, students do not prefer course content on the first day of class, nor do they like poor use of class time (Eskine & Hamer, 2017). Activities well received by students include creating positive or negative experiences (LoSchiavo, Buckingham & Yurak, 2002; Wilson & Wilson, 2007); discussing interesting topics to stimulate their curiosity about the course, (Bartsch, 2006; Bennett, 2004; Helmy, 2016), and, engaging with their peers through interviews (Case, Bartsch, McEnery, Hall, Hermann, & Foster, 2008). Gilboy, Heinerichs, and Pazzaglia (2015) found that using a flipped classroom model helped capture student buy-in from the first day of class.

Including students in the logic of the course design and sharing the decision process for why certain elements are included helped students feel "intrinsically motivated" (Black & Deci, 2000, p. 742). Course-related information is relevant, however, it must not be actual course content. Rather, students are more intrigued when the time spent is focused on them and how they can do well. Sharing some surprising details of the field can be a worthy approach to stimulate curiosity, yet instructors would be wise to steer clear of any topics that could be seen as exam worthy. In sum, students need to understand what they are doing and why. The logic of the course, why they should care, how it is relevant to them, and initiating their engagement for shared ownership are all related to the development of epistemic curiosity in beginning a course.

From the other side of the desk, faculty concerns may include tolerating some risk regarding control of the course. The upside of this risk is that students feel considered and included, which initiates interest and engagement. In tolerating that risk Jafar (2014) has found that rather than creating unsurmountable problems, the opposite has occurred. Students rose to the challenge and freedom in meaningful ways, where they felt heard, and that they were doing important work. Roots of this idea stretch to 1996 when Shor recounted the experience of sharing power in a course with students. His book reveals an unconventional approach to teaching and resolving power issues in the classroom, while maintaining his commitment to power-sharing and radical pedagogy. In sum, the literature reviewed is informed by the fundamental assumptions of andragogy (Forrest & Peterson, 2006; Knowles, 1980, 1984; Loeng, 2018) which centers on adult learning. The assumptions include adults' need to (1) know why need to know something, (2) value their experience in learning, (3) see solving problems as central to meaningful learning, (4) see value in what the learning provides, and (5) be treated as independent, self-directed persons who can choose to pursue learning that is most meaningful for them.

Clearly, the first day with students is an opportunity to create a unique experience that leads to engagement and course commitment. This is accomplished by creating experiences that differ from the traditional, highly structured, content intensive session where students may feel some initial pressure of encroaching performance expectations. This is particularly salient in the midst of Covid where distractions are ubiquitous and attention and energy are spread across a host of issues, both personal and professional. Exercises, provocative topics, and careful use of our power are relevant concerns if we want to set a norm that will give students reasons to attend on day two. In the battle against Covid, the following literature suggests that it must start from the beginning.

COVID: Impacts on Learning

As a result of the Covid outbreak many professors and students moved from face-to-face (F2F) instruction to online platforms through such portals as Zoom and WebEx for course delivery. This has had far-reaching impacts on students and their learning. Covid-based impacts on student learning are found in Hicks, Caron, and Smilek's (2021) study of student affect, attention, and time perception. Their work revealed increases in anxiety and nonproductive attention-draining behaviors such as mindless tech use. These were joined by reduced motivation and productive behaviors, and a loss of students' ability to keep track of time. Serhan (2020) discovered negative attitudes and reduced motivation to learn shortly after the transition to online education in the spring of 2020. The single benefit of Zoom was the increased flexibility in learning. Further study by Adnan and Anwar (2020) and others (Pitikoe, Ferreira-Meyers, Bhebhe, Bhebhe, & Dlamini-Zwane, 2021) found that unreliable internet access can be a significant barrier for students at the undergraduate and graduate level in tech-mediated learning environments. Additionally, these authors discovered that the learning experience was further impoverished by the absence of F2F interaction, response time to inquiries, and student socialization.

Institutionally, Covid-19 required a nimble response from universities and their academic departments. Responses ranged frorm the monumental challenge of converting internships into capstone courses (Shine & Heath, 2021) since F2F contact was restricted, to rapid isolation strategies and course redevelopment for a fully online presence (Crawford, et al., 2020). While these responses disclose the quick, at-the-ready mentality of faculty and administration, (Wu, 2020) it does not reveal the accompanying stress that they were suddenly experiencing with nearly half of the semester yet to complete. The Covid crisis also revealed the limited resources or preparation many universities discovered in their institutions. These challenges were in addition to learners who were disadvantaged, and had restricted access to online resources (Zhong, 2020).

That universities are now re-populating classrooms does not mean they have left Covid and all of its negative impacts behind. Many students have faced financial, relational, and occupational fallout from this with no handy remedy available. They now come back to the classroom with variations of the stress and distractions they have been experiencing in recent years. A reasonable question for academics across the globe is how best to serve these learners to maximize engagement and resilience (Greensmith, Channer, Evans, & McGrew, 2023; Rohatgi, 2021; Wilson, 2016) that will result in learning. Below, I will provide details of a specific student-focused approach that captures students' interest and holds it in the Covid-focused environment in which we are now teaching.

Approaches to Day One

The broad assortment of feelings generated by the Covid pandemic can be a formidable opponent as we re-enter classrooms. Wisdom suggests that we consider our approach and what we are trying to accomplish as we do that. Given the work of Hicks, Caron, and Smilek (2021) we know that students may be experiencing conflicting and confusing thoughts and feelings as they try to rebuild their lives in various respects. Our support of them in this process can be informed by Reeve's (2016) work on Autonomy Supportive (AS) classrooms. Reeve described this as "learning activities, a classroom environment, and a student-teacher relationship that will support their daily autonomy" (2016, p. 133). Lee and Reeve **(**2012) suggested that teachers become "in synch" with students as they form relationships that are mutually influential. Students and teachers partner in their influence of each other in the ongoing relationships that evolve, and this impacts what and how all can learn. The

following describes such an example: "the teacher makes a request, students agree but also suggest how that request might be revised or personalized, the teacher accommodates that input" (Reeve, 2016, p. 133). This is further facilitated by the teacher's ability to offer meaningful rationales for what is happening, recognize students' negative emotions when they arise, and reduce controlling language.

An overarching structure that helps achieve what Reeve suggests is provided by deLuse (2018) who encourages the use of activities that focus on three significant needs: content, relationship, and face needs. Content approaches are intended to help students build meaningful connections between the course material and their personal experience. Relationship focused activities reveal connections among students, and between students and the teacher. Face issues relate to the need to preserve dignity and a sense of efficacy for students. Any given activity/exercise/presentation is likely to address more than a single issue as there is some overlap between the three approaches. The activity described in this paper is intended to address all three of these needs. These three categories will be more fully explored in the context of this activity in the Discussion section below.

Doubt and Conviction in Learning – The Opening Dialogue

To combat the dynamics created by Covid, going virtual, and now returning to the classroom I have initiated a new approach to the first day. As mentioned above, I want students to be conscious of the exciting potential that awaits discovery in the classroom and be enthused by that possibility. While I am interested in exploring the content of my field, I am also, perhaps more importantly, interested in exploring what we do not know that we do not know as an avenue to that enthusiasm. By doubting the truth of our convictions, what we believe we know, we temporarily suspend that confidence so that we can ask another question; what else could be known that lies below the water line of consciousness, below the very threshold of any awareness of the question itself? Exploring this domain invites everyone in the room, including me, into a provocative new dialogue of inquiry, fundamentally predicated upon confessed ignorance.

My approach begins by reaching across disciplines to discuss findings from the field of Zoology, a field far removed from the content in a school of business. What do we really know about the animal kingdom, and to which animals have we applied the fundamental attribution principle (Ross, 1977)? By this, I am asking for which animals do we believe we understand their motivations and behaviors and perpetuate these beliefs with no empirical evidence? What would it take to doubt those convictions? Can we loosen the grip on our convictions about animals, and by corollary, topics in the field of management? How might that dislodge established knowledge, or evolutionary "truces" (Kegan, 1982, p. 108). This is what Kegan calls the established stages or balances of equilibrium in our development which are predicated upon our learning. Disrupting them may thrust us into what may feel like an epistemological freefall where what we believed we knew is no longer reliable.

For instance, consider dogs. Dogs are a common presence in society and a personal experience for many. This common experience is a handy container for consideration of what we do not know, that we do not know we don't know. Recent research (Hart, Nováková, Malkemper, Begall, Hanzal1, Ježek, Kušta1, Němcová1, Adámková1, Benediktová, Červený & Burdain, 2013) described dogs' sensitivity to small variations in the Earth's magnetic field. In this article scientists discovered that under stable atmospheric conditions, dogs aligned themselves with the Earth's north/south magnetic field prior to excretion. This behavior was abolished during unstable atmospheric conditions. People commonly understand this behavior as a dog searching for scent or some other metric suitable for completing this daily task. How does this have anything to do with management? The content, in its own right, has no relationship to management. But that is not the point. The facts of this research are, for most, so distant and foreign that they approach the unbelievable, perhaps the nonsensical. This

new knowledge presents as that which we do not know, that we do not know we don't know. *That* is the point. It resides in that fourth quadrant of epistemology, and when encountered, confronts the limits of known knowledge and experience to such a degree that it risks being discarded without consideration. Indeed, this fourth quadrant is the most exciting domain of the four as it not only introduces us to new knowledge, but also to ourselves in a provocative way. The impact in the classroom is palpable. The content of the dog behavior is so novel and unexpected that we all feel a lightness in the room.

Facilitating the Opening Dialogue

Detailed description of this dialogue is provided below for delivery in the interested reader's class. I will follow this with a discussion and connections to theory.

Materials

The article from Frontiers in Zoology and debrief questions below.

Learning goals

1. To confront the usual (for me anyway) tedium that students often bring to a new semester and invite them into a rich and participative experience.
2. To remain available to new knowledge by asking the uncomfortable question about what is missing, that we do not know is missing.
3. To be aware of the risks associated with too much confidence in what we know.
4. To learn to be comfortable with the ambiguity of being uncertain and still having to act.

Overview

a) I begin by acknowledging that here we are, again, starting yet another course. I verbally recognize and grant the challenges that this brings into students' lives given the complexity of life in the 21st century. I meet them in that psycho-emotional space by stating that I, too, am tired and still completing grade debates with students from last term, which is met with laughter.
b) I ask students if they have problems in their lives, like I do (which I say). I assume that all of us have stuff we must deal with as a result of being adults. These are often issues we did not ask for or cause but have to manage. I suggest that if they can solve those issues in the next 2.5 hours (or however long the class lasts) that they go and do so now, no penalty. No one leaves. I then suggest that the problems I am referring to are not the type that can be reconciled in the next 2.5 hours. Many of them are larger and more complicated. Some cannot be solved and simply must be outgrown, or we must wait for them to become irrelevant in our lives. So, if the issues cannot be resolved in the next 2.5 hours, why not settle in and be present? Be mindful.
c) I discuss mindfulness as the simple notion of "Be Here Now." That means bring all of ourselves into the present, especially since we cannot solve those issues that would take us "out of the room." Then I discuss the opportunity that we have to be college students against the backdrop of the world where most of the earth's population does not. I present statistics of the percent of US citizens who have completed a bachelors (23.5%) or masters (14.4%)

degree as of 2021 (US Census) and end with comments about how lucky we are to have this opportunity that most do not.

d) I open a conversation about what there is to learn in this class and others. I let this move into areas that are foreign to us and then share and discuss the 2x2 table shown below:

Table 1. Four quadrants of epistemology

	1b. I know…	1c. I don't know…
1a. I know that…	Q1 I am wearing tan pants	Q2 much about nuclear physics
2a. I don't know that…	Q3 how to play violin – it exists in my preconscious	Q4 ????

(Spoken as: 1a 1b Q1; 1a 1c Q2; 2a 1b Q3; 2a 1c Q4)

e) To punctuate the 4th quadrant, I ask the room if they have ever heard of dogs, and, if anyone in the room has a dog. Some laughs and lots of stories about their favorite pets are shared. Many of these comments suggest that our pets have personalities, much as we do. I then ask if they walk their dogs and if they have seen their dog sniffing around before doing his business. I ask them why the dog engages in those actions. They describe what he is doing and why. I ask them on what evidence they base their explanations of the dog's behavior. How do they know, for instance that their dog is sniffing around for the scent of other dogs, or that he is marking his territory? Crickets. I finish by asking them what dog ever told them that? Then we discuss briefly what we really know about dogs? Finally, I bridge to the specifics of the article and the results that confront what we think we know, and how fascinating it is to learn things that we did not know were learnable due to assumed nonexistence; things we did not know, we did not know.

Results

To measure any difference in students' epistemic curiosity as a result of the event, I administered a pre/post survey using Litman's definition of the construct. Specifically, I asked 25 students to anonymously respond to this statement: "At this exact moment I have a strong desire for knowledge that motivates me to learn new ideas, eliminate information-gaps, and solve intellectual problems." They were asked to complete this prior to any of my comments listed above and again immediately after I concluded, and before the debrief described below. Students were asked to rate themselves on a 7-point Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree. Results of a t-test were statistically significant with $t = 3.844902$ and a p value of .00078. This is significant at the $p < .05$ level. This data suggests that there has been some statistically significant change in their epistemic curiosity as a function of this activity.

Debrief

Experience has shown that debriefing the conversation is best handled in small groups since we are meeting each other for the first time. This increases the likelihood that students will talk among themselves and initiates some relationship among them right from the start. The relationships that

develop model what I hope to create in the classroom as the term unfolds. Below are several questions that can be used to debrief their experience. I rarely use them all.

1. Where in your lives have you been surprised when you discovered what you did not know that you did not know?
2. How did it feel to learn something that conflicted with what you had taken-for-granted as solid truth?
3. What assumptions grounded what you believed to be true, that wasn't?
4. Has this been in your personal, work, school lives?
5. What was the impact of the new knowledge?
6. What did you do differently after you gained that knowledge?
7. What has been the result of that different knowledge and action?

Is the experience provocative? I suspect so. Students' responses have been quite varied. Some are aghast, some are grossed out, some are tickled, and some flatly deny the research results. I do not challenge them on their reactions and have provided the actual article if they believed I was tricking them.

Theoretical Interpretation of Opening Dialogue

The meta-question behind the dog talk is: What could we do on the first day of classes to activate the potential present in that pregnant moment and build hope and anticipation for the balance of the course? This initial class session, so often wasted, is an opportunity to stimulate student reflection on the possibility of class as something rich and meaningful, anything other than the usual, taken-for-granted nothing, which seems common. The traditional use of the first day, with little imagination regarding its potential, amounts to the natural attitude (Husserl, 1962). We do not explore the knowledge that falls within the natural attitude. We do not doubt it. Indeed, we have convictions about what we think we know that prevent us from exploring it and skeptically reacting to contravening data when learned. LeVasseur described the natural attitude as "the ordinary lack of curiosity with which most of life is lived" (2003, p. 417) which seems an apt description regarding typical first-day-of-class activities. It would be wise to take a fresh look at day one in a way that helps shake off the natural attitude and consider some alternative that is different from that to which we have become accustomed. Adopting this alternative introduces us to what Husserl called the transcendental attitude (1962). Here we can begin to see, finally, again for the first time a thing so well known that it has become invisible, never begging for re-evaluation or discernment.

Such re-evaluations can be reckoning moments for many of us as new and compelling knowledge may threaten what we have assumed to be true. Kegan (1982) suggests that this offers an intriguing possibility on our constructive-developmental horizon that does not square with our existing sense of truth, and therefore may upset our current organized epistemological construction. In that space we are likely to feel conflict, some cognitive dissonance between what we "know" and what we have just learned which reduces our confidence and hence, comfort with that "known." Do we cling to the comfort of knowing? Or, perhaps we yield "to the motion of life" (Kegan, 1982, p. 265) and give ourselves to it, with all the disorientation and incoherence that new knowledge brings as we attempt to integrate it into our relationship with reality as we have constructed it? Confronting our historic knowledge construction, which stands as unreflective truth, through the lens of what has just been learned can open new portals for consideration of what are treated as foregone conclusions. Applied in the classroom, this can suspend confidence in what is believed to be known when we ask students: What don't you know (about your life, work, education, relationships) that you don't know you don't know?

Discussion

deLuse (2018) discussed three dominant frames that were introduced above, and which may help organize the first day activity of a course to maximize interest and participation. The dog talk is just such an activity and needs to be interpreted through these three frames. deLuse's first category addressed course content and how students relate to the course material, thereby increasing its meaningfulness. While the content of the dog research is not technically a part of the course, it helps us realize that most of us know far less than we think about many topics, including management, and opens the inquiry among the group. This creates a more honest and transparent approach to each other and the material and how it might have personal meaning for us. This realization opens us to learning from a humble frame, granting that there are likely many content areas we know little about, which could include many of the topics covered in the course.

The second frame of relationships focuses on initiating interactions between students, and between the students and the teacher to initiate some sense of community. Discussing and debriefing in small groups reduces the risk of being seen as unknowing or ignorant, and the judgment of others that may occur in the classroom. This also provides an opportunity to learn about the members in each group which serves deLuse's relationship category. Dogs' behavior, and our ignorance of it, may be a humbling experience that unites us in our honest quest for learning predicated on a shared realization that we all take much of what we think we know for granted. It is an opportunity to delve into our own epistemological foundations with a keen eye for re-evaluation and reconsideration. How is it we know what we know, and by what faith can we have confidence in that knowledge? The revelation of dog behavior, silly as it may be, with no disrespect to our Zoology colleagues, lays us all simultaneously bare in our shared ignorance which strangely, unites us in honest relationship.

The third frame concerns dignity and a sense of efficacy in learning which deLuse calls face needs. Realizing that few of us knew about the propensity of dogs unites us in our humility that we simply don't know everything, and likely know far less than we think we do, about dogs and of course, what else? This public experience of shared ignorance, including the professor's, relieves all of us of the need to "look good" in the eyes of others. It helps us let go of our human need to be right, increases the likelihood that we see the course as a learning space more than a performance space, and increases the potential for rich discovery.

The opening talk on dog's behavior assumes the absence of this knowledge of their behavior by attendees, which has been borne out in my experience. The details of dog behavior are far removed from anything most have imagined. Hence, content is found not so much in material directly related to a course or ourselves, but to content related to nothing currently known; it is a zero/sum phenomenon - we knew nothing, we now know something. The power of this information is in how it is *not* related to our personal experience; that is what punctuates it and makes it poignant. Relationship needs are served by this dynamic. Due to the incredulity of the canine science, we are united in our horror-struck response to this data. It is comforting to know that while perhaps a particular student did not know this, the reality is that none of us knew and this bonds us together (Bastian, Jetten, & Ferris, 2014; Coates, Rosenthal, Schecter, 2013; MacMahon, Stenfert Kroese, Jahoda, Stimpson, Rose, Rose, Townson, Hood, & Willner, 2015). Finally, face needs are served in that no one can be embarrassed or lose their dignity if everyone is ignorant. Again, a shared and bonding experience creates a sense of relationship in the room.

The three parts of deLuse's (2018) work highlight Dweck's (2006; Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Kroeper, Fried, & Murphy, 2022) notions of fixed and growth mindsets. Fixed mindset people are characterized by the assumption that they understand what they know, and that if they do not know or understand something it is simply a physical limitation of their neural software. There is

little motivation to try to learn or understand as the person with this orientation simply believes they have reached a fundamental limit of their ability, and nothing can alter that reality. This may be characterized by the phrase often heard on campus where a student proclaims "I am just not good at math." Growth mindsets, by comparison, react to this lack of knowledge, understanding, or ability with a fundamentally different response. Confronting what are seen as limits by the fixed mindset person, the growth mindset person believes that with additional effort, study, or practice she will be able to alter her plastic neural limits and expand her repertoire of knowledge, skills, or abilities.

Those who already maintain a growth mindset are likely more often tickled at the novelty of the dog science. Those with a more fixed orientation may feel united with growth mindset students in that they just realized that they, too, can learn things that they may have considered beyond their limits. When we feel ourselves in the presence of others who are humbled in publicly revealed ignorance, we often feel instinctively drawn to them in a shared sense of unity and that we are not alone in our own ignorance. This classroom experience is often met with smiles, and nervous but relieved laughter; relieved in how unlikely it is that others (not just us) could have known this detail about dogs as it is so far removed from the curriculum of any business student. Perhaps results would be dramatically altered were this to be demonstrated in a Zoology class or in veterinary school.

Inviting students to consider unorthodox and nontraditional ideas as relevant to the course and their personal development helps establish a norm of exploration and curiosity based on a collective and public confession of ignorance by everyone in the room, including the teacher. This helps to focus attention on learning, rather than performance. This also suggests that there are many avenues to knowledge, and exploring seemingly unrelated notions can, if managed well, be figural in our ability to understand course content. This broad approach to learning may offer novel interpretations to the course and other courses that we may be taking/teaching, and bridge to the realm of personal insight. To wit, the opening comments related to dogs reveal that we can explore many avenues, some controversial and unorthodox, in our learning. While this opening vignette may be provocative, it sets a tone of tolerance for strange and odd points that can lead to learning. In addition, the confession by the instructor that he did not know this canine detail unites the class, students, and teacher in a shared quest for learning and knowledge. From the very beginning the talk establishes a culture of curiosity, questioning, and knowledge seeking, characteristics of an andragogically focused learning space, rather than one of showboating knowledge already acquired.

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