

Using Collaborative and Expressive Writing Activities to Educate First-Year Students about Alcohol and Drugs

Jennifer Ann Morrow, Ph. D.
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN, USA

Substance Use in College

- 🍺 Risky drinking is a common phenomenon worldwide
 - 🍺 Australian universities (Hallett et al., 2014)
 - 🍺 Chinese universities (Ji et al., 2012)
 - 🍺 European universities (Wicki et al., 2010).
 - 🍺 USA universities (NIAAA, 2013).
- 🍪 Marijuana is becoming increasingly popular on college campuses (Suerken et al., 2014).

First-Years and Substance Use

- 🍺 Students typically increase their use of alcohol during their first year of college (Fromme et al., 2008; Nguyen et al., 2011; Ross & DeJong, 2008).
- 🍺 Marijuana use is the most prevalent illicit drug on college campuses with about 46% reporting ever having used it (Johnston et al., 2011) with many (@20-25%) initiating use in their first-year of college (Mohler-Kuo et al., 2003; Pinchevsky et al., 2012).

First-Years and Substance Use

- 🍺 Numerous short and long term as well as primary and secondary negative consequences are related to substance use in college (Mallett et al., 2013; Palmer et al., 2012).
- 🍺 Scott-Sheldon and colleagues (2014) conducted a meta-analysis and found that first-year students who received an intervention during their first year reported both lower quantity and frequency of drinking as well as fewer negative consequences.

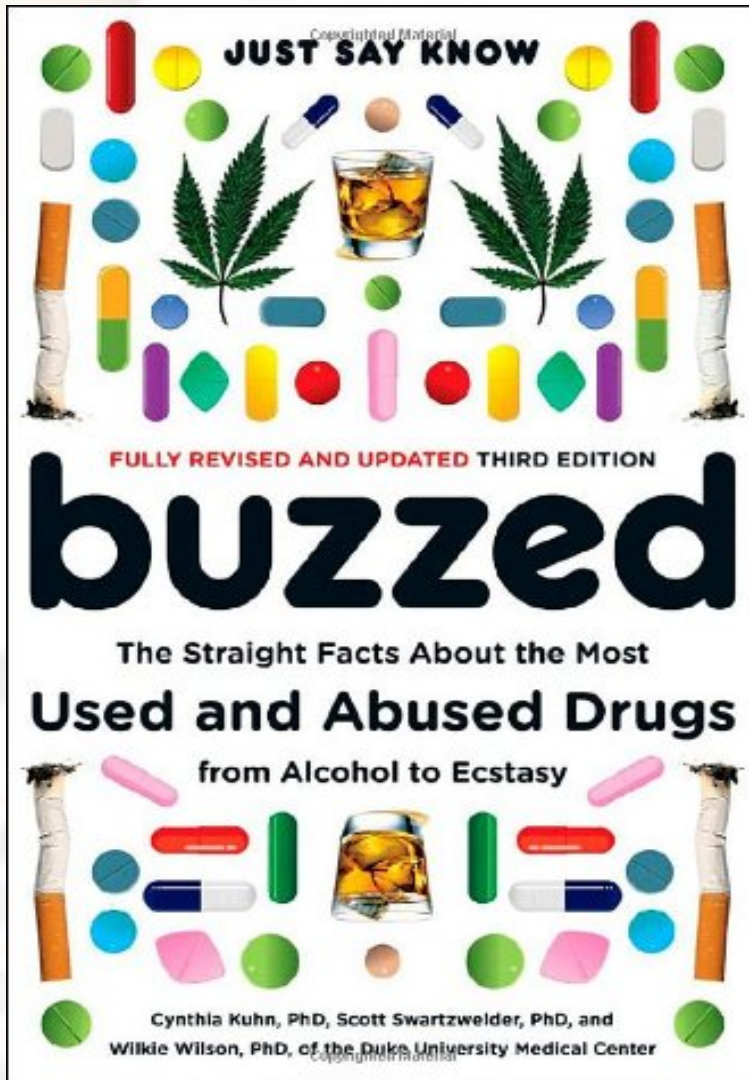
First-Year Seminar (FYS 129)

- 🍷 One-credit (Pass/No Credit) seminar for first-year college students.
- 🍷 Taught by faculty and administrators and may be on any topic of their choosing.
- 🍷 Students meet either once a week (full semester) or twice a week (1/2 session) in a class of no more than 18 students.

Alcohol, Drugs, and College

- 🍷 This first-year seminar is focused on research and myths regarding college students' alcohol and drug use.
- 🍷 Students in this seminar will read relevant literature in this area and discuss what they know/don't know about alcohol and drugs.
- 🍷 We will review common myths and discuss research on the use of alcohol and drugs in the college environment.

Alcohol, Drugs, and College



- Weekly collaborative activities
- Focused expressive writing on alcohol and drug use and campus perceptions
- Legalization of marijuana debate
- End-of-class reflection

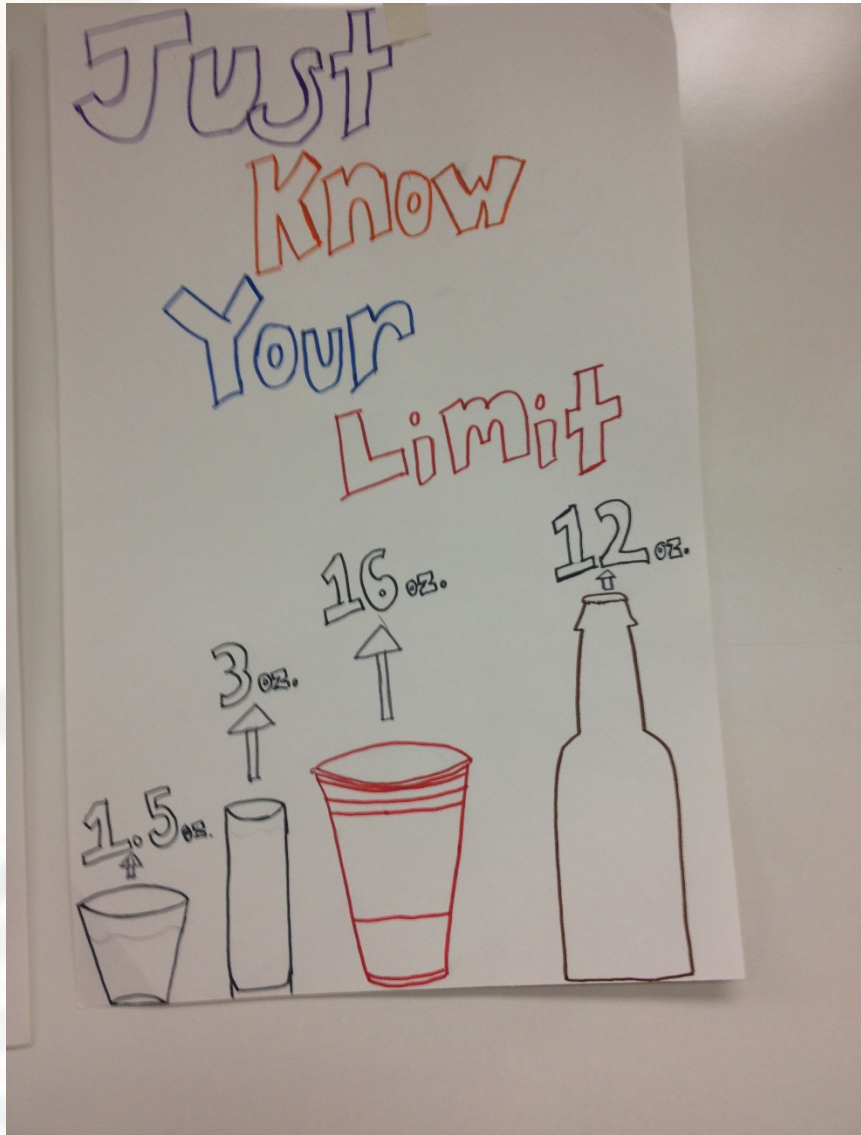
Collaborative Activities

- Small group (4-6 students) activities
 - Benefits and risks
 - Fact vs Myth
 - Positive and negative consequences
 - Prevention posters.
- Large group (18 students) activities
 - Video and song reactions
 - Community officer demonstrations
 - Field sobriety demonstrations
 - Alcohol and drug jeopardy
 - Drug bingo.

Collaborative Activities

BENEFITS OF MODERATE DRINKING	PRIMARY CONSEQUENCES OF EXCESSIVE DRINKING	SECONDARY CONSEQUENCES OF EXCESSIVE DRINKING
Happy Social More likable Increased revenue for bars/restaurants Fun Tastes good Less inhibited Decrease in risk of heart attacks Reduced risk of stroke Live longer Reduced risk of type 2 diabetes Reduced risk of cancer Reduced risk of respiratory problems Increased HDL levels (good cholesterol) Stress reduction Increased appetite in elderly patients Reduced symptoms from arthritis Reduced risk of parkinsons disease Reduced blood pressure Decrease in blood clotting Reduction in blood insulin levels Reduction in anxiety Reduction in risk of developing dementia What is safe? 1-2 drinks per day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 ounces of beer • 8-9 ounces of malt liquor (ex: Colt 45) • 5 ounces of wine • 1.5 ounces of 80-proof spirits (hard liquor) 	Increased risk of injury Lower class attendance Increased risk of missing work Chance of being arrested Poor grades Fighting Falling Getting behind in schoolwork Blackouts Increased risk of sexual assault (women) Unprotected sex Dui Car crashes Dependence Burns Drowning Suicide Unwanted pregnancy Increased feelings of loneliness Expensive Dropout of school Broken relationships (family, significant other) Reduction in short-term memory Crying Increased risks of strokes Brain damage Interactions with medications Death Increased estrogen Impaired fertility Increased sexual dysfunction Regret Hangovers Cessation of menstruation (women) Unplanned sexual encounters	Increased medical costs Higher insurance premiums Lower work productivity Increased crime Damage to property Kill someone Injure someone Fetal alcohol syndrome Noise in neighborhoods Accused of sexual assault Need for increased staff in community settings (bouncers, police, RAs) Disappointed parents Increase in renting fees Robbery STDs Changed perceptions of you Interrupted sleep Having to take care of drunk roommate Messiness Arguments Feeling humiliated getting others in trouble because you are drunk Excessive drinking costs U.S. 223.5 billion (2006), or about \$1.90 per drink (workplace productivity, health care expenses, criminal justice, motor vehicle crashes)

Collaborative Activities





Collaborative Activities


B	I	N	G	O
Sympathetic	Benzodiazepines	Depressed Brain Functions that Support Life, Particularly Breathing	Monoamine	Family and Friends
Gamma-Hydroxybutyrate (GHB)	Atherosclerosis	Ambien	Pruning of Neurons	Alcohol
Amphetamine	Epileptic Seizures	~FREE SPACE~	Anxiety	Decongestants
Amnesia	Cocaine	Liver Damage	Injection	GABA
Flunitrazepam	Paranoia	South America	Appetite Suppression	Narcolepsy

Collaborative Activities

Videos for discussion

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AK9fK9QDRT0&index=11&list=PL455C241E0A504BEB> (college drinking song)

 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wh_nZi uFC4o&list=PL455C241E0A504BEB&index=70 (effect of bath salts)

 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iW_fsb3Dqw&index=75&list=PL455C241E0A504BEB (crystal meth before and after).

Expressive Writing Activity

- 🍺 Students write in an online journal at least once a week for four weeks.
- 🍺 Instructs them to focus on their experiences and/or what they have witnessed on campus.
- 🍺 Asks how these experiences make them feel and how they dealt with them.
- 🍺 In last week they are also asked if they perceive that there is a problem with alcohol/drugs at UT.

Expressive Writing Activity

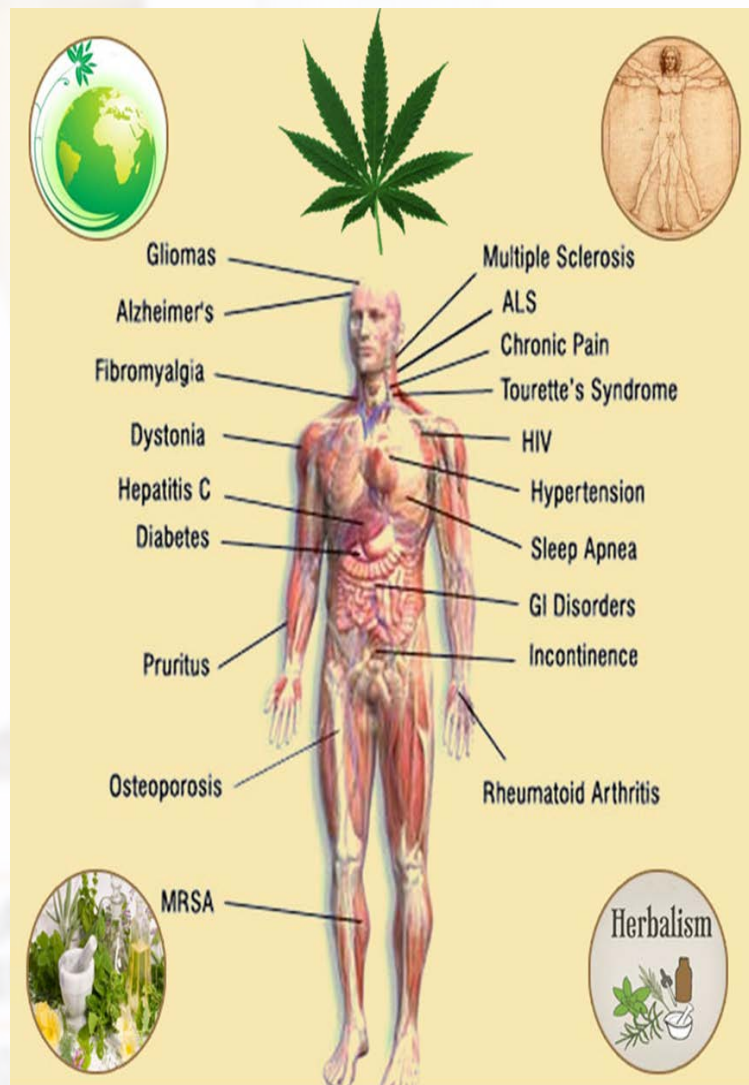
🍷 “Since the first week of school, I have seen many students participating in the consumption of drugs and alcohol. I can easily say that many people on campus find it hard to have sober fun.”

🍷 “I feel ashamed that I embarrassed myself a little that night because people have been talking about it all week. Now I know how to be more responsible.”

Legalization of Marijuana Debate

- 🍺 Students work in assigned groups to create their arguments for the debate.
- 🍺 Must review relevant research and provide evidence to support their arguments.
- 🍺 Can use videos, ads, pictures to enhance their arguments.
- 🍺 All group members must participate in the development and delivery.

Legalization of Marijuana Debate

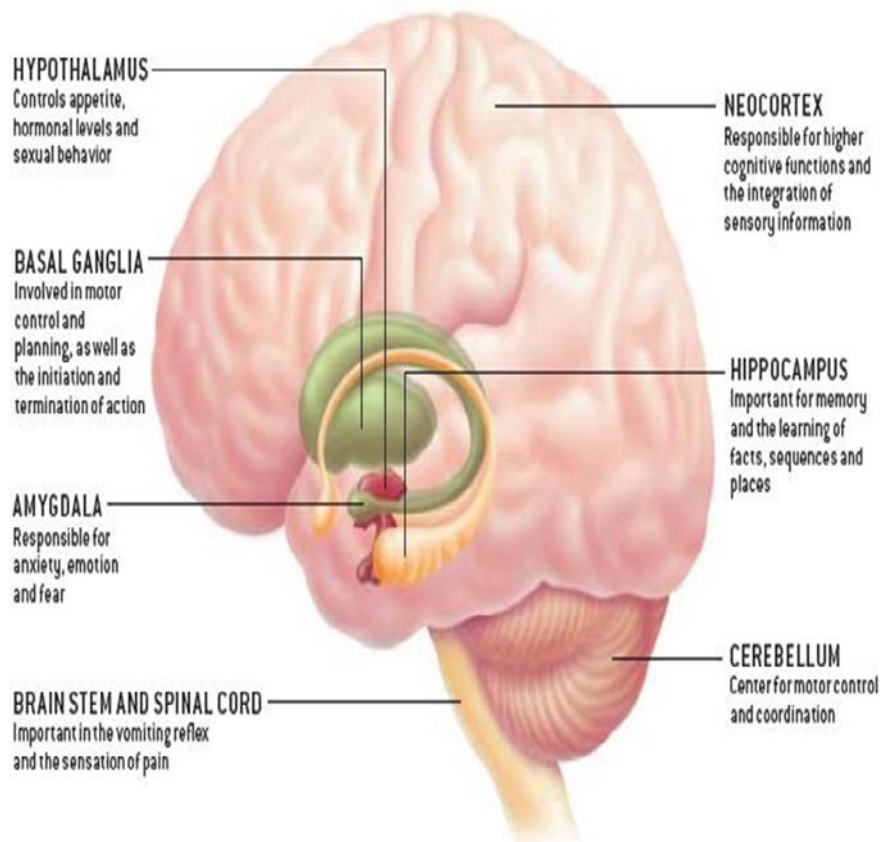


Potential Therapeutic Uses of Medical Marijuana

WHERE MARIJUANA ACTS

The drug *Cannabis sativa* binds to the brain's own cannabinoid receptors in many different areas, including those highlighted below. This widespread influence accounts for the diverse effects

the drug—and its relatives made by the brain—can have and offers exciting opportunities for devising medications that can specifically target certain sites to control, say, appetite or pain.



Class Reflection

- 🍷 At the end of the semester students complete a confidential online reflection activity.
- 🍷 Questions asked:
 - 🍷 New information they learned
 - 🍷 What surprised them
 - 🍷 Favorite and least favorite discussion activity
 - 🍷 Did their beliefs and/or behaviors regarding alcohol and drugs change
 - 🍷 Suggestions for improvement to the course.

Student Feedback

🍷 Most students reported an increase in knowledge regarding these topics

🍷 “The information I learned was quite intriguing because I knew these kinds of drugs existed but I did not know how drastically it could affect a person”

🍷 “I definitely will take a lot from that lesson and be better in the future when it comes to drinking”.

🍷 Many liked the use of collaborative activities versus just lecturing”

🍷 “Working with the group on the debate made me closer to some of the class”

🍷 “I think the posters made the topic a bit more fun. It allowed us to be creative”.

Student Feedback

- Many reported their awareness regarding negative consequences had increased and has made them modify their behavior
 - “I am more informed about the effect. I will be more careful about what I consume”
 - “My behavior towards alcohol did change...I will actually take time to process exactly what I was doing. ”
- Students suggested reducing the readings and including additional activities where they could work in small groups.

Suggestions for Instructors

- 🍺 Present recent research on all sides of the topic. Utilize locally based articles when appropriate.
- 🍺 Incorporate collaborative activities whenever possible.
- 🍺 Utilize online journaling to keep students engaged in the topic.
- 🍺 Be flexible...take time to discuss topics that are most interesting to students.

Contact Information

Jennifer Ann Morrow, Ph. D.

University of Tennessee

Dept. of Educational Psychology and Counseling

1122 Volunteer Blvd.

Knoxville, TN USA 37996-3452

Email: jamorrow@utk.edu

Dropbox link: <http://tinyurl.com/efye-Morrow>

My social media:

http://web.utk.edu/~edpsych/f_s/morrow.html

<http://www.slideshare.net/jamorrow>

<https://twitter.com/evaluatindi va>

<http://evaluatindi va.blogspot.com/>