



Final Report on a Professional Development Grant in Course Curriculum Internationalization



Expanding the Cultural Scope of Living Lovingly*

****Living Lovingly is a personal development course that utilizes poetry as the creative medium for self reflection and self exploration. This course is designed (online & in-person formats), continually developed and currently taught by Ali Esteghlalian at PCC Community Education.***

The actual final report for this grant is captured in a *Google Slides* presentation entitled: **PCC Grant_Final Report052021_Esteghlalian** that includes the teaching material for conducting a few sessions on the subject of 'living lovingly' using material and ideas from Persian and Japanese languages. The following is intended as a set of guidelines for other instructors on 'How to Use the Material.' Instructors and all other Interested parties at PCC and any other institution of higher learning are encouraged to contact Ali Esteghlalian (alireza.esteghlalian@pcc.edu) with questions or suggestions regarding this material.

The 'Final Report' presentation contains 3 independent sections that may be utilized either as a whole or as separate, independent modules for facilitating workshops or formal teaching sessions on a variety of topics such as *Self Exploration, Self Expression, Love & Compassion, Meditation & Poetry, Creative Self-Reflection*, etc. These 3 sections are as follows:

1. Initial Creative Warm-up & Group Mediation

The instructor states the name and purpose of the class and invites students to participate in a quick flash-poetry exercise and a brief meditation. The purpose of these exercises is to help participants connect to the class by engaging them in a show-and-tell exercise using a limited number of words.

Teacher will provide only 1-2 minutes for this exercise, and will call on students to share their responses. While the teacher may choose to write down the words shared by the students to exhibit interest and attention, he or she should refrain from making judgment calls on the content of students' responses to encourage and foster self-expression throughout the class and help students share their thoughts and feelings without the anxiety or worry about being judged or embarrassed in the class.

To calm the participants and facilitate their presence and connection to the class, the teacher will then invite the students to sit quietly in a relaxed position while keeping their eyes closed and listening to a 1.5-min calming piece of music that will be played by the teacher. This music is included in the presentation. After the completion of this exercise, the teacher will invite students to open their eyes and reconnect with the class by taking a few deep breaths.

2. Using Persian Poetry (Rumi's) to talk about love and compassion

The teacher will begin the session by providing a brief overview of the life of Jalal-al-Din Rumi, the 13th Century Persian Poet, and will then recite a piece of his poetry in Persian (when possible) or English or both. This is to familiarize the audience with the style and flow of Rumi's poetry, originally written in Persian. The teacher will then invite the guest speaker or the students who wish to participate in reading different pieces from Rumi's poems and will then briefly discuss each piece in the class. The teacher will also explain to students that they are not expected to provide technical critique of the poet's work but to look inward and think about what the poetry and its flow, words and imagery brings up for them. Students should be frequently encouraged to express themselves and share their thoughts and feelings with the class.

3. Using Japanese Style Poetry (Haiku) to express passing emotions

The teacher will begin the session by providing a brief overview of the purpose and structure of Haiku in Japanese culture and poetry. This is to encourage the audience to think about seemingly insignificant moments of their lives, and to notice how a variety of beautiful expressions can be created if they just begin to focus and pay attention to each and every moment. The teacher will then invite the students

to read a few Haikus in the class and share their reactions to each piece. The teacher can also show one or two images on the screen and ask the students to write a Haiku about each image by following the Haiku rules discussed at the beginning. Students will then receive an 'activity' for home that involves writing two Haikus, one about an image selected by the instructor, and one about a moment that each student chooses for himself or herself.