

Enhancing the Well-Being and Academic Experience of Higher Education Students. The CRAFT Program: Theoretical Framework and Preliminary Research

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Abstract

The CRAFT program, grounded in mindfulness, yoga, positive psychology, and emotional intelligence, was conceived as an art of being and a neuroeducational method for self-actualization, fulfilment, and well-being to attend to the highly demanding challenges affecting higher education students involved in specialized educational fields. Since 2017, the CRAFT program—the acronym of which reveals its five elements of *Consciencia*, *Relajación*, *Atención*, *Felicidad*, and *Transcendencia*—has been curricularly implemented as CRAFT-based subjects at the Royal Conservatory of Music of Granada, Spain, once a week for 60 min during the entire academic year. The main purpose of the following work will be to explain the theoretical framework of the CRAFT program and provide a summary of the preliminary research findings supporting its potential role for enhancing student musicians' well-being and academic experience across physical, psychological, cognitive, and emotional dimensions with implications to other educational contexts. Some of the main reported findings from pre-post quasi experimental studies conducted with higher education students musicians include significant improvements in mindfulness skills, positive reappraisal, psychological well-being, and physical flexibility and balance; higher perceived benefits and proactivity amongst CRAFT participants than controls for leveraging CRAFT practices to improve their health and well-being during the lockdown; and a series of perceived benefits related to the five CRAFT elements such as enhanced conscious awareness, emotional self-regulation, psychological distress, mind clearance, concentration, wellness, vitality, hope, equanimity, positivity, and resilience. Further research within longitudinal mixed methods studies will need to be invoked to substantiate these findings.

Keywords: mindfulness; yoga; meditation; positive psychology; student musicians