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"Pursue Some Path": Green Space as a Self-care Method
Caitlin Masterson
Western Oregon University



**WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF
WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY HAVE EXAMINED THE ENCLOSED**

Action Research Project Title:

"Pursue Some Path": Green Space as a Self-care Method

Graduate Student: Caitlin K. Masterson

Candidate for the degree of : Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

*and hereby certify that in our opinion it is worthy of acceptance as partial fulfillment
of the requirements of this master's degree.*

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Date: 12.13.19

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ABSTRACT

This action research begins with an exploration of “Green Space,” a theory that claims nature has a deep and meaningful impact on the psyche. Green Space has been shown to help reduce anxiety and increase attention, creativity, and memory. The Transactional Theory Framework is examined in tandem with Green Space theory. The transactional theory is a means to evaluate the processes of coping with stress and stressful events. I applied the concept of Green Space as a primary self-care method and then collected and analyzed data. I looked at how Green Space combats stress and burnout. Additionally, I explored in what ways Green Space impacts my work as an American Sign Language/ English interpreter. I did this by viewing and/or participating in a Green Space event, collecting data via daily journaling, as well as writing pre and post journal entries, and creating work samples.

Keywords: Green Space, stress, interpreting, self-care

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

I am an interpreter in the K-12 setting. Both the fields of interpreting and education are known to be demanding and stressful settings (Humphrey, 2015; Samuels, 2018). This research explores “Green Space” as a self-care method. Green Space is a somewhat recently popularized theory that claims nature has a deep and meaningful impact on the psyche. Green Space has been shown to help reduce anxiety and increase attention, creativity, and memory (Barton, & Pretty, 2010; Barton, & Rogerson 2017; Berman, Jonides, & Kaplan, 2008). The term Green Space appears in the literature in several different formats, such as Green Space, green space, green-space, and greenspace. The convention in this Action Research project is to use Green Space. Definitions of Green Space throughout the research also vary greatly. Broadly, Green Space is publicly accessible areas with natural vegetation (Kit Campbell Associates, 2001; CDC 2009; Lachowycz & Jones, 2013). Within this research, Green Space will be defined as any contact with the natural environment.

Chronic stress is emotionally draining and can lead to a more serious condition called burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Self-care is behaviors or strategies that help mediate or reduce the effects of burnout (Humphrey, 2015). As such, self-care is very important to immediate and long-term wellbeing.

I applied the concept of Green Space as a primary self-care method and then collected and analyzed data. I looked at how Green Space combats stress and burnout. Additionally, I explored in what ways Green Space impacts my work as an American Sign Language/ English interpreter. I did this by viewing and/or participating in a Green

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Space event, collecting data via daily journaling, as well as writing pre and post journal entries, creating work samples, and writing about my feelings regarding my work samples.

Statement of the Problem

One of the reasons I wanted to explore self-care strategies was to be more adaptable in my interpreting style thereby allowing me to match a wide variety of consumers. Since I interpret five days a week in a K-12 setting with one specific student I had noticed my interpreting had become very idiosyncratic. Particularly, I had noticed that because the student I work with requires a lot of redirection my stamina had declined, and my sign choices were very habitual. I hoped that by using Green Space I would feel less stress and anxiety in general. This, in turn, would allow me to more comfortably talk about my work thereby permitting growth and improvement of my interpreting skills.

I chose to employ Green Space as my self-care method because the climate where I live gets large amounts of precipitation and therefore has copious amounts of greenery. The Pacific Northwest (west of the Cascade Mountain Range) is known for its public lands, hiking, and natural spaces. Prior to the start of my research, I occasionally went hiking on the weekends. As I began my research, I continued to enjoy the natural spaces around me by hiking but with much greater intention.

Although more and more publications are discussing Green Space (Dobson, 2018; Lambert, 2019; Suttie, 2016; University of Sheffield, 2019) as a self-care method there are no articles that discuss the benefits of Green Space to interpreters specifically. Interpreters could benefit greatly from reduced stress and increased attention and

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creativity. It is my hope that through this action research my own work will show some of these improvements thereby opening the door to continued research.

Theoretical Frameworks

As previously mentioned, research focuses on Green Space as a self-care method. Green Space, in this research, will be defined as contact with the natural environment. In recent years Green Space theory has become more and more publicized. It is a theory in which there is evidence that being in nature impacts our brains and behavior. It helps reduce anxiety, fixation, and stress (Barton et al., 2016; Cole & Hall, 2010; Gidlow et al., 2016; Nisbet & Zelenski, 2011). Additionally, Green Space has been shown to increase attention, creativity, and our abilities to connect with others (Kaplan, 2001; Suttie, 2016).

That said, research on Green Space as a theoretical framework is lacking. Lachowycz and Jones (2013) state “there is no comprehensive evidence-based conceptual framework which documents key theoretical relationships and specifies likely causal mechanisms by which greenspace may influence health” (pp. 33-34). They went on to create a theoretical framework with their focus on Green Space in city parks, landscape and urban planning (Lachowycz & Jones, 2013). A majority of the framework is identifying what factors may influence the health benefits of Green Space. The researchers clarify that while other research attributes physical health outcomes to physical activities and psychological to exposure to nature, their framework intentionally shows physiological and psychological outcomes are linked and does not attempt to pair them with any specific influences (Lachowycz & Jones, 2013). The theoretical framework identifies three encompassing factors that influence the effects of Green

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Space. They are: Opportunity to use Green Space, Personal Motivation, and Ease of Use (Lachowycz & Jones 2013).

Due to the fact that my research is centered on self-care *and* stress, I have chosen to also use the Transactional Theory Framework. The transactional theory, also sometimes referred to as the transactional model of stress and coping, is a method for assessing the processes of coping with stress and stressful events (Ashley, & Cort, 2007; Lazarus, 1966; Antonovsky, 1979; Antonovsky & Kats, 1967).

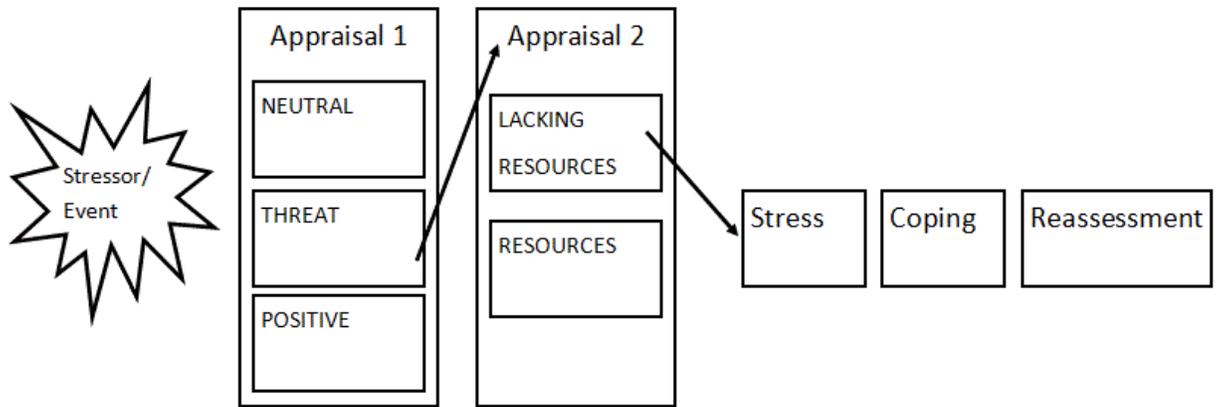


Figure 1.1 *Revised Transactional Model (RTM) Adapted from Goh et al. (2010)*

Fig 1.1. Proposed model based on the Revised Transactional Mode (RTM). Adapted from "An Asian perspective of occupational stress coping model: A case study of Sri Lankan employees," by Y. Wah Goh, S. Sawang, T. Po Oei, and D. Ranawake, 2012, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Organizational Psychology*, 5, pp. 25-31. Copyright 2012 Australian and New Zealand Journal of Organizational Psychology

Figure 1.1 is the Revised Transactional Model (RTM) by Goh et al. (2012). It incorporates concepts from Lazarus and Folkman’s (1984) transactional theory as well as Karasek’s (1979) job demand and control theory (Goh et al., 2012). Within the theory, the individual is thought to assign meaning to the stressor. Figure 1.1 shows that when a stressful event occurs, one’s primary appraisal process (PA) will determine if it is a threat or not. If it is a threat the secondary appraisal (SA) process is activated to determine if the individual has the resources to handle the event (Goh et al., 2012). This means that the

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same stressful event may affect individuals differently depending on the “meaning” assigned and how equipped they are to deal with the stress. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) explain that stress is the result of the transaction between the whole person (physiologically, and psychological) and their personal environment.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The field of interpreting has been shown to be a high stress, demanding setting (Samuels, 2018; Humphrey, 2015). This is due, in part to the complexities of interpreting and American Sign Language (ASL)/English interpreting in particular. Conveying the meaning of words is not enough, interpreters must also impart information involving cultural differences and social cues. (Bontempo, Napier, Hayes & Brashear, 2014; Dean & Pollard, 2013; Humphrey, 2015; Roberts, 1997).

Additionally, because ASL is visual and English is auditory ASL/English interpreters are often expected to work simultaneously, meaning they translate between the two languages at almost the same moment (Frishberg, 1990; Schwenke, 2012). Simultaneous interpreting leaves very little time to process and requires quick thinking and decision making.

Another contributing factor to stress for interpreters is role strain. Humphrey (2015) defines role strain as “a situation or event involving multiple, conflicting responsibilities, unexpected situational requirements, and/or ethical dilemmas as well as the resources to manage those demands” (p3). Role strain can be positively or negatively impacted by things such as education, pay, workload, injuries, intrapersonal relationships, autonomy and self-care (Humphrey, 2015).

Chronic stress is emotionally draining and can, therefore, lead to burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). According to Maslach et al., (2001), “burnout” is psychological/emotional exhaustion which can cause a lack of empathy or detachment (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 2). Conversely, Self-care is behaviors or strategies that help mediate or reduce

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the effects of burnout (Humphrey, 2015). As such, self-care is very important to maintain or improve psychological and physiological health. Self-care can include many aspects of health. Green Space Theory incorporates physical self-care, as well as psychological self-care (Lee, Park, Tsunetsugu, Kagawa, & Miyazaki, 2009; University of Sheffield, 2019). The literature review will provide a basis for this action research project.

Stress and Burnout

Early research on interpreters' perception of stress was first performed in 1986 (Heller, Stansfield, Stark, & Langholtz, 1986). Their research concluded, “sign language interpreting is extremely demanding work – emotionally, intellectually, physically, and ethically” (Heller et al., 1986, p.432).

Memory is an important skill for interpreters to possess. They must hold on to several utterances while simultaneously reforming a message. Stress can have a large impact on our ability to recall information. Schwabe, Joëls, Roozendaal, Wolf, and Oitzl, (2012) describe the 3 steps to forming a memory and indicates that where stress occurs in the process can influence memory recall in different ways. Stress can sometimes make a memory easier to recall if it is applied in the formation stage; however, Schwabe et al., (2012) state that stress before a recall event (such as a test or interpretation) will make it more challenging to remember the material.

Excessive stress can, at times, lead to burnout (Humphrey, 2015; Maslach et al., 2001; Schwenke, 2012). Burnout is a psychological syndrome in response to chronic stress, “depersonalization” and reduced feelings of personal accomplishment that occurs most commonly among those who work with other people (Maslach, et al., 2001).

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Maslach and Jackson, (1996) categorize burnout with three subcategories: Emotional Exhaustion, which refers to “feelings of being overextended and depleted of one’s emotional and physical resources;” Personal Accomplishment, or “the feelings of incompetence and a lack of achievement and productivity at work;” and lastly Depersonalization, or “the negative, callous, or excessively detached response to various aspects of the job” (Maslach & Jackson, 1996, p. 192). Detachment can be detrimental to any professional, yet it is particularly important for interpreters to be able to work effectively with others.

Interpreters are only needed when two or more parties need to communicate, and they do not have a common language. If there were no other people involved in the process, the interpreter would not be necessary. Interpreters may also work with a team. As the name implies, this is two or more interpreters working together to translate between languages (Hurwitz & Witter, 1979). Because stress and burnout can affect one's ability to effectively work with others we must seek self-care to combat stress and burnout.

Self-Care

It is important to have a foundational knowledge of what self-care is before exploring the positive influences of Green Space. Self-care is defined as any self-initiated practice whose purpose is to increase or maintain physical, emotional, or mental wellbeing (Humphrey, 2015). Wellbeing, however, is much more difficult to define.

Dodge, Daly, Huyton, and Sanders, (2012) describe the challenge and proposes a new definition in their aptly named article *The challenge of defining wellbeing*. Within the article are a handful of definitions that seemed clear and easily applied. For example,

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“wellbeing stems from individuals’ perception of their current situation and their aspirations” or “As well as feeling satisfied and happy, wellbeing means developing as a person, being fulfilled, and making a contribution to the community” (Dodge et al., 2012, pp. 224-225). It is worthy to note that these descriptions included concepts like self-perception and contribution. That said, for the purpose of this action research, I will be utilizing the new definition proposed by Dodge et al. (2012, p. 230). They say “wellbeing is when individuals have the psychological, social and physical resources they need to meet a particular challenge, it is the balance point between an individual’s resource pool and the challenges faced.” This is not unlike Dean and Pollard’s Demand-Control Schema (2001).

The theory the interpreting field knows as the Demand-Control Schema is based upon occupational research that was later adapted by Dean and Pollard (2001). Karasek’s (1979) job demand and control theory, mentioned previously with Transactional theory, noted that individuals who had less decision latitude in response to challenges or demands would experience more stress and burnout, and, conversely, those who had more options (controls) experienced higher job satisfaction and effectiveness. Dean and Pollard (2001) streamlined these definitions to state that demands are, “Requirements of a job, which may include aspects of the environment, the actual task being performed, and other factors that ‘act upon’ the individual” (p. 2), and controls are, “Resources the interpreter has at her or his disposal or a response the interpreter offers in light of assignment demands” (p. 14). Or to use the metaphor provided in *The challenge of defining wellbeing*, “when individuals have more challenges than resources, the see-saw dips, along with their wellbeing, and vice-versa” (Dodge et al., 2012, p.230).

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Dean and Pollard (2001) then examined demands and controls in the interpreting profession specifically. They categorized four types of demands that affect interpreters: environmental demands, interpersonal demands, paralinguistic demands, and intrapersonal demands. Environmental demands are challenges that relate to the setting. Interpersonal demands are challenges relating to the interactions between people. Paralinguistic demands are challenges that coincide with consumers' expressive communication. Finally, intrapersonal demands are challenges that pertain to the internal psychological state of the interpreter (Dean & Pollard, 2001).

As previously mentioned, controls are skills, decisions, or other resources that an interpreter may bring to respond (or not respond) to the demands. Therefore, the term “control” refers to the host of characteristics, abilities, and actions that contribute to effective work.

As Goh et al. (2012) suggested, both the Demand-Control Schema and the definition of wellbeing proposed by Dodge et al. (2012) are rooted in the transactional theory. They could be considered a subcategory under the transactional theory. Within the transactional theory framework, stressful events are understood to be “person-environment” transactions. The impact of the event depends on how an individual judges the stress and what social/cultural/environmental resources they possess (Lazarus, 1966; Antonovsky, 1979; Antonovsky & Kats, 1967). Similarly, in the Demand-Control Schema, one must classify a demand and choose how to respond. In the definition of wellbeing, one would have to classify the degree to which the stressor will tip the sea-saw (Dodge et al., 2012, p.231).

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The transactional theory first emerged around the 1960s and 1970s when stress was considered to be an exchange dependent on the individual to assign meaning to the stressor. It was also around this time that many theorists published works discussing the theory and applying it to various fields such as psychology and health (Lazarus, 1966; Antonovsky, 1979; Antonovsky & Kats, 1967).

Based on the transactional theory, the Demand-Control Schema and the definition of wellbeing provided by Dodge et al. (2012), it can be concluded that self-care is a self-initiated practice that maintains the balance point between psychological, social and physical resources and the demands we face in life.

Green Space

The idea that Green Space can help improve an individual's health and mood has existed for quite some time. In 1984, American biologist E. O. Wilson introduced the theory that humans evolved with nature and in doing so developed a fondness for nature. It was around this same time that the concept of “Forest bathing” emerged (Qing, 2018). Forest bathing is, as it sounds, surrounding and saturating oneself in nature (Qing, 2008). Kellert and Wilson (1995) expanded on Wilson's theory to say individuals will experience less stress and increased positive affect when in environments that contain the resources necessary for our (evolutionary) survival, such as natural spaces with water sources and vegetation. Since that time there have been numerous studies that discuss the positive impacts of Green Space. Whether it be lowered mortality rate and blood pressure (Lee et al., 2009), reduced stress and depression (Barton et al., 2016; Cole & Hall, 2010; Gidlow et al., 2016) improved attention and cognition (Berman, Jonides, & Kaplan, 2008), increased self-esteem and overall wellbeing (Nisbet & Zelenski, 2011;

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Barton & Pretty, 2010) or even reducing ADHD symptoms (Faber & Kuo, 2011), Green Space has proven beneficial to health.

While the research supports that Green Space benefits health, there is a division over the duration of time needed to experience those benefits. Cole and Hall (2010) state that most “wilderness trips are typically of sufficient duration (a few hours at least) for restoration to occur” (p. 808). However, Ulrich et al. (1991) reported signs of some benefit after events as short as four minutes. Another researcher described some benefits after 10 minutes of exposure to Green Space (Berto, 2005).

One notable difference is Kaplan (2001), who explains that a glimpse of nature through a window may be enough to benefit health. She calls these opportunities “micro-restorative experiences” (Kaplan, 2001. p. 511). Kaplan goes on to explain that the repeated glancing opportunities are most likely what allows the brief view of Green Space to be beneficial.

Most researchers agree that to experience greater benefits one must increase the duration of exposure to Green Space or the frequency in which the exposure occurs (Berto, 2005; Cole & Hall, 2010; Kaplan, 2001).

Another aspect that may affect the level of benefit an individual may receive from Green Space is their demographic information. For example, age may play a role in that individuals that spend more time at home have been shown to be more influenced by Green Space. This is most often older adults who no longer work, and young children (Lachowycz & Jones, 2013). Lachowycz and Jones also mention that women have a stronger relationship with Green Space, however they are also more influenced by safety concerns (Lachowycz & Jones, 2013). Ethnicity is also mentioned; white people tend to

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view Green Space more favorably, and therefore they also experience greater health benefits (Lachowycz & Jones, 2013). The last demographic mentioned by Lachowycz and Jones (2013) is socioeconomic status. Those with lower socioeconomic status are more likely to live in apartments or smaller homes without yards. This group is also heavily influenced by Green Space (Lachowycz & Jones, 2013). The implication drawn by Lachowycz and Jones (2013) is that the health benefit of Green Space is greatest for those who need it most.

Self-Reflective Practice

Interpreting is sometimes referred to as a practice profession (Dean & Pollard, 2013; Peterson, 2012). This is because interpreting requires “complex, social context judgments and skills [that] are crucial supplements to one’s technical abilities” (Dean & Pollard, 2009, p.1). The process in which interpreters analyze their own cognitive processes is called reflective or intentional practice (Dewey, 1933; Schön, 1987). Regular reflection is then said to maintain or improve interpreting performance (Ericsson, 2001). "... the interpreter will impact the message by the decisions she made when constructing the target text, whether she is aware of it or not, whether it is intentional or not" (Janzen, 2008, p. 185). When we as interpreters take time to reflect on choices and actions we increase our awareness of our impact. Interpreters might reflect on the decisions they made and classify them as effective or not. If our choices are not effective, we can create a plan for what to do if the situation arises again. One possible way for an interpreter to reflect is through journaling.

According to Hubbs and Brand, (2005) reflective journaling provides a conduit for inner dialogue. It allows the writer to connect their thoughts, feelings, and actions.

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“Journaling, as a learning strategy, provides opportunities for students to mull over ideas, uncover inner secrets, and piece together life's unconnected threads” (Hubbs & Brand, 2005, p.62). Rogers (1982), another theorist, supported journaling. He believed that practitioners are the experts of their own work and journaling could be used as a tool for growth and development. Journaling as self-reflection provides an opportunity for self-discovery, and an uncovering of self-truths, which in turn creates an opportunity for developing one’s practice (Bolton, & Delderfield, 2018; Hubbs & Brand, 2005; Rogers, 1982).

Coaching

Another way an interpreter may reflect is through interactions with a coach. Coaching, or mentoring, is an experienced practitioner guiding or supporting a less-experienced practitioner (Blake, 1999). If one is expected to be vulnerable and share work with a coach, it is important that a sense of trust is established. In fact, throughout their research, Dean and Pollard (2001, 2009, 2013) mention that interpreters feel uncomfortable talking about their work. Because of this, Dean and Pollard introduced the concept of supervision to the interpreting field.

Consultation, case conferencing, or supervision is commonly used in the fields of medicine and mental health. Supervision can be a type of or a part of coaching; it is defined as “a designated interaction between two or more practitioners within a safe and supportive environment, that enables a continuum of reflective critical analysis of care, to ensure quality services, and the wellbeing of the practitioner” (Bishop & Sweeney, 2006 as cited in Bishop, 2007, p. 1). The use of supervision in medicine, mental health, and interpreting has led to sizeable benefits to both the field and practitioner. Some of these

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benefits include increased understanding of work issues, greater self-awareness and development of a professional identity, increased critical thinking and ethical decision making, increased job satisfaction, greater quality in services, greater autonomy and a decrease in stress and burnout. (Brunero & Stein-Parbury, 2008; Dean & Pollard, 2004, 2013; Gonge & Buus, 2011; Hetherington, 2011; Judd, 2014; Taylor, 2014; Wheeler & Richards, 2007).

Newer practitioners can gain both practical skills and coping strategies from a coach. A coach can help hone decision-making skills by weeding out unfeasible ideas or strategies (Tait, 2003). The benefits of speaking to a coach, despite sometimes being a difficult and uncomfortable process, are numerous. Therefore, it is important to speak about the work to grow as a professional and ensure quality work for consumers.

Conclusion

Interpreting can be exacting work and therefore cause stress in many aspects of life, such as ethically, physically, and emotionally (Heller et al., 1986, p.432). Excessive stress and limited means of coping with stress can lead to burnout, which is detrimental to both the interpreter and the consumer (Humphrey, 2015; Maslach et al., 2001; Maslach & Jackson, 1996; Schwenke, 2012). Self-reflection is one way to maintain an ethical practice, however, if the practitioner is lacking the self-confidence to engage critically with their own work, they are unable to benefit from the action (Dean & Pollard, 2009; Dewey, 1933; Ericsson, 2001; Janzen, 2008; Schön, 1987). Self-care is a method of coping with and counteracting the effects of stress (Humphrey, 2015). Green Space, in particular, has been shown to have numerous health benefits, both psychologically and

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physiologically (Barton et al., 2016; Barton & Pretty, 2010; Berman et. al, 2008; Cole & Hall, 2010; Gidlow et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2009; Nisbet & Zelenski, 2011).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

As mentioned above, Green Space is not only an incredibly effective coping strategy; it has been shown to have numerous psychological benefits (Barton & Pretty, 2010; Barton et al., 2016; Berman, Jonides, & Kaplan, 2008; Cole & Hall, 2010; Gidlow et al., 2016; Kellert & Wilson, 1995; Lee et al., 2009; Nisbet & Zelenski, 2011; Qing, 2018). Therefore, I looked at what ways Green Space is an effective self-care method while also cultivating attention and creativity thereby improving my skills and wellbeing as an interpreter.

A majority of my data is the result of daily journaling, as well as pre/post journaling and some work samples. On January 21st, I wrote my first journal entry. Since that day, at the conclusion of each day, I free-write for 3 minutes. I talk about my day, my work, and my general feelings about my performance. I also journal in the moments immediately preceding and following my deliberate exposure to Green Space. As such, a majority of my data is self-reported and in regard to my thoughts and feelings. The Green Space I sought is on average a 1.5-mile hike in settings where it is unlikely I would encounter many other people (usually around four to five others).

I journaled for a total of 118 days between January 21, 2019, and May 25, 2019. These 118 days occurred throughout school days and vacation time. This time period was selected because it correlated with winter and spring terms at Western Oregon University.

I am not able to compare my interpreting practice from the start of the year to the end of the year because all the work samples were filmed at the end of the school year and therefore near the end of my action research project. This was an intentional choice

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because I was able to use my own observations, and the feedback from my coach to compare and contrast my work samples during the last 8 weeks. I also made note of my feelings surrounding a work sample and those about sharing my work with my coach.

As is the regular practice in the Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies program, I had a coach assigned to me. Using the opinion and perspective of a coach is a helpful way to gauge my own experiences. For me, meeting with a coach also provided a unique opportunity to determine my level of confidence in myself as a practitioner. After 80 days of journaling, I began filming regular work samples to share with my coach. Because I typically hike and meet with my coach on the weekends, I attempted to film on Mondays, analyze my work on Tuesday, and send them to my coach no later than Thursday. As I have been filming and looking critically at my work on a regular basis, I collected data on any trends in my interpreting practice by analyzing my recorded work samples using a direct comparison of what I heard vs what I saw. I also wrote a journal entry for any emotional response I might have had while filming or presenting my work to my coach.

After journaling and working with my coach I began data analysis by flagging certain language used in my journal entries. I read and sorted through my journal by tagging specific words that suggested emotional response. I tagged the times that I talked about stress, anxiety, busyness, and other moments of high strained emotion with a blue page marker. I also tagged for times that I mentioned other types of self-care in yellow, and feelings of confidence and happiness in pink. Finally, I organized the coded data by counting each color-coded word and made a note of any trends.

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Study Limitations

A large portion of this project is self-reported by one individual. Therefore, it may be a challenge to generalize, especially for those with different demographics than me. The amount of benefit I received or did not receive from Green Space was influenced by my demographic information. As a working-age adult, I am not often at home. According to Lachowycz and Jones (2013), this reduced the opportunity for Green Space to positively influence my health. However, as a white female, who lived in an apartment I have a greater opportunity to benefit from the effects of Green Space than male, people of color and those who live in more affluent areas (Lachowycz & Jones, 2013). Although I am a woman, I believe that I am less concerned with safety as compared to my peers. This is due to my involvement with karate and self-defense.

Karate has provided me with an immeasurable sense of self-confidence in myself and my place in the world. I began karate as a young teen and to date have reached San Dan rank (3rd-degree black belt). Karate has helped me feel comfortable in my own skin, step out of my comfort zone, feel more confident in my decisions, and I have become a fairly outgoing, extroverted, people-person. Karate provides health benefits in the form of physical fitness and physical and emotional safety. Few others will have a similar background, and therefore may experience varied results from their time in Green Space.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For me, most of the results of my research were very subtle. Most of the noticeable benefits Green Space provided were psychological. As the weeks progressed, I reported fewer instances of feeling stressed, overwhelmed or sad; and, I reported more instances of feeling happy, excited, or content. Another interesting change I noted is the increase in emotions reported in general. This could be due to heightened self-awareness and/or increased comfort in identifying and expressing emotions.

Additionally, my journal often (85.7 percent of the time) showed improvement in my mood immediately following a Green Space event. That is to say, if I indicated that I was feeling stressed in my prewrite journal entry almost 86 percent of the time I described feeling better, happy or excited following the Green Space event. The areas that I noticed the most change were in regards to self-esteem and sharing my work with others.

As a newer interpreter, I would say that I was reluctant to discuss my work samples especially if they were “bad.” By this I mean work samples where sections were unclear, information was omitted, or times I felt the target language did not match the source language. Early in my interpreter education, I was taught about non-evaluative language. As students, we were asked to not place judgment on ourselves or others by labeling things bad or good. Intellectually I fully embraced using non-evaluative language, but it was much more difficult to incorporate emotionally. As a result of my research, I now feel that there are no “good” or “bad” work samples. There may be times where a work sample is more or less effective. Additionally, an effective work sample is

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not necessarily a perfect work sample; in fact, I would argue that perfect work samples do not exist. It can still be nerve-racking to share ineffective work, yet those are the work samples that allow for the most improvement.

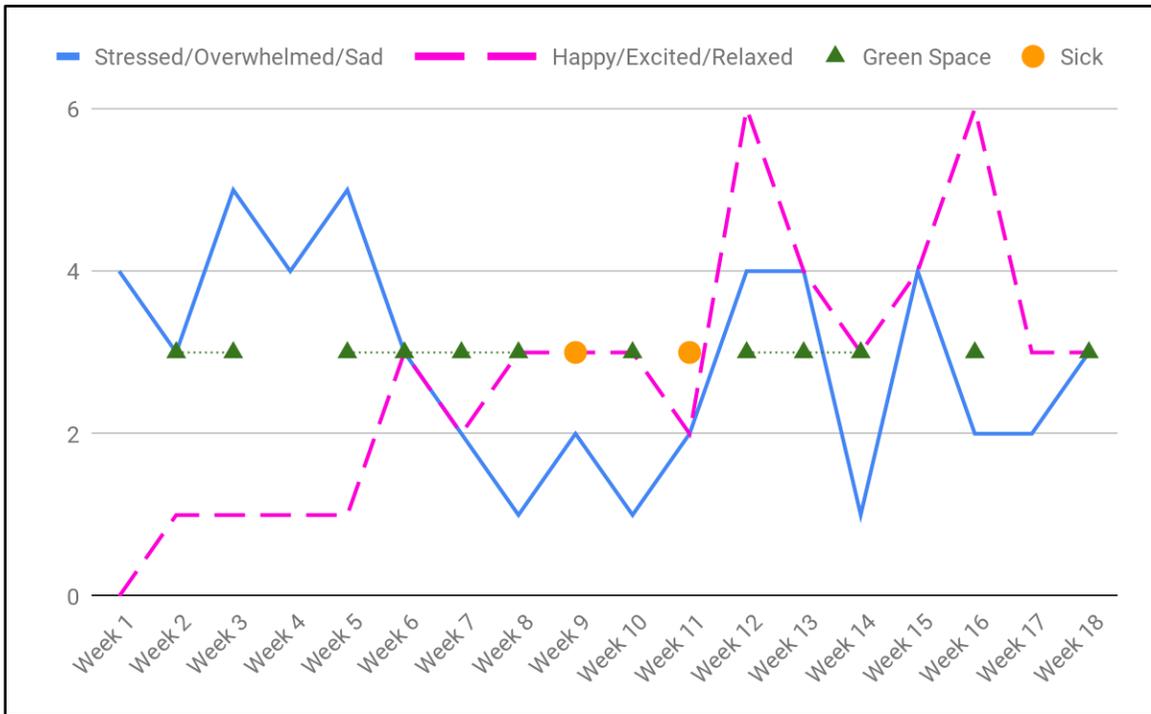


Figure 4.1 *Personal influence of Green Space*

Having a coach provided a chance for me to look critically at my emotions surrounding the recording and sharing of a work sample. Throughout my journaling, I mention being anxious or reluctant to record or analyze my work. In one entry, in particular, I state: “I’m unsure about it... I don’t know, it was just not my best work. I’m considering refilming it.” The following day I write that despite feeling like the sample was rough I still sent it off. This shows that as my work progressed, I became more confident, and I built trust with my coach I was able to share more. In the past, I often did refilm work samples, however, my desire to improve and put my best self forward as a professional would no longer allow me to do that. I think the boost in self-esteem was

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due in large part to participating in Green Space as a self-care method. This allowed for further growth of my skills as an interpreter.

Just as Dodge et al. (2012) mention wellbeing is the balance point between life's challenges and the resources we have to respond to those challenges. Dean and Pollard (2001) would call these responses controls. Using Green Space as self-care is a control I employed. I was weighing the resources side and tipping my wellbeing scale. Green Space allowed me to create a sort of stockpile of positive emotion. I could later use this stockpile to better process challenging situations.

Green Space had a positive impact on my psyche. Some of the impacts are more subtle and difficult to see and others were explicitly stated in my journal entries. For instance, on May 6th, I wrote that my time in nature was “Soothing to the soul.” I also often commented on how wonderful the sun was and how beautiful the natural areas were. On one occasion I wrote, “We went for a walk and the sun is shining and the river is flowing and it is beautiful.” As the weeks progressed, I began to express a desire or need to be outside, mentioning “we need to get out and about” and “I am really in need of some nature time.” These instances show that as I spent more time in Green Space my desire to be in Green Spaces also increased.

As I initially coded for times that I felt physically ill I included it with the data regarding stress and unfortunately found it skewed my ability to see trends. When those instances were included with stress it caused the data to appear to rise and fall drastically with no clear indication as to why. In order to resolve this issue, I coded illness separately in orange. I still included that data because I feel that physical illness is a good indication that something is wrong psychologically.

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Due to the number of weeks in which this research was conducted, there were times in which I was sick or unable to go into Green Space, or weeks where more/ less Green Space opportunities occurred naturally, or (on one special occasion) the birth of my niece.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

It is my hope that interpreters and other practice professionals recognize the importance of self-care and they utilize Green Space as a self-care method. I recommend that interpreters be continuously self-reflective. A reflective practitioner is an ethical practitioner (Cokely, 2000). Without reflection, we may never fully realize the consequences of our choices. Therefore, it is imperative that, as interpreters, we stay curious and reflective about our work. However, because we are all individuals the exact same self-care and method of reflection may not work for everyone.

If I or others were to replicate or continue this research, I would most likely attempt to make my data more quantifiable. While I was able to compare my journals day to day to gauge my emotions if I, or others, were to repeat this research or perform it with a larger sample I would create a rating or scale to better represent the amount of stress I was experiencing. For example, on a very stressful day one might rate it 5 out of 5, or on very relaxing days one might say 1 out of 5, etc.

Additionally, I would recommend further research in the duration of Green Space. As the research recommended, in order to benefit from the Green Space event, I stayed in nature for a minimum of 10 minutes. Often my hikes required an hour or more to complete but unfortunately, I did not make note of that information at the time. There may have been some Green Space events that lasted longer than others, thereby providing more benefits.

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Since this research is focused on a single individual it may be a challenge to generalize. However, research on the profession of interpreting still limited, I think there are many opportunities to do research on self-care, self-reflection and Green Space.

My specific interpreting, self-care, stressors, and wellbeing have been the driving force while developing the research. However, if one were to apply the data collection method and action plan in general, including daily reflection, active participation in Green Space and work samples, they may gain some of the benefits of Green Space thereby improving their interpreting practice as well.

Personally, I found Green Space to be a very effective self-care method. The combination of physical activity, greenery, and fresh air is incredibly soothing. Henry David Thoreau wrote: “Pursue some path, however narrow and crooked, in which you can walk with love and reverence.” I found that while in Green Space, not only did my love and reverence with nature grow, but my love and reverence for myself grew too. Being in Green Space, utilizing it as self-care, was a nurturing experience.

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