**How does making connections between content and real-world experiences impact student learning? [PATHS Video Transcript]**

When we look to the literature, research shows that time and again students learn and remember information more effectively if they're able to connect it to a lived experience, either something they do or something they know from inside or outside the learning environment.

So, how can instructors include these opportunities for students?

First, looking at your course content, identify opportunities where you can make connections by using real-world examples and experiences or help students make their own connections.

For example, in a kinesiology lecture, students may be learning about anatomical structures in the knee. In its simplest form, making connections to the real-world might involve the instructor providing few examples of famous athletes that students are familiar with who have had different types of knee injuries. Then, an instructor can connect these examples to the different anatomical structures being discussed to help reinforce this information.

An instructor may also bring a guest speaker into the classroom and ask students to write a self-reflection on their experience listening to the guest speaker. This gives students an opportunity to connect course concepts to real-world experiences by engaging with an external speaker from within their discipline, while also making their own connections based on this experience through self-reflection. Linking learning activities to real-world examples and professional settings can also help students make connections. If students are completing a peer evaluation, for example, an instructor may identify how feedback and evaluation are used within their discipline.

Using case studies, problem-based learning, podcasts, virtual learning experiences, and experiential education are other activities and learning tasks instructors can use. There are many ways instructors can create real-world connections in the classroom. An important part of any experiential education opportunity includes providing students with the opportunity to reflect. This is how they translate their learning into a meaningful experience.

When students make meaningful connections, their motivation and engagement in the course can increase, and they can develop a sense of connectedness and academic culture through improving their appreciation for what they are learning, and why.

***Sources:***

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York University, [Faculty of Health Experiential Education Resources](https://www.yorku.ca/health/experiential-education-3/)

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