TEACHING PRACTICES AND STUDENT WELLBEING: IT TAKES A VILLAGE
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PRESENTER TEAM

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WHO IS HERE TODAY?

Poll

- Faculty member/instructor
- Student services staff
- Teaching and learning department staff
- TA or graduate student
- Undergraduate student
- Other
TAKE A MOMENT…

To reflect on one of your best profs from your undergraduate or graduate experience. What made them a good professor? Did they offer support in a stressful time? Was there a particular way the professor taught that helped make it a positive learning experience?

Keep this in mind as the session proceeds... one of the key things we are learning in this work is that good teaching is inherently good for wellbeing.

STUDENT REFLECTIONS: THE ROLE OF FACULTY MEMBERS
My teaching impacts student wellbeing:

UBC 2018 Teaching Practices Survey (CTLT)

![Pie chart showing percentages of responses to teaching impact question]

LEARNING & WELLBEING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- Student wellbeing is key to academic success (Keyes et al., 2012; El Ansari & Stock, 2010)
- Positive mental health (flourishing) results in students’ adopting more of a deep approach to learning (Trigwell, et al., 2012)
- Depressed mood is negatively correlated with academic performance (Holmes et al., 1996)
- 43% of women and 34% of men self-reported that stress was negatively impacting their academic performance (National College Health Assessment)
WHAT DO YOU THINK STUDENTS SAY HAS THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON THEIR WELLBEING?

Poll: What is most important for student wellbeing?

- Assessment
- Course design
- Environment, culture, and communications
- Instructors and their teaching practices
- Program administration
- Student services and support
- Student society activities

Chi Baik, Wendy Larcombe & Abi Brooker, 2019

STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING WELLBEING

Table 3. Student recommendations for improving wellbeing by Cohort (% of respondents).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>All cohorts (n = 2525)</th>
<th>Science (n = 935)</th>
<th>Arts (n = 619)</th>
<th>Biomed (n = 324)</th>
<th>Eng (n = 271)</th>
<th>Law (n = 182)</th>
<th>Vet (n = 194)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic teachers and teaching practices</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student services and support</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment, culture, and communications</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course design</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program administration</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student society activities</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *In Chi square analyses of this theme across cohorts, p < .0005.

Chi Baik, Wendy Larcombe & Abi Brooker, 2019
It is clear that, from the student perspective, university teachers and their teaching practice have the potential to enhance and support student mental wellbeing (and conversely, to have a negative effect on wellbeing)." (Baik, Larcombe & Brooker, 2019)

A recent review of the literature on health promotion at universities found: “The most promising strategies to promote mental wellbeing included changes in the way students are taught and assessed.” (Fernandez, et al., 2016)

Strengthening self-esteem and self-efficacy through pedagogical interventions (e.g., assessment and feedback) can positively impact academic performance (Gebka, 2014)

“One of the most powerful things we have learned is, that in many cases, practices that foster student well-being align very well with what we know are just effective teaching practices, and therefore accessible in a spirit of enhancement and trying to improve a course. It’s even better if [campus executives] can provide faculty with relatively easy things to try and get started with. There are many low barrier, high impact activities that anyone can introduce,” says Simon Bates, MA (Cantab), PhD, associate provost, Teaching and Learning at the University of British Columbia (UBC).
LEARNING & WELLBEING AT UBC: 3 TLEF PROJECTS OVER 8 YEARS

2012-2015
Mental Health Needs Assessment

2015-2017
Teaching Practices that Influence Student Mental Health & Wellbeing

2017-2020
Building Academic Tenacity in Students

The Okanagan Charter
UBC’s Strategic Plan
Wellbeing Strategic Framework

2015
2018
2019

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support for these projects provided by UBC Vancouver students via the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund and the support of our student staff, student volunteers and faculty/staff advisors for their assistance in developing and implementing these projects.
CONTEXT AND CALLS TO ACTION

• Okanagan Charter (2015-2016)
  ✓ Embed health into all aspects of campus culture, across the administration, operations and academic mandates.

• Strategic Plan (2018)
  ✓ Lead globally and locally in sustainability and wellbeing across our campuses and communities.

• Wellbeing Strategic Framework (2019)
  ✓ Contribute to targets identified within Collaborative Leadership, Mental Health & Resilience, and Social Connection.

MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT (2012-2015)

KEY ACTIONS IDENTIFIED:
• Increase awareness of mental health among students, faculty, and staff
• Promote mental health resources and services
• Create a healthier campus community
• Increase the number of healthy, affordable food options on campus
• Improve teaching practices
How teaching practices influence student mental health & wellbeing

TEACHING PRACTICES & WELLBEING: METHODOLOGY

Exploring teaching practices that promote student wellbeing

- 2015 UES Survey
- UES Data Analysis
- Fall Term Student Focus Groups
- Preliminary Data Analysis
- Winter Term Instructor Interviews
- Winter Term Student Focus Groups
- Data Analysis

*Undergraduate Experiences Survey conducted in February 2015
Support for the whole student

Student learning and motivation

Belonging and social inclusion

https://blogs.ubc.ca/teachingandwellbeing/resources/
### BELONGING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Student wellbeing and learning are supported when students feel a sense of connection and social belonging.

Social inclusion directly supports student wellbeing. When students feel included, it is easier for them to achieve academic success and in turn, have a greater sense of wellbeing. Feeling connected to the instructor motivates students to work harder in the course and makes it easier to reach out for help when necessary. Instructors who get to know their students are better able to connect course materials to the students’ interests, further motivating them to learn. Having peer relationships in the classroom motivates students to attend, helps them catch up if they miss something, and supports studying outside of class.

#### FOSTERING INSTRUCTOR-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP
- Having short, informal conversations with students
- Encouraging students to attend office hours
- Introducing yourself
- Smiling
- Encouraging students to address you by your first name
- Displaying your passion for the subject
- Sharing personal anecdotes
- Using humour as appropriate
- Learning and using student names

#### FOSTERING PEER-TO-PEER RELATIONSHIPS
- Maintaining the same groups throughout the term
- Encouraging group work and in-class discussions (especially when it is not for marks)
- Building learning communities (i.e., using icebreakers)
- Offering bonus marks for students to attend course-related community events
- Fostering a safe classroom environment
- Incorporating a lab, discussion group or tutorial
- Offering field trips or other informal learning environments

**What strategies you have used to enhance belonging and social inclusion?**

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Increasing student capacity for academic success, deeper learning, and wellbeing
ACADEMIC TENACITY: PROJECT OVERVIEW

Which educational practices, in which types of learning environments, can positively impact student wellbeing, learning, and academic success?

- **Year 1 & 2:**
  - Pilot a series of strategies
  - Assess and share impact
- **Year 3 & beyond:**

ACADEMIC TENACITY: THE CONSTRUCT

**Belonging**
- Believe that they belong in school
- Feel comfortable in classrooms with their peers and instructors

**Self-Regulation**
- Persist and remain engaged in complex tasks
- Enact new effective strategies

**Mindsets**
- View effort positively
- Understand challenge as leading to growth

(Dweck, Walton & Cohen, 2014)
ACADEMIC TENACITY: PROJECT SITES

(Dweck, Walton & Cohen, 2014)

ACADEMIC TENACITY: EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Belonging</th>
<th>Self-Regulation</th>
<th>Mindset &amp; Goals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embedding self-compassion in courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoting social belonging and self-regulation through the Academic Scholars Program</td>
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<td>Creating opportunities to connect in office hours</td>
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<td>Connecting to place and peers in the natural environment</td>
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<td>Fostering connection through improv pedagogy</td>
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<td>Building connections online</td>
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<td>Literacy into Embedded mental health the curriculum</td>
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ACADEMIC TENACITY: EXAMPLES OF EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

Educational Strategy:

Students in a first-year biology course have the opportunity to engage in activities outside the classroom; prompted to reflect on their learnings from the activities for participation marks.

Expected Outcome:

Enhanced self-regulation through successful use of learning strategies. Increased participation with campus activities and communities on campus.

Students in a psychology research methods course are invited to engage their instructor in informal interactions related to learning outside of the classroom setting.

Expected Outcome:

Increased sense of belonging and enhanced perception of departmental support. Increased academic confidence and reduced academic anxiety.

THINK BACK…

To the faculty member you remembered at the beginning of this session.

How does what that faculty member did to create a supportive learning environment relate to what we've shared in this session?
QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

RESOURCES
Teaching and learning resources
https://wellbeing.ubc.ca/teaching-learning-resources
REFERENCES


