



TEACHING PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE STUDENT WELLBEING

Student wellbeing is enhanced when students are holistically supported

Students learn in the context of their lives, and instructors can support student wellbeing by acknowledging non-academic aspects of students' lives, openly discussing wellbeing related topics, and creating a safe classroom environment. Students described a safe classroom environment as one where they did not feel judged for making a mistake or holding a different opinion, and where they could participate in a way that they felt comfortable.

Recognizing that students have lives outside academics

- ☐ Engage in conversation not directly related to the course
- ☐ Provide flexibility in office hours
- ☐ Ensure that the workload is reasonable
- ☐ Reduce cost of course materials
- ☐ Not requiring proof from students experiencing a crisis
- ☐ Offer deadline extensions
- ☐ Incorporate flexibility into the grading scheme
- ☐ Clearly communicating grading and assessment policies
- ☐ Set deadlines to encourage work-life balance
- ☐ Remind students that their marks do not determine their worth

Openly discussing wellbeing-related topics

- ☐ Address campus issues that affect multiple students
- ☐ Let students know about campus resources
- ☐ Share general information about mental health and wellbeing with the students
- ☐ Discuss your own mental health and wellbeing
- ☐ Ask students how they are doing
- ☐ Check in with students who appear to be struggling

Creating a safe classroom environment

- ☐ Establish a relationship based on trust with the students
- ☐ Treat student input as valuable
- ☐ Allow students space to be wrong, and gently redirecting students as appropriate
- ☐ Ensure that discussions allow space for different perspectives and opinions.
- ☐ Use inclusive language
- ☐ Take breaks as necessary during challenging discussions
- ☐ Address safety and support early on in the term
- ☐ Respect student autonomy
- ☐ Allow students to participate in multiple ways, if participation marks are deemed necessary
- ☐ Ask for volunteers (vs. cold-calling)
- ☐ Acknowledge that university can be scary and intimidating to new students
- ☐ Offer trigger warnings when necessary

Additional information:

- ➔ Find out more about our research on how teaching practices affect student wellbeing and download a copy of this checklist: blogs.ubc.ca/teachingandwellbeing
- ➔ Learn more about resources that can help you support your students' wellbeing and academic success at: facultystaff.students.ubc.ca
- ➔ We gratefully acknowledge the financial support for this project provided by UBC Vancouver students via the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund

References:

- ➔ El Ansari, W. & Stock, C. (2010). Is the health and wellbeing of university students associated with their academic performance? cross sectional findings from the united kingdom. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 7(2), 509-527.
- ➔ Keyes, C. L., Eisenberg, D., Perry, G. S., Dube, S. R., Kroenke, K., & Dhingra, S. S. (2012). The relationship of level of positive mental health with current mental disorders in predicting suicidal behavior and academic impairment in college students. *Journal of American College Health*, 60(2), 126133.



Research shows that student wellbeing promotes learning (Keyes et al. 2012; El Ansari & Stock, 2010), and that some teaching practices are more effective than others at promoting student learning. Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund [TLEF]-funded project, *Identifying the influence of teaching practices*

on undergraduate students' mental health and wellbeing in the Faculties of Arts and Science, used mixed-methods to identify teaching practices that promote both student learning and student wellbeing. Learn more about the project methods and findings on our blog: blogs.ubc.ca/teachingandwellbeing/

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. Through our research, students and instructors identified several strategies instructors can use to foster relationships in the classroom:

Fostering instructor-student relationship

- ☐ Learn and use student names
- ☐ Have short, informal conversations with students
- ☐ Encourage students to attend office hours
- ☐ Introduce yourself
- ☐ Display your passion for the subject
- ☐ Share personal anecdotes
- ☐ Smile
- ☐ Use humour as appropriate
- ☐ Encourage students to address you by your first name

Fostering peer-to-peer relationships

- ☐ Encourage group work and in-class discussions
- ☐ Maintain the same groups throughout term
- ☐ Incorporate a lab, discussion group or tutorial
- ☐ Build learning communities (i.e. using icebreakers)
- ☐ Offer field trips or other informal learning environments
- ☐ Offer bonus marks for students to attend course-related community events
- ☐ Foster a safe classroom environment

Student wellbeing is supported when their learning (and motivation to learn) is supported

Our research showed that student wellbeing is supported when students feel motivated to learn and when they feel that they are learning successfully. Students are more motivated to learn when they find the subject matter interesting, relevant, or meaningful to them, and when they find the learning process engaging and enjoyable. Students feel they are learning more effectively when the course is structured to support student success, when students feel they are able to learn effectively in the classroom, and when students feel they are supported outside of class.

Structuring the course effectively

- ☐ Set all key course dates early
- ☐ Provide a detailed course syllabus
- ☐ Share all course-related information in one place
- ☐ Ensure that all information is correct before posting
- ☐ Provide practice problems (with solutions)
- ☐ Indicate the topics that will be covered on an exam
- ☐ Share the exam format
- ☐ Indicate what is expected on an assignment
- ☐ Smaller, more frequent assessments, so long as the total volume of work is not increased
- ☐ Design assessment questions that allow students to demonstrate learning/understanding
- ☐ Allow sufficient time to complete assessments
- ☐ Avoid or minimize the weight of group marks
- ☐ Provide timely & constructive feedback
- ☐ Share the grade distribution

Delivering the course material effectively

- ☐ Provide lecture outlines
- ☐ Convey the material in a clear logical manner
- ☐ Use active teaching methods
- ☐ Use simple language
- ☐ Use clear examples
- ☐ Explain things from multiple perspectives
- ☐ Provide learning objectives
- ☐ Recap at the end of lecture
- ☐ Move at a pace that is appropriate to the student

Supporting student learning outside the classroom

- ☐ Connect students to resources
- ☐ Be accessible outside of class
- ☐ Invite students to attend office hours
- ☐ Suggest effective study methods for the course
- ☐ Solicit feedback from students
- ☐ Share class notes online
- ☐ Provide thorough notes
- ☐ Offer review sessions
- ☐ Incorporate how-to's into the course

Helping students find value in the subject matter

- ☐ Share your passion and enthusiasm for the subject
- ☐ Allow students choice in their assignments
- ☐ Explain why a topic is important
- ☐ Connect course concepts to the “real world”
- ☐ Show students where to learn more about a topic
- ☐ Connect students to community
- ☐ Use hands-on or applied learning

Helping students find value in the learning process

- ☐ Speak in an engaging tone of voice
- ☐ Choose interesting examples
- ☐ Incorporate multi-media
- ☐ Hand-write class notes on the whiteboard
- ☐ Encourage students to ask questions
- ☐ Ask students questions
- ☐ Encourage in-class discussions
- ☐ Use clicker questions
- ☐ Provide opportunities for in-class practice
- ☐ Plan field trips and community events attendance