

Virtual Classroom Wellbeing: *What Can I Do?*



CTLT Winter Institute

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Introduction and Overview



- **Thank you!!**
- for your commitment and care for student wellbeing and learning
- **Today's topics to discuss:**
- the changing classroom, teaching and impact on students what does this mean for their wellbeing and learning?
- What does this mean for us as teaching faculty?
- What can we do right now with little time?
- What are projects, ideas and resources to help?
- Reality sharing, experiences and actions

THE CHANGING CLASSROOM

The pandemic and online learning has increased issues and awareness of student, faculty and staff wellbeing.

What have you noticed?

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RESEARCH: STUDENT RESPONSE TO SWITCH TO ONLINE BY SIOBHAN MCPHEE ET AL, APRIL 2020, UBCV

- 32% decrease in course **engagement** due to lack of focus, stress, anxiety, motivation, personal circumstances
- biggest challenges to engaging, wellbeing and learning was time management, tech issues, lack of assessment flexibility and access to instructor

- **What else?**

- social isolation, changes in eating, exercise and sleep habits, stress, anxiety, burnout, lack of motivation, workload increase
- loss of sense of belonging and purpose

- **YIKES!!**

- BELONGING ENGAGEMENT WELL BEING KEY FOR LEARNING

What does this mean for faculty?



- **It's an opportunity to make a difference!!**
- Well proven that wellbeing and class environment contribute to learning
- UBC's acknowledgement and commitment to Wellbeing through the Okanagan Charter and Strategic Plan
- But maybe it's not your expertise area, or maybe your course is already packed with content, or maybe you are not comfortable addressing wellbeing, or maybe you don't have time or the energy!!
- **Adoption rates are low**
- We don't need more to do!
- But if our goal is for students to graduate from our classes with new knowledge to apply to make society better. **It won't happen if they are not well**
- And **unlikely that faculty will take this on if they are not supported**



Collectively . . .

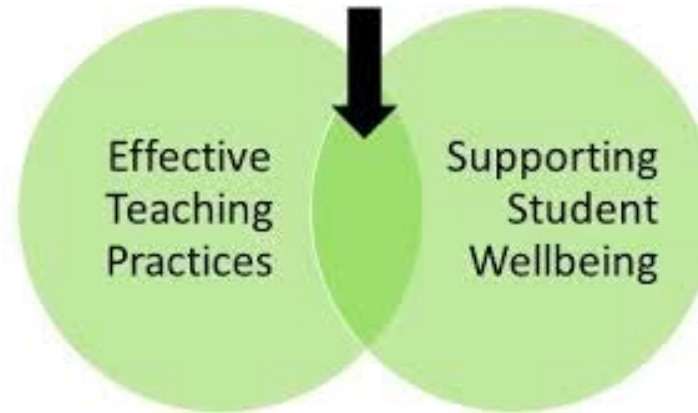
if we all do a little bit, we can have a huge impact!

RESOURCES:

CTLT



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FOR TEACHING
AND WELLBEING



Health and Wellness Voices Research

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

Everyone plays an important role in supporting student wellbeing

SEE
SOMETHING

Pay attention to warning signs

You may be the first person to see signs that a student is in distress, and it's important to pay attention to warning signs. Mental health concerns can have a significant impact on everyday life, including academics.

SAY
SOMETHING

Trust your instincts

Say something if you're worried about a student or if they leave you feeling concerned. It's okay to share your concerns about a student with someone else at the University in order to provide the student with the support they need.

DO
SOMETHING

Reach out and help

A student may not know help is available or may hesitate to ask for it. Connect the student with resources and identify your concerns using Early Alert.

► Use this document as a guide to help you know what to look for, say, and do.



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Okanagan Campus



TEACHING PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE STUDENT WELLBEING: A Tool for Educators



Developed a digital curriculum map, used the curriculum map to plan lessons, promote learning outcomes, and ensure that all students are engaged in the learning process.

Student Wellbeing is influenced by the environment and culture of the school

Students are more likely to be engaged in learning when they are in a safe and supportive environment. The school environment should be a place where students feel safe, respected, and valued. The school culture should be one of respect, honesty, and integrity. The school should be a place where students can learn and grow.

Student Wellbeing is influenced by the school's policies and procedures

Key School Policies that influence student wellbeing

1. Health and Safety Policy
2. Anti-Bullying Policy
3. Behaviour Policy
4. Safeguarding Policy
5. Equality Policy
6. Access to Information Policy
7. Complaints Policy
8. Data Protection Policy
9. Financial Policy
10. Environmental Policy
11. IT Policy
12. Learning Policy
13. Marketing Policy
14. Music Policy
15. Physical Education Policy
16. Religious and Cultural Policy
17. School Development Plan
18. School Improvement Plan
19. School Organisation
20. School Policies
21. School Procedures
22. School Rules
23. School Values
24. School Vision
25. School Website
26. School Work
27. School Yearbook
28. School Zephyrus
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What are some simple practices that I can do now?



The “TEACHERS” Project

Training and Engaging Academics in their Classrooms to positively impact Health, Education and Resiliency in our Students

- Project Partner: Dr. Jannik Eikennar, School of engineering
- Faculty participants: Dr. Tamara Freeman, Chemistry and Dr. Jamie Piercy, psychology
- Pilot project graciously supported by the UBCO provost office (2019-2020)
- Targeted interventions
- Student surveys re impact and faculty focus groups

Targeted interventions: (3 course areas)

COURSE LOGISTICS

Eg. flexible grading
and course outline
wording

Assignment	Scheme 1	Scheme 2	Scheme 3
Report	20%	25%	25%
Quizzes	20%	20%	25%
Presentation	30%	25%	25%
Final Exam	30%	30%	25%

INSTRUCTOR APPROACHES

Eg.
kindness/compassion
and more
transparency/info
around assignments

ACTIVITIES

Eg. Movement
breaks, stand up
desks, intentional
arrival



What we found: 😊

- Faculty chose what intervention worked best for their course and teaching style
- Students noticed!!!
- They felt, engaged, supported and more connected to professor
- Greater class enjoyment
- Faculty felt supported; easy to implement; enjoyed student interaction; helped their wellbeing!!



COURSE LOGISTICS

Flexible Grading

- **Students offered the option to choose their “best two out of three” for assignments or quizzes**
- **Offered students choice in assignments and opportunities to set (within a given range) percentage weighting of assessments**
- **Considered the timing of exams and assignments to alleviate undue stress**

Course Outline

- **Provided a variety of ways for students to contact instructor in syllabus**
- **Avoided heavily weighted components, such as an exam worth 50% of the final grade**
- **Used inclusive language and language to personally address students**
- **Used positive and proactive vs punitive language to convey expectations and university standards**

INSTRUCTOR APPROACHES

Lectures and Assignments

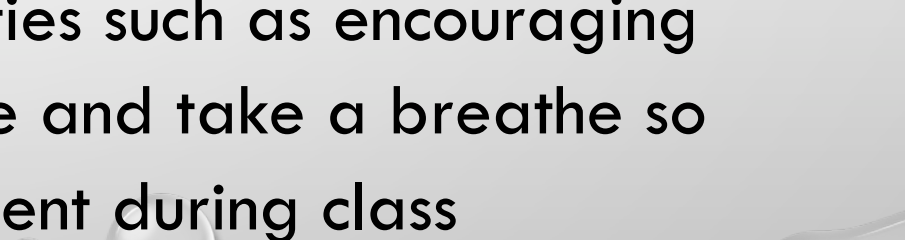
- **Provided lecture material in advance and through several means (i.e. recording, video)**
- **Provided feedback on each stage of larger assignments to help students progress to the next stage**
- **Provided activities where students design mock test/study questions**
- **Published grading rubrics in advance and use a group style evaluation rubric where appropriate**
- **Used interactive tools (i.e. clicker) to promote class engagement**

Compassion

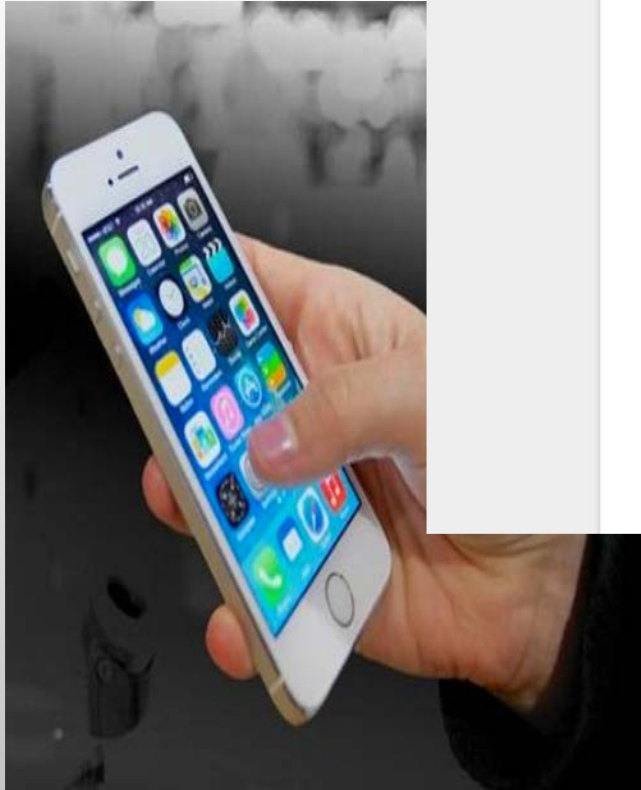
- **Whenever possible, let students know the instructor cares about them and their success**
- **Demonstrated interest in learners instead of trying to be an interesting teacher**
- **Invited small groups of students to attend office hours**
- **Brought kindness into the classroom through quotes and daily intentional language**
- **Offered small check-in activities with students frequently**



ACTIVITIES:

- movement
 - incorporated movement breaks into the classroom that are easy to manage, quick, academically oriented (if possible) and enjoyable for students
 - made stand-up desks available for students who chose to use them.
 - incorporated “intentional” arrival activities such as encouraging phones away, make a “to do” list, pause and take a breathe so students were able to be mindfully present during class
- 

Intentional arrival example:



My To-Do List		
Date	✓	Item
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	





MORE EXAMPLES

- MOVE U CREW EXERCISE BREAKS
- REC UBC
- RANDOM ACTS OF EXERCISE VIDEOS
- “TAKE A STAND”
- WELCOME COMMENTS, “TEAM” AND SUPPORT LANGUAGE, PERSONAL VS “THE STUDENT. . . . ON COURSE OUTLINES AND ALL COURSE DOCUMENTS AND COMMUNICATION
- 4 COURSE THEMES . ./ . . . KINDNESS AND GRACE



KINDNESS: HOW UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ARE KIND; IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENT WELLBEING AND LEARNING

- incorporated into a 1st yr health course with a unit and assignment on kindness/gratitude (theme analysis); pre post surveys after intentional planned acts of kindness
- intentionally integrating kindness; a social/emotional element, into courses, provides an opportunity to positively impact not only student wellbeing and student experience, but also student learning and academic success
- **kindness increases sense of belonging, class cohesion and enjoyment**
- DEFINED KINDNESS AS: *IMPROVING OTHERS' LIVES; BEING POLITE AND HELPING*
- *Research with Dr. John-Tyler Binfet, Faculty of Education, UBCO*

HEALTH BENEFITS OF BEING KIND

THROW
kindness
AROUND LIKE
confetti

www.shutterstock.com · 504549256

- KINDNESS IS TEACHABLE AND “CONTAGIOUS”
- INCREASES SECRETION OF OXYTOCIN (↓ BLOOD PRESSURE, ↑ SELF ESTEEM, OPTIMISM, OVERALL HEART HEALTH)
- ↑ ENERGY; PEOPLE FEEL STRONGER, CALMER AND LESS DEPRESSED
- ALTRUISTIC PEOPLE SURVEYED IN 136 COUNTRIES WERE HAPPIEST
- THOSE WHO VOLUNTEER HAD 2X GREATER OVERALL HEALTH VS ASPIRIN PROTECTION AGAINST HEART DISEASE
- ↑ SEROTONIN PRODUCTION
- ACTIVATES REWARD AND PLEASURE CENTERS IN BRAIN
- ↓ STRESS, ANXIETY, PAIN, DEPRESSION



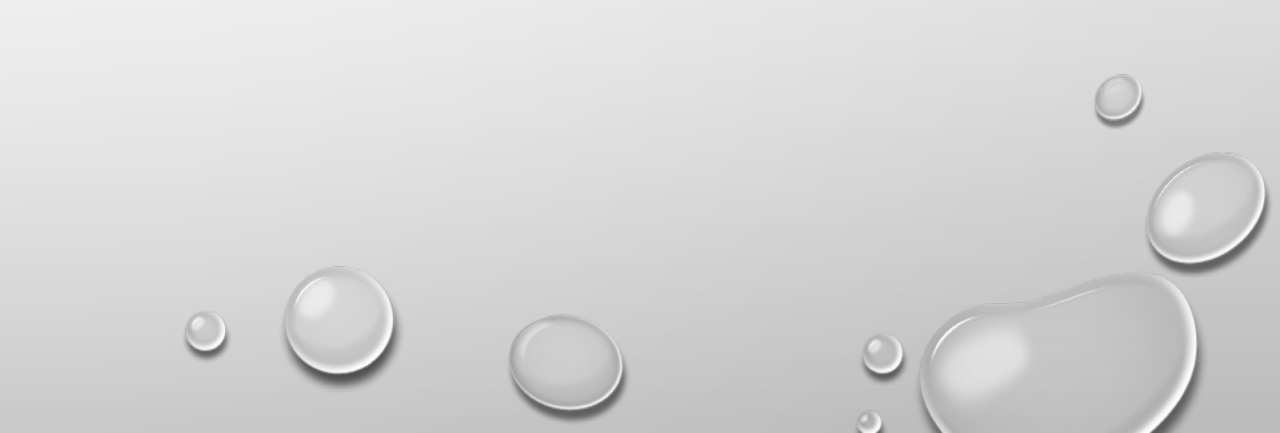
Recent experiences, realities, sharing and actions

BREAK OUT ROOMS:

1. SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS THIS TERM
2. DISCUSS WHAT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO TRY AS YOUR CLASSROOM WELLBEING INTERVENTION
3. WHAT ARE YOUR CONCERNS OR ?

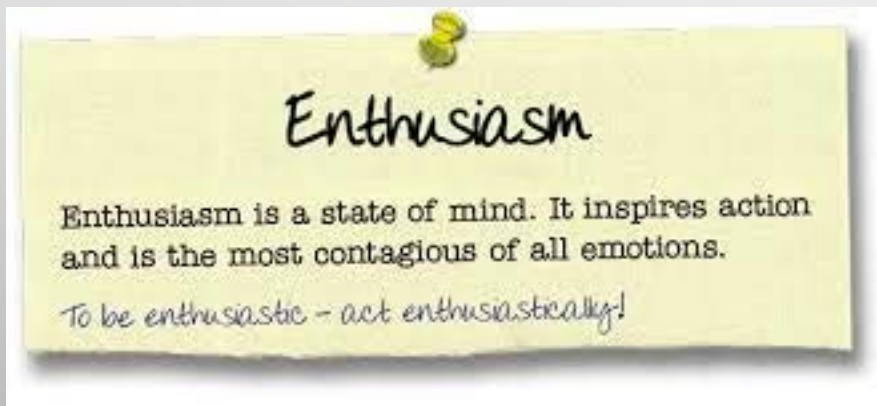


SUMMARY OF IDEAS; BE CREATIVE WITH ADAPTATIONS TO FIT YOU AND YOUR COURSE

- Course outline language, assessment details and communication
 - Intentional arrival and wellness check ins; share resources
 - Activities/movement
 - HEAL 100
 - Teaching teams, experiential learning tasks
 - Kindness; small groups and support and . . .
- 

ENTHUSIASM

"enthusiasm, with an educated plan and passion, can overpower apathy"



Let's get more faculty, more departments, more students involved and experiencing better wellbeing!

- Our goal is for this to be a foundational approach in everyone's teaching; "how" we teach
- Offer Training workshops; PD, new faculty orientations, CTL etc.
- We need our classrooms to be safe and inclusive; addressing student wellbeing in the classroom can help do this
- Phase II of the TEACHERS Project Graciously supported by CTLT SEED Grant 2020 - 2022
- Awaiting ethics for the research component but
- we are supporting this project now; **WE WILL HELP YOU DO THIS!!**
- Reach out for support and we'll get you going. 😊



“



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Collectively . . .

if we all do a little bit, we can have a huge impact!

**I hope you are inspired to do your little bit
and now realize how simple it is!!**



tiny
INSPIRATIONS

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