

The TEACHERS Project Toolkit

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

The TEACHERS Project investigates the impact of supporting faculty members in adopting course-based interventions to **improve student well-being**.

Phase I and II of the project showed:

- Over **70%** of students agreed that the interventions:
 - Supported their well-being
 - Helped with focus and class engagement
 - Motivated them to learn
 - Helped students feel more connected to the professor
- Over **50%** of students agreed that the interventions:
 - Created a sense of community in the classroom

These results are consistent with current literature that student well-being is positively impacted by these interventions, and faculty members are more likely to integrate and maintain these interventions with direct support.

Why is well-being in the classroom important?

Students are more vulnerable to a decline in health and well-being during the beginning of their university careers when academics can be overwhelming and social isolation is common.

There is a strong link between student wellbeing and resiliency, academic tenacity, and overall student success, and in addition, the classroom environment and instructor approaches positively impact student wellbeing, enjoyment and course engagement. As faculty, we can influence the academic environment to positively impact the challenged state of student wellbeing



What does well-being in the classroom look like?

Simple, evidence-based, targeted interventions, embedded within the course that influence student resiliency and well-being. See page 2 for examples

Target interventions address 3 course aspects:

1. Activities

Movement

- Incorporate movement breaks into the classroom that are easy to manage, quick, academically oriented (if possible) and enjoyable for students (e.g., standing breaks, stretches, exercises, encouraging stand up desks (e.g., even a cardboard box or a stack of books))
- Take a Stand Policy (<https://wellbeing.ubc.ca/take-stand-policy>)
- Random Acts of Exercise Videos (<https://wellbeing.ubc.ca/random-acts-exercise-videos>)
- Move UBC Classroom Stretching video (<https://wellbeing.ubc.ca/move-ubc-classroom-stretching-video>)

Intentional Arrivals

- Incorporate "intentional" arrival activities such as encouraging phones away, make a "to do" list, pause and take a breathe so students are able to be mindfully present during class
- Other examples include: song of the day, "check-in", posting on the "wishes and worries" board



2. Instructor Approaches

Lectures & Assignments

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

Intentional Kindness

- Whenever possible, let students know that you, the instructor cares about them and their success
- Use kind language in all communications and course documents
- Demonstrate interest in learners instead of trying to be an interesting teacher
- Bring kindness into the classroom through quotes and daily intentional language
- Offer small check-in activities with students frequently
- Intentionally bring kindness into all aspects of the course such as while working in groups etc.

3. Course Logistics

Flexible Grading

- Offer students the option to choose their "best two out of three" for assignments or quizzes
- Offer students choice in assignments and opportunities to set (within a given range) percentage weighting of assessments
- Consider the timing of exams and assignments to alleviate undue stress

Course Outline

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



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Study by Dr. Sally Stewart (UBCO), Dr. Jannik Eikenaar (UBCO). Supported by Marissa Hall, B.A.
If interested in learning more or participating in the next phase of research, please contact
Dr. Sally Stewart at sally.willis-stewart@ubc.ca