TEACHING PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE STUDENT WELLBEING:
A Tool for Educators

UBC 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

- ☐ Engaging in conversation not directly related to the course
- ☐ Reminding students that their marks do not determine their worth
- ☐ **Setting office hours that accommodate students' schedules**
- ☐ **Ensuring that the workload is reasonable**
- ☐ **Reducing cost of course materials**
- ☐ **Clearly communicating grading and assessment policies**
- ☐ **Not requiring proof from students experiencing a crisis**
- ☐ **Offering deadline extensions**
- ☐ **Incorporating flexibility into the grading scheme**
- ☐ **Setting deadlines to encourage work-life balance**

OPENLY DISCUSS WELLBEING-RELATED TOPICS

- ☐ Letting students know about campus resources
- ☐ Asking students how they are doing
- ☐ **Discussing your own mental health and wellbeing**
- ☐ **Checking in with students who appear to be struggling**
- ☐ **Addressing campus issues that affect multiple students**
- ☐ **Sharing general information about mental health and wellbeing with the students**

CREATING A SAFE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

- ☐ Treating student input as valuable
- ☐ Taking breaks as necessary during challenging discussions
- ☐ Respecting student autonomy
- ☐ Asking for volunteers (vs. cold-calling)
- ☐ Acknowledging that university can be scary and intimidating to new students
- ☐ **Establishing a relationship based on trust with the students**
- ☐ **Allowing students space to be wrong, and gently redirecting students as appropriate**
- ☐ **Ensuring that discussions allow space for different perspectives and opinions**
- ☐ **Using inclusive language**
- ☐ **Addressing safety and support early on in the term**
- ☐ **Allowing students to participate in multiple ways, if participation marks are deemed necessary**

Taking care of your own wellbeing is important.
The UBC Human Resources Workplace Wellbeing & Benefits website has information about benefit plans designed with the continuing health and wellbeing of staff, faculty and their families.

In addition, UBC is proud to offer a wide range of workshops and programs to help keep you working and living well.
Visit **www.hr.ubc.ca/wellbeing-benefits/** to learn more about the available resources.

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

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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.
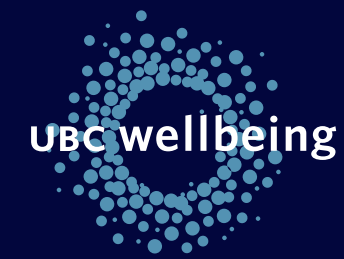
This reflection tool is designed to give you an opportunity to think about your teaching practices through the lens of promoting student wellbeing. In this list, you may notice teaching practices that you already use.
→ **We invite you to identify and consider adopting one or two new teaching practices into your work.**

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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.

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**

- ☐ Light blue: Practices that may be easier to implement
- ☐ **Medium blue: Practices that may require some preparation by the instructor**
- ☐ **Dark blue: Practices that may require thoughtful preparation by the instructor**

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.

HELPING STUDENTS FIND VALUE IN THE SUBJECT MATTER
- ☐ Sharing your passion and enthusiasm for the subject
- ☐ Explaining why a topic is important
- ☐ Connecting course concepts to the "real world"
- ☐ Showing students where to learn more about a topic
- ☐ Using hands-on or applied learning
- ☐ **Allowing students choice in their assignments**
- ☐ **Connecting students to community**

HELPING STUDENTS FIND VALUE IN THE LEARNING PROCESS
- ☐ Hand-writing class notes on the whiteboard
- ☐ Encouraging students to ask questions
- ☐ Asking students questions
- ☐ Speaking in an engaging tone of voice
- ☐ Choosing interesting examples
- ☐ Incorporating multi-media
- ☐ In-class discussions
- ☐ Clicker questions
- ☐ In-class practice
- ☐ **Field trips and attending community events**

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

DELIVERING THE MATERIAL EFFECTIVELY
- ☐ **Providing lecture outlines**
- ☐ **Using simple language**
- ☐ **Using clear examples**
- ☐ **Explain things from multiple perspectives**
- ☐ **Conveying the material in a clear logical manner**
- ☐ **Provide learning objectives**
- ☐ **Recapping at the end of lecture**
- ☐ **Moving at a pace that is appropriate to the student**
- ☐ **Using active teaching methods**

SUPPORTING LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM
- ☐ Inviting students to attend office hours
- ☐ **Connect students to resources**
- ☐ **Being accessible outside of class**
- ☐ **Suggesting effective study methods for the course**
- ☐ **Soliciting feedback from your students**
- ☐ **Sharing your class notes online**
- ☐ **Incorporate how-to's into the course**
- ☐ **Providing thorough notes**
- ☐ **Offering review sessions**