



## Small TLEF Project – Final Report

Report Completion Date: (2017/11/22)

### 1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

#### 1.1. General Information

<b>Project Title:</b>	Identifying the influence of teaching practices on undergraduate students' mental health and wellbeing		
<b>Principal Investigator:</b>	Michael Lee		
<b>Report Submitted By:</b>	Michael Lee		
<b>Project Initiation Date:</b>	April 1, 2015	<b>Project Completion Date:</b>	September 30, 2017

#### 1.2. Project Summary

Based on students' perspectives, we identify teaching practices (e.g., teaching environment, pedagogy, grading, etc.) that positively influence undergraduate students' mental health and wellbeing in the Faculties of Arts and Science at UBC. Examined the Undergraduate Experiences Survey data in February 2015, we ascertained practices and instructors that students identify as fostering their mental health and wellbeing. We then conducted focus groups to explore student experiences with these practices and instructors, and interviewed identified instructors to learn about their teaching practices. Finally, in collaboration with CTLT, we developed a set of guidelines to encourage faculty and Teaching Assistants to integrate the findings into their teaching practice; and findings were broadly disseminated to the teaching community at UBC. This two-year pilot project serves as a model for future investigations and development of best practices to support student wellbeing across all faculties and levels at the university.

#### 1.3. Team Members –

Name	Title/Affiliation	Responsibilities/Roles
Steven Barnes	Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts	Core group member / worked closely with faculty members
Patty Hambler	Student Development and Services	Core group member/ worked closely with student services
Mineko Wada	Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, Faculty of Medicine	Core group member / ensured rigor of data collection and analysis process
Kathleen Lane	Graduate student with Sauder School of Business	Student- work-learn staff / project coordinator
Minnie Teng	Graduate student with Faculty of Medicine	Student –work-learn staff / KT coordinator



10 faculty + 4 grad and undergrad students	Various Faculties and Departments throughout the UBC-O campus	Faculty and student advisors
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#### 1.4. Student Impact –

This project is intended to create impact at the instructor level, thereby impacting students’ learning. Thus, this report will not be reporting on student impact at the course level. However, its impact on faculty and staff members who participated in this project will be discussed under section 2.4 “project impact”. Though there is no direct and immediate impact on student, students who enrolled in classes from participating faculty members indicated positive effect on their wellbeing: “This project has opened my eyes to how much care and thought instructors put into making their lessons—not just as a way to pass on knowledge, but also as a way to promote wellbeing.” More detail on student’s perception can be found on *The shift: Exploring the relationship between teaching and wellbeing* (<http://flexible.learning.ubc.ca/case-studies/project-identifies-teaching-practices-that-promote-student-wellbeing/>)

## 2. PROJECT EVALUATION

### 2.1. Project Outcomes –

The intended main objective of this project is to investigate the influence of teaching practices on undergraduate student mental health and wellbeing in the Faculties of Arts and Science. Specifically, this involves:

- 1) Identifying teaching practices that actively promote students’ mental health and wellbeing; and
- 2) Sharing the findings with the campus teaching community, including instructors and teaching assistants, to increase their awareness of practices that enhance students’ mental health and wellbeing.

### 2.2. Findings –

The project team adopted Appreciative Inquiry as the core methodological approach for the project, as the goal of this project was to identify teaching practices that are effective for learning and supporting well-being. We administered two campus-wide surveys and conducted focus groups and interviews with students and instructors, respectively. After analyzing each of the data sets independently, three themes were identified as important teaching elements that promote student well-being:

- **Belonging & social inclusion:** Students’ well-being is supported when they feel connected to their instructors and peers.
- **Learning well:** Students’ well-being is supported when they are motivated to learn and when they feel that they are learning effectively.
- **Whole student:** Student well-being is supported when instructors recognize that they have lives outside academics

The project outcomes are achieved through data collection and analysis from surveys, interviews, and focus groups conducted with over 4000 students, and about 20 faculty members from different faculties/departments.



Based on the above findings and detailed examples of teaching practices identified through the project, we designed knowledge translation (KT) activities and tools such as infographics and a checklist of teaching practices that promote student well-being.

### 2.3. Dissemination –

Activity	Title	Organized by	Participant #
workshop	How teaching practices influence student mental health and wellbeing	First year Science symposium / Faculty of Science	~ 25 instructors
workshop	UBC Thrive: Design Lab – Let’s talk teaching practices and student wellbeing	Thrive week	~20 Instructors, student volunteers, faculty
workshop	How Teaching Practices Influence Student Mental Health and Wellbeing	Winter Institute / CTLT	~ 10 instructors & CTLT staff
Off campus - World cafe	Wellbeing in Learning Environments: From K to PhD	Education and Public Health in Partnership / Public Health Association BC	~ 10 faculty, teachers & administrators
Short presentation	Teaching practice & student wellbeing	Faculty of Forestry Deans Meeting	~8 dean & associate deans
workshop	Supporting the Student as a Whole Person	Classroom climate / CTLT	~10 instructors
Off campus - workshop	Hearing what they have to say: Gathering data on how teaching practices impact on student mental health and well-being	Healthy camps Healthy mind	~30 teachers & instructors
Off-campus workshop	13th Annual Learning Conference “Engaging Every Learner”	UBC-Okanagan	~28 instructors/student services staff
Poster	Identifying the influence of teaching practices on undergraduate students’ mental health & wellbeing in the Faculties of Arts and Science.	Celebration of Learning poster	~ 50 instructors
Short presentation	Teaching practice & student wellbeing	National meeting for depts. of Chemical and Biological Engineering	~25 dept heads throughout the country



Off-campus poster	Identifying the influence of teaching practices on undergraduate students’ mental health	STLHE	100+ faculty & education designers
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**2.4. Project impact –**

80 KT participants (faculty members & CTLT staff) who participated in our KT events, and also participated in our outcome studies indicated that their awareness on impact of teaching on students’ mental wellness is increased. In addition, many of them also indicated that they learned new skills that they can use in their classroom context. Though the findings are not statically significant, knowledge and skill acquisition are clearly indicated in our outcome study.

A short video that highlights the impact of this project can be found in [\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSr2YFnhNfw\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSr2YFnhNfw). Detail report of the outcome study is available at <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/graduateresearch/42591/items/1.0355405>

**3. TEACHING PRACTICES –**

The project team reflected on the themes and findings of the project and has attempted to try new teaching practices that were found to be conducive to student wellbeing. For example, realizing the importance of creating a safe learning environment, we have attempted to bring up the topics of mental health and mental illness in the classroom and mentioned available campus resources to students. Members of the project team have also printed out tables of student names along with their pictures knowing students’ name in an attempt to know the students by name. In addition, members of the project team recognize that flexibility in teaching has been cited as important to students so that fair but flexible accommodations for students who are in need have been practiced.

**4. PROJECT SUSTAINMENT –**

Our project team has worked with UBC communications and Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology and created a checklist of teaching practices that have been found to be instrumental to student wellbeing ([http://blogs.ubc.ca/teachingandwellbeing/files/2016/12/TLEF\\_Handout\\_Round2\\_v2.pdf](http://blogs.ubc.ca/teachingandwellbeing/files/2016/12/TLEF_Handout_Round2_v2.pdf)). An infographic of the findings of the project ([http://blogs.ubc.ca/teachingandwellbeing/files/2017/05/TLEF-Infographic\\_Round2\\_v2.pdf](http://blogs.ubc.ca/teachingandwellbeing/files/2017/05/TLEF-Infographic_Round2_v2.pdf)).has also been developed as knowledge translation dissemination tools.

Two videos (<https://youtu.be/WhRgpTBbZdg>, <https://blogs.ubc.ca/teachingandwellbeing/2017/08/13/student-reflection-video/>) have also been created to aid in knowledge translation. One animated video has been created to help instructors and faculty recognize that teaching directly influences students’ learning and wellbeing. Another video features student opinions about how teaching affects wellbeing. Both videos have been widely distributed through our social media channels (Twitter, UBC Blog).



A blog (<https://blogs.ubc.ca/teachingandwellbeing/>) has been created and dedicated to showcase findings from the project and acts as a platform for discussion for instructors and faculty worldwide, so that we have a wider reach of audiences for knowledge translation purposes. A Twitter account has also been created to offer findings and updates on the project. We are also in the process of possibly establishing a community of practice for instructors, faculty, and teaching assistants to continue the dialogue on teaching and wellbeing.

Furthermore, we are in the process of developing knowledge translation packages in collaboration with the Teaching Assistant union for TA training through TA Instructional Skills Workshops (ISW). As faculty and instructors often start off as teaching assistants, we have been working to disseminate project findings to teaching assistants so that knowledge on how teaching affects wellbeing will be instilled in teaching assistants early in their teaching career, and will thus have a longer term impact as they continue towards their teaching journey.

As our team has been working very closely with the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology, we will continue to collaborate with them to offer more workshops (e.g. Winter Institute, 2017) to disseminate our project findings to ensure knowledge translation and sustain this momentum to improve student wellbeing through teaching.