



Student Wellbeing After a Health Crisis: How Student Experiences Can Inform Best Practices

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Practitioners Summary

Overview

In collaboration with SEEDS, the goal of our project was to determine if the current UBC Wellbeing resource for professors was up to date and effective. The classroom is a dynamic place and, since the COVID-19 pandemic, has experienced myriad changes. We employed a mixed-method approach in order to determine what best practices are currently in use, and what practices UBC students would like to see more of. It was determined that the current resources is mostly still relevant however, it was found that recommendations could be made in order to best support students within the dynamic landscape of the university classroom environment.

Goals and Objectives

Identify gaps in existing literature

After an extensive literature review, we determined where research was lacking and how we might be able to fill the gaps.

Create research question in collaboration with SEEDS

With our partners, we designed a research question which was practical to conduct research on, and would result in tangible recommendations for the client.

Speak with the student body

In order to determine the best practices teaching staff can engage with to foster student wellbeing in the classroom, we had to hear from students themselves.

Methods

Literature Review

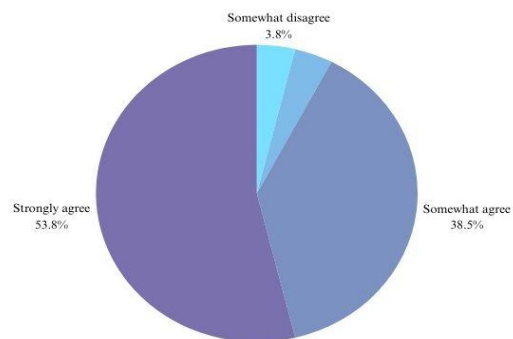
Survey

Three Interviews

Recommendations

- 1 Encouraging teaching staff to recognize the complexities of student life.
- 2 Providing alternative ways for students to access material without relying heavily on those methods.
- 3 Effectively communicate results and feedback to staff through online modalities.

Preliminary Findings



“Meaningful connection with my peers is important to me” and “Professors making time to connect with students in the classroom is important to me”

Executive Summary

In partnership with UBC Wellbeing and the SEEDS Sustainability Program, we were tasked with providing recommendations for the *Teaching Practices that Promote Student Wellbeing: A Tool for Educators*, a resource designed to help instructors support student wellbeing in the classroom. However, this resource (which includes reminders to “use inclusive language” and “engage in conversation not directly related to the course”) was designed in a pre-pandemic setting. Therefore, our guiding research question was: **“In a post-pandemic classroom environment, what are the best practices that instructors and staff can implement in order to best support student wellbeing?”**.

To answer this question, we employed a thorough review of the existing literature, designed a survey which could be completed by students of any year and in any department, and conducted interviews for deeper qualitative analysis. We found that students, in general, wanted to take part in in-person learning as much as possible. This does not mean, however, that professors should not be accommodating cases such as unexcused absences or extenuating “life” circumstances. Participants clarified that the decision to attend class was not impacted by whether a professor posted their lecture slides or recorded their lectures. In other words, limiting the use of these methods neither encourages classroom participation or benefits student wellbeing. It was found that the most important factor influencing students’ attendance in class was the classroom environment which the professor had a hand in creating, and which was described as “friendly”, “warm”, or “supportive”. Participants noted that efforts on behalf of teaching staff to encourage classroom discussions, learn names, or talk to students about more than just their academic lives all contributed to the desire for students to come to class. Given the link in the literature between in-person attendance, motivation, engagement, and academic success (Delaney and Ashton, 2024), we believe the previously mentioned efforts by professors to be the best way to foster classroom wellbeing.

Regarding the current resource available to educators, we found it to be reflective of students' current desires. Some key recommendations to inform best practices include encouraging professors to provide hybrid learning options for students who struggle to come to campus, are sick, or face other barriers, and not relying only on online if possible. Additionally, we recommend incorporating more group discussions, peer collaboration, and interactive classroom activities to foster a supportive and engaging learning environment.

We recognised our positionality as students, or “insiders”, as beneficial to our research; we were able to design survey and interview questions with our own experiences in mind which contributed to a deeper analysis of student wellbeing in the classroom post-pandemic. Future methods we could employ to make our research more robust include interviewing professors and teaching staff themselves to determine their experience of dynamics in the classroom in the years following the pandemic. Potential avenues of future research include examining student wellbeing in the classroom and its relation to year standing, i.e. the way peer connections and community build over time. More specifically, asking students of varying years what they think professors of lower-level classes can do to promote student wellbeing amongst new students in large lecture halls where connection can be difficult to achieve.

List of Figures

Figure 1. Doughnut chart showing the respective departments participants of the survey were from	15
Figure 2. Bar chart showing the distribution of participant year standing	16
Figure 3. Stacked Bar Chart showing the survey results from the Likert Scale questions	16
Figure 4. Bar chart showing the themes presented in question 3 of the survey	17
Figure 5. Bar chart showing the themes present in question 4 of the survey	18
Figure 6. Bar chart showing the themes present in question 5 of the survey	19
Figure 7. Bar chart showing the themes present in question 6 of the survey	20
Figure 8. Bar chart showing the themes present in question 10 of the survey	21
Figure 9. Bar chart showing the themes present in question 14 of the survey.....	22

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
List of Figures	5
Introduction.....	8
Literature Review.....	9
Understanding the Student Perspective.....	9
The Role of Faculty in Student Wellbeing.....	9
Post-Pandemic Technology and Its Effects on Student Connectivity and Wellbeing	10
Wellbeing Resources UBC Provides.....	11
Research Methodology and Methods.....	12
Research Methodology.....	12
Research Methods	12
Survey analysis: quantitative.....	14
Survey analysis: Qualitative.....	14
Interview analysis.....	14
Survey Results	15
Demographics of participants.....	15
Likert Scale	16
Long Answer Questions	17
Interview results.....	22
Interview #1.....	22
Interview #2.....	23
Interview #3.....	25
Discussion and Recommendations	26
Recommendations for Action	26
Immediate Action.....	26
Mid-term Action.....	27
Limitations	28
Recommendations for Future Research	28
Conclusion	29
Appendices.....	31
Appendix A	31
Appendix B	32
Appendix C	33

Appendix D	34
References.....	35

Introduction

Student well-being is a pressing concern in higher education - yet many of the resources meant to support it are no longer aligned with today's classroom environment. Our research is concerned with student wellbeing at UBC; specifically, how can professors and staff be best prepared to support their students' wellbeing and prevent negative impacts before they happen? In collaboration with the SEEDS Sustainability Program, our team was tasked with evaluating and updating UBC's Wellbeing Resource, a tool designed to guide instructors in supporting student wellbeing (see Appendix A for a copy of the current resource). This resource includes checklists and practical tips, such as encouraging informal check-ins with students, initiating small conversations, and even reminders for instructors to smile more in class. While well-intentioned, much of the guidance was developed before the pandemic, in 2018, and may not fully address the needs of students today. Our objective was to determine whether this resource remains effective and relevant. To answer this overarching question, we narrowed our analysis to a specific research question: In a post-pandemic classroom environment, what challenges and best practices should instructors and staff be aware of to best support student wellbeing?

Although student wellbeing is shaped by many factors beyond the classroom, our study focused specifically on classroom dynamics to isolate concrete, actionable insights. The pandemic has significantly reshaped how students engage with learning, and this report aims to identify how an institute's resources can evolve accordingly to better serve both students and educators. While our research had to yield results that would help us update the wellbeing resource, we wanted it to first and foremost provide indicative evidence of the best ways to support student wellbeing. But why only consider aspects of wellbeing that stem from the classroom, and why only consider a post-pandemic environment specifically?

We can contextualize these two facets by first being aware that wellbeing is affected by a variety of factors extending beyond the classroom. Our narrow scope allowed us to isolate tangible methods occurring within the classroom which can lead to everyday differences in the lives of students. Secondly, teaching staff and students alike are experiencing the classroom that is situated in the "post-pandemic". However, the resource is situated in a context that is entirely pre-pandemic, since it was launched in 2018. Reflecting on how much of the classroom experience has changed between today and less than a decade ago, it becomes evident that this distinction needs to be made.

We sought to identify any examples of how professors can foster wellbeing that are not yet addressed in the resource, so that it may better reflect how students and professors approach classroom learning. Our research was initiated through an analysis of the discourse on student wellbeing, which is expanded on in the literature review. Our background study of the topic yielded the following definition for student wellbeing which guided our methods:

A concept including mental, emotional, and academic health shaped by students' relationships to instructors and classroom experiences. Motivation and engagement play a central role in student wellbeing.

As this report will emphasize often, students are the focus of our analysis. Thus, through our methods, we were able to formulate a definition for wellbeing that is reflective of the average UBC student. While our literature definition guided our methods, our student definition guided our discussion and recommendations:

A supportive and respectful learning environment, where one is safe and heard among peers, with access to flexible and accessible learning materials. There is a connection, comfort, and a sense of belonging within the classroom community

Ultimately, the goal of this project is to find out whether students are experiencing tangible, positive outcomes in the classroom because of the supports listed out in the resource, and what, if anything, in the resource needs to be updated to reflect present-day learning environments.

Literature Review

Regarding wellbeing, students are a unique demographic within society. It has been cited that students enrolled in higher-education programs experience disproportionate levels of stress, mental illness, and general degradation of wellbeing (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2011; Stallman, 2010). Through the literature, we have defined wellbeing as a concept including mental, emotional, and academic health shaped by students' relationships to instructors and classroom experiences. As such, this topic has been well researched, with many studies focusing on the phenomenological experience of students within the classroom (Audin et al., 2003; Denzine and Steven, 2009; Riva et al., 2020).

Understanding the Student Perspective

One commonality between studies is how interactions with instructors directly affect students' experience. This can range from instructor preparedness, wellbeing knowledge, and associated characteristics. Consequently, students' suggestions on how teachers may improve student wellbeing in the classroom often relate to teaching practices. Baik et al. (2019) found that variations among student responses to improving wellbeing "indicate the value of consulting students at the program/school level" (p. 9); failures to do so can result in wellbeing initiatives that may not address stressors students perceive as impacting their wellbeing. Here, the researchers recognise students as "the experts" (p. 10) of their own experiences and, therefore, have valuable insight not available to staff, and other faculty. Thus, while instructors have been proven to play critical roles in addressing student wellbeing, students are able to determine what kinds of teaching practices best support them. Student wellbeing is an educator-student dependent relationship; students know what they are lacking, and educators have the capacity (and indeed an ethical obligation) to provide it. Student experiences must be recognised as important modes of wellbeing evidence.

The Role of Faculty in Student Wellbeing

From approachability to syllabus flexibility, instructors influence a student's wellbeing extensively. While our research focuses on students' perspective of new learning environments in a post-pandemic world, instructors have no doubt been at the forefront of that transition. Therefore, it is worth exploring the kinds of ways instructors approached a post-pandemic learning environment. Germanier and Puhr (2023) study the meaning-making processes of instructors as they navigate post-pandemic education. The authors describe participants' various experiences, reactions, and means of navigating their roles as educators through a pandemic. Some flourishing through upbeat, and even analytical responses to their new reality. Others, however, returned to in-person learning more discouraged than ever. Participants noted lack of faculty comradery, in some cases, affecting their own wellbeing. Participants also noted the struggles of online teaching (students refusing to turn cameras on, resulting in lack of student-instructor connection, and instructor exhaustion), as well as the challenges of post-pandemic life

within the classroom (the connective barriers that masks inevitably produce). Our research will focus on the student's perspective, and their experiences in post-pandemic learning environments. Still, experiences within the university classroom constitute dynamic relationships. As such, the student experience should not be taken in isolation from the instructor experience.

Post-Pandemic Technology and Its Effects on Student Connectivity and Wellbeing

Student's wellbeing is multifaceted; an integral part of this journey through university is social networks between students, and unfortunately, it has been altered by the COVID-19 pandemic. The importance of student wellbeing is evident as Jayman et al. (2024) points to the discourse generally accepting that the university student population have "poor mental wellbeing" (p. 5). The article reveals that this connection plays a key role to wellbeing, illustrated through multiple examples of student submission that highlight the importance of "togetherness, friendship, and connection" within a university environment (Jager, 2023). Different universities employed different procedures for class conduct and norms post-COVID, thus the scope of our research includes considering how online and hybrid learning formats affected relationship-making ability among students. Not only does in-person learning provide students with better levels of engagement, but it encourages personal connections to be made that otherwise wouldn't be fostered in an online setting (Delaney & Ashton, 2024). On the other hand, mental health and wellbeing has been in decline among students even before the pandemic (Delaney & Ashton, 2024), suggesting that the relationship between online classes and wellbeing decline is correlational, and not causal. Furthermore, online learning formats are not merely detriments to wellbeing. The reason for their implementation originally was to ease the burden on faculty and students during the height of the pandemic; in this way, it was implemented to *increase* wellbeing. Currently, as we transition to the post-pandemic era, we can ask if the benefits online classes provided at the beginning of the pandemic can be legitimized by the risks currently posed. Changes in learning formats caused by the pandemic, and which affect students' wellbeing, are examined by Conrad et al. (2022), whose work reveals two factors in the shift in format causing most concern for students. These were design factors and lack of synchronous lectures. The study provides some strategies in order to alleviate the deleterious consequences of these factors including redesigning education formats to better fit student needs, as well as bolster the importance of social interactions in the classroom (Conrad et al., 2022).

Similarly, Jayman et al. (2024) points to the importance of researching in this field as "rapidly evolving technologies" influence how people "interact". One important consideration of new learning formats is that the system we use to learn is flexible and adaptable in a variety of scenarios. Our study aims to consider the positive effects of new learning formats, *alongside* the negative. Such positive effects have been explored by Pagone et al. (2024) whose goal was to engage with the teaching experience in its virtual modalities, provide suggestions for both teaching practices and student participation in virtual and in-person learning, and to encourage a conceptual reformulation of learning spaces in order to benefit from both kinds (online and in-person) in the future. The authors identify two factors that fostered a successful pandemic-learning approach which can then be applied to other post-pandemic learning contexts. They are the virtual platforms faculty already had access to (Zoom, Canvas, and Google Classroom), and the ability for students of a "digital age" to quickly adopt online learning platforms. In the kinds of classrooms this study focused on, the flexibility and adaptability of learning formats favoured

by post-pandemic instructors (such as untraditional final exams, and emphasis on multiple evaluation strategies) proved successful for students. Therefore, the authors suggest that instructors and faculty members were able to use the pandemic context to exemplify the importance of “innovation, teacher reflection, flexibility in planning, and formative assessment” (p. 196). It also confirmed previously reviewed literature (Baik et al., 2019) that students are the “masters” of their experiences and should play a central role in the implementation of their educational experience. This study has demonstrated that teaching methods which saw an increase in use during the pandemic have favourable impacts on student success and, likely, wellbeing.

He et al. (2023) cites a correlation between motivation, engagement, and academic success that has been significantly impacted by online learning formats in the post-pandemic university. Here, we focus on student's perspectives of online learning modalities during the pandemic. Given the association between online learning and decreased levels of student motivation, engagement, and program completion, it is imperative to understand the relationships students have with hybrid learning formats in order for teachers and universities to meaningfully support student learning and experiences. The authors cite various studies which explore student perceptions of online learning, with many concluding that students' top preferences for learning include in-person formats. They also cite that 82% of students experienced increased concerns regarding academic performance in the wake of the online transition. Importantly, poor academic performance or reduced engagement with the material has been proven to increase stress and be a determinant to wellbeing (Martin, 2010). The authors posit that it is essential for students to have their learning preferences considered, and the effects that abrupt transitions have had on their mental health must be considered. According to Hu and Li (2017), emotional engagement is “often considered a primary contributor to overall student engagement, influencing behavioural and cognitive engagement during the learning process” (He et al., 2023). They find that motivation is directly correlated with engagement, the former leading to increased levels of the latter. They cite Stark (2019) as finding online courses to have lower levels of motivation (and therefore engagement) than in-person learning settings. In general, academic performance follows correlationally from motivation and engagement. Because of this correlation, we believe learning formats used in university classrooms to be one of the current main contributors to student wellbeing within the classroom, beside student-instructor and student-student interactions.

Wellbeing Resources UBC Provides

As an institution, the university is responsible for both teachers and students alike. The largest wellbeing accommodations at UBC cover academic accommodations as well as in-person resources through the wellness centre. “Academic accommodations are intended to provide students with a disability or ongoing medical condition access to the academic environment” (University of British Columbia, 2025), providing students with more accessible forms of exams and other, generally inaccessible course requirements. This aspect of wellbeing is directly linked to mental wellbeing, research suggests that anxiety, depression, and their combination are associated with increased levels of disability (Brenes et al., 2008). Academic accommodations cover alternate format materials, assistive technology, captioning and ASL interpreting, as well as the ability to request a note-taker all to create a safe environment to learn at a university level. Looking into the Wellness Centre's in-person resources, questions about health, mental health, and support options are all considered (University of British Columbia, 2025). With these

resources in mind, there has been no extensive focus on the shift back from online classes to in-person teaching, leaving a gap in knowledge on how to accommodate individuals struggling with issues surrounding motivation, engagement, and academic success.

The capacity of support available for students in promoting wellbeing since the COVID pandemic needs to be examined as the literature shows that multiple universities have experienced a higher demand since the pandemic. Lisiecka et al. (2023) pointed to research by the American Council of Education who identified that “70% of US university presidents” felt that there was an increased demand surrounding “student mental health concerns” during the pandemic (p. 13). The current strain of resources at UBC and the impacts of this on students need to be investigated to understand what measures need to be addressed to support student wellbeing. Lisiecka et al. concluded from the analysis that universities should incorporate a few key strategies to allow for better mental health support, of which UBC has many, including “peer support” and “wellness workshops” (Lisiecka et al., 2023; Mental Health Care at UBC, n.d.). These issues of demand need to be grounded in a UBC specific context to determine how UBC services have been impacted by the needs of student's post-pandemic.

Research Methodology and Methods

Research Methodology

Our research employed a mixed-methods approach, using a literature review, a survey, and interviews to first identify knowledge gaps, and then attempt to fill them. The survey was most feasible given the time constraints of the project, and the general availability of university students. Having the survey available through a QR code made it easy for people to scan with their phones (and accessible), and designing the survey to be completed in (approximately) 5-7 minutes was important for our survey's success. Still, we knew that to gather the kind of data necessary to answer our research question, we would need some participants to elaborate on their survey answers. We attribute the success of our interviews to our positionality as students; there was a certain level of a priori knowledge we had about the topic that allowed us to converse with participants in a relatively seamless manner.

Research Methods

The most important ethical concern we encountered while conducting our research was realizing our own positionality (as students) exploring a topic which revolved around student wellbeing. Originally, it was thought that in order to maintain not only ethical compliance, but appropriate research conduct our group must remain somewhat ambivalent to the research at hand. What we discovered however, was that our position as “insiders” in this field was incredibly beneficial to our research, from creating survey questions to conducting semi-structured interviews. To begin, we identified main themes we found to be emerging from a preliminary literature review. These included student wellness in relation to institutional barriers of the University, the emergence of AI, and changes in learning-formats in the “post-pandemic” classroom. Originally, we had identified institutional barriers of the University as both key to understanding student wellbeing, as well as an interesting avenue of potential research. Our initial understanding was that the university, as a place of production under capitalist regimes, may be essentially ill-equipped to address student wellbeing as its main objective within society and, more specifically academia, is production. Thus, wellbeing is often constrained by larger

social structures; wellbeing is prioritized insofar as it does not impede the ability for staff and students to engage with research and teaching/learning capacities. However, because the goal of this project was to update the *Teaching Practices that Promote Student Wellbeing: A Tool for Educators* (UBC Wellbeing Resource hereafter) designed for educators, the inquiry into institutional barriers became somewhat unapplicable. Although identifying the structural limits of the university based on student and staff perceptions of these limits is undoubtedly interesting and important, we recognized that this line of inquiry extended beyond the scope of the current project. We then pivoted to a previously identified gap in the literature: the emergence of new learning formats in the years following the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because the resources meant for staff had not been updated since 2018 (pre-pandemic), we desired to know if the resources were still relevant in relation to students' perceptions of wellbeing "post-pandemic". In other words, we switched our focus to what the best practices staff can engage with to support student wellbeing in the "post-pandemic" classroom. The UBC Wellbeing team agreed that this was both feasible and relevant. With their support, we began our formal literature review and preparations for primary research.

We designed our survey with efficiency, ease, and effectiveness in mind. We wanted to limit the number of short-answer questions involved, refine our Likert scale questions to reduce the overall volume of questions, and limit the completion time in general. As students who often take surveys associated with UBC, we realise the survey fatigue can be an issue, especially given the time at which we activated the survey (around midterms and approaching end of term). The first draft of our survey (which was sent to our SEEDS and UBC Wellbeing partners) was over-focused on the preliminary or demographic questions that, while perhaps interesting to know, were not directly related to the task at hand. Our partners strongly suggested that we increase the number of short-answer questions in the survey (we started with only 3). Given our goals of efficiency, ease, and effectiveness, we decided that any more than 5 short-answer questions would result in either poor or incomplete answers. Thus, we limited our short-answer questions to what we determined were the questions most in need of an explanation. These were:

- a. In 1-2 sentences, what practices and / or policies in the classroom are least supportive to your wellbeing?
- b. In 1-2 sentences, what practices and / or policies in the classroom are most supportive to your wellbeing?
- c. How has your experience of wellbeing in the classroom changed since the pandemic? We ask that you consider broad general changes, such as the emergence of AI; trends in teaching practices; asynchronous lectures and exams, etc.
- d. In 1-2 sentences, do you feel that remote-friendly learning options benefit or limit your wellbeing?
- e. Finally, what do you want faculty to know about how they can encourage student wellbeing in the classroom?

Our survey launched on March 17th and remained active until noon on March 31st. In total, we received 47 responses, 31 of which were valid. To promote our survey, each of our group members shared the call to participation (see Appendix B for the call to participation) and the link to participate on through their Instagram accounts. We relied on word of mouth as well as posters we hung in high traffic areas on campus (the Nest, the Geography building, the McLeod building, and the Centre for Interactive Research and Sustainability). Our professor also shared the link with another class. We received a large influx of responses after being put in-

touch (through the connections had by our SEEDS and UBC Wellbeing partners) with the social media manager for the UBC Wellbeing Instagram.

Our next goal was to organise focus groups/interviews with survey respondents who indicated interest. We did not feel as though the number of participants who responded “yes” to the opportunity to participate in a focus group was large enough to warrant holding one. Instead, we decided to hold three separate interviews with one or more members of our group guiding the conversation.

Interview #1 was held in-person and lasted for approximately 50 minutes; interview #2 was held on Zoom with two members of our group and lasted approximately 50 minutes; and interview #3 was held on Zoom with one member of our group and lasted approximately 35 minutes. The interviewers used a previously created guide while maintaining freedom to ask follow-up questions and shift the conversation based on context or what seemed to generate the most interesting and pertinent dialogue (see Appendix C for a copy of the interview guide).

Survey analysis: quantitative

The results from the Likert scale questions were entered manually into Excel and graphed on a pie chart first. This gave us information in percentages and allowed us preliminary visualization of our data (see Results). Because our quantitative data analysis was relatively simple, the presentation software we used (Canva) was able to perform the same process as Excel, while maintaining cohesive aesthetics through the presentation. We re-entered our data manually into Canva to create the charts we used in the presentation.

Survey analysis: Qualitative

To analyse the results from the survey’s short answer questions, we used NVivo to identify key words, phrases, and themes. We used this same process to define “student wellbeing in the classroom” based on participants' responses. However, there was also ‘manual’ analysis of the responses regarding student definitions – in order to delineate common themes - as it was integral to understanding our project generally.

Interview analysis

All interviews were recorded on either a local device or through Zoom. Both methods produced transcripts of the conversations that were uploaded securely to separate Word Documents. Here, we were able to edit the transcriptions (where needed) based on the recordings for clarity purposes. We used specific sections of these interviews in our presentation (and the following report) to add context, and to deepen our analysis of student wellbeing in the classroom.

For our interviews, we chose participants who we were already acquainted with. Schless and Mendels (1978) found that close family and friends disclosed 29% more information than interview participants they were not acquainted with. We found that knowing our interviewees made both the participant and the interviewer more comfortable in disclosing personal or sensitive information about their wellbeing.

Survey Results

Our survey had a total of 31 useable responses, some of which varied in number of specific question responses as the survey was designed to allow participants to skip questions. This was done to encourage participants to complete the entire survey even if they were not able/did not feel as though they wanted to answer every single question.

Demographics of participants

In order to gauge the demographics of the participants that completed the survey, two preliminary questions were designed; the first being “What department are you a part of? (e.g., Geography, Chemistry, Urban Planning...)” and the second question was “What is your year standing?”.

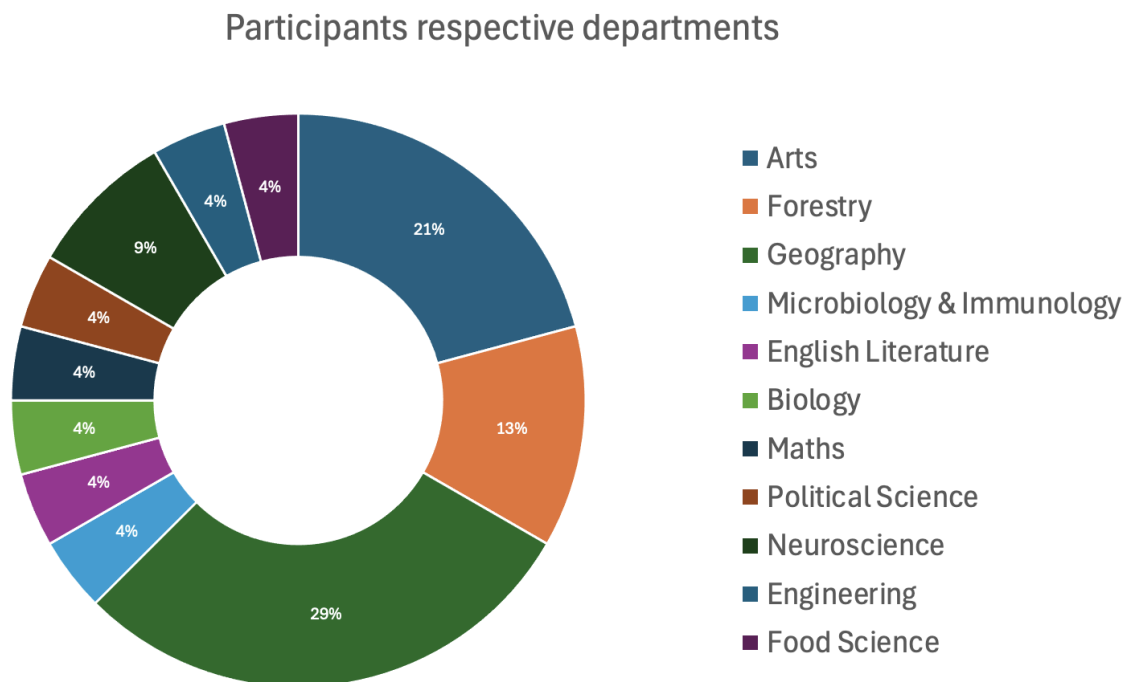


Figure 1: Doughnut chart showing the respective departments participants of the survey were from.

The question on participant departments revealed that a majority of participants were either in Geography (29%) or Arts (21%). There was also a smaller proportion of participants were in forestry (13%) and neuroscience (9%). There were also seven other departments represented at a smaller percentage (4%).

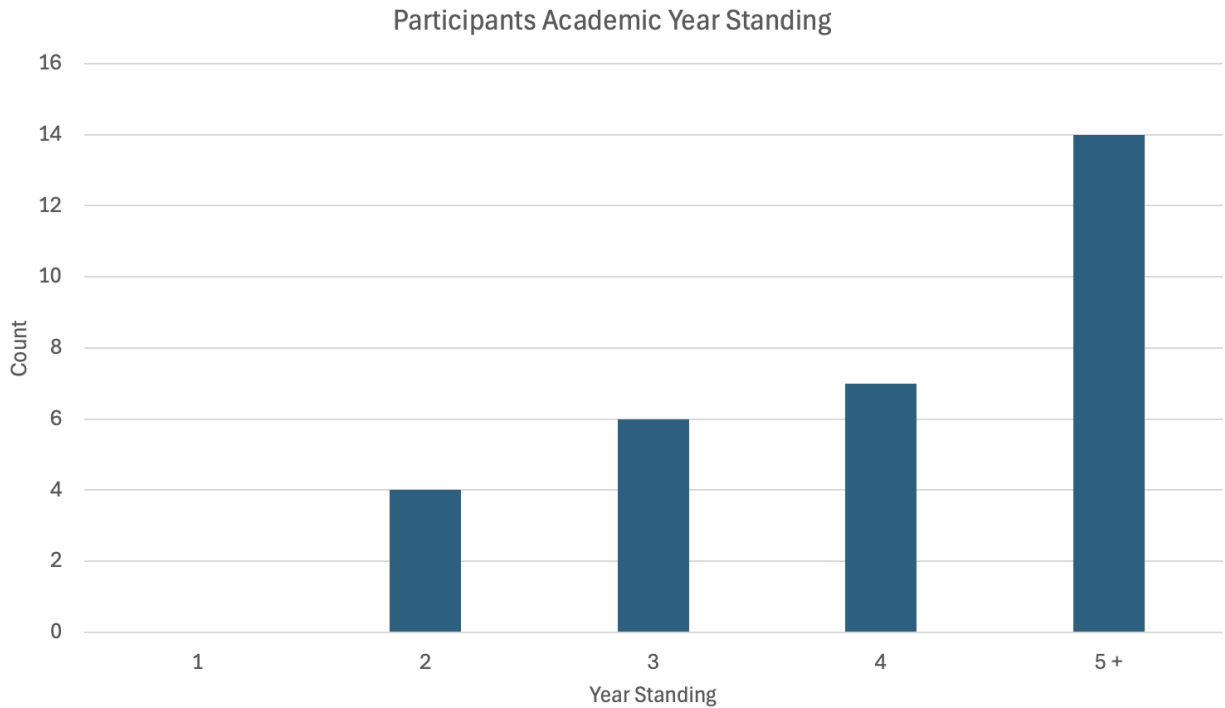


Figure 2: Bar chart showing the distribution of participant year standing

Most of the respondents were in upper years of study. The majority of survey participants had 5th or higher year standing, and almost an equal amount of 3rd and 4th years. The smallest demographic was 2nd year students. The survey had no representation from the 1st year population.

Likert Scale

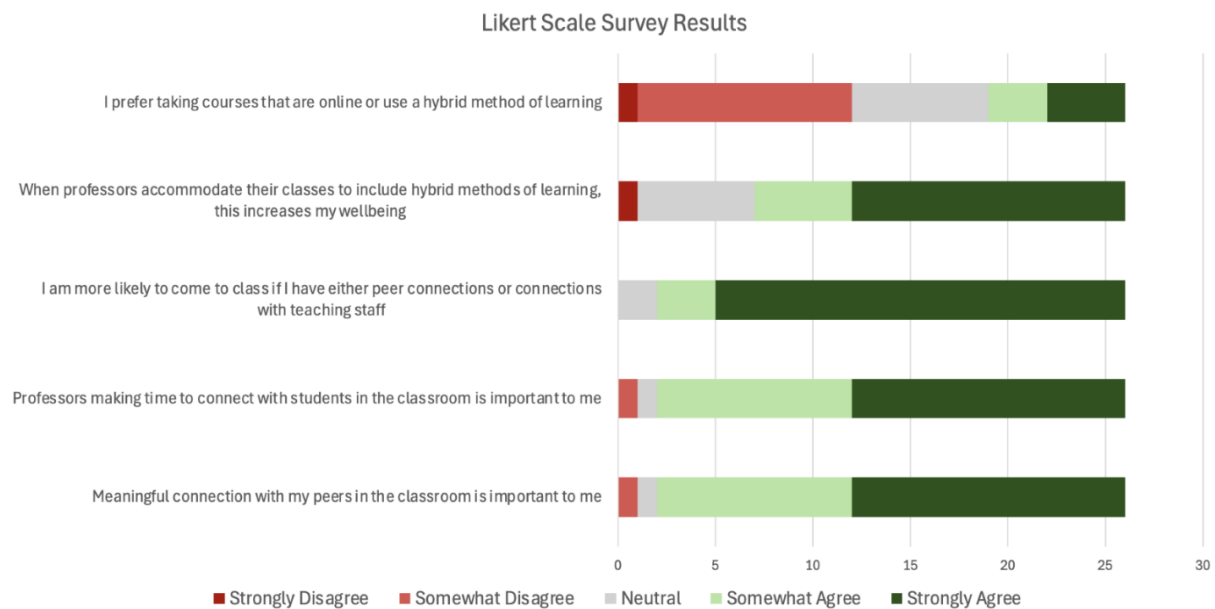


Figure 3: Stacked Bar Chart showing the survey results from the Likert Scale questions

The Likert Scale is a 5-tiered scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree and was used to understand student's overall stance on the following statements:

- 1) I prefer taking courses that are online or use a hybrid method of learning
- 2) When professors accommodate their classes to include hybrid methods of learning, this increases my wellbeing
- 3) I am more likely to come to class if I have either peer connections or connections with teaching staff
- 4) Professors making time to connect with students in the classroom is important to me
- 5) Meaningful connection with my peers in the classroom is important to me

Most of the Likert scale questions had a high proportion of students who strongly agreed with statements 2 – 5, whereas statement 1 received an overwhelming number of respondents who somewhat disagreed.

Long Answer Questions

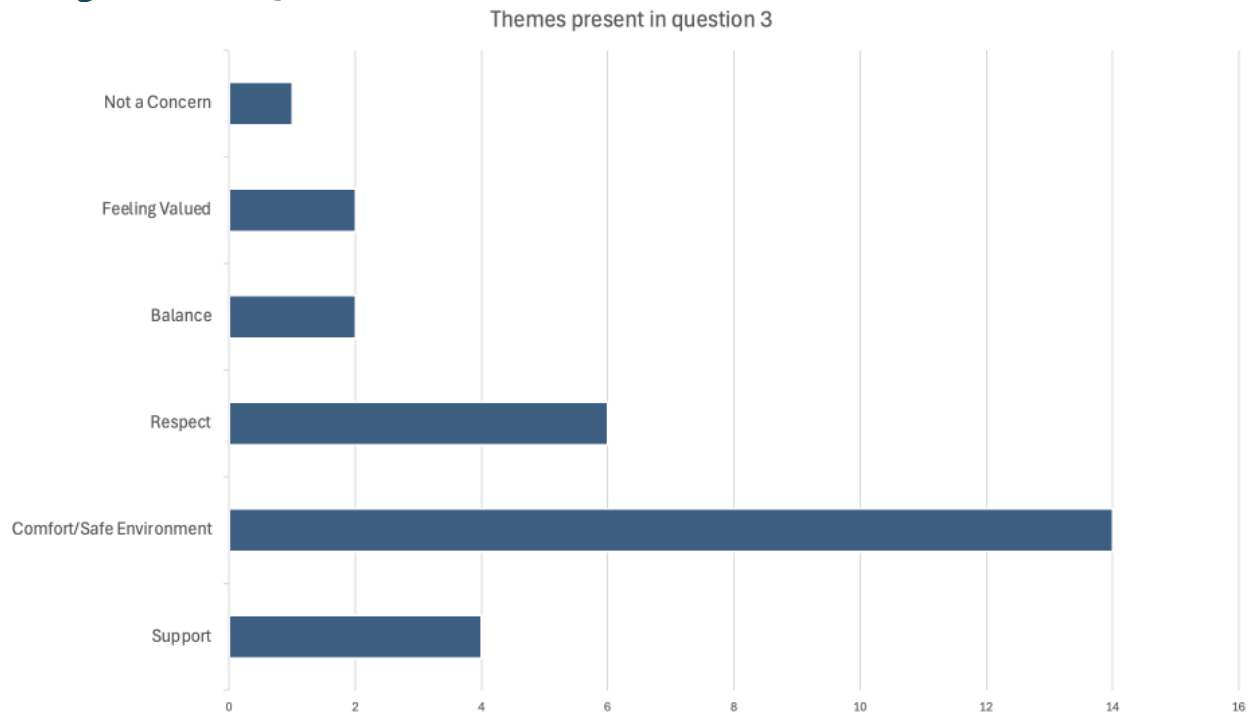


Figure 4: Bar chart showing the themes presented in question 3 of the survey

Participants were asked to answer, “In 1-2 sentences, what does student wellbeing in the classroom mean to you?”. As shown in Figure 4, creating a safe and comfortable environment was a top priority for an overwhelming number of respondents. The notion of respect and support also came up as important concepts for a 21% of participants.

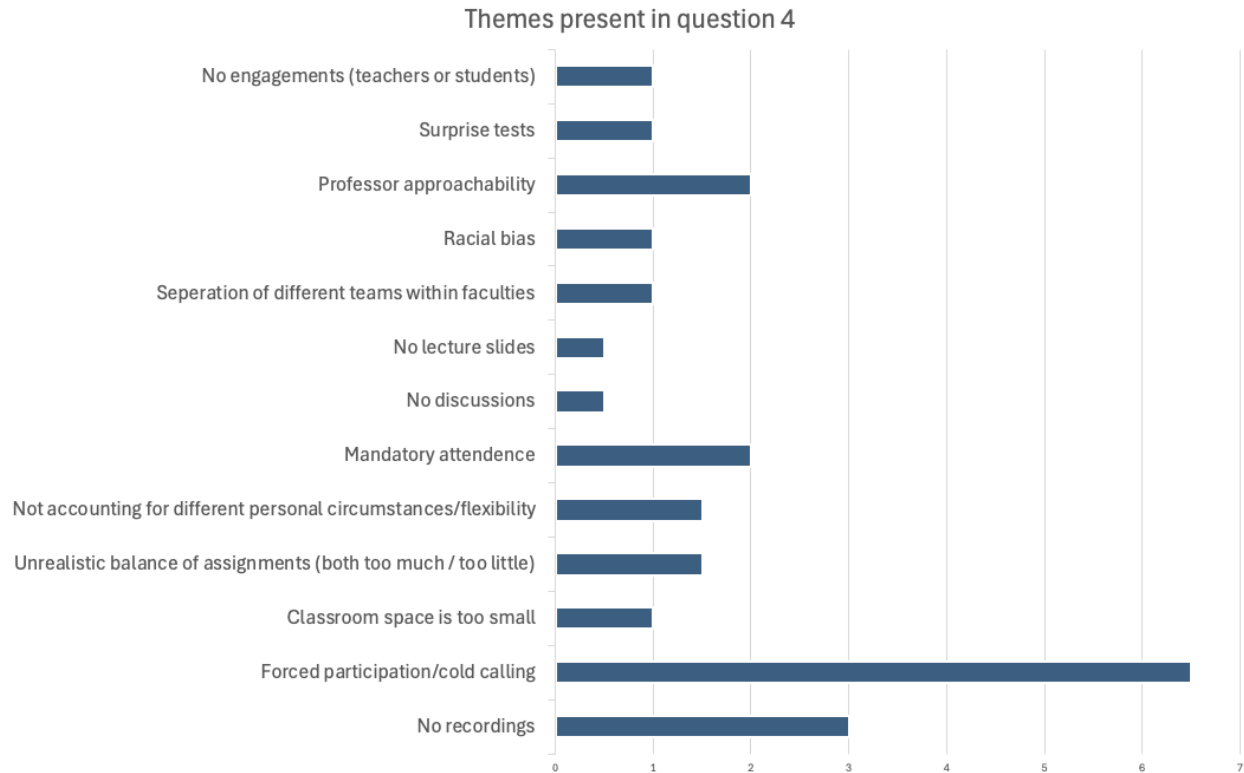


Figure 5: Bar chart showing the themes present in question 4 of the survey

Question 4 investigated current classroom practices that were least supportive of students' wellbeing. It asked: "What practices and / or policies in the classroom are least supportive to your wellbeing?". Overall, the highest theme that appeared was the use of forced participation and cold calling in classroom with around 30% citing this to be one of the least supportive practices in use. Other notable themes included having no lecture recordings, mandatory attendance, and poor professor approachability.

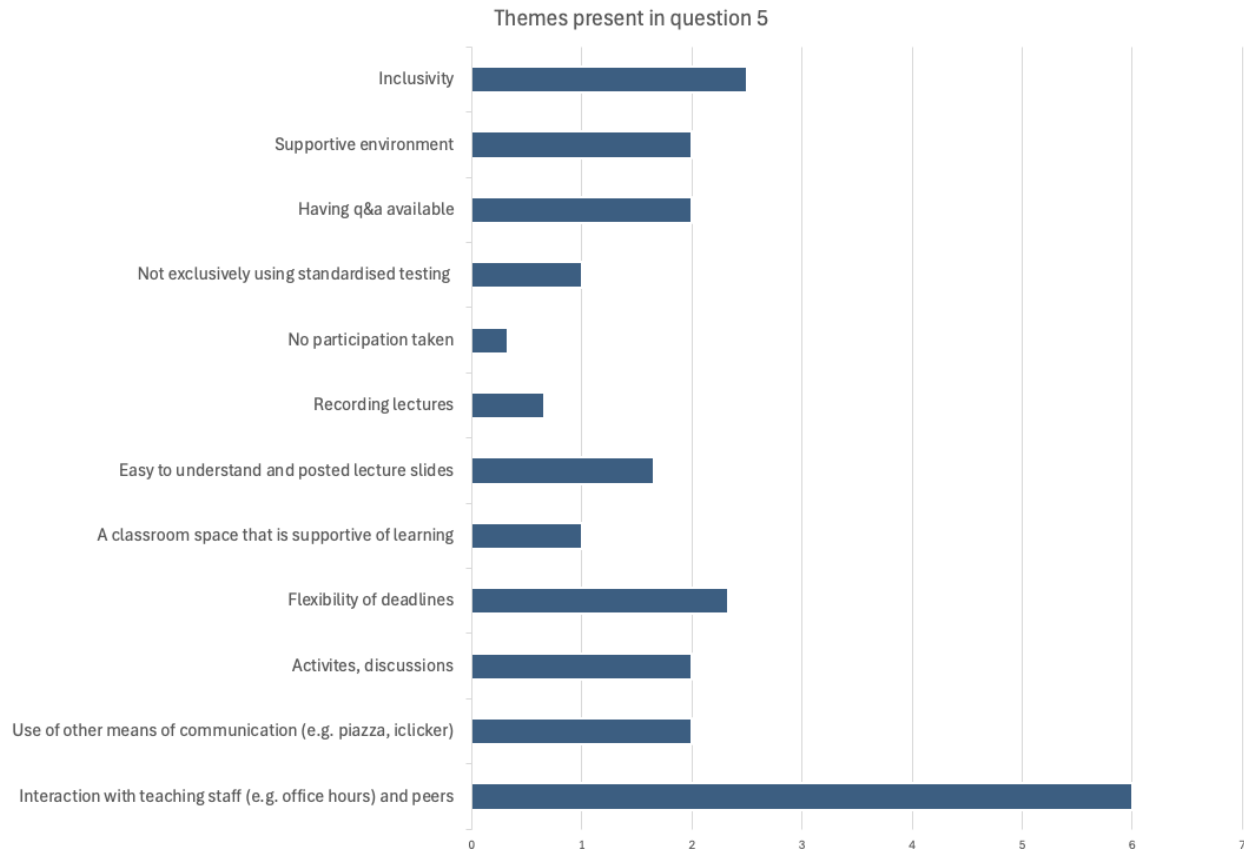


Figure 6: Bar chart showing the themes present in question 5 of the survey

Question 5 of the survey asked participants “In 1-2 sentences, what practices and / or policies in the classroom are most supportive to your wellbeing?”. Responses to these questions were varied however, we identified 12 themes emerging from the answers. Connection and interaction with teaching staff and peers in the classroom was of the utmost importance, with around 26% of respondents citing this as highly beneficial to their wellbeing. Some other key themes that were identified in multiple responses include: inclusivity, supportive environments, access to question-and-answer sessions, posted lecture slides, deadline flexibility, having activities and discussions, and other means of communication options.

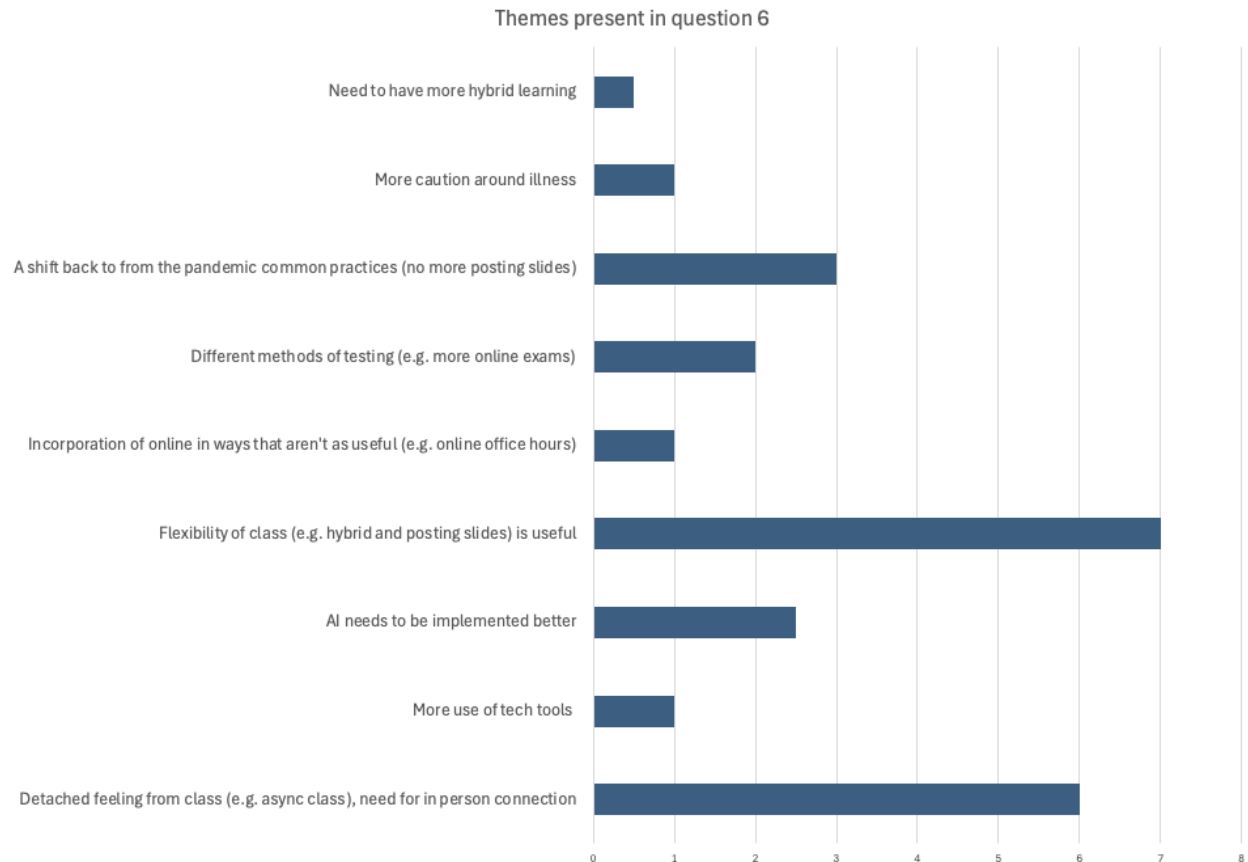


Figure 7: Bar chart showing the themes present in question 6 of the survey

We asked students to specify their experience of the classroom dynamic since the beginning of the pandemic in question 6: “How has your experience of wellbeing in the classroom changed since the pandemic? We ask that you consider broad general changes such as the emergence of AI; trends in teaching practices; asynchronous lectures and exams”. Two key themes that arose out of this question was the usefulness of workload flexibility (from posting slides to hybrid learning options) and the need for in-person connection, which participants noted was lacking during the pandemic.

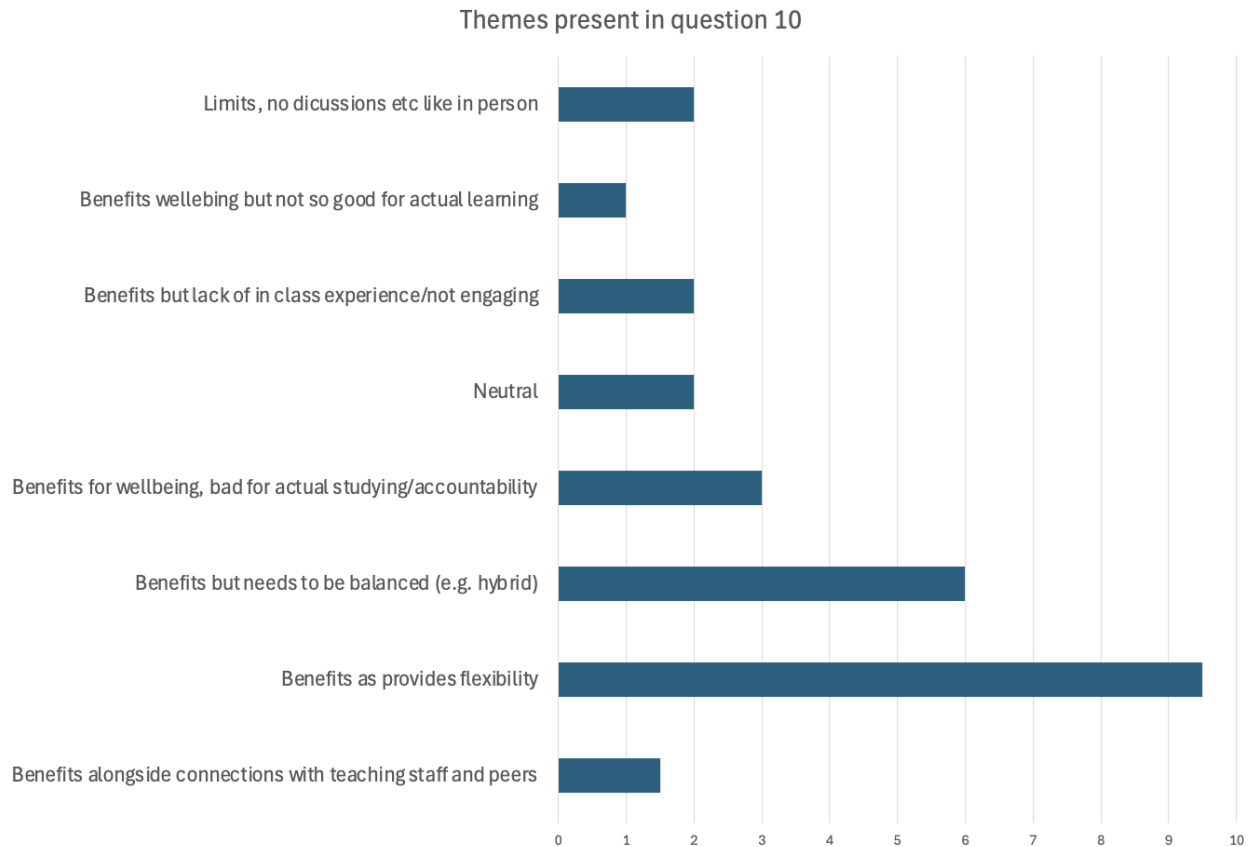


Figure 8: Bar chart showing the themes present in question 10 of the survey

Question 10 asked students specifically whether they felt that remote learning was beneficial for their wellbeing. It stated: “In 1-2 sentences, do you feel that remote-friendly learning options benefit or limit your wellbeing?”. Not only did this provide answers to whether or not remote learning was a help or hindrance to wellbeing but provided reasons behind students’ feelings towards hybrid learning.

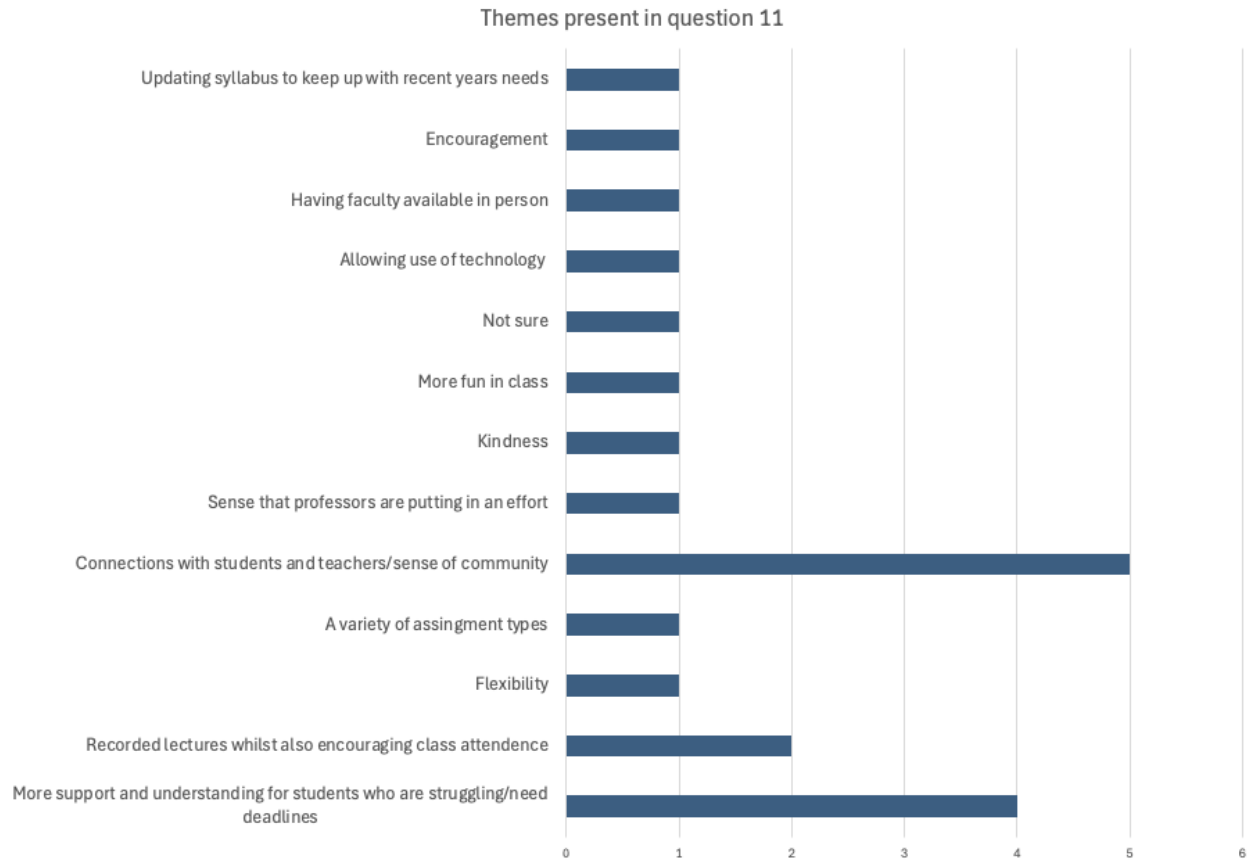


Figure 9: Bar chart showing the themes present in question 14 of the survey

This survey question tried to understand what students wanted teaching staff to better implement in classes by asking ‘what do you want faculty to know about how they can encourage student wellbeing’. Around 24% of participants felt that connection both with faculty and students needed to be better integrated into the classroom environment with more student support and having record lectures being closely followed in the responses.

Interview results

Interview #1

We began by discussing general changes that the interviewee has experienced in the past few years. We asked them to think of broad, general changes in the way professors conduct their classrooms, or simply noticeable differences within the environment. The participant mentioned the awareness of AI as something which has changed the way professors test or assess their students, noting an increase in the number of exam-based courses and a decrease in take-home assignments. As an Arts student, the participant stated that “there used to be longer, take-home papers, but now they’re just fully like a written exam”. Regarding changes in assessment and workload related to the pandemic specifically, the participant observed that “it’s definitely changed our relationship with even like school or being a student. I think a lot of people

either...come in to school treating it as more of something that they do...on the side, or...along with other things instead of...a completely full-time pursuit...". Here, the participant was noting the ways the pandemic brought awareness to the holistic aspect of a student's life, stating that they felt they had more flexibility in lectures and lab sections because of this increased awareness.

When discussing peer connections in the classroom, the participant remarked that they "feel like one of the biggest things that you miss in...a hybrid course or an online, of course, is that you don't really get to talk to any of your peers... once you kind of get like a bit of a warmer atmosphere, people actually talk in discussions, which is a big difference". In this section, the participant was adamant that a 'friendly' or 'warm' classroom environment not only kept them (and other students) engaged with material, but made it easier to talk to peers, talk to the professor, and motivated them to come to class.

We then discussed some specific activities or policies professors take part in that reduce either the participants willingness *or* capacity to learn or engage with material. First, the participant noted excessive amounts of reading, which they felt hindered their ability to parse through important information, but also their general feeling towards the class. By this, they meant that, given a weekly module with 60-80 pages of reading, they already knew (given their circumstances) they would not be able to complete all the assigned pages. Thus, they were less motivated to do even some of it.

"I certainly can't finish this so like I'm going to do something else that I can finish. I think you get better engagement if you...focus on small sections that are realistically doable"

Finally, in terms of what the participant thought professors could do to foster classroom wellbeing, they responded: "I think teaching staff can make student well-being worse...I feel that however, it would be hard for teaching staff to make student well-being better because when I think of my personal well-being or maybe the well-being of generally people in my circle that I know personally...your well-being depends most on like your life circumstances...so I think that instructors should probably focus on well-being, more in the sense of how to not make it worse, instead of necessarily trying to pursue better because I think this is probably too high of a standard". They did however note their appreciation for professors when helping them pursue activities or opportunities outside of the classroom, such as job posting or reference availability. This, noted the participant, had made a tangible change in their life.

Interview #2

AI practices and policies at UBC came up as something that could be improved on and integrated better to suit today's societal norms. The interviewee talked through their experience with AI from first not using it much and finding it slightly strange but then slowly integrating it more into tasks such as summarising readings. They highlight how their needs to be better policies around AI in place as best to reflect how intertwined it is in life and currently there is a gap between policies and the reality of AI use, whilst also underscoring that they understand the complexity of the implications of AI such as the environmental damage.

The way assignments are weighted in classes came up as a point of discuss, with the interviewee addressing both group projects as well as more standard exam and assignments.

“So, some methods that are like untraditional from like the midterm final kind of standard assessment procedure which I really prefer and I think is. Should be integrating more classes is having more regular assessments on what you learned the last week or two weeks or something instead of having like a midterm or final. Because we learned so much in a week in a class that.”

The participant highlighted how they felt that having more regular lower risk assignments and quizzes over the course of the term better suited their learning comparing to having midterms and finals. One the note of having these lower weighted assignments the same issue was discussed with reference to group projects with them identifying how they found it more beneficial to have group activities during class time rather than big, longer-term projects.

Classroom connections and office hours was conversation that came up during the interview, with the participant emphasizing the importance of having a good atmosphere to foster wellbeing. The participant indicated the importance of having connections with both teachers and students revealing how they like to not feel by themselves in class as well as having someone to study with as well as remembering when a teacher recalled in the beginning of the school year contrasting this to her saying

“do you have a nickname? Yeah I do, and then at the end of class I was like I would prefer you say my whole name. I feel like that’s a personality thing to be honest. But not treating your students on an equal planning field.”

Creating an atmosphere that wasn’t fostering a safe and caring classroom environment. The interviewee also emphasized on the importance of both connections with students and teachers through office hours. The student connections can be created through group office hours as it provides an opportunity to speak to both your peers as well as professors.

“professors encouraging like to have group or office hours but not honestly about like clouds topics just being like we can come and chat if you want to talk about. These things and then it's like or if you just when I come hang out and it could be about class stuff, but it would have other stuff. And you also meet one-on-one. One thing really liked was being able to book. If the professor can open up sometimes and then being able to book a time slot to go have like. A session with them because. I feel like I'm versus when a professor is like. Sometimes I'm less likely to go. And I know I said I don't go as much, but it's like something more informal. I would love to talk to them and. Yeah, cause when exists at time, I feel like I need to go to there once a purpose and it's I don't really have any maybe a question, but I would like to have. A relationship with them because I know I want an erect letter recommendation, something like that.”

This highlights that alongside the group office hours there should be an opportunity to meet one to one with professors when in need of questions that aren’t easily done in a group environment.

The mode of instruction and the flexibility that are created within these classes took up a large proportion of the discussion that occurred in this interview. First understanding their point of view of the mode of instruction, they highlighted how they didn’t really mind how the class was delivered unless it was super early in the morning there was a preference for these classes to

be online. However then, slightly contradicting themselves by later identifying a preference towards in person or hybrid classes due to wanting connections with teacher and peers. Their further seemed to be a preference towards hybrid options or at least recorded lectures as they talked about how they appreciated being able to go through them at their own pace. The interviewee provided another point to add to recorded lectures as not likely to affect attendance because if someone is not going to show up the recorded lectures will not be the deciding factor in the student attending.

Interview #3

During this interview I started the conversation with general questions about how the interviewee experiences wellbeing in the classroom, and if they have noticed any noticeable changes in practices since the pandemic. The participant mentioned how they have seen a large increase in resources and focus on student mental health since the pandemic. They are currently in their second year, so they don't have any experience of university before the pandemic, which may limit or alter their point of view. They continue by saying many of the resources do not feel sincere, almost performative; as if some of the resources provided do not have the interest of students in mind and are just there to make the school look proactive.

“Yeah, I always hear profs and TA's talk about mental health resources on campus, but it never feels like they actually care or are even useful, its more so another part of their spiel they have to say before class... I've never used any of the recourses, because I don't think they would actually help me, and I don't know anyone who has actually used them.”

We continued our conversation, shifting the discission topic onto hybrid and asynchronous classes and learning formats. The participant is in the faculty of Forestry and has a heavy science-based course load, which they say largely impacts their preference for in-person courses. They say that hybrid classes are hard to follow and don't allow for interaction with peers, which is useful for not only socializing but support with course work.

Interviewee: “I never take online courses; it's harder to follow along and I feel like I don't know who else is in the class. I made all of my friends and study partners in my first-year courses, without that little group I definitely would've struggled a lot more... not only would I feel lonely, but I wouldn't have anyone to study with. When you meet people in class you know someone who is having a hard time with the same work as you are and can help each other out.”

AI is becoming more and more popular with many institutions (such as UBC) and popular online programs (Microsoft, Meta, etc.) using them, it has become almost impossible to ignore. From my perspective, as a Geography student, I have been encouraged to not use AI in all aspects of my life, not just in academia. Mostly because of the ethical and environmental issues. But many students do not share the same opinion as I, many students use AI on a regular basis, helping them with all kinds of tasks. I asked the participants how they feel about the emergence of AI and whether they think it has a place in a university setting, and what their Professors and TA's have advised. They state that teaching staff discourage the use of AI for

concerns of academic integrity and plagiarism. The interviewee, however, feels that AI can be tremendously helpful and uses it for every assignment.

Interviewee: “The technology is there to help us and is made to help us. I don’t use it to cheat, but it helps with difficult questions, I can ask it to rephrase a question for example.”

Discussion and Recommendations

The results from our mixed-methods approach lead us to conclude that the wellbeing resource remains relevant, even in a post-pandemic context. However, the nuances of student habits and learning formats that have changed post-pandemic have resulted in a misplacement of priorities within the resource. Although it provides a strong foundation for faculty and staff to refer to, we will discuss what we think needs to change and why. The following recommendations for action are based on the results from our literature review and methods. They incorporate knowledge both from our discourse analysis in the literature review, and specific, student-focused actions stemming from our surveys and interviews. The recommendations are categorized into two different time periods. First, short term recommendations for immediate action, which could be incorporated within the next full calendar school year. The second are longer-term recommendations for mid-term action that will either require greater effort, longer times for incorporation, or further research. Even post-pandemic, the resource still tackles the main pillars of student wellbeing that we laid out in our literature and student definitions. Still, we provide the following recommendations for action:

Recommendations for Action

Immediate Action

Normalizing Connection-Building Practices

The resource already acknowledges that student wellbeing and learning are supported when students feel a sense of connection and social belonging. We believe that the strategies laid out in the resources’ *Fostering instructor-student relationship* section should have greater emphasis placed on it. The resource should encourage professors to incorporate more gestures that acknowledge the student as a person. This was emphasized in our first one-on-one interview. Furthermore, professors should be encouraged to create a classroom environment that makes students feel connected to the classroom and each other in a positive way. This can include casual check-ins, icebreakers, or discussion posts to get to know each other.

Encouraging Collaboration between Peers

Similar to the recommendation above, more emphasis should be placed on the *Fostering peer-to-peer relationships* section of the resource. Our research has shown that this is a pillar of student wellbeing in the classroom and thus should have a considerable amount of time and attention paid to it by professors. Currently, only *incorporating a lab, discussion group, or tutorial* and *Offering field trips or other informal learning environments* are emphasized to require thoughtful preparation by the instructor. This should be expanded to include even more group activities or collaborative projects in order to foster meaningful peer relationships.

Moreover, our survey found that forcing participation out of students is one of the policies least supportive to their wellbeing. Thus, collaboration between peers needs to be done in a way that doesn't force students to participate, but rather encourages them to do so, or perhaps provides incentives for students to participate willingly. Further research can be established around this endeavor in order to find what activities students respond to best.

Uploading class material

Specific to current post-pandemic learning formats, sharing lecture slides or recordings increases classroom accessibility without deterring attendance. Students identified this as a facet of learning that is most supportive to their wellbeing, as seen from our survey results. Our third interview cited withholding lecture slides or recordings as something detrimental to their wellbeing, emphasizing how unreasonable it is for some classes, particularly those that are science-based. In courses with dense material, it's almost impossible to note everything down in class, but it is actionable (and manageable) practice professors should try incorporating into their teaching practices. The resource should reflect this as a standard practice which can increase student wellbeing.

Hybrid Learning Accommodations

Instructors should offer options for remote participation or flexible attendance when students are facing illness, barriers due to difficult commute, or other circumstances. One of the questions we asked in our surveys asked for students to consider broad general changes, such as: the emergence of AI; trends in teaching practices; asynchronous lectures and exams'. One of the key themes that rose out of this question was the usefulness of flexibility of classes (from posting slides to hybrid learning options). Another question from our survey, when looking specifically at whether students felt that remote learning was beneficial for their wellbeing, found that the flexible nature of the learning format benefits their wellbeing.

Mid-term Action

Communicating about Support Resources

The existence of resources doesn't guarantee that they're known or even used. One of the gaps we identified in our research was the gap between available support, and the student's knowledge of that support. This could be one reason why students find it difficult to gain knowledge of wellbeing resources; because professors are not being told to prioritize (or simply do not care to prioritize) passing on knowledge about these resources to students. We are sure that categorizing action items in the *Openly Discuss Wellbeing-Related Topics* to a higher priority will encourage professors to take them on in their class, setting a new standard. However, it might take some time if there are underlying reasons why faculty aren't, or can't, share the information.

Developing the Wellbeing Resource

We are concerned with how well a pamphlet can simultaneously support student wellbeing and instruct faculty on how to do so. We believe that transitioning from a pamphlet to a digital platform, such as an app or website, would increase the accessibility, visibility, and adaptability of the resource. If the resource is online, it can be easily updated to reflect new research or input feedback from both students and faculty. Both a website and an app will allow for the resource to become more interactive, allowing staff to fully participate in the process of supporting student wellbeing within the dynamic post-pandemic classroom. This is why we believe a professor's perspective is necessary. While we, as students, would find an app or a website the most practical option for the resource, we are unsure about the preference of professors who hold different preferences than students.

Limitations

The first limitation we recognized was the scope we used when examining student wellbeing. Our project was focused on student wellbeing in relation to classroom experiences, practices, and learning formats. It was not, however, concerned with practices of the university at a larger scale. Moreover, it did not address financial stressors such as tuition, housing, and the rising cost of living; social stressors such as community and relationship building; and, in the case of international students and even some domestic, the general stress of being away from established support systems. While the survey responses typically focused on in-classroom practices and experiences, the interview participants (having more conversational freedom) sometimes mentioned concerns related to talking about wellbeing in such isolated circumstances. Unpromoted, interviewee #1 stated that: “I think teaching staff can make student well-being worse. I feel that, however, it would be hard for teaching staff to make student well-being better because when I think of my personal well-being or maybe the well-being of generally people in my circle that I know...your well-being depends mostly on your life circumstances... I think that instructors should probably focus on well-being, more in the sense of how to not make it worse, instead of necessarily trying to pursue better because I think this is probably too high of a standard”.

Additionally, more survey responses, and from a wider range (or more proportionally accurate) of departments would have given us more accurate and in-depth data. Leaving the survey active for an extra week could have given us more time to teach out to university clubs and groups, as well as professors and teaching staff. Given more time, our research would have benefited from a focus group. We recognise that there are certain limitations in talking about wellbeing through a survey and even with an interview format. It can be difficult to define or articulate; to have a focus group where people can engage with other students' ideas and perhaps find connections would have provided unique and in-depth data.

Recommendations for Future Research

Perspectives from Professors and Staff

Student wellbeing in the classroom is just as much a concern to the faculty as it is to the students. Our SEEDS partners recommended our research stay within a scope which involves students, as they are doing separate research involving faculty and staff. We think that focus groups, interviews, or even surveys with UBC professors from a range of faculties could teach us how they see their own role in helping student wellbeing. Most importantly, it would determine any barriers faculty face in implementing actions for student wellbeing which we lay out in our recommendations, but that may have been overlooked.

Experiential gaps between upper and lower years

During the question-and-answer portion of our in-class presentation, a peer brought up a point which, for its remarkable importance, we had not thought of when conducting our research. They had asked if we had analysed our survey responses based on the year standing of the participant; they wanted to know if the practices or policies professors implement in their classes find differing levels of success between upper and lower classes. I responded that we had not however, there is an interesting contradiction to be found in lower-level classrooms (based on the experience of our own group members). That is, newer students (first or second year standing) typically need more support from their professors or benefit more from making connections with peers in class. However, lower-level classes tend to be those with the largest class sizes and quantitatively or qualitatively heavy material, making it difficult for teaching staff to engage in the kinds of practices known to benefit student wellbeing (small discussion groups, learning students' names, providing flexibility based on an individual's needs). We believe that future research in this area would be invaluable in understanding the way that classroom wellbeing can (and may inevitably) build *over time*.

Usage and Impact of UBC Wellbeing Services

One of our interview participants noted that they find the resources provided for students by UBC are performative or tokenistic, without making a real attempt to help students. Our literature review also found that there hasn't been a focus on the shift back from online to in-person classes following the peak of pandemic safety measures, although our review has found that the demand for wellbeing resources has increased since the pandemic. Future research should investigate why students fail to take advantage of wellbeing resources - could it be lack of awareness, stigma, or simply accessibility issues? We need to address which resources are currently being least/most accessed, in which contexts, and by which demographics to determine what practices UBC can be engaging in to support their student body.

Conclusion

Our project was concerned with student wellbeing at UBC; specifically, asking how professors and staff can be best prepared to support their students' wellbeing and prevent negative impacts before they happen. Our team was tasked with evaluating and updating UBC's Wellbeing Resource, a tool designed to guide instructors in supporting student wellbeing. Our research objective was to evaluate whether the UBC Wellbeing Resource remains effective and relevant. The results from our mixed-methods approach lead us to conclude that the wellbeing resource remains relevant, even in a post-pandemic context. However, the nuances of student habits and learning formats that have changed post-pandemic have resulted in a misplacement of

priorities within the resource. In our discussion and recommendations section, we laid out both short term action that can be implemented as soon as the next school term, and mid-term action that requires more coordination to implement. We contribute to the growing literature on student wellbeing by contextualizing it both solely in the classroom, and in a post-pandemic setting. There were several limitations in our research, one being its narrow scope, which focused specifically on classroom-related aspects of student wellbeing. Broader factors such as housing, tuition, or community support were outside the bounds of our research, even though they play a significant role in student wellbeing. While the survey captured in-class experiences effectively, discussing wellbeing is an inherently difficult topic to do through a survey, as ideas can be hard to articulate. A larger and more diverse sample of survey respondents would have helped our data. Time constraints, the limitations of survey and interview formats, and our inability to run a focus group may have further restricted the depth of participant responses. Finally, we encourage further research to concern itself with perspectives from professors and staff, consider the intersection of wellbeing among various student years (year standing), and how the university can best inform students about UBC's wellbeing services. We hope that SEEDS and future wellbeing initiatives can build off our research to create a more inclusive and responsive academic environment for all students at UBC.

Appendices

Appendix A

These are screenshots of the current UBC Wellbeing Resource for educators which details the practices and policies they can implement in order to support students' 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.

Student wellbeing is supported when students are supported holistically.

RECOGNIZING THAT STUDENTS HAVE LIVES OUTSIDE ACADEMICS

- ☐ Engaging in conversation not directly related to the course
- ☐ Recognizing 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
- ☐ Offering trigger warnings when necessary

Taking care of your own wellbeing is important. The UBC Wellbeing Resource for Educators, including this website, has information about how to stay engaged with the wellbeing of students, faculty and their families.

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:

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- Keyes, C. L., Eisenberg, D., Perry, G. S., Dubé, S. R., Kreshke, K., & O'Leary, 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), 126-133.

TEACHING PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE STUDENT WELLBEING: A Tool for Educators

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.

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 in the classroom:

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 humor 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's 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, as 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
- ☐ Recap at the end of lecture
- ☐ Making a pause 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

Appendix B

This call to participation was shared through various social media accounts, posted in high-traffic areas on the UBC campus, and shared to other classes with the help of our teaching staff.

Taking submissions until March 31st, 2025

The image is a collage of hand-drawn posters pinned to a corkboard. At the top, a white poster with a yellow sticky note on the left says 'UBC WELLBEING SURVEY' in large black letters, with two small hearts to the right. The sticky note has a drawing of a person with a heart above their head. Below this, on the left, is a blue poster with a drawing of a university building and the text 'COMPLETE IN UNDER 10 MINUTES!'. To its right is a white poster with a hand-drawn oval around the word 'QUESTION' and the text 'How has YOUR university experience been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?'. Below the blue poster is another white poster with a hand-drawn oval around the text 'We want to hear from YOU' and the text 'Our study is in partnership with UBC Wellbeing - your answers could result in meaningful change!'. To the right of this is a yellow poster with a large drawing of an ear and the text 'As a part of GEOG 371!'. At the bottom left is a purple poster with the text 'What does well being mean to YOU?' and two small hearts. At the bottom right is a white poster with a QR code, the text 'ethics ID H16-03315', and 'SCAN HERE' with a hand-drawn arrow pointing to the QR code.

UBC WELLBEING SURVEY

COMPLETE IN UNDER 10 MINUTES!

QUESTION

How has YOUR university experience been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

We want to hear from YOU

Our study is in partnership with UBC Wellbeing - your answers could result in meaningful change!

As a part of GEOG 371!

What does well being mean to YOU?

ethics ID H16-03315 **SCAN HERE**

Appendix C

This is a copy of the interview guide used in all three interviews. These were key themes that we desired elaboration upon, although the interviewer has freedom to ask follow-up questions or stray from the guide based on the context of the interview.

1. Has your experience of wellbeing in the classroom changed since the pandemic? Try and think of some examples of general changes that have affected your wellbeing, either positively or negatively. For e.g.: how the recent emergence of AI has changed your studying habits; have teaching practices becoming more/less student-centered; having to consider whether a class is delivered in person or online when registering; etc.
 - (For this question, they may answer yes, no, maybe. Once they do, ask them to think of examples)
 - Do you find yourself choosing courses based on the method of delivery like hybrid or asynchronous?
 - Do you notice professors using different forms of assessment or untraditional kinds?

We are using covid-19 and post-pandemic as a benchmark. We encourage you to consider other changes and trends that have emerged since then. These changes don't need to have anything to do with covid-19; for example: I've found that cellphones are much more prevalent in the classroom to the point where professors rarely ask people to put them away.

2. Do you think that COVID-19 has changed the way students are generally treated by their professors? Perhaps professors are more accommodating of students needs because the pandemic brought attention to the fact that being a student is not the most important part of some students lives. Feel free to disagree with this.
3. What are some examples of things professors have done that noticeably reduced either your willingness or capacity to learn?
 - What are some things that professors do that motivate you to learn or do well in a course?
3. Do you feel that the pros of hybrid-learning formats outweigh any of the perceived or experienced cons?
4. You answered in your survey that having connection with your peers and efforts making an effort to connect with students is very important to you, could you expand on that?
 - What do you think professors can do to encourage connection amongst peers?
5. What do you think the greatest benefit of hybrid learning or recorded lectures is?
6. If you were a professor or member of the teaching staff, what would you be doing to make sure that your students can achieve positive feelings of wellbeing?

Appendix D

This is a copy of answers that were determined to be outliers in our survey results

Question	Response
Question 4	Giving extensions when necessary. Not having a big amount of heads being on one exam
Question 4	Practices of condescension on the part of instructors and professors are least supportive to my wellbeing
Question 5	Hard due date. Failing averages
Question 6	Nothing

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