EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

*Building Connections: Well-being & Teaching,* was a drop-in event co-hosted by SFU Health Promotion and the Teaching and Learning Centre on March 1st, 2016. Participants from academic departments and service units, gathered to discuss ways to foster well-being into the learning environment for instructors and students.

PRESENTATIONS

Thirteen presenters from diverse academic departments at SFU, shared examples of how their teaching practices contribute to student and faculty well-being. The following are some brief highlights from each presentation.

**Adam Dyck, Department of Mathematics**

*Inclusivity: Using a Pronoun Round to Create an Inclusive Classroom Setting*

- Adam shared a pronoun etiquette sheet that can be used to foster inclusive learning experiences.
David Zandvliet, Faculty of Education

Real Life Learning: Moving Beyond the Walls of the Classroom

- David shared ideas about the benefits of moving learning beyond the walls of the classroom through his field school in Haida Gwaii.

Rachel Fouladi, Department of Psychology

Instructor Support: Sharing Resources with Students to Help them Engage and Thrive

- Rachel incorporates links to services and supports within her class syllabus.

Mark Lechner, Faculty of Health Sciences

Flexibility: Using Comment Cards to Create a Flexible and Responsive Learning Environment

- Mark shared a sample comment card that is available at: SFU Teaching Practices [PDF]

Tara Immell, Beedie School of Business

Optimal Challenge: Using Informational Interviews to Help Students Navigate Job Uncertainty

- Tara uses an informational interview assignment to help students prepare for their future careers.

Nicky Didicher, Department of English

Services & Supports: Using a Mindfulness Activity to Enhance Learning and Well-being within English 103

- Nicky led the group through a guided mindfulness session. A mindfulness audio cast is available to all SFU instructors at: Health and Wellness Audio Recordings
Lieke Brummelhuis, Beedie School of Business
Staying Engaged at Work: Strategies for Maintaining Balance amidst Academic Pressures
- Lieke shared strategies that faculty can use to maintain their own well-being and life balance.

Herbert H. Tsang, School of Interactive Arts and Technology
Real Life Learning: Engaging Students through Building the Official SFU App
- Herbert highlighted how students in his course were engaged in real life learning through building the Official SFU App.

Lara Aknin, Department of Psychology
Social Connection: Group-Generated Study Guides
- Lara showcased materials that help students work effectively in groups to develop study guides.

Jennifer Thomas, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Inclusivity: Anti-Oppressive Course Design and Lesson Planning
- Jennifer facilitated the sharing of ideas to create equitable and safe learning experiences for all.

Sean Chorney, Faculty of Education
Flexibility: Creating Flexible Learning Experiences in Math Education
- Sean described ideas for making Math Education more accessible and flexible to learners.

Kate Tairyan, Faculty of Health Sciences
Instructor Support: Skype in Office Hours as a Way to Stay Connected
- Kate shared how she uses skype office hours to help students stay connected and prepared.
Through a series of interactive stations, the design lab was intended to spark dialogue about creating conditions for well-being among students and instructors. The format brought together faculty members and staff from departments and units that rarely have the opportunity to interact. The following is a summary of the key ideas shared at each design lab station.

**What Does a Positive Classroom Culture Look Like to You?**

Special Thanks to the Design Lab Facilitators

- Kathleen Burke, Beedie School of Business
- Diana Cukierman, Faculty of Applied Sciences
- Dean Diamond, Student Conduct Coordinator
- Vivian Neal, Teaching and Learning Centre
- Lisa Ogilvie, Health and Counselling Services
Examples of Well-being in Learning Environments

Through the design lab stations, instructors shared examples of how they create social connection, optimal challenge and inclusivity within the learning environment. Some key ideas are included below.

Social Connection

- Providing opportunities for group work in class.
- In a large class (200 students), have in-class assignments in groups of 4-5 during lecture to get students talking to their classmates.
- Use a class check in where students share 1-2 words about how they’re feeling that day.
- Jointly create ground rules for working in teams, and mark students on the quality of group work.

Optimal Challenge

- Use activities that pushes students to aim higher (while having fun).
- Give students opportunities to learn to deal with problems that are unsolved or have no “perfect” answer. This prepares them for real career challenges.
- Check in with students about the course load and other course assignments.
- Frame the learning with relevant, relatable and real world examples.

Inclusivity

- Incorporating cooperative and collaborative learning experiences.
- Do your teaching materials contain examples that reflect diversity? For example: photos of men and women, names from different cultures.
- Give students an opportunity to share stories to align material with their personal experiences.

More Examples

To learn more visit: SFU Well-being in Learning Environments
What do you do for your own Well-being?

Participants shared examples of what they do to support their own well-being at SFU.
Feedback from Participants

In total, 67 participants attended the event, and represented 14 different departments at SFU.

86% of participants who completed the evaluation indicated:

- The event provided an opportunity for connection among instructors.
- They plan to try something new in their teaching practice to impact well-being.

Examples include:

- Group work assessment tip from a conversation at lunch
- Comment cards
- Mindfulness
- Journal writing
- Adding a pronoun to my syllabus
- Use index cards for things more than content
- Using more connections tools
- I am not a teacher however will use many of these ideas in my work day
- Formative evaluations

100% of survey respondents indicated that they:

- Learned something new about the links between teaching practices and well-being.
- Would come to an event like this again in the future.

Join the Network

SFU’s Well-being in Learning Environments Network includes faculty, instructors and teaching assistants who are creating conditions for well-being in learning environments. Members are encouraged to try and share ideas from the Well-being in Learning Environments website and are updated on upcoming events and advancements within the project.

To join, visit

SFU Healthy Campus Community Learning Environments