

THE WELLBEING ENHANCES LEARNING (WEL) MODEL

Key Practices

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Practices for ENVIRONMENT

Maintain a setting, culture, and context that cultivates empathy

- introduce novel perspectives and experiences
- place learning and exploration in the context of our larger world and environment
- create opportunities to engage with beauty, art, and nature
- welcome dilemmas that question assumptions and cultivate empathy
- support transformative exchanges between classroom and community
- create a culture of compassion that allows for mistakes and growth

Practices for COMMUNITY

Facilitate connection and connectedness

- co-create classroom guidelines and share responsibility for reinforcing those guidelines
- hold space for multiple truths and multiple voices (normalize multi-culturalism)
- model and teach empathic listening
- reinforce curiosity as contrasted with judgment
- stay open to new ideas and to the creativity of others
- introduce and welcome challenging conversations and exchanges
- encourage students to ask peers and teachers for support

Practices for PURPOSE

Fulfill and honor intention, spirit, and meaning

- welcome and invite moments of silence
- create reflective opportunities that inspire self-knowledge and growth
- set goals that are relevant and useful for students and encourage personal goal-setting
- notice and embrace “spirit-filled” moments
- introduce and welcome deep and provocative thoughts and questions
- foster the integration and synthesis of new wisdom
- teach flexible and diverse content that students can find culturally or socially relevant.

Practices for HEALTH

Address physical and mental factors that impact learning, including sleep, diet, stress, activity, and emotions

- start with centering or grounding
 - model and support skills for self-care and coping
 - normalize emotional experience
 - invite students to explore how their identity and values contribute to the class

Practices for RELATIONSHIPS

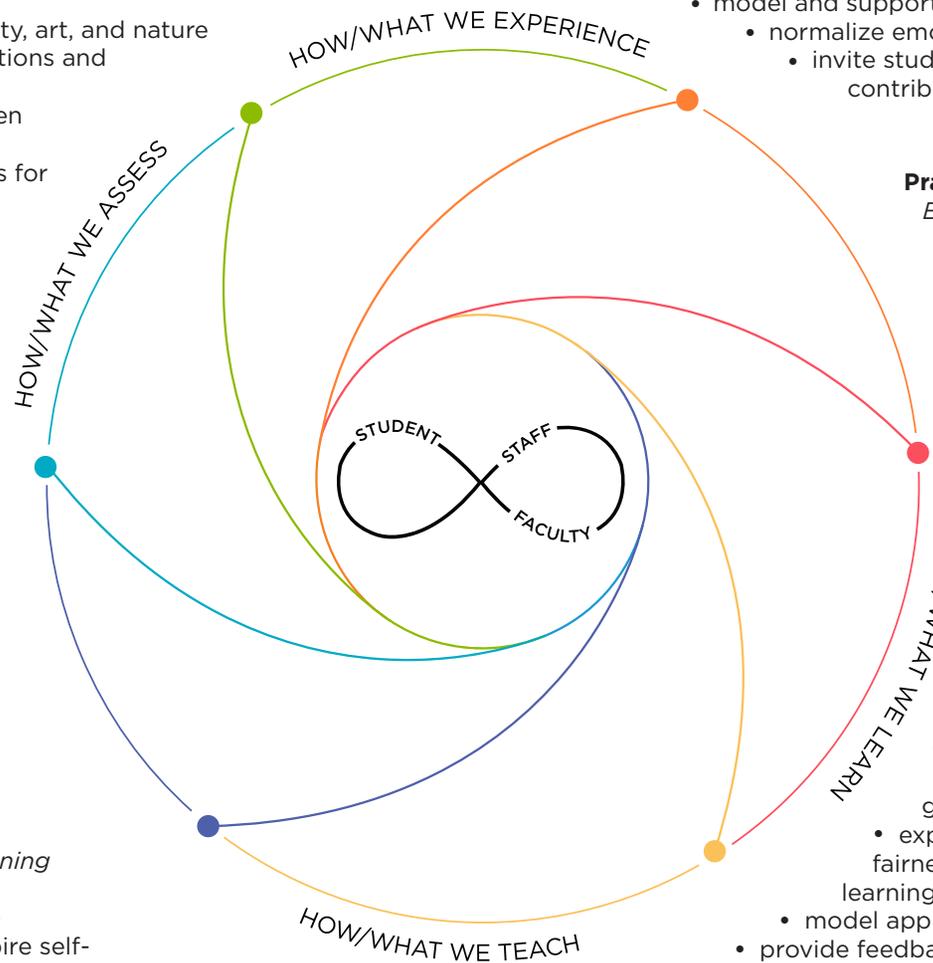
Build relationships of authenticity and trust

- explore personal experiences and potential bias
- accept where others are in their life journey
- include activities that promote equity, trust, and connection
- assess and attend to the personal development needs of each student
- speak and act from a place of fairness, respect, and openness
- seek and accept feedback from students

Practices for SECURITY

Create a safe place to teach, learn, reflect, and delve into the unknown

- establish clear expectations of learners and clear guidelines for assessment and grading processes
 - expect and reinforce behaviors such as fairness, respect, and compassion throughout the learning experience
 - model appropriate levels of vulnerability and risk-taking
 - provide feedback that reduces mistrust and focuses on student improvement
- maintain privacy and confidentiality as needed
- share a diversity of perspectives so that students can feel safe to be themselves and speak to all of their identities



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Principles and Goals

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The WEL model identifies key practices that enhance student wellbeing to improve engagement and learning. It accomplishes this by optimizing both internal and external conditions as they relate to the six dimensions of wellbeing: health, relationships, security, purpose, community and environment (Kreitzer, 2013).

The WEL model has six goals, which relate to these dimensions of wellbeing:

1. Address physical and mental factors that impact learning, including sleep, diet, stress, activity, and emotions (Health)
2. Build relationships of authenticity and trust (Relationships)
3. Create a safe place to teach, learn, reflect, and delve into the unknown (Security)
4. Fulfill and honor intention, spirit, and meaning (Purpose)
5. Facilitate connection and connectedness (Community)
6. Maintain a setting, culture, and context that cultivates compassion (Environment)

The practices outlined in the WEL model foster personal development and transformative learning for everyone. The model assumes a mutual relation between teachers and students, which acknowledges that everyone teaches and learns. It uses a whole systems approach that recognizes the interdependence of individual and community wellbeing. And it emphasizes flexible, responsive course design.

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