



Bringing
Theory to
Practice

The Well-being and Flourishing of Students



Considering Well-being, and its Connection
to Learning and Civic Engagement,
as Central to the Mission of Higher Education

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Foreword

It is a pleasure to welcome your interest to this important initiative. As the co-founders of Bringing Theory to Practice, we have anticipated for over a decade how the work of the Project would converge on the fundamental alignment of the core purposes of higher education, and the motivating values of those who participate—educators and students of all categories and levels.

For us, the focus has always been on students—the entirety of their educational experiences; the wholeness of their promise. It has been on the power of higher education to transform the lives of both teacher and student—individual lives, organizational structures, civic values, and actions.

The draft document that follows is the first step in announcing a major initiative to affect greater understanding and more intentional action regarding the connections between intensive and engaging learning opportunities, civic development, and the Well-being of students as whole persons.

We look forward to your contributions to the discussions that this initiative may stimulate. In the draft are thoughtful perspectives that will inform and provoke. They are by no means the last word, but they are more than casual. Those associated with BTtoP and the more than 300 campuses that have received or are receiving support have developed in theory and documented in practice the outlines of progress—deepening and broadening appreciation of the meaning and implications of the transformative connections of higher learning to those who engage in it.

Throughout 2014, we will be adding greater evidentiary support and reporting effective and transferrable practices and policies. By the end of the year, BTtoP will announce and promulgate a major, and we hope most influential, report that promotes the work of many and encourages, perhaps inspires, the work of most. We welcome your involvement!

Sally Engelhard Pingree
Co-founder, BTtoP
President, S. Engelhard Center

Donald W. Harward
Co-founder and Director, BTtoP
President Emeritus, Bates College

Perspectives and Implications

Connecting the Holes to Produce a Whole: Student Well-being as a Unifying Factor

Jill N. Reich (professor, Psychology, Bates College and Project Scholar, BTtoP)

The importance of student Well-being is beginning to re-emerge as a key component of higher education. It has always been there, embedded in our mission statements, fondly remembered by aging alumni in reference to a particular faculty or staff member, and trotted out for special attention in reference to our traditions or, more cynically, in connection to our fund raising.

It is not about some superficial or even transient experience of being happy or even about feeling happy, but rather it turns to that more important, sustainable quality of purpose that underlies our sense of self, our motivation to persist, our trust in agency, and our responsibility to act for the common good.

But this time is different. Efforts are underway to delineate what we mean by the numerous ways we understand and then label what herein I am calling “Well-being.” Be it flourishing (Keyes), Well-being (Diener), wholeness (Long), thriving (Schreiner), identity (Magolda) or a myriad of other terms we use on our campuses, a common thread in this effort, as Don Harward has so persistently argued, is our conceptual reach back to the Aristotelian concept of eudaemonia. It is not about some superficial or even transient experience of being happy or even about feeling happy, but rather it turns to that more important, sustainable quality of purpose that underlies our sense of self, our motivation to persist, our trust in agency, and our responsibility to act for the common good.

And efforts are underway to implement pedagogies, curricular structures, co-curricular programs, and civic engagement, all in the service of advancing our students’ Well-being. This is great— certainly a good start. But think about how much more effective and efficient we could be if our efforts were coordinated within and across campus and our results were disseminated in publications that reached across our disciplinary silos. How much more effective we could be if our academic and student life and civic centers were all talking the same talk, consolidating resources, and working together to build programs for which student Well-being was the focus and reason for acting.

We need to dig ourselves out of our holes (i.e., our silos) to advance the wholeness of our students.

References

Marcia Baxter Magolda, “Identity and Learning: Student Affairs’ Role in Transforming Higher Education,” *Journal of College Student Development* 44, no. 1 (2003): 231–246.

Ed Diener, “Subjective Well-being: The Science of Happiness and a Proposal for a National Index,” *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 34–45.

Corey Keyes, “Promoting and Protecting Mental Health a Flourishing,” *American Psychologist* 62, no. 2 (2007): 95–108.

Theodore Long, “Evoking Wholeness: To Renew the Ideal of the Education Person,” *Transforming Undergraduate Education*, ed. Donald Harward (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012), 125–140.

Laurie Schreiner, “The ‘Thriving Quotient’: A New Vision for Student Success,” *About Campus* 15, no. 2 (2010): 2–10.

The Connection Between Civic Engagement and Well-being

Barry Checkoway (professor of Social Work and Urban Planning and founder, Ginsberg Center, University of Michigan, and senior consultant, BTtoP)

Is there a relationship between civic engagement and the Well-being of college and university students? What are some strategies for strengthening that relationship, as part of the core mission of higher education?

Bringing Theory to Practice (BTtoP) has asked these questions. We have consulted with experts, organized conferences, published papers, and supported projects. From this work, we have learned that:

- Participation in collective action reduces social isolation and increases social connectedness.
- Joining together for a common purpose is associated with feelings of self-efficacy, self-confidence, self-esteem, and satisfaction with daily activities
- Community action in disinvested areas can strengthen social development and community empowerment.
- Community service affects the knowledge and skills of college students, their academic achievement, and their sense of social responsibility.

When our colleagues at California State University-Chico required students to write and present about public issues, it contributed to their identity development and belief in their ability to make a difference.

When the University of Michigan participates in intergroup dialogues as an approach to civic engagement, it increased their understanding of inequalities, intergroup empathy, and commitment to political action.

Our studies are ongoing, but we know enough to this purpose in colleges and universities—not only for its effects on students but also for the institutions and communities of which they are part.



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Barry Checkoway, “New Perspectives on Civic Engagement and Psychosocial Well-being,” *Liberal Education* 97 (2011): 6–11.

Peter Levine, “What Do We Know about Civic Engagement?” *Liberal Education* 97 (2011): 12–19.

Constance Flanagan and Matthew Bundick, “Civic Engagement and Psychosocial Well-being in College Students,” *Liberal Education* 97 (2010): 20–27.

Shawn Ginwright, “Hope, Healing, and Care: Pushing the Boundaries of Civic Engagement for African American Youth,” *Liberal Education* 97 (2011): 34–39.

Assessing Well-being as a Function of Learning Well

Ashley Finley (national evaluator, BTtoP and senior director of assessment and research, AAC&U)

Answering the question of what we want students to do with regard to learning can easily slip into a comment on how we want students to be in relationship to that learning. For example, we often want students to engage in experiences that are challenging, difficult, complex, even transformative. We want these things because we tend to think these are the conditions under which learning happens most powerfully.

But we also know that success under these conditions requires calling upon certain qualities within our students. Qualities that are generally seen as essential for human capacity building; the resilience to tackle hard questions; the self-esteem or confidence to challenge oneself; the persistence to fail and try again. And what happens when students engage these qualities? When they challenge themselves to learn well? The effects might be observed in a single expressive moment (e.g. a student's satisfied smile) or over time in changed behavior or disposition (e.g. a reluctant student taking on what had seemed overwhelming or assuming leadership roles).

These qualities and their effects are the cornerstones of assessment of whole student development and Well-being. And although development and Well-being cannot always be seen or witnessed, they can, helpfully, be reflected on standardized scales that aim to capture, for instance, a student's sense of "flourishing," "hope," or "satisfaction with life"—and in qualitative assessments (e.g., focus groups, reflection papers.) From the naked eye, to the focus group conversation, to the proven scale—all can be telling assessments, not just of who students are in a single learning experience, but who we hope students will be as they live their lives.

Suggested Assessment Resources

Academic Motivation Scale and Need for Cognition Scale

Wabash National Study, Center for Inquiry at Wabash College, <http://www.liberalarts.wabash.edu/study>

Deep Learning Scale

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE),

http://nsse.iub.edu/pdf/psychometric_portfolio/Validity_DeepLearning.pdf

Flourishing Scale

Keyes, Corey. 2009. Atlanta. Brief Description of Mental Health Continuum Short

Form (MHC-SF). Available: <http://www.sociology.emory.edu/ckeyes/>. Retrieved 11/01/10

Moral development scale and Civic-mindedness scale

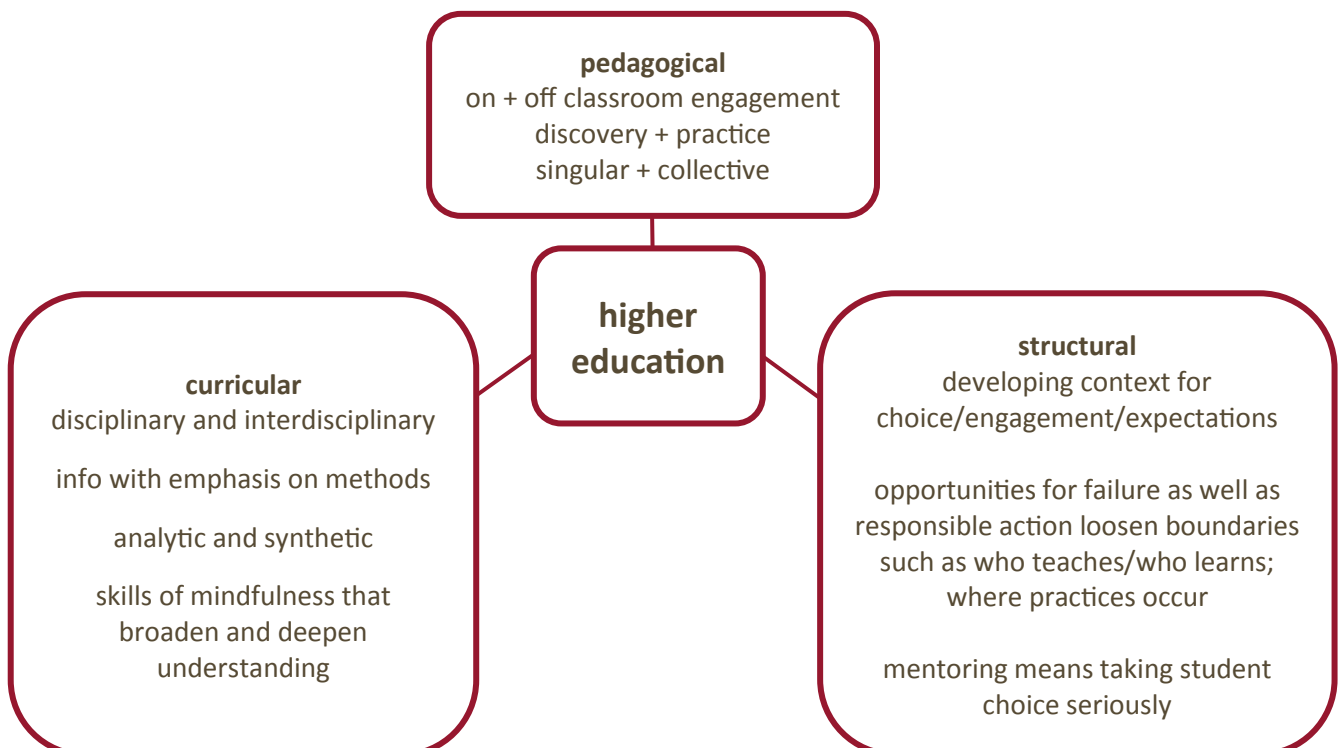
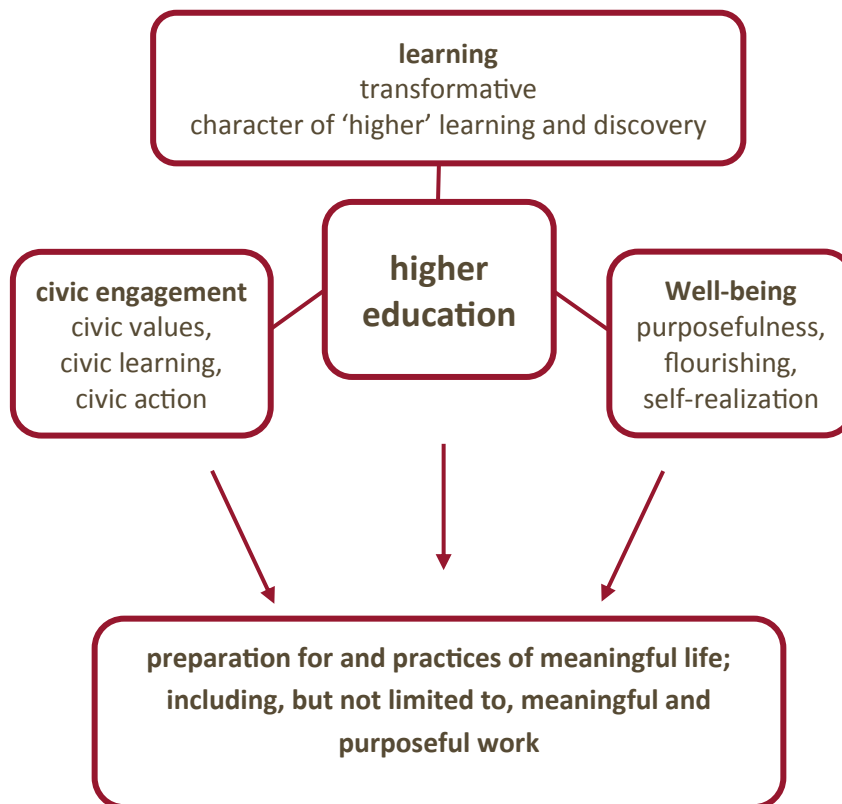
Eyler, J., & Giles, D. (1999). *Where's the learning in service-learning?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

*Additional Well-being and development resources available through the University of Pennsylvania Positive Psychology Center, see "Questionnaires for Research," <http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/ppquestionnaires.htm>

*See also Bringing Theory to Practice Toolkit Instrument in the Resources section of BTtoP.org.

Tripartite mission of higher education

Dimensions of higher education to reinforce and achieve the tripartite mission



Where is your campus on an Arc of Change?



(6) Awareness/Confrontation of a new paradigm...

(5) Sustainability/Priorities: Institutions address how they will sustain changes and how they will have the campus culture reflect—in practices, policies, priorities, rewards, and finances—the transformation they've achieved.

(4) Assessment/Evaluation of effectiveness and costs: Institutions are in the midst of thorough evaluation and assessment of initiatives.

(3) Implementation/Investment in means, processes and models: Institutions implement major new initiatives.

(2) Understanding/Considering strategies and clarity of objectives: Institutions explore the rigorous clarification of objectives and the strategic steps they should take to affect change and/or address current paradigms.

(1) Awareness/Confrontation with current paradigm: The initial position on the Arc is complex and context dependent. Campuses may call attention to current barriers, failures, inadequacies, marginalization of purpose, or evidence of student disengagement. Institutions may initiate or extend campus “conversations” regarding what it would mean to alter the campus culture in a way that makes the educational experience truly transformational in its implications for student learning, Well-being, and civic development.

A Provocation: Confirming the Connection of Engaged Learning to Well-being

The provocation begins with conversations and concludes with an admonition—an appeal to who we are as educators and as champions of the full promise of higher education.

Part A: Two Dialogues

First Dialogue:

Faculty Member #1:

“There is no (nor should there be a) connection! I have spent a career fighting the pressure to entertain my students. Learning is not necessarily pleasurable. Are you arguing that the object of my teaching is to make my students happy? There’s too much emphasis on that in our culture already. My job is to teach and do scholarship; making my students happy, or offering therapy to my students, are not my responsibilities.”

Faculty Member #2:

“You miss the point. The Well-being of students, the eudeamonic, is not pleasure or a superficial sense of happiness. Well-being is the profound core objective of why education is essential to being a whole person. It is captured in why the student is transformed by education—it is the transformation in self-realization, identity formation, purposefulness, and fulfillment. It is captured in flourishing and agency; realized in moving beyond self-interest to the common good. These deeper and broader dimensions of student Well-being, of happiness in its eudeamonic meaning, are among the core objectives, the basic purposes, of our teaching and of students choosing to learn. It is what we meant when we considered “making a difference” by becoming educators! We direct attention to student Well-being in our curricula, in our choice of pedagogies, and in the structural relations we establish within the institution and to the world beyond the institution.

I agree that as Faculty we have an obligation to eschew entertainment and to focus on creating opportunities that expect students to be challenged, demands made, real work to be offered. This isn’t nostalgic! It is taking students seriously as whole persons! In the grasp of their own transforming moments, we ask them to counter convention, to seek alternative perspectives, to suspend judgment, to defend contrarian views.... All of these and more are what it means to engage in higher learning and with that engagement, encourage the Well-being of our students.”

Second Dialogue:

Person #1:

“All that may be true, but it is going to happen only on small private liberal arts and sciences campuses—not here. The scope of change that would be required is far too great. Most on this campus would see pursuit of student happiness as clearly beyond the mission of this place.”

Person #2:

“Rather than pronounce, take a look at what is happening. Community colleges through Research I’s are involved in finding ways to affect change and raise the attention given to multiple aspects of Well-being in

the curriculum [influencing significant percentages, if not all , of their students through intentional seminars that infuse topics directly connected to dimensions of Well-being, or to study specific and persisting transformative changes that occur when students study abroad in a challenging context (and transfer that to having all students have such an experience even if the challenging context is in the neighboring city), or to maximize opportunities for students to be expected to take responsibility for a capstone project that gives them an even limited dimension of being experts.]

Campuses of all types can explore multiple pedagogies that require engagement and then chart the dimensions of purposefulness or self-expression of the students and their willingness to pursue even more demanding experiences. Off-campus engagement in community-based experiences, well beyond volunteerism or participatory action research, link civic learning to more profound forms of action. These practices are documented to affect a student’s understanding of their own identity and the interdependence of the identity and aspirations of others—to being in relation to and valuing the integrity of others.

These opportunities can and do happen at state universities and at local community colleges, as well as in the context of campuses that have populations exclusively of residential students—campuses where structural barriers are diminished and where students have multiple opportunities for interaction with faculty, staff, and with each other—in the classroom, on the playing field, or in social interactions. These are clearly advantages, but they are not necessary conditions! And their absence or diminution are not an excuse for failing to use our own ingenuity and commitment as educators to establish greater volume and frequency of the learning opportunities to which students have access and expect to have access. We affect the campus learning culture, and in doing so make manifest the realization of student flourishing. Again, it is why we are educators—regardless of our institutional type or magnitude of resources.

We can begin by asking how to be mindful of the Well-being of our students. Intentional steps can then be designed and structured as opportunities in engagement. As educators, we move from [our own] values, and those of the institution; we move from within to begin change.”



Part B: Voices That Make Evident the Centrality of Student Well-being to the Mission of Higher Education

‘This college, like all in higher education, has the responsibility of providing for all of its students more than access, more than a credential, more than training; it has, and has always had, the transformative responsibility of providing and sustaining both challenging and supportive opportunities for intensive engagement and learning that are essential to beginning a life of “becoming whole”—what classically has been understood as “the good life”—even the purpose of life. Higher education has the opportunity and the responsibility to champion this core value of “being fully whole”—a core human right.’

A repeated theme in addresses, versions of which are often delivered to new matriculants

“...[a] college has a...much deeper capacity to truly engage the ‘whole person’ and help that person discover a sense of self, direction, purpose, passion. Job exploration is part of that discovery and development (and, frankly, private colleges are scrambling to be more intentional about that aspect of the learning.) But so too is civic inquiry and engagement. So too is the interaction with peers, colleagues, the campus cultures. So if a life of purpose and fulfillment is the goal, then the time spent—with mentors, peers, staff, guided inquiry, engagement and learning, etc.—provides the strongest possible means to the intended ends.

I found all this helpful because I often have a sense of oscillating back and forth between ‘the civic case’ and the ‘economic case’ for liberal learning. But if the ultimate purpose is individual wholeness, flourishing, sense of direction and agency, then the various practical applications of liberal learning are—or should be—woven together in the person of the student.”

Carol Geary Schneider, president, AAC&U

A scholar has an article appearing in a well-known journal in which she argues that linking engaged learning and Well-being requires understanding a broad epistemological framework—that deep and engaged learning requires agency—actually doing something—and that agency can be linked to personal wholeness—and community wholeness.

Tessa Hicks, assistant vice president of community engagement, Pitzer College

Well-being could be the defining (redeeming, irrefutable and necessary) component of future of liberal education.

Ted Long, former president, Elizabethtown College

[Speaking to an annual gathering of the institution’s alumni, acknowledging teaching excellence]: “If the liberal arts experience is about anything at all, it is about seeing the whole person, educating the whole person, transforming *the whole person*. Not just the student, not just the citizen—the person. [It is] about teaching [a student] to learn—...not just how to argue and reason and participate, but how to live and how to learn and how to learn to live a life of learnable moments.”

Justin Crowe, professor of political science, Williams College

“Over the years in working at the foundation, and having had the privilege to see so many exciting projects put into practice, a part of me has remained frustrated. When I visit college campuses, I often get the sense that students are somehow not fully alive, that the amazing energies inherent in young adults are somehow not reached by the curriculum or the faculty, that in all of our talk about ‘core’ curricula we are still not reaching students at *their* core. I wonder if perhaps we are working with a flattened notion of a human being,

or the human condition, or only approach human beings within a very narrow range of what may actually be an extraordinarily expansive, multi-dimensional continuum, a continuum that includes flourishing and perishing as essential aspects of our humanity.”

Susan Kassouf, program officer, Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation

An announcement of the published volume *The Science of Wellbeing* (Cambridge University Press: 2006) “...heralds the emergence of a new field of science that endeavors to understand how individuals and societies thrive and flourish, and how this new knowledge can be applied to foster happiness, health and fulfillment.”

Nic Marks and Hetan Shah at the new economics foundation (nef) wrote a *wellbeing manifesto* (2004)—seeking to answer the question, what would politics [what would education] look like if promoting Well-being was one of governments’ [our institutions’] main aims? The manifesto contends that some academics argue Well-being is best understood in terms of overall happiness or satisfaction—but the manifesto argues that people also want to be leading fulfilling lives—developing capabilities, fulfilling their potential and leading socially useful lives. So Well-being has several dimensions:

- Satisfaction
- Personal development
- A sense of community/belonging and contributing



The well-known opening phrase of *The Declaration of Independence*, “We hold these truths to be self-evident; among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”—meaning that a key aim of an open/democratic society is where citizens can seek higher levels of Well-being. Our Founders understood that happiness is not identical to pleasure. The eudeamonic is not the same as the hedonic. Happiness is an individual experience in the context of a commitment to public good. It is the “realization of potential, forming identity and contributing purposefully”. It is these more “ennobled” understandings of happiness and Well-being to which the Founders were willing “to commit their fortunes, lives and sacred honor.”

On a practical level—*Brandon Busted* (*executive director, Gallup Education*) demonstrates how international surveys identify five essential elements of Well-being:

- Career Well-being
- Social Well-being
- Financial Well-being
- Physical Well-being
- Community Well-being

Scholarly discussions in journals such as *Health Psychology* explore recalibrating scales of Well-being, ask whether pharmacological enhancement of Well-being can be measured; and discuss the relation of Well-being to markets, and to behavioral economics.

If *Aristotle* were to be interviewed he might claim, as he suggests in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that happiness/Well-being is an inward effort of the soul. *William Blake* claimed that the necessary conditions for Well-being meant having someone to love, something to do (work), something to hope for.

“I think the relationship between education and emotion is a big part of what we are beginning to understand as holistic Well-being of students. What does it mean to be well in the context of higher education? Much of our qualitative data from student focus groups includes language re how their civic or learning experience made them feel—whether it be a relationship with a faculty member or peers, or opening their mind to a new perspective that was emotionally challenging. This is not an unfamiliar response when you ask someone what they think of a poem, or a book, or a painting.”

Jennifer O’Brien, project manager, Bringing Theory to Practice, in response to the premise of lifting the role of the arts and literature in understanding matters of the civic

Daniel Kahneman (Nobel laureate, founder of behavioral economics) argues in *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux: 2011) that we must distinguish (a) an immediate experience of Well-being (e.g. when getting married) from (b) subsequent reflection re how the experience fits in overall view of fulfilling/flourishing life. This is crucial if we intend to promote and then assess Well-being. Which do we seek (a) or (b), or both?

James Comer (founder of the School Development Program at Yale in the 1990’s) put the learner’s social and emotional development front and center—it did not persist as a movement; however, seeing pernicious consequences of NCLB emphases on test scores, this may be the time to fully promote social and emotive learning.

“Ours is an age of social and professional precarity. Gallup’s research indicates that a “good job” is key for Well-being, yet such jobs are hard to come by, so Well-being is hard to achieve—and harder still to sustain. In such circumstances, students without a robust understanding of, and a mature set of habits that promote, Well-being are perilously unprepared.”

Dylan Joyce, project associate, Bringing Theory to Practice

Arthur Zajonc (research physicist) and Parker Palmer (philosopher and education theorist) contend in their recent book (*The Heart of Higher Education: A Call to Renewal*, Jossey-Bass: 2010) that meditation and reflection are missing aspects of learning in higher education—“the whole person must be inclusive of contemplative learning and experience.”

A philosophical or historical tracing might reveal that the notion of Well-being is not peripheral—rather it has been and continues to be a nuanced concept at the very core of Platonism, Aristotelianism, the work of Cicero, the explorations of its relation to pleasure in Stoicism, Bentham, the Utilitarian tradition and J.S. Mill, the heart of the Enlightenment and Humanism, the work of Dewey, contemporary pragmatism, and such recent moral and political theorists as Nozick and Rawls.

Sissela Bok in her new book (*Exploring Happiness from Aristotle to Brain Science*, Yale University Press: 2013) brings together findings from neuroscience with long standing reflections from philosophy, history and literature. She explores the relation of a deeper understanding of happiness and Well-being to ethics and actions and to how and why we see the relevance of education to human life. “How is our own Well-being weighed against that of others? Who has the right to pursue happiness? Does such a right justify cruelty or injustice? Is there more to being happy than feeling happy, i.e. to experiencing happiness? How can Well-being be measured or assessed? To what extent is Well-being connected to a full range of human experiences—limits, failure, fears, suffering and loss?

Part C: Where and How to Focus

These may be sufficient to suggest the range of dimensions and range of contexts that frame discussion of “what we mean” (and “what you may mean”) by Well-being. But they are much like impressions. They help to see broadly and to glimpse at possible connections, but focus is a challenge. If the context is our campuses, however, and there are various understandings of what higher learning and Well-being mean or entail, how does a conversation go forward?

One way to begin is to “unbundle” aspects of higher learning and “unbundle” aspects of Well-being, allowing the opportunity to consider more specific connections and the evidence we have, or need, to support giving more of our attention and resources to them. Each of the listed aspects of higher learning is familiar to faculty—and the opportunity each presents is part of the campus’s culture for learning. The questions might begin with: Is their multiplicity and importance recognized? By individuals? By departments? How frequently are they available? To whom? Are they supported with the recognition that each has identifiable affects? As colleagues compare the list of categories of higher learning and the opportunities that should be regularly offered to experience those categories, the connections with dimensions of the student’s Well-being, in its varied dimensions, are known to be present—we have seen the changes in individual students. And they can be assessed, and reinforced for collections of students.

Bundled concept of higher learning

- **Learning that:** disciplinary and interdisciplinary; acquisition of basics (facts, information, perspectives, etc.) of a field and seeing connections
- **Learning how:** acquisition of complex skills and methods of critical thinking, writing, and expression; analysis and synthesis; quantitative and qualitative
- **Learning to:** applying knowledge in practice
- **Judgment:** linking learning to principles and values
- **Discovery:** finding what is new or acquiring a level of expertise
- **Learning about:** especially in a disorienting context; revelatory learning; understanding and insight that follows doubt, challenge, and suspended judgment
- **Learning for** the satisfaction of doing so or for the value of learning independent of its utility
- **Learning to** be prepared for future work and life
- **Contemplative reflection** and learning
- **Civic learning**

Bundled concept of Well-being

- **Flourishing**
- **Eudaemonic/hedonic experience**
- **Agency;** capacity to discern possible consequences; freely choose and recognize responsibilities
- **Identity formation** and expression
- Recognition of boundaries of self-interest; **valuing other**
- **Seeing community** as required for self-identity and realization
- **Mindfulness**
- **Positive dispositions** such as resiliency and persistence
- **Purposefulness;** objective or goal oriented
- Disposed to be **constructive;** to move on from failure
- **Capacity to experience happiness...**discerning what counts in moment from later (perhaps with much different judgment) retrospectively
- **Experiencing wholeness** as having **rational, emotive, and physical dimensions**
- **Exhibiting deep and broad understanding** of civic values and actions
- **Experiencing wholeness** as having a **spiritual** (self-awareness through contemplation/meditation) dimension

Avoiding a Category Mistake

BTtoP has found it helpful to consider what we mean by student Well-being in order to avoid misunderstandings that result from a prevalent category mistake (E.g., “‘She arrived in a taxi and a flood of tears’...‘You mean she came by two modes of transportation?’”). The category mistake is the conflation of the grammar of (A) mental illness with that of (B) mental health. We emphasize how these are two different categories, not dimensions of the same category.

The concept or grammar of mental illness uses the language of suffering and diagnoses of illnesses for which there are appropriate treatments offered by highly trained medical professionals. Specific illnesses include psychoses, schizophrenia, and clinically diagnosed depression.

The concept or grammar of mental health is distinct from that of mental illness. Health is not the absence of illness or a threshold from which variation defines illness (although the frequent conflation of the categories explains why clinical language is often used when speaking of health). The grammar of mental health falls into the category of wellness as a positive attribute—of psychosocial, or eudaemonic, Well-being. It uses language of flourishing, thriving, harmony, persistence, identity, self-realization, mindfulness, purposefulness, and fulfillment. Not to be flourishing may be to be languishing, unsure of self, or lacking purpose—but this is not the same as being ill. (This concept is illustrated by Corey Keyes’ two continua model on the following page.)



Higher Education’s Institutional Responsibilities

Regarding mental illness, our responsibilities include being aware and capable of identifying apparent symptoms and providing assistance, support, reference, and counsel. We align policies and determine limited care by being supportive, not punitive. We establish professionals and procedures for recognizing the presence of illness in our populations, and determine and make clear the level of service we can provide. We maintain confidential record keeping, meet legal responsibilities, and, if needed, offer flexibility in easing student exiting and re-entry, assisting with his/her academic persistence.

Regarding mental health, our responsibility is to craft for all students the broad and deep learning opportunities that make possible engagement and conditions that support flourishing, self-realization, purposefulness, etc. As a priority of the institution, we design, implement, assess, expect, and insist on multiple and repeated opportunities for meaningful engagement (including challenging students, intentionally asking him/her to risk examining assumptions and perspectives that have shaped their identity) that lead to deeper learning and civic and psychosocial development.

The responsibility of crafting conditions for the flourishing of all of our students is distinct from the responsibility we have to those who are ill—and both responsibilities are profoundly important! It is the distinct and different category of the flourishing, the mental health or psychosocial Well-being of all of our students, that is essential to the language, the concept, and the grammar of learning, and to our responsibility to make real the full mission of higher education.

A Well-being Continuum

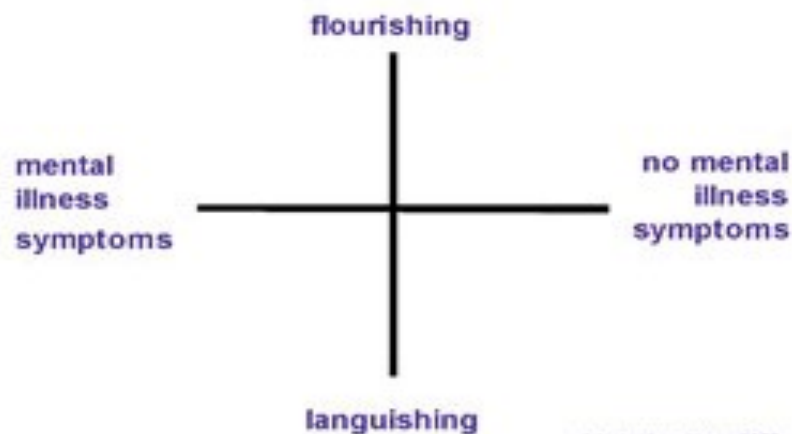
While mental health and mental illness remain distinct categories, Corey Keyes illustrates how a population can be plotted on a graph with a vertical axis of mental health, from languishing to flourishing, and a horizontal axis of mental illness, from having severe mental illness symptoms to having no mental illness symptoms. The graph suggests that various positions are possible; a population represented in the top left quadrant would have mental illness symptoms yet be flourishing, while a population represented in the bottom right quadrant would be languishing but have no symptoms of illness.

We as college leaders hope that most of our students would be plotted in the upper right quadrant and would continue to move up on that axis—continuing to flourish in the future—in large part because of their experiences on our campuses.

It is revealing to ask campus constituencies where they assume their students currently fall—recognizing that much general knowledge influences each constituency—e.g., faculty are likely to have remarked about increased symptoms of depression within the students in their classes; staff may have general knowledge of the prevalence of mental illnesses among the population; and, students have general impressions of their own and their friends' Well-being.

Comparing those assumptions to forms of evidence-based models could follow. Comparing assumptions and evidence-based models could reveal much about the collective population, but not much about individuals. However, it is the collective we would want to address as institutional leaders.

By gaining information and sharing insights regarding the scope and challenge of what it would mean for all constituencies of the campus to attend to the Well-being of all of our students, we can begin campus conversations that keep the categories of flourishing and illness distinct, offer insights into where there may be connection, and give priority to providing engaged learning opportunities and practices.



Part D: The Provocation—the Challenge

This provocation is directed to us as educators—the challenge is to stir the campus voices that will encourage the redirecting of campus attention, understanding, and commitment. The resulting conversations and actions will go towards aligning our practices and policies, structures and rewards, pedagogies and engaging curricular opportunities, and both our and our students’ expectations—toward all of the dimensions of purpose for higher education—and specifically to the purpose of making possible opportunities and support systems that permit the transformative power of higher education—the realization and the potential as whole persons—of each of our students.

What would induce or incentivize the changes that such a provocation suggests? Why should, or would, we change? And why change now when there are so many pressing challenges facing higher education and our individual campuses?

Timing is important. As a result of bringing the collective attention of the campus to the Well-being dimension of the mission of higher learning, we provide a unique opportunity to address the chronic challenges that ordinarily consume, and localize, our attention. We would have a constructive reason to question core aspects of what and why we are educators and educational institutions. Doing so would mean taking risks for it would require examination and candor regarding how resources are distributed. Prevailing structures, privileged pedagogies, calendar, the venues where students learn, who teaches, reward systems, and the effectiveness of technology for purposes beyond information access—each would be raised.

While daunting, the challenge to take up the provocation and its implications flows from the recognition that the basic meaning and ethical foundation for higher education is understood in our educating whole persons by providing them with opportunities that exercise their own agency and potential. So the provocation proposes that now, when market and social forces clamor for the commercialization of higher education, is a most appropriate time to move to a shared conviction, to make the changes we know to be effective to the very center of the enterprise, and to rest that conviction broadly, because it is rooted in a shared conceptual understanding of the meaning of higher learning, the use of multiple forms of engagement, and their basic connection to the wholeness of those who participate.

And there is a simple way to begin. We ask of ourselves as educators (in whatever capacity) to be “mindful of student Well-being.” How does our course or our advising session, our department or our institution, provide multiple types of engaged learning opportunities? What steps could we take as educators to make those learning opportunities plentiful and vigorous, have students expect to engage in them, and then join them in such engagement? And we can ask how can such opportunities gain priority in the allocation of resources? How do they fit with the expectation of controlling costs? And how do they connect to creative uses of technology, structural policies and practices, and how those practices and policies might be re-thought?

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Examples of Campus Projects

In their own words

California State University-Chico

"U-Courses: Learning by Design," improves students' academic and civic experiences, and Well-being, through a relational pedagogical model using insights from "communities of practice" (COP) and Psychological Sense of Community theories. U-Course faculty teams redesign first-year courses from traditional to community-oriented pedagogical approaches. U-Courses provide students with alternative learning structures assisted by trained student mentors. In U-courses, groups of 10-12 first-year students engage in project-based work in a well-crafted community, sustained by student mentors, who serve as "more capable peers." Mentors foster COPs within the classroom and engage students in discussions of work strategies, interpersonal strategies and the purposes of shared work. The project will train student mentors as they work to help individuals and groups succeed in college settings, and to develop the sense of community that contributes to student Well-being.



Dartmouth College

The "Mentoring With Purpose" program will bring students, faculty, staff, and area community leaders together in an annual all-campus Mentoring Summit, sustained dialogue groups, and relevant courses to foster a new campus mentoring culture that deepens student learning and flourishing and fosters social change. Mentoring With Purpose will feature focused skill-building, civic engagement, discussions, and mentoring practice to create a new multi-constituent, civically-engaged Dartmouth community that acts on its values and works together for the common good. Mentoring allows students—and faculty and staff members—to explore their identities; to know others across difference; to reflect on their values; and, to work actively for social change and justice in a "cascade fashion" with people above them, beside them, and below them.

Oregon State University

Oregon State University is at a crossroads. Our campus is expanding and re-organizing at unprecedented rates through new infrastructure, buildings, global student representation, and an increase in new degree programs at the bachelors, masters, and doctorate levels. In times of transition as these, the opportunities to re-examine, and possibly re-frame, how we support student success, flourishing, and positive community growth is available to us as never before. We have identified Corey Keyes' model of flourishing, an "individual feels positive towards life and is functioning well psychologically and socially," as our compass. As we consider all the ways our students interact with and move through OSU, it is our goal to infuse more intentional learning opportunities into new and existing structures and processes. Our Bringing Theory to Practice project is one of the branches of our growing tree of flourishing initiatives.

Pitzer College

We will develop and implement a three-semester Global/Local community engagement program focused on the psychosocial Well-being of forty current first year students. This program is part of a two-year “Global-Local Mentorship Project” that will “fast-track” students into civic engagement locally and internationally in their freshman and sophomore years. Sequentially, students will participate in spring 2014 action research teams, specially designed spring 2014 workshops on psychosocial development, a sophomore-year study abroad semester in 2014-15 in which they will continue their action research, and a newly designed course “Individual and Social Well Being in Local and Global Communities” upon their return from abroad. This program and the mentorship project in which it is nested are intended to serve as pilot for a larger transformation of the Pitzer curriculum.

Simon Fraser University

SFU would like to explore how academic units can be engaged in the systemic support of Well-being and whole student development. This project will build off the momentum created through the Well-being in Learning Environments (WLE) project which focuses on the classroom setting and was initiated through BTtoP funding. It will also be an integral component of a broader Healthy Campus Community initiative that uses the WHO’s Healthy University framework to create campus environments that positively influence Well-being.



The project will: (1) engage and build relationships with academic units and increase consciousness about student Well-being and how academic units can positively impact Well-

being; (2) expand the WLE web-based resource to include faculty and department level practices, policies, and curricular strategies to foster student Well-being; and (3) work with select academic units to pilot key recommended strategies and measure success.

University of LaVerne

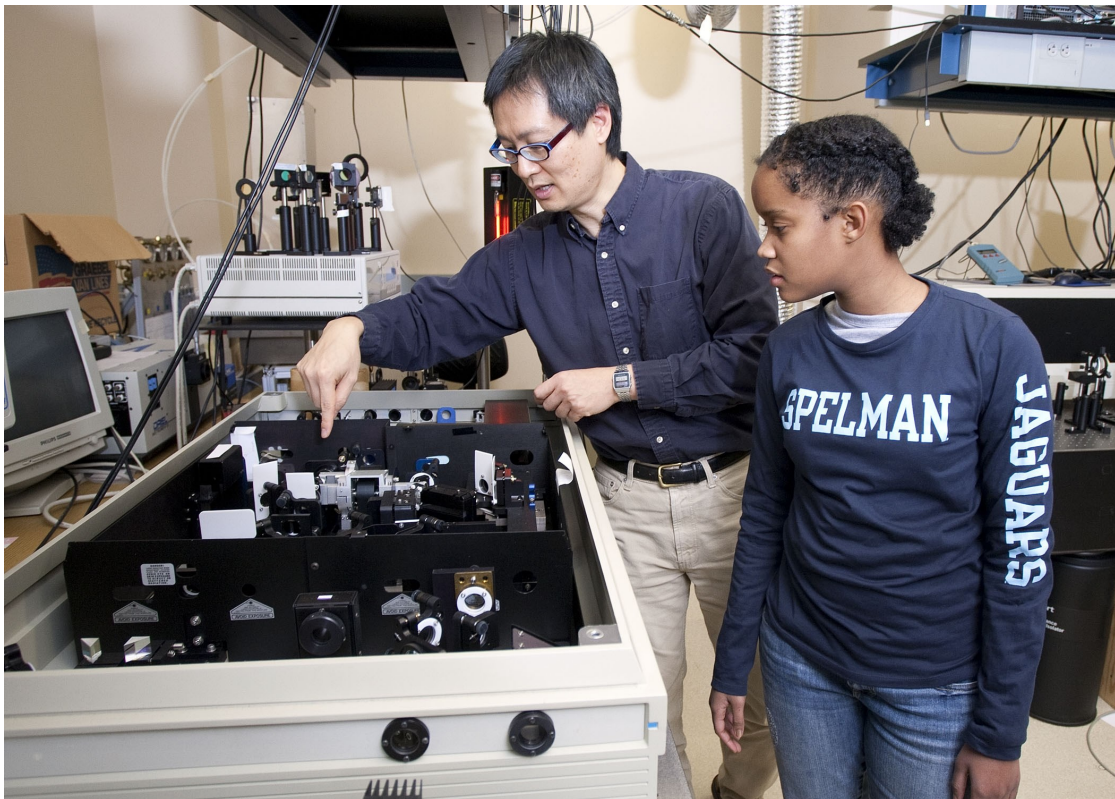
University of LaVerne will offer a singular experience for its sophomores as part of their La Verne Experience. Our working concept is a seminar with small cohorts that extends the curricular experience into the co-curricular and is facilitated by full-time faculty assisted by peer students drawn from the Junior or Senior class. The Sophomore La Verne Experience (SoLVE) will scaffold onto the Freshman La Verne Experience (FLEX) by expanding the student experience beyond the classroom, integrating opportunities for personal and social responsibility with relationship building between students, faculty, and the community. The seminar will build on the values of the university while encouraging an appreciation for the co-curricular. It provides a safe space for students to identify their strengths and creativity, reflect on their unique talents, engage in community, and develop purposefulness; in short, the seminar will be a transformative experience directed toward a budding wholeness.

Wagner College

Wagner College proposes to examine the relationships between the psychosocial Well-being of students and their use of time, focusing on the extent and type of time spent online communicating with family, friends, professors, and others on campus; their extent and quality of sleep; and exploring how students use online technology to manage their relationships, especially their relationships with parents. Students participating in an extension of the First-Year Program will be asked to complete three measures of Well-being (Flourishing scale, Helicopter Parent Behavior scale, and Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index), and to complete reports about how they are spending their time. Focus groups with a variety of students will be conducted to explore students' use of technology for communication. These data will be analyzed for associations between time spent, especially time spent in online communication, and Well-being.

Wellesley College

Wellesley College is implementing and evaluating a shadow grading policy for first-year students. According to the policy, which will go into effect in the fall of 2014, letter grades received by first-semester students will not be recorded on their official transcripts and will only be made known to others on campus in limited ways. The faculty adopted the policy as a means to refocus first-year students from an emphasis on grades to an emphasis on intellectual engagement and challenge. We are hopeful that a reduced emphasis on grades will enable first-year students to develop better time management and study skills and reduce the stress they experience in making the transition to college. Finally, we hope that implementation of the policy will enhance the ability of students from under-resourced high schools to learn to take advantage of the Wellesley curriculum and our academic support services on their way to becoming successful college students.



Bringing Theory to Practice Project

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As of November 2013

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Cover: "Poetry, tone," University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 2009.

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The Bringing Theory to Practice Project (BTtoP) is an independent national effort. It is funded by the Charles Engelhard Foundation of New York and the S. Engelhard Center, and functions in partnership with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) in Washington, DC.

The S. Engelhard Center is a nonprofit public charitable foundation. Its mission is to support projects and initiatives that affect greater and sustained commitments by educational institutions at all levels to provide effective means of addressing the intellectual, emotional, and civic development of today's students in preparation for claiming their positive future. The Center is supported by the generosity of the Charles Engelhard Foundation and the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation.