Preliminary findings from the Student Wellbeing in experiential learning spaces (SWELS) project

Project team: University College London, King’s College London & University of Oxford

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Background

• Over a decade of museums/cultural heritage and wellbeing research at UCL
• Working with a broad range of audiences/participants
• But never applied this to our own community of colleagues and students
• In 2019 we conducted a little pilot survey
• Students from four UCL modules that all involve an element of experiential and object-based learning
• Relationship between object based learning (OBL) and wellbeing
• Edited book on this topic (Kador & Chatterjee 2021)
The Pilot

66% pract. workshops and object handling

55% visits to other organisations

Introducing object handling and slow looking (at objects, specimens & artworks) more broadly across the UCL curriculum would have a positive effect on student wellbeing and help to reduce stress.

42% strongly agree
42% agree
SWELS Student Survey

Demographics

93.5% UK-Based

N=122

69.9% Aged 18-21

86.9% Undergraduate

55.3% KCL
26.8% UCL
16.3% Oxford
1.6% Other

75.6% Female

48% White Caucasian
Comparing SWELS participants’ wellbeing to national average using the ONS Wellbeing questions

On a scale from 0 to 10:

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
   Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile

2. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?

3. Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

0 = “not at all” and 10 = “completely”
CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES STUDENTS ENGAGE IN

- Walking: 12%
- Reading: 12%
- Exhibitions: 11%
- Games: 10%
- Painting: 10%
- Yoga: 9%
- Textiles: 7%
- Gigs: 8%
- Computer Games: 6%
- Online Activities: 5%
- Music: 5%

Engagement in creative and cultural activities by SWELS participants

- Walking: 110
- Reading: 105
- Exhibitions: 100
- Games: 90
- Painting: 90
- Yoga: 85
- Gigs: 80
- Textiles: 75
- Computer Games: 70
- Online Activities: 60
- Music: 55
- Dancing: 50