

Online teaching practices which are beneficial for students' mental health and well-being



Shivon Sue-Chee, Daniel An, Ruth Crasto
University of Toronto

Introduction

- There are many good teaching practices that have consistently had a positive impact on students' well-being such as being clear about course objectives and assessments (Lane et al., 2018)
- However, with the rise of online learning from the 2020 pandemic, students have been facing new challenges such as connecting with people in their classes and lack of motivation (Adnan & Anwar, 2020)
- This study examined students' perception of teaching practices that have generally had a positive impact on their well-being in the past and other teaching practices that may have helped them during the pandemic.

Methods

- 569 participants in two third-year statistics courses at the University of Toronto
- End-of-semester survey:
 - 10 teaching practices based on Lane et al., (2018) study
 - Impact on their well-being (emotional, mental, and social health) on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high)
 - 3 Open-ended Questions on online teaching practices that helped them:

1	Be motivated to learn and made you feel you were learning effectively
2	Feel the instructor recognized you have lives outside of school
3	Feel connected to your instructor and your peers

Results

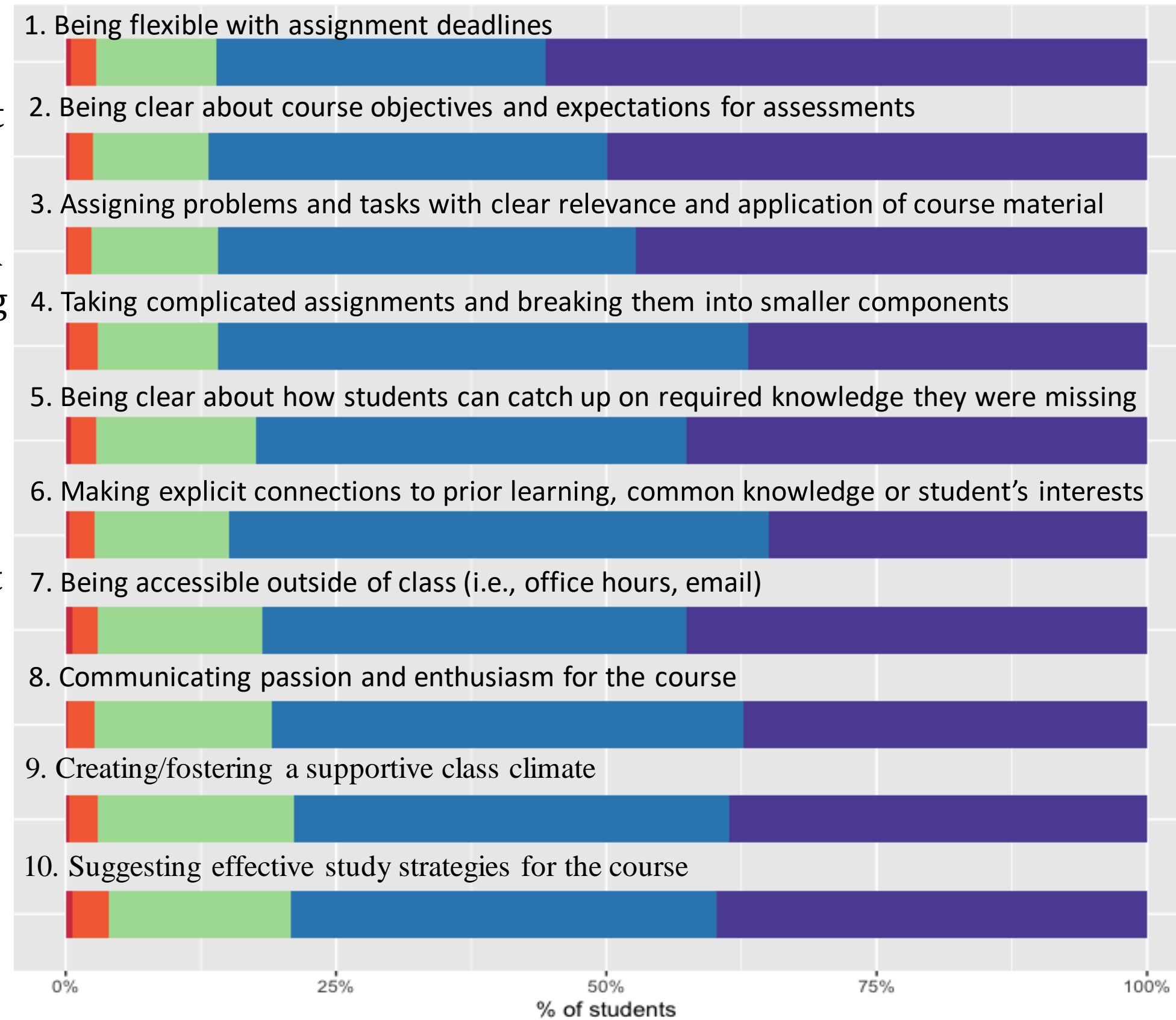


Figure 1. Ranking of teaching practices from highest to lowest based on average scores of positive impact on students' well-being.



Figure 2. Word clouds of most frequently mentioned words in response to the Open-ended Questions 1 to 3.

Discussion

- All 10 teaching practices were similarly ranked as impactful.
- Being flexible with assignment deadlines and being clear about course objectives and assessments were top rated.
- Flexibility in assignment deadlines was highly rated within the pandemic period compared to pre-pandemic study (Lane et al.) and emphasized by students to help them feel their instructor recognized they have lives outside of the classroom.
- Online discussion forums (Piazza), office/tutorial hours, assignments and peer reviewing were highlighted as helpful in making students feel connected to the people in their classes.

Future Research

- Future research would consider which demographic groups would benefit more from certain teaching practices.

References

- Adnan, M., & Anwar, K. (2020). Online Learning amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: Students' Perspectives. *Online Submission*, 2(1), 45-51.
- Lane, K., Teng, M. Y., Barnes, S. J., Moore, K., Smith, K., & Lee, M. (2018). Using Appreciative Inquiry to Understand the Role of Teaching Practices in Student Well-being at a Research-Intensive University. *Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 9(2), n2.

Acknowledgements and Contact

- Authors would like to acknowledge the support from Pedagogical Innovation and Experimentation (PIE) Fund and University of Toronto's Department of Statistical Science of the Faculty of Arts and Science
- Contact: shivon.sue.chee@utoronto.ca