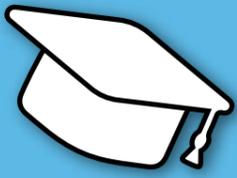
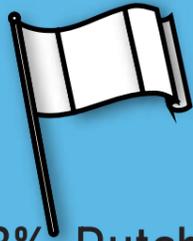


Well-being and belonging of first-year students during corona-times

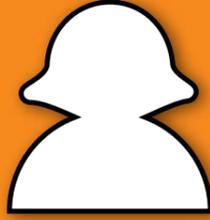
The COVID-19 pandemic has an enormous impact on our first-year students' study program, their living situation, and their socializing activities. How does this pandemic impact the well-being and study motivation of students? Which students are especially vulnerable and are there protective factors that can improve students' well-being?



50% male
50% female
participants



63% Dutch
14% German
23% other



591
respondents



18 study
programs

EWI

ET

TNW

BMS

How are our first-year students doing?

Depression



29% - no signs



58% - mild/moderate
symptoms



13% - moderately
severe/severe symptoms

Stress



25% - low stress



56% - moderate
stress



18% - high stress

Anxiety



42% - minimal anxiety



49% - mild - moderate
anxiety



9% - severe anxiety

Corona-related worries

40% is worried about falling behind

21% is worried about diploma losing value

22% is worried about finding a job

80% is worried about less enjoyable study period

28% is worried about financial situation

Well-being



29% - feelings of well-being on
(nearly) every day



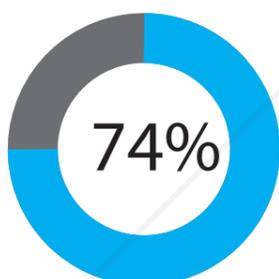
**38% - feelings of well-being
on 2/3 days per week**



33% - feelings of well-being
once a week or less

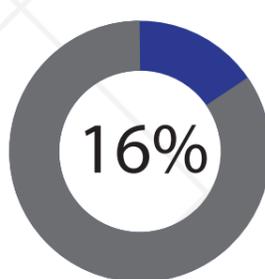
Study related outcomes

Belonging



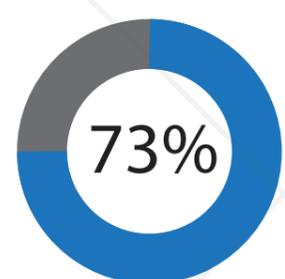
74% of first year students feel a sense of belonging in their study program. (19% neutral, 7% not belonging)

Dropout intentions



Only 16% has seriously considered quitting their study

Study engagement



73% of first-year students feel engaged in their study program. (17% neutral, 11% not engaged)

General findings

The majority of our first-year students feel that they **belong** in their program, they feel **engaged** and did not seriously consider quitting their program. However, a significant part of our first-year students is dealing with symptoms of **depression, stress, and anxiety**. This is comparable to outcomes of previous studies, also before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, asking for help and engaging in boosting activities is more difficult in these times. We also see that students are **worried** because of Corona about **falling behind** (40%) and having a **less enjoyable study period** (80%).

What is helping and hindering our students' well-being?

Students' characteristics

Female students tend to **worry** more, experience higher levels of **stress**, and lower levels of **well-being**. In addition, **international** students (but not German students) also tend to worry more than Dutch students on the impact of Corona on their personal and study situation.

Students' living situation and social contact

Students' living situation does NOT impact how they feel, but the **amount of contact** with family and friends does. Students who have more face-to-face and virtual contact with family and friends experience higher levels of **general well-being** and **lower stress levels**. More frequent **contact with friends** also resulted in **higher persistence intentions**. Students who are also an **active member** of a study or **student association**, also experience lower levels of **stress**.

Support of teachers and peers

Support of both teachers and peer students is crucial. If students experience that **teachers** take their concerns seriously, it helps to resolve students and they feel not overlooked. They experience lower levels of **stress**, less corona-related **worries**, and higher levels of **engagement, belonging, and persistence intentions**. The same is the case for support from fellow students: students that feel that they can count on their classmates, who made friends in the program experience comparable positive outcomes (fewer worries, higher engagement and belonging) and also a higher level of **well-being** in general. Student who experience more support from their **study advisor** also have fewer **corona-related worries**.

Quality of virtual education

The **quality of virtual education** is impacting many aspects of students' well-being. If students perceived their online teaching as valuable, interesting and they have the feeling they learn something, they also experience lower levels of **stress**, less corona-related **worries**, and higher levels of **well-being, study engagement, feelings of belonging, and persistence intentions**. An interesting result is that the the quality face-to-face education is less impactful on how students' well-being.

Recommendations for:

Students

Keep in contact! It is more difficult these days to keep in contact with family, friend and fellow students. But, students who do, also feel better. Do you find it difficult to make friends? Ask your study advisor about buddy and mentoring programs.

Give feedback to teachers! The quality of virtual education is impacting students' well-being. But how do teachers know what helps and hinders you? Do not hesitate to provide suggestions, a teachers can only help you if you speak up! Do you find this difficult? Ask your classmates if they feel the same and ask your question together.

Do you want **more tips on how to deal with stress, anxiety or depression?** Or do you want to know who to contact if you feel the need for support? Click **here** for more information on what you can do or where to find support.

Programs & teachers

Provide time and space for informal contact between students and teachers. For students, it is more difficult in online education to ask an informal question both to their fellow students and to the teacher. Free up some lecture time to get to know each other and to have an informal chat. Also, informal contact moments organized by the study program or study association can contribute to this.

Monitor as a teacher how students experience the educational activities. For teachers, it is more difficult in these days to pick up informal signs of how students are experiencing the educational activities. Use the Impact!-tool, quick self-tests, and other feedback tools to monitor how students perceive educational activities and adjust if necessary.

Many students experience corona-related worries, and especially female and international students do so. Ask them what they are worried about, maybe you can help them take these worries away.

**UNIVERSITY
OF TWENTE.**



Bridge the Gap!

This project was funded by the BMS COVID 19 fund of the University of Twente. Data was collected in November 2020. This project is a collaboration of the Bridge the gap project (prof.dr. Maaïke Endendijk (project leader), dr. Lianne Aarntzen, dr. Marlon Nieuwenhuis, dr. Ruth van Veelen) of the department Educational Sciences and the department of Psychology, Health and Technology (dr. Nadine Köhle & dr. Saskia Kelders), supported by Hermen Pastoor and Michael Schaab. This report contains the first results of the study. Program directors will receive detailed outcomes for their study program. Students have received individual feedback on their scores. Please contact bridgethegap@utwente.nl for more information on the details of the sample, the instruments that were used, analyses and outcomes.