School/Department/Area

LTIF Final Report 2009

BOUNCE: The Student Wellbeing Project

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Project Details

Project Title
The Student Wellbeing Project - BOUNCE

Project Leader
A/Prof Andrea Chester (Leader, Discipline of Psychology, City Campus) – project leader

Team Members
- Dr Kitty Vivekananda (Senior Manager, Student Wellbeing Services) - industry client
- Lara Bardsley (Senior Psychologist, RMIT Counselling Services) - project manager
- David Towl (Health Promotion Officer) – health promotion consultant

Funds Approved
$83,353.40

Funds Acquitted
$78,160.00  See Appendix A for financial statement.

Introduction

The project used multidisciplinary, WIL student groups to build a positive psychology student-centred online resource to enhance the wellbeing of RMIT students.

Recent research suggests cause for concern, with the wellbeing of university students lower than for adults within the general population (Cummins, 2003; Stewart & Podbury, 2003). Although it is unclear why this distinction occurs, there is recognition that the role of the student and the university environment influences student wellbeing in tertiary contexts (Weckwerth & Flynn, 2006). It therefore seems likely that universities have the potential to positively impact the wellbeing of their students. Promoting wellbeing of tertiary students has been recognised as an important aim for universities; it was identified as a priority of the WHO Health Promoting Universities framework (Tsouros, Dowding, Thompson, & Dooris, 1998).

This LTIF project took a positive psychology approach to improving wellbeing amongst RMIT students. Rather than taking a deficit approach, which focuses on mental health problems and dysfunction, the positive psychology framework emphasises human potential and has application for all students, regardless of current level of mental health or identification as needing support. The positive psychology movement has gained increasing recognition worldwide since the
introduction of the term by Martin Seligman in the late 1990s. Research has demonstrated the positive impact of wellbeing on multiple aspects of life including physical health and longevity, mental health, relationship satisfaction, and professional success (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). Increasing individual wellbeing also has benefit for communities; recent evidence suggests that enhancing the wellbeing of individuals enhances the wellbeing of communities, as wellbeing spreads through social networks (Cutler, 2009).

Given the virus-like contagion of wellbeing, it is not surprising that recent research suggests that most effective way to promote wellbeing amongst young people is through peer-to-peer communication (Oliver, Collin, Burns, & Nicholas, 2006). In addition, generation Y students, often referred to as “digital natives”, have access to online technologies in unprecedented numbers (Kennedy, Krause, Judd, Churchward, & Gray, 2006). Accordingly health providers have begun adopting online formats for connecting with young people to enhance mental health (Edwards-Hart & Chester, in press). Sites such as Ybblue, Headroom and ReachOut! are all examples of the use of emerging technologies to engage with this population.

The BOUNCE project was designed to use students’ own experiences of wellness in an online model of health promotion. BOUNCE uses positive psychology principles of resilience, social connectedness and social contribution to enhance student wellbeing. BOUNCE is peer-centred, encouraging students to share their experiences, ideas and stories of wellbeing through a variety of online media to inspire, motivate and connect with others. BOUNCE is student-centred; designed, created, promoted, contributed to and maintained by RMIT students.

BOUNCE was about both process and content. In terms of process, BOUNCE provided the 26 students who worked on the design, development and the promotion of BOUNCE with complex and challenging WIL experiences. In addition to meeting the varied needs of the market (RMIT students) and the client (Student Wellbeing Services), students who worked on BOUNCE were required to plan, develop goals, conceptualize the project, meet deadlines, communicate, co-operate and negotiate with other student groups to create what proved to be a successful and innovative initiative. These students came from the following disciplines:

- Communication Design
- Creative Media
- Entrepreneurism
- Information Technology Systems
- Marketing
- Printing and Graphic Arts
- Psychology
- Public Relations
- Social Work and Social Science

These students attended specific training in multi-disciplinary teamwork developed and delivered by the RMIT Counselling Service. Additional students were involved in the BOUNCE community actively promoting the project across the university and evaluating the website. In total more than 800 students were involved in designing, developing, building, promoting and evaluating BOUNCE in 2009.

In terms of content, one of the major outcomes of the project is the BOUNCE website, a dynamic site that will continue to provide students with opportunities to share wellbeing resources into the
future. In 2009, as part of this project, 125 students joined this wellbeing e-community, submitting their original experiences of wellbeing in the form of stories, poetry, music, songs, graphics and artwork, photos, humour, cartoons and animation, tips, and short videos. Entries were judged by a panel of RMIT students and staff. These entries formed the basis of an online resource that was launched in November 2009. The resource can be viewed at www.rmitbounce.edu.au

The BOUNCE website is a dynamic, living resource and it is our intention that the project will continue to run, with new student groups building on the work already created. The project aimed to improve wellbeing for all RMIT students while providing opportunities to develop work-ready skills for those who participate in the project groups.

Detailed Project Description and Outline

Project Outline

BOUNCE was a large and complex project involving 8 key phases from inception to final celebration. Each of these phases is explained below. In detailing these phases, evidence that the project achieved the five key objectives of the LTIF funding (improved learning experiences and employment opportunities, innovation, strategic alignment, university-wide application and value for money) is presented.

Project Phases

Phase 1: Project objectives, the management team, and the project plan.

Dr Kitty Vivekananda, Senior Manager of Student Wellbeing Services, identified the key aim articulated in the project proposal:

To enhance the wellbeing of RMIT students through university-wide collaboration between WIL students, academics and Student Wellbeing Services

In collaboration with A/Prof Andrea Chester, Leader of the Psychology Discipline on the City Campus, Dr Vivekananda develop a WIL-based project to enhance student wellbeing by encouraging creativity, building skills and facilitating students’ sense of community.

Drawing on positive psychology evidence on enhancing resilience and coping in the student community, the Student Wellbeing Project (SWP), later rebranded as BOUNCE by the students, was developed. In addition to assisting students to build a wellbeing community and to collaborate and learn from each other, the aim of the SWP was to build strong relationships between the academic community and Student Wellbeing Services so as to assist students to benefit from resources and services to enhance their emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing while at University.

Lara Bardsley, Senior Psychologist (part-time) with the RMIT Counselling Service, was recruited as the project manager (2 days per week). In consultation with the then Manager of Health
Services, and later with the involvement of the Health Promotion Officer, David Towl, a management team was formed. The team developed the project plan in early 2009. In order to clarify roles, position descriptions for the management team members were created. BOUNCE was coordinated by the Project Leader A/Prof Andrea Chester and the Project Manager Lara Bardsley working closely with Dr Kitty Vivekananda. A research assistant, Tim Outhred, a third year psychology student, was appointed. Additional collaborators included Student Services Group (SSG), academics in the 8 programs involved, Jody Fenn and Bill Lane from EMG, and ITS.

**Phase 2: Building the BOUNCE community - establishing key relationships with academics for WIL activities.**

In 2009, over 800 HE and TAFE students from all three Colleges were involved in the creation of BOUNCE. The students responsible for the design and development of BOUNCE were supported by 30 academic and SSG staff. As such the project represents a unique and innovative example of university-wide collaboration.

In working with such a large and diverse team, the project was supported and resourced: relationships between student groups involved in building and researching the resource, relationships between academics, relationships between SSG staff, relationships between the management team and all the possible interdependent relationships between these groups. These relationships were fundamental to establishing a strong learning community across the University. Managing these varied and complex relationships involved considerable skill.

Facilitating the wellbeing community was a challenge and a number of options were trialled; some successful, others not. For example, early meetings bringing together staff and students were seen to provide important opportunities to scope the project and develop relationships. Less successful was the use of mentors for students. Providing mentors from SSG to each of the student working groups was identified in the initial proposal as a core part of the WIL experience and a way to manage communication between the student groups and the management team. This did not, however, prove to be successful, with students focussed within their groups and with their academic supervisors. As a result the majority of the communication between student groups and the management team was facilitated by the Project Manager Lara Bardsley. As the management team consolidated the project brief, Lara contacted relevant academic course coordinators to negotiate appropriate tasks for their students. Although this was time consuming for Lara, having a single point of communication simplified the process for students, staff and the management team.

The academics were enthusiastic, flexible and quick to register their support for a project to enhance their students’ industry experience through WIL opportunities. They could see the value of multi-disciplinary teamwork and training, within a resilience-building model. A challenging aspect of SWP was that it was still gestating when it was presented to the academics in late 2008. Because the management team were not experts in the various components of the project, such as public relations or website design, the academics supervising these student groups became instrumental in defining the project and clarifying parameters. They helped guide the management team in what could realistically be achieved within the project time frame. This was a challenging stage of the project, but with the good-will developed in regard to the SWP, the key working groups were identified, tasks and co-ordinators assigned and a time scale developed for the different stages of the project throughout the year.
Phase 3: Preparing the students for BOUNCE: multi-disciplinary team training

One of the biggest challenges in having students working together across disciplines was to maintain group cohesiveness and functioning given that the students from different disciplines had diverse ways of communicating, different orientations and were frequently working on different, but interdependent aspects of the project. In addition, many of the students had a lack of experience in real world project work. Some were not skilled in negotiating roles, working with clients, identifying goals or managing conflict.

In consultation with Dr Audrey Tam, from ITS, the management team identified that one of the key outcomes of the project would be to develop a generic multi-disciplinary team training program. Jennifer English, the then Manager of the Counselling Service and psychologist Adrian de Boers devised a comprehensive, half-day experiential training for students to assist them in working together and developing expertise in the following areas:

- working in teams
- setting goals
- decision making
- problem solving
- conflict resolution
- negotiation skills

Students were trained in groups of approximately 15 before they began work on BOUNCE. See Phase 7 below for details of how the training was evaluated by the students. Academics across the RMIT campuses, leaders in SSG and those working with culturally and linguistically diverse students have expressed interest in the training in the future. The training has therefore proved to be good value for money, with a range of ongoing applications across the university. For further information on this training program and the manual, *Multi-Disciplinary Team Training: Manual for Facilitators*, contact the RMIT Counselling Service.

Phase 4: Building BOUNCE: student project groups

Perhaps the most exciting and challenging phase of the project was building the website. Despite clarity around the key strategic initiatives of the project, one of the most challenging aspects of the project was the lack of clarity at the project’s inception around content. Because SWP was devised as a student-centred project, the specifications were to be determined by students. The management team worked hard to help facilitate the students to develop their own vision of both the website – its look and feel, the logo, and the content and the promotion of it. This nebulous brief was understandably frustrating for many of the students although as one of the students, who worked on the project in both semesters, commented, it offered “real responsibilities, a real client, with real needs. It could get real annoying. But those are the good parts, because that's what it’s going to be like in life”. The “realness” of the project made it valuable.

In addition to an ability to sit with the loose conceptualisation of the project, effective and timely communication between the working groups was required. Some groups could not start on their part of the project until other groups had completed their work. For instance, the front-end of the website could not be developed until the look and feel was finalized and the logo and graphics...
were designed. Despite our best attempts to align the student project group tasks with the relevant course assessment dates, this did not always work and students sometimes found themselves pushed to complete work on tight deadlines. Student competency areas overlapped, information was lost in communication (or never communicated), and the demands of the project, at times, exceeded the resources available.

As time went on the management team developed greater familiarity with technological possibilities and became more prescriptive about the outcomes expected. There was always a tension in seeking to provide an accurate brief to the students while still encouraging student input in the conceptual development of BOUNCE. Despite their frustration, the students exceeded their negotiated input and it was clear that the majority of those involved in BOUNCE were deeply committed to its success.

Below are the 8 student project groups, their roles, and the academic staff who co-ordinated their curriculum based contribution. In nearly all cases BOUNCE was offered as one of a range of projects from which students could choose in WIL-based courses.

* indicates Team Leader who was required to coordinate communication with other project groups.

**Communication Design Project Group**
School of Applied Communication – Communication Design
Course Co-ordinators – Bronwyn Clarke and Peter West
Students: Alexander A Cameron, Hee Kyung Kim (Judy), Nicholas Cooke*, Phuong Vinh Vo*

The Communication Design group provided the conceptual and artistic design for the website. They designed the logo and brand for the project, the look and feel of the website and provided the artistic design for posters, flyers and bookmarks which were then adapted for merchandise such as t-shirts, stamps and stencils. The communication design team liaised with printing, copy and public relations teams to create print media and merchandise.

**Multimedia Systems Project Group**
School of Computer Science and Information Technology – Design (Multimedia Systems) –
Course Co-ordinator- Dr Vic Ciesielski
Students: Alan Scott*, Mark Sarmiento, Meng Yong Song, Wei Lin Lu

This group was instrumental in the design of the website, adapting the artwork and logos to a dynamic, animated and multi-faceted website design. In addition to working within a framework that was expansive and exploratory assisting the client to define the visual parameters of the project, this group liaised with the artists, worked closely with the programmers and the management team to enhance the usability and functionality of the website.
Information Technology Project Group
School of Computer Science and Information Technology
Course Co-ordinators/ supervisors– Astrid Bauers, Dr Andy Song, Dr Audrey Tam.
Students: Samuel John Henery*, Ismael Sanchez Arzapalo

This group was the backbone of BOUNCE, responsible for the back-end programming and operational working of the website on which all the creative design and contributions are displayed. The IT team researched and applied the technology for the e-community and website. In addition to working within a framework that was expansive and exploratory, advising the client on the possibilities and parameters of the project, the IT team liaised with the host, EMG to ensure accessibility requirements were met and branding was correct, the artists and creative media teams and the management team, bringing the BOUNCE website to life (and on time).

The Public Relations Project Group
School of Applied Communication - Public Relations- Caroline Van de Pol
Students: Bryley Drummond*, Lucy Chisholm, Jack Giles, Sharon Rose Lim, Nurazuin Sharifuddin

The Public Relations team came up with the tag lines and copy for BOUNCE and provided a comprehensive promotion strategy and analysis of the BOUNCE initiative. They liaised with artists, designers and the management team to develop marketing materials and promotion strategies for BOUNCE, provided media strategies, communication guidelines, feature articles, event promotion and future initiatives concepts, terms and conditions of the competition and provided an analysis of the promotion strategy prior to the launch.

The Social Work/Social Science Project Group
School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning, Social Work
Course Co-ordinator – A/Prof Jenny Martin
Students: Merinda Biggs*, Courtney Green, Katrina O'Brien, Brenden Bride, Nabila Marrow

This group developed an exhaustive list of wellbeing resources for students that will form an important part of the website, such as places to eat, socialise, get financial support, etc. They also helped to publicise the resource.

The Psychology Project Group
School of Health Sciences – A/Prof Andrea Chester
Students: Tom Lothian*, Amy Louise Brown, Antonella Zanini

This group evaluated the wellbeing of the students involved in BOUNCE and examined student’s preferences for working in groups. The psychology group will continue to research the types of contributions students make to the site, who contributes and the impact of those contributions.
The Marketing Project Group
School of Economics, Marketing and Finance – Dr Raju Mulye

This group of over 600 students audited the BOUNCE website, testing how well the site met its objectives, built relationships with target market, and established a sense of community. At the time of writing, the results of these audits, collected late in semester 2 were still being de-identified prior to analysis.

The Entrepreneurial Project Group
School of Management – Entrepreneurship – Dr David Gilbert, Dr Afreen Huq
Students: Scott Douglas*, Joshua Sprague, Rantavali (Vali)

Members of this group researched the sustainability of BOUNCE through a variety of innovative options that will involve future initiatives and opportunities for students. This group completed a comprehensive prospectus with student governance, ensuring that BOUNCE will BOUNCE into the future!

Problematic for the project was the need to locate the site outside RMIT. In order to enable our student groups to program the site and upload content and because it was important to have students design its look and feel, we took advice from ITS that such a project could not be located on the RMIT server/RMIT branded site and would need to be located on an externally-hosted site. A student designed WIL website posed some essential contradictions for the RMIT branding guidelines. After robust discussions the issue was resolved by branding the Bounce site with the RMIT logo, however, the ongoing problem of providing a place on the RMIT server where RMIT students can program and maintain sites remains. Until this issue is resolved the BOUNCE site will, of necessity, continue to sit on the external server.

Phase 5: The BOUNCE competition and promotion

From July to early September 2009, students were invited to upload their original ideas and experiences related to student wellbeing on the BOUNCE website. A competition provided contributors the chance to win $1700 worth of cash prizes and 6 iPod Touch.

Seven wellbeing themes were identified: Aspire & Imagine, Appreciate & Wonder, Connect & Care, Balance & Replenish, Celebrate & Laugh, Learn & Create, Grow & Contribute and students were asked to tailor their contributions according to these themes. Students were encouraged to submit original work in the following media: stories, poetry, music, songs, graphics, artwork, photos, humour, cartoons, animation, wellbeing tips and short web videos.

The competition was devised and launched with the Communication Design, Information Technology, Public Relations, Multi-media Systems and Social Work/health Science groups working together to develop merchandise including: large banners, posters, t-shirts and stamps, cards and launching a web-marketing and promotion campaign on the RMIT campuses. The conditions of the competition were approved by the Legal Services Group and ethical issues relevant to the competition were considered by the SEH CHEAN.
Promotional events took place on the City, Brunswick and Bundoora campuses including: a BOUNCy castle, free popcorn bags stamped with the BOUNCE logo, and BOUNCE promotion cards offering discounted coffee/juice and passes to RMIT City Fitness. These events were largely managed by David Towl and the Research Assistant Tim Outhred and brought together by an energetic group of RMIT students employed as promoters who became known as the BOUNCErs who were frequently sighted around the campuses in the bright BOUNCE t-shirts. The BOUNCErs gate crashed lectures (with permission) making lots of noise, handing out bouncy balls and promotion cards.

**BOUNCErs ready to BOUNCE**

Stencils were designed by the Artful Dodgers Studios and Lara Bardsley (also dressed in a fluorescent orange BOUNCE t shirt) handed out BOUNCE promotion cards to students enrolled in all of the creative and design courses across campuses. In addition, Arfah Aini Mohd Kalok (Masters student in Public Art), constructed pavement art using coloured rice around RMIT, inviting other students to join her in the meditative and community-building experience.

**Arfah and Tim working on the pavement art in Swanston St**
The promotion ran for 10 weeks and by its conclusion, 235 contributions to the website had been received. Prior to being available on the website all contributions were moderated by the Psychology Project Group and the Management Team. Students whose work was rejected were informed of the decision and the reason for the rejection by email. The major reason for non-inclusion was lacking relevance to the theme of wellbeing. A small number of contributions were approved pending amendments, such as correcting typographical errors, providing more information about relevance to the wellbeing theme or confirmation that third parties in the images had given consent.

A final group of 152 contributions were approved for the website. These contributions were shortlisted by the Psychology Project Group and the Management Team. Due to the small number of entries on theme Grow & Contribute, shortlisted entries in this theme were moved to other appropriate themes. The 30 short-listed entries were judged by a panel of RMIT students and staff who were asked to vote on-line for the best entry in each of 6 wellbeing themes and the best entry according to media type.

**Best entry in theme: Balance and Replenish and Best Multimedia (film, audio, animation)**

**Entry– ‘Oscillations’ by Fiona Boyd [First Prize]**

This winning entry can be viewed at:

http://www.rmitbounce.edu.au/drupal/?q=node/187

**Best entry in theme: Connect and Care and Best Text**

**Entry– ‘Hazarajat’ by Muhammad Baqir Khan [Second Prize]**

Hazarajat (Afghanistan).
Breakfast may be in Melbourne,
  But I let myself wander.
  From Wardak to Chakcharan,
  and Sar-e-pol to Moqr.
  Today I was walking,
  Made my way to Arjestan,
  caught my breath in Behsud.
while I had lunch in Daulat Yar.
  Kart-e-Sakhi was pleasant,
  And Hamid served tea.
  I couldn’t help but visit
  While Batur was in Malistan.
  I had promised Bakul dinner,

And so I headed to Dai Chopan.
We spent the night singing ghazals,
  As I gazed upon the stars.
  At sunrise I was silenced,
  By the beauty of Band-e-Amir,
  While it was hard holding back tears,
  At the sight of what remains
  of the Buddhas of Bamyan.
  I still wish to see Zardalu,
  and my journeys shall continue.
  Yet wherever I may roam,
  It is all and the same,
  Home is in my heart,
  Home is my Hazarajat.
Best entry in theme: Appreciate and Wonder – ‘Etched on my Heart’ by Nabila Marrow

Letters on my heart,
scribbled notes to you
They are secrets
left scattered for you to find
I'm hoping, and I am wishing
for you to find them
And when you do,
my heart will skip a beat
There's a moment where
I feel my heart
in my throat
I swallow it back
to keep it in place
In check
So I can keep calm
for you

Best entry in theme: Aspire and Imagine – ‘Love Prevails’ by Carissa Dawson

“Even in darkness, love prevails!”
Best entry in theme: Celebrate and Laugh – ‘Charlie and Gran Watering the Garden’ by Chloe Vallance

Best photo entry – ‘launchpad’ by Colin Stenton

“Getting ready to fly.”
Best painting/sculpture/drawing/graphic entry– ‘Lovelorn’ by Caroline Small

The BOUNCE DVD

The story of BOUNCE was documented on DVD by Lara Bardsley who interviewed many of the students, academics, BOUNCErs involved in the project, as well as, the Management team. The footage was edited with the assistance of Aniko Hazi, producing four films that exist as a multi-media record of BOUNCE. These appear on the BOUNCE website and were showcased at the BOUNCE celebration. A full 40-minute DVD is attached to this report.

Phase 6: Going live and the final celebration

From late September to early November 2009, attention was focused on the final celebration. The celebration marked the end of the funded project for 2009 and the launch of the website. Each of the students and staff who participated in the Student Wellbeing Project and the development of the BOUNCE website were invited to attend a ceremony acknowledging their participation and effort.

On November 13th, the BOUNCE website went live and a celebration, attended by 70 students and staff took place in the RMIT First Site, Union Gallery. At the event, introduced by Prof. Julianne Reid, DVC Academic, each participant received a certificate of acknowledgement, as did each of the short-listed contributors. Prizes were awarded to the winners.
Consistent with the student-centred theme of BOUNCE, a 3 minute film created by Lara Bardsley showcasing student voices was screened and the contributions to the website were shown.

A video recording of the event was produced by Aniko Hazi.

**Phase 7: Ethical issues and evaluation**

The project received HREC approval from the CHEAN in SEH in a stepped process. The project was different to those typically considered by the CHEAN, both in its scope and complexity, and we are grateful to the Chairs of the committee, A/Prof Barbara Polus and Dr Diana Donohue, who spent considerable time with us developing protocols to deal with the specific ethical issues that arose in the different phases of the project. Ethical issues identified included:

- the incorporation of student intellectual property in an RMIT resource
- the recruitment of a control group of students not involved in BOUNCE so as to compare the effect on engagement in a wellbeing project with other WIL experiences
- the nature of the competition to solicit contributions to the website
- protection of individuals identifiable in artwork contributed to BOUNCE

The original aim to evaluate the contributions to the website using established wellbeing themes proved difficult. Indeed it was unclear how some entries were related to wellbeing at all or why they were submitted under the particular theme chosen. Although it was not therefore possible to evaluate the contributions compared to the key components of wellbeing identified in the literature, simple descriptive statistics comparing the types of entries (Table 1) and number of entries submitted under each theme (Table 2) provide interesting information.

Photography was the most popular media with more than 50% of the entries in this form. Contributions were received under each of the 7 themes, however, almost 40% of the contributions were submitted under the theme of appreciate and wonder. This theme included a lot of images of nature, e.g., flowers, clouds, a glacier, etc. The importance of the environment was noted early on in the project when the student groups brainstormed the meaning of wellbeing for them. The role of
the natural world and our place in it, our capacity to respect and enjoy it, was a clear theme for the students.

Table 1

*Number of contributions to BOUNCE by media type*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media type</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Photos</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawings and Paintings</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poems</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sculptures</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short stories</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animations</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

*Number of contributions to BOUNCE by theme*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appreciate &amp; Wonder</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect &amp; Care</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspire &amp; Imagine</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance &amp; Replenish</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrate &amp; Laugh</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn &amp; Create</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grow &amp; Contribute</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An unexpected outcome of the contribution process was the value of the written descriptions that were provided for visual images. Contributors of visual entries were asked to provide a brief written description for accessibility reasons, e.g., “a beach at sunset”. Rather than describing the physical image, however, many contributors provided a description of the meaning of their work and very often its connection to wellbeing. This proved to be of unexpected value in the moderation process.

Evaluating the impact of BOUNCE on the RMIT community was equally complex, although the following data provides some indication of level of engagement. More than 1000 student contributed to BOUNCE in 2009. To date 125 students have joined the BOUNCE website community and 52 students contributed to the website for the launch. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the act of contributing was positive, with contributors reporting feeling good to be a part of the project. One of the contributors, Muhammad Baqir Khan, a student from Afghanistan, thanked us for the opportunity to publically share his connection to his home, which is so frequently portrayed in negative ways. Muhammed’s reading of his poem at the launch was a powerful reminder of the potential of the project.

BOUNCE was offered as a WIL project in 8 programs and taken up by 26 students. When asked about their reasons for participating in BOUNCE rather than other, often more clearly defined and
less complex projects, students reflected on the meaningful nature of the project, their desire to “give something back to RMIT”, and help “create a community”. Some students spoke of their own isolation in their early years at university and were keen to support a project that might ease the transition of other students. For many students the opportunity to work on a project from inception right through to execution was unique and very attractive. Unlike other WIL simulations or projects in which designs might be presented to real clients, but often not taken up, BOUNCE offered students a chance to see their designs and ideas realised.

The opportunity to work across disciplines was another motivation for students as it is not often part of WIL projects. As one student said, “I saw the potential of working with different groups of students and was really enthusiastic about the project, so it really took a high priority on all my schoolwork”. Another student noted, “I was really excited that we were doing this project, the website and people contributing to it, to be at uni, and be able to do something where you’re going across multidisciplinary teams and working within them, and doing something that’s real, its fantastic, working in teams, in my career I’ll always be working with people from different mindsets, different backgrounds, so this helps a lot”.

Despite the successful uptake of BOUNCE across courses, the project was not integrated into all the courses approached. For example, the brief was considered inappropriate to the assessment task in an event management course. In most cases we were able to be flexible, but in some cases our requirements were just not compatible with course requirements and we had to find other ways to achieve our goals. Now that the website is established we hope it will be easier for staff and students to be more proactive in designing their own projects to continue to contribute to BOUNCE.

Finally, the evaluation of the project included an analysis of the impact of participating in the BOUNCE student project groups. In keeping with the student-centred nature of the project this analysis was undertaken by one of the fourth year psychology students, Antonella Zanini, to satisfy the thesis component of her program.

The effect of participation in BOUNCE on wellbeing, academic self-efficacy and satisfaction with group work was determined using a pre-post test comparison using standard measurement tools. Students from the same courses who did not engage in BOUNCE served as a control group. A focus group of students from two of the student project groups was used to collect qualitative data.

Participants in the evaluation were 80 students (46 female, 34 male), including 19 BOUNCE participants and 61 controls. The mean age of participants was 24.5 years (SD 5.1). Although participating in the BOUNCE student project groups did not enhance wellbeing or academic self-efficacy, the students who took on the BOUNCE project reported higher satisfaction with their group work experience than those in the control group, t (41) =1.80, p = .04, 95%CI (-.29, 4.97). This is particularly salient given that these students entered the project less satisfied with their previous group work experiences than the control group, t (77) =-2.97, p = .005, 95%CI (-.97, -.18). This outcome of the project is particularly pleasing, suggesting that despite the complexity and frustrations of the project, BOUNCE provided a positive experience of group work that these students can take with them into the workplace. This represents an improved learning experience, with work-ready implications.

The higher satisfaction experienced by the BOUNCE students may be due, in part to the multi-disciplinary group training. As one participated noted, “I think that was really good to do the training and for us to start on an even keel”. The support from and commitment of the management team were also identified as important to the participants. “I felt like they were as committed as I was,
problems or issues or questions that I had, I could email them and have their response fairly quickly…. I felt the project was taken seriously.

Phase 8: The future – BOUNCE prospectus

To quote two of the members of the Entrepreneurial team, Josh Sprague and Scott Douglas, “the best of BOUNCE is yet to come”. BOUNCE was an ambitions project with most of the energy focused on developing a wellbeing resource by students, for students. But the product is only one part of BOUNCE. The most pervasive and powerful outcomes of BOUNCE are the relationships and sense of a learning community forged through the process of the project. Strong relationships were built between Student Services Group, particularly Student Wellbeing, the academic community and between students who worked on and contributed to BOUNCE. The creativity and opportunities that have grown out of these relationships has exceeded our hopes and expectations.

What has been established is a showcase of RMIT students’ stories of resilience and wellbeing while at University and the facility of an e-community who can comment and share information through the BOUNCE website. The BOUNCE website is a foundation for future projects and opportunities that we hope will extend far into the future. With the aim of keeping BOUNCE student-centred, we anticipate that 2010 will see BOUNCE run though a student-run steering committee, offering initiatives for students to devise, participate and manage future positive psychology initiatives. The future of BOUNCE is limitless.

Further competitions and marketing will ensure that BOUNCE becomes integral to the student experience of community building and peer support. Student contributions will continue to fill the website and students will continue to access BOUNCE through avenues such as Facebook, Twitter, and mobile phones. Consistent with the graduate attribute of being a global citizen, further initiatives and WIL opportunities might allow BOUNCE to “bounce” overseas, offering students opportunities to work in multi-disciplinary teams in initiatives that will promote student resilience and wellbeing, both in national and international arenas.

Motivated by their own passion for BOUNCE, Josh Sprague and Scott Douglas, two students completing their Entrepreneurial Studies at RMIT, developed a prospectus to ensure the longevity and student-focus for BOUNCE.

Dissemination of Project Outcomes

The project has been publicised within RMIT through the promotional activities that were part of the project as well as the final celebration. BOUNCE activities are also planned for Orientation 2010. In addition, the project was presented at the conference of ANZSSA, the Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association, in December 2009.
Abstracts have been submitted for the following conferences in 2010:

- National Conference of the Australian Health Promotion Association.
- International Asia Pacific Student Services Association Conference
- Pacific Rim First Year in Higher Education Conference

**Project Summary**

BOUNCE: The Student Wellbeing Project was developed to enhance the wellbeing of RMIT students. The project, which was a collaboration between Student Wellbeing Services and the School of Health Sciences, was conceptualised as a student-centred, WIL experience, involving more than 800 students in all facets of the design, creation, promotion, maintenance and evaluation of the resource. The project delivered a wellbeing web resource populated with a rich diversity of student contributions on time and within budget. Additional outcomes of the study include a cross-disciplinary training package, positive student perceptions of group work, and enhanced connections between Student Services and academic disciplines.

**References**


# Appendix A: Financial Statement

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**Budget was underspent by $5,330**