Chapter 2
Teaching Well-Being/Quality of Life from a Philosophical Perspective

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Introduction

Quality of life is a subject of study that is undeniably relevant to each and every one of us. It is no surprise then, that since humans have been studying anything at all, they have been studying quality of life. Indeed, the original academic subject, philosophy, held quality of life among its few central concerns.

"How should I live?", ancient Greeks would ask before being directed towards Plato's Academy, Epicurus's Garden, or other sanctuaries for critical thinkers. But which sanctuary to choose? The second-century satirist Lucian of Samosata pointed out that each philosophical school had different advice on how to live because they had different views on what it was to live well (Bok 2012; Lucian 2005). The choice of philosophical school was important; much time could be wasted at the feet of any number of hairy-faced ideologues as they revealed their view of the one true path to happiness. And, of course, their mutually exclusive views meant that they could not all be correct.

These days, philosophers refer to the broad investigation of the more theoretical aspects of how we should live as 'normative ethics'. The chief division within normative ethics is between moral theory and well-being. Moral theory is the investigation of what determines the moral rightness or wrongness of actions. It essentially involves identifying and critiquing theories of what we should do, where the normative force of the "should" comes from morality. Well-being, as a subject area in philosophy, is the investigation of what determines how good or bad a life is *for the one living it*. It essentially involves identifying and critiquing theories of what is ultimately good and bad for us, where good and bad are viewed prudentially (i.e., for us, as opposed to for others or for everyone). So, when a philosopher teaches quality of life, they usually understand themselves to be teaching well-being.

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What Does the Term “Well-Being” Refer to in Philosophy?

Conceptual clarity is important to philosophers. We tend to go on a bit, so it frustrates us greatly if we discover we have been talking past each other (for, say, the last 2000 years or so). For this reason, every good philosophical course on well-being or quality of life will start with several conceptual clarifications.

Well-Being: The Prudential Good Life

The philosophical understanding of well-being is shared by many academic disciplines, and is usually considered synonymous with welfare, prudential value, and the prudential good life. The concept is variously described, but the shared meaning within the various descriptions is clear: The life of well-being is the life that is good for the one living (Crisp 2017). So, when we ask about a person’s well-being, we are asking about whether their life is going well for them.

The “for them” phrase is important because a life can be good in various ways (Feldman 2004, Chap. 1). A life can be morally good, but morality may require sacrificing one’s happiness or even one’s life for the sake of others. While such a sacrifice might be the right thing to do in the moral sense of “right”, it seems anti-prudential – bad for the well-being of the one doing the sacrificing. A life might also be good in the sense of making for a good example of human life by being so perfectly average, or aesthetically good in the sense of making for a good story. Neither of these kinds of good life necessitate that the life is prudentially good – valuable to the one living the life. This is most clear for the aesthetically good life; the protagonists of literature’s tragedies tend not to live envious lives. The life of King Lear, for example, is not one I would wish for my children, despite the baubles of office that come with being king. So, philosophers of well-being are interested in prudential value, not necessarily moral or aesthetic value.

Well-Being or Quality of Life?

Well-being is the prudential good life, in other words, the life that is good for the one living it. Well-being and quality of life are sometimes understood as synonyms, but this definition of well-being differs from the definition of quality of life provided in the introduction to this book (and reproduced in Box 2.1), which takes a multi-dimensional and fairly fluid view of what makes life go well. These differences highlight key dissimilarities in specific methodologies and general approaches used when investigating the topic of prudentially good lives.

Box 2.1: Key Definitions 1

- *Philosophical definition of well-being:* the prudential good life, the life that is good for the one living it.
- *Quality of life studies definition of quality of life:* a multi-dimensional concept which involves a number of domains which people experience in diverse forms according to the importance attributed to them in their lives, considering their expectations, their values, and their experiences.

The philosophical concept of well-being is like an empty cup with the barest semblance of a form. Defining well-being as the prudential good life – the life going well for the one living it – does give some perspective on the concept of interest, but it does very little to answer the question, “How should I live?”. In effect, the bare-bones definition of well-being would answer, “You should live well” – an answer that isn’t all that informative. For this reason, philosophers of well-being do not stop after merely outlining the cup. We also try to fill the cup with a theory or account of well-being. So, to draw the analogy to its full extent, drinking from the cup would bestow one with the knowledge of what actually makes a life go well for the one living it (not just the meaning of the term “well-being”).

Quality of life, as defined in Box 2.1, is multi-dimensional and at least partly subjective; the definition allows the importance of the various aspects of a good life to be decided by each individual for themselves. From a philosopher’s perspective, both of these attributes of the definition are up for debate. This is no surprise when you consider that philosophers see one of their main roles as questioning the assumptions underlying important claims and arguments. Indeed, one of the most important questions in the philosophy of well-being is whether there is just one thing that ultimately makes life go well for the person living it or whether there are several things. In other words, when philosophers argue for a theory of well-being, one of the things they must argue for is whether there are many aspects or just one aspect of the prudential good life.

The issue of subjectivity is dealt with in the same way. A philosopher needs to argue for *why* we should think that the prudential good life has any subjective elements. This is not to say that objective elements are assumed. Philosophers need to justify any subjective or objective aspects of their theory of well-being. Hopefully the message is clear; philosophers should argue for their theory without making assumptions, or at least with making as few assumptions as possible. In practice, this leads to lots of extra opportunities to disagree about the fundamental aspects of the issue in question. This attention to detail and pedantry for addressing the fundamentals is doubtless part of the reason why philosophy has made little progress over the millennia, and quality of life researchers have not waited for a philosophical consensus to emerge before bringing empirical methodologies to the subject.

Another important aspect of a philosophical approach[1] to well-being research is that philosophers tend to look first and foremost for universal answers to the question of interest. Given especially the widespread differences in values across cultures, this preference for universal answers may also have slowed the progress of philosophical investigations of well-being. But imagine the relative importance of discovering what makes life go well for an individual, for a group, for every current person, or for every conceivable person. Not often constrained by practicalities, philosophers tend to aim for the "big fish" – the universal theory of something. Philosophers of well-being are no different, tending to either aim for a universal theory of well-being, or sometimes limiting the scope of their inquiry to humankind so as to keep monographs to readable lengths (e.g., Kraut 2007). Of course, the idea that a fundamental truth about well-being is even possible (and so, worthy of investigation) is an assumption, so this idea is also questioned by philosophers!

How to Create a Philosophical Theory of Well-Being

Any philosophical course on well-being or quality of life would be remiss if it did not look carefully at the process of creating a theory of well-being. There are several issues to address, including the assumptions mentioned above, the identification of what has non-instrumental prudential value, and the prudential rationale – the justification of *why* that thing has (or those things have) non-instrumental prudential value. All of these issues should be addressed to adequately provide the characteristic level of clarity we aspire to in philosophy.

Scope

What or who is your theory of well-being for? There are many possibilities. It would be possible for me to make a theory of well-being that was only intended to apply to myself on this particular day. It would also be possible to make a theory of well-being and intend for it to apply to everything, even inert objects of the distant future. For teaching purposes, the most useful limits of analysis are usually at the individual subjective level (getting students to create a theory of well-being that applies to themselves) and at the level of humankind. Other interesting scopes to investigate include all life or all sentient life, and limits to specific cultures or other meaningful sub-populations of human kind.

When teaching well-being and quality of life from a philosophical perspective, I find it useful to get students to think about a theory of well-being for themselves in

[1] There is huge diversity within philosophy. The claims in this chapter refer mainly to the philosophical tradition known as Western Analytic Philosophy, which, now prominent in the Anglophone Western world, traces most of its heritage through Europe to Ancient Greece.

the first instance. Then I encourage students to share their theories with each other and see whether they are compatible. These comparisons lead easily to fruitful discussions about the potential for theories of well-being to be generalised in either a restricted or universal way. Another useful endeavour is encouraging students to think about whether their individual subjective theory of well-being could usefully apply to non-human animals, artificial intelligence, or aliens.

Level of Analysis

Whether well-being can only be sensibly analysed at the level of whole lives is another important issue to consider when creating a theory of well-being. It was not uncommon for Ancient Greeks to claim that an individual's well-being cannot be assed until they are dead, or even long after that (Bok 2012). For example, if honour is a component of well-being and one's honour can be affected by the actions of one's children, then my well-being could be affected long after my death because of the misdeeds of my (poorly raised) children.

Philosophy can also make sense of theories of wellbeing that give assessments of the prudential value of parts of lives, even moments of the briefest duration. The theory of well-being that sums units of pleasure and ignores everything else is as amenable to assessments of moments as much as it is to assessments of whole lives.

Philosophy in the Western Analytical tradition tends to focus on individuals as the relevant unit of analysis. In philosophical research on well-being, this means primarily thinking about what makes a life go well for an individual. Other philosophical perspectives, particularly indigenous perspectives and those originating in the East, may focus on groups as the relevant level of analysis. In the well-being context, that means indigenous or eastern philosophers of well-being may investigate what makes life go well for the *group*. This group-centric approach is not to be confused with simply summing the well-being of each individual in the group in order to determine the well-being of the group. Oftentimes, taking a group-centric approach means treating the group as the smallest unit of analysis for at least some aspects of well-being. For example, whether a group is genuinely harmonious could be an emergent property of the group, based on but not fully determined by the relationships between individuals in the group.

A related issue is whether philosophical investigations of well-being at the individual level should accept group-level well-being or the well-being of relevant others as a potential component of an individual's own well-being. For example, some individuals in East Asian cultures would claim that their well-being is party constituted by the well-being of their family members or local community (Joshanloo 2014; Lu and Gilmour 2006). The key issue here is whether the well-being of another can rightly be seen as being a fundamental (non-instrumental) part of what it is for an individual's life to go well for them, as opposed to being a merely instrumental cause of their well-being. The issue of instrumental vs non-instrumental prudential value is discussed in more detail below.

Different levels of analysis in the hard sciences might mean investigating at the sub-atomic, molecular, organism, or species level. These different levels of granularity do not readily apply in the philosophy of well-being, which usually operates at the level of sensible everyday objects and mental states. For example, Philosophical theories of well-being are likely to operate on the level of emotions, desires, beliefs, friendships, material possessions, and so on. This focus does not exclude interesting possibilities such as the reduction of pleasure to a particular function or neurochemical event in the brain. In practice, however, philosophers tend to operate on the level that requires no equipment to test, and can easily be explained to people without scientific expertise.

Identifying What Has Non-instrumental Prudential Value

With the scope and level of analysis established, the next step in creating a theory of well-being is to clearly state what has value. Specifically, the theory should identify everything that has non-instrumental prudential value. "Non-instrumental" and its counterpart "instrumental" are discussed below, and "prudential" was discussed above. These key terms are also defined in Box 2.2 below.

Box 2.2: Key Definitions 2

- *Prudential value*: goodness or badness *for* an entity (usually a person)
- *Prudential good*: something that contributes to prudential value
- *Instrumental good*: something that indirectly contributes to prudential value (via one or more non-instrumental goods)
- *Non-instrumental value*: something that directly contributes to prudential value

Instrumental and Non-instrumental Goods

What is good for people? There are countless objects and activities that positively contribute to well-being. However, the vast majority of these objects and activities are only prudentially valuable because they lead to some other prudential good. Take money as an example; money is cross-culturally desired for its value. But money is also the prototypical example of an *instrumental* good – something that *in*directly contributes to well-being (via one or more *non*-instrumental goods). One way to determine whether a good is instrumentally or non-instrumentally prudentially valuable is to closely examine the connection between the good and well-being.

Does money *directly* contribute to our well-being? To answer this question, we have to think carefully about why money is good for us. Money, unlike perhaps life, does not have intrinsic or inherent value – that is, value in and of itself, without reliance on anything outside of itself. Consider how valuable your monetary savings would be if the currency your savings were held in completely collapsed. For example, imagine if everyone in the world decided to immediately disband all currencies and install a new global currency: sheep. Bill Gates and others would immediately fall off the rich lists, only to be replaced by Lance, Andy, Dave, Sharon, and other sheep farmers from rural New Zealand. The current financial system is required for money to have any value at all, so money's value cannot be intrinsic or inherent.

Re-focusing on how money creates prudential value for us, we can see that money is valuable mainly because it allows us to buy things. Whether the buying of stuff is thought of as an opportunity, a freedom, the ability to satisfy desires, or the ability to buy stuff that is itself prudentially valuable, is for the moment irrelevant. The main point is that the prudential value lies not in the money itself, but in what it provides, like freedom, or in the provisions of the goods that it can be used to purchase, like buying a holiday for your family to increase your happiness.

This process of asking ourselves, "But, why is *that* valuable to our well-being?" is repeatable. We can keep asking this question until we reach the end of the line – the point at which we cannot produce an answer for why something is valuable for us, and yet we remain sure it is valuable. On the face of it, this might seem bad; have we just discovered that we value something for no good reason? Philosophers love justifications (arguments and evidence), so discovering that we value something without justification sounds dreadful to us – will we be forced to hand in our pens and our badges if our philoso-boss finds out? Luckily, struggling to justify a value that we are sure is valuable is a sign of the good in question being non-instrumentally valuable (as opposed to being a sign that we should quit our day job).

For example, I often ask my students a simple question: "Why are you here?", and then keep asking them why this or that. Answers tend to follow this pattern (">" separates each level of justification):

> To help me pass the course > To get a degree > to get a job > to get (lots of) money > to buy a house and nice things > to provide for my family > because that makes me feel good > ?

The question mark represents the end of the justificatory line. Feeling good seems to be prudentially valuable, but it is not easy to justify *why* it makes my life go better for me. Consultation with others at this point usually reveals that many people agree with the view that feeling good is obviously prudentially valuable. This makes feeling good a plausible candidate for being a non-instrumental prudential good – it directly contributes to well-being, or perhaps, is a component of well-being.

The distinction between instrumental and non-instrumental prudential goods is vital for creating a philosophical theory of well-being. The main real-world purpose of a theory of well-being is to allow for assessments of the prudential value of lives. These assessments are a kind of accounting for prudential value. And, as every good accountant knows, we want to avoid double-counting. The easiest way to avoid double-counting when assessing the prudential value of lives is to count all and only the non-instrumental prudential goods. Notice that this still allows for the value of instrumental goods to be included in the accounting – any instrumental prudential value a good has must be realised through non-instrumental goods. For example, the instrumental value of money might be fully accounted for through the non-instrumental value of the good feelings or happiness the spending of the money brings about.

A further complication is that some goods will be both instrumentally and non-instrumentally prudentially valuable. Consider feeling good. Feeling good may directly contribute to well-being, but feeling good also makes us more likely to be nice to other people, which may lead to stronger or more friendships (Diener and Tay 2017), and friendship has also been suggested as a non-instrumental good (e.g., Finnis 1980). Of course, having many strong friendships might also make us feel good, but as long as friendship also directly contributes to prudential value (over and above any effect is has on how we feel), then friendship is a non-instrumental prudential good as well as an instrumental prudential good. For prudential value accounting purposes, we would add the non-instrumental value of the friendship to the non-instrumental value of the good feelings (caused by the friendships and other features of life).

Of course, a theory that listed all of the instrumental prudential goods would be a very long theory indeed, far too long to be useful. So, a philosophical theory of well-being aims to identify all of the non-instrumental prudential goods.

It should be noted that this approach differs from many attempts to theorise about well-being or the quality of life from a social-scientific perspective. Many scientists investigating well-being attempt to model it, identifying both the components of well-being and potential causes and effects of well-being. This modelling approach achieves several important aims at once. It provides some evidence that the concept is real in the sense that it coheres with other widely supported concepts and can cause changes in those other concepts when it itself changes. Models are also at once an explanation and a prediction depending on the perspective taken (Foss 2014). Having a precise and accurate model of happiness, for example, might allow us to point to what is likely causing someone's current happiness as well as predict how happy they will be if those causes of happiness reach particular levels. Conceptual social scientific models of well-being are usually developed empirically or quickly operationalised and empirically tested.

Philosophers tend not to use empirical methods when developing their theories of well-being, but they often do think about how their theory coheres with other established theories, principles of value, and examples. This aspect of theorising about well-being will be discussed more in section "How to critique a philosophical theory of well-being".

One or Many Things?

Given the task of creating a theory or well-being, a major issue is how many non-instrumental prudential goods there are. The title of this section suggests that the viable options are one (monism) or many (pluralism). Astute readers may notice an assumption here – why not a theory of well-being with zero non-instrumental prudential goods? Excluding this possibility is an assumption (so, well spotted!), but it is a fairly safe one. If nothing has non-instrumental prudential value, then nothing that happens to us can make our lives go better or worse for us. That means there is no prudential difference between being tortured for the rest of your life and living a regular life like you do now! Since our lives do seem to have their ups and downs, then there must be something or somethings that represent that change in prudential value; non-instrumental prudential goods play that role.

With "none" excluded as an option for number of non-instrumental prudential goods, philosophers are usually left to decide between one and many when creating theories of well-being. Conceptually, identifying the number of non-instrumental prudential goods could be approached in two ways. One way is practically difficult; amassing all of the instrumental goods and interrogating them to discover what non-instrumental prudential good or goods they might lead to. This would be difficult to accomplish because of the sheer number of instrumental prudential goods. The second and more common way to work out how many non-instrumental prudential goods should be in a theory of well-being starts by looking at the prototypical goods. Reflecting (usually from an armchair) on what really makes life go well, and then interrogating those reflections, usually leads to a short or very short list of candidate non-instrumental prudential goods.

The final decision on how many of the candidate non-instrumental prudential goods really are non-instrumental prudential goods is determined by attempts to reduce each of the candidate goods to one or more of the other candidate goods. Consider an extension of the friendship example from above. Imagine your armchair reflections and interrogations have resulted in three candidate non-instrumental prudential goods: feeling good, meaning, and friendship. An attempted reduction of friendship to feeling good and meaning requires thinking about the prudentially valuable aspects of friendship and whether in fact that value is all ultimately found in the good feelings and meaningfulness that friendship provides. One way to do this is to imagine a friendship that is neither pleasurable nor meaningful (it doesn't need to be the opposite of pleasurable and meaningful, just perfectly neutral on those values). Would this pleasure-less, meaningless friendship still be prudentially valuable – would it make your life go better for you? Remember that you do not need to explain *why* it would make your life better for you, you just need to assess whether you have a strong feeling about it (because we are trying to assess whether friendship is non-instrumentally prudentially valuable).

If this process leads you to identify more than one non-instrumental prudential good, then you also need to consider how the goods relate to each other and to well-being. It is important to consider whether one of the goods has priority over others. For example, feeling good and engaging in meaningful activities might both be irreducible non-instrumental prudential goods, but perhaps one is much more valuable than the other. Consider also that one non-instrumental prudential good may be required to enable others to contribute to well-being. For example, being alive might be non-instrumentally prudentially valuable and a pre-requisite for feeling good. It also might be the case that a life without any one of the non-instrumental prudential goods cannot be considered a prudentially good life, no matter how much of the other goods is present.

Subjective or Objective?

The terms subjective and objective are frequently used loosely in both philosophy and social scientific work on well-being or quality of life. The terms are defined relevant to a well-being context in Box 2.3 and the important distinction between them is discussed in this section.

Box 2.3: Key Definitions 3

- *Well-being Subjectivism*: it is up to each individual to decide what makes their life go well for them (and only them)
- *Well-being Objectivism*: there is a fact of the matter about what makes lives go well that applies to people regardless of what they believe about prudential value
- *Mixed subjective-objective accounts of well-being*: what non-instrumentally makes life go well includes both subjective and objective components
- *Well-being Subjective-Objective Hybridism*: a life goes well for the one living it if and only if the person believes that what has objective prudential value is valuable for them, and their life includes what has objective prudential value

When discussing any matter of value, subjective accounts give complete power to individuals to decide for themselves what has value. Note that this is different to a measure of well-being relying on self-report data. A life satisfaction survey question with a 0–10 response scale elicits a respondent's judgment about their own life, so it is subjective in the sense that the respondent has complete control over how to rate their life on the scale. However, if the answer to that question is used as a measure of well-being (either total well-being or a component of well-being) then the researcher has made the decision about what ultimately makes the respondent's life go well for them – being satisfied with their life. Subjective theories of well-being allow individuals to choose the concepts that count as non-instrumental prudential goods for their own well-being (they do not get to decide for people generally).

Subjective accounts of well-being the potential drawback that they enable people with very unusual beliefs about prudential value to be living the prudential good life despite living what appears to most observers to be a worthless life.

Objective accounts of well-being do not leave the "what?" question of non-instrumental prudential value to individuals; they dictate what ultimately makes life go well for the one living it. Nearly all philosophical theories of well-being are objective in the sense that they are intended to apply to people even when those people do not agree with the theory. For example, the objective "feels good" theory of well-being states that feeling good is good for you *even if* you do not want some of those good feelings or even if you do not think feelings directly contribute to well-being.

The dictatorial nature of objective accounts of well-being is a benefit in terms of being able to overrule people who claim to have wonderful lives despite outward appearances to the contrary. However, the same dictatorial nature may also be viewed as a weakness because it overrides individuals' idiosyncratic perspectives in a way that may not fully respect any fundamental diversity between individuals.

Objective accounts of well-being should not be confused with the objective measures of well-being or quality of life that are extant in the social scientific literature. If a social scientific measure of well-being or quality of life is referred to as being "objective", this is usually meant to mean that there exists a way to check the data produced by the measure, such as a report on the number of jobs available (e.g., Weijers and Morrison 2018). The "objective" label can even be used when the data are self-reported. For example, employment and related employment categories are usually self-reported in social scientific research. These reports are independently verifiable, at least in principle, because we could momentarily disregard research ethics and track down the respondents' employer. Note that is different to measures of subjective well-being, which effectively refer to something so internal to a person that there may be no independent way to verify the data, even in principle.

It is possible to create subjective-objective mixed accounts of well-being. A mixed theory of well-being would identify at least one objective non-instrumental prudential good and yet still allow individuals to have a say over what the other non-instrumental prudential goods are for themselves. Such accounts are not popular among philosophers. The combining of subjective and objective elements seems to allow for contradictions or at least incalculable value trade-offs. There is one exception to this general rule against mixed accounts – hybrid subjective-objective accounts of well-being. Hybrid accounts are usually characterised by the alignment of subjective and objective prudential values, such that individuals value what is truly worthy of value. For example, the hybrid "feels good" theory of well-being will only attribute non-instrumental prudential value to someone's life when the following conditions are met: the person believes that feeling good is a central component of well-being and the person is feeling good (because according to the theory, feeling good is, objectively speaking, a central component of well-being).

Internalist or Externalist?

The terms internalist and externalist are much less common than subjective and objective but explaining them will help untangle some of the confusion around subjective and objective. The terms are defined relevant to a well-being context in Box 2.4 and the important distinctions between them are discussed in this section.

Box 2.4: Key Definitions 4

- *Internalist accounts of well-being*: Only things internal to a life can be non-instrumentally valuable for the one living that life (such as beliefs, health, and the experience of friendship)
- *Externalist accounts of well-being*: Only things external to a life can be non-instrumentally valuable for the one living that life (such as living in reality even when the person doesn't believe they are)
- *Mixed internalist-externalist accounts of well-being*: At least some things external to a life can be non-instrumentally valuable for the one living that life (such as the truth of a person's beliefs, actually having friends, etc.)

Internalist accounts of well-being only consider things internal to the person whose well-being we are assessing. For example, the internal aspects of mental states are considered, but the external objects of our mental states are not. So, for internalist accounts, it matters that I am feeling good, but it does *not* matter what I'm feeling good about – even if I'm feeling good about the suffering of others! Similarly, what I believe about the world outside of myself can be considered, but the truth of what I believe cannot. If I believe I am a good friend, then it doesn't immediately matter for my well-being whether or not I am a good friend (although it will likely come back to bite me in the future when my friends give up on me). Additionally my body and so my health, is internal to me, so it can also be considered by internalist accounts of well-being.

Externalist accounts of well-being only consider things external to me when assessing the prudential value of my life. The internal aspects of my mental states and the functioning of my body are not considered on these accounts. Instead, my well-being rests solely on things that are *not* about me. Perhaps that God is pleased with me or that I live in the real world (even though I do not know or believe these things).

The focus of externalist accounts on all but the person whose life we are evaluating make them unpopular. Much more popular are mixed internalist-externalist accounts of well-being, which include internal and external elements. On a mixed account, feeling good might contribute more prudential value if it is the result of concerted effort, or it might contribute nothing at all if it is the result of morally depraved behaviour.

Prudential Rationale: Justifying Why It Has Prudential Value

While it is important to be clear about the fundamental details of what has value, the most significant part of any theory of well-being is the prudential rationale. Philosophers are loathed to accept anything at face value – we usually demand clear and compelling justifications for all claims, even (and sometimes especially) those considered common-sense. When faced with a new theory of well-being, we want to know *why* we should believe that the proposed goods are non-instrumentally valuable.

Creating convincing prudential rationales is the most difficult part of creating a theory of well-being. Recall from the discussion of instrumental and non-instrumental goods above that providing a direct reason why a good is prudentially valuable may just reveal a more fundamental prudential good. For example, to argue that eating cake is only valuable because it leads to feeling good is to discover that eating cake is an instrumental good and that feeling good may be a non-instrumental good. Applying the same test to feeling good, we might conclude that feeling good *just is* good for us. This identifies feeling good as a potential non-instrumental prudential good, but it hardly justifies it.

Justifying proposed non-instrumental prudential goods requires providing generally compelling reasons – reasons that should be convincing to reasonable people! The justification can be considered successful if many reasonable people accept that the proposed non-instrumental prudential good makes the life of the one living it go better for them even when the good leads to nothing else. In practice, this justification takes a lot of discussion, often including examples and principles of value.

The prudential rationale for the Simple Unrestricted Desire Satisfaction (SUDS) theory of well-being, can be used to illustrate this. The SUDS theory states that the only non-instrumental prudential good is the satisfaction of one's desires (with any and all desires counted, and all desires weighted according to their intensity) (Lukas 2010). The prudential rationale for the SUDS theory of well-being is that getting what you want is good for you (no matter what it is you want). The justification for the theory would likely include discussion of examples of people with things in their lives that are considered to be non-instrumental prudential goods by other theories, but that the person does not desire. For example, if a person does not desire another friend, then according to SUDS, gaining another friend does not directly increase that person's well-being.

Example Philosophical Theories of Well-Being

Combining these components of theories of well-being in different ways permits a huge range of possible philosophical accounts of well-being. Some combinations, although possible, are not popular. The theories of well-being that have proven popular over time are briefly defined in Box 2.5 and discussed below. It should be noted that there are a lot of sub-variants, different specific accounts of well-being that gather under these major headings. Any philosophical course on well-being would discuss many of the sub-variants.

Box 2.5: Main Philosophical Theories of Well-Being

- *Prudential hedonism*: All and only pleasure is non-instrumentally prudentially valuable and all and only pain is non-instrumentally prudentially dis-valuable
- *Desire satisfactionism*: All and only desire-satisfaction is non-instrumentally prudentially valuable and all and only desire-frustration is non-instrumentally prudentially disvaluable
- *Objective list theory*: There are X non-instrumental prudential goods and they are… (e.g., pleasure, truth, and friendship)
- *Perfectionism*: The prudential good life is the perfect life – being a perfect specimen of the kind of creature you are

Prudential hedonism is the theory of well-being that takes all and only pleasure to be non-instrumentally prudentially valuable and all and only pain as the opposite (Weijers 2011). The theory essentially says that the happy life is the prudentially good life and that the happy life is one that includes lots of pleasures and few pains. Important hedonistic variants include Mill's (1861) qualitative hedonism, which values higher pleasures (cerebral pleasures that are only available to humans) over lower pleasures (sensual and bodily pleasures that many animals can experience). An important modern variant is Feldman's (2004) attitudinal hedonism, which understands non-instrumentally prudentially valuable pleasure as a pro-attitude, such as appreciation or approval, towards states of affairs (as opposed to understanding pleasure a pleasant sensation – feeling good).

Desire-satisfaction theories of well-being revolve around the idea that getting what we want is good for us. The basic version, simple unrestricted desire satisfactionism, allows the satisfaction of any and all desires to contribute positively to well-being (Lukas 2010). Whole life desire-satisfaction theories are only interested in whether someone's life as a whole matches up to their desires (Kekes 1982). A few variants also focus on the desires of well-informed others, rather than the individual living the life (e.g., Suikkanen 2011).

Objective list theories of well-being dictate a number of non-instrumental prudential goods that apply to us whether we agree with them or not. Some important examples include Finnis' list (1980): life, knowledge, play, aesthetic experience, sociability (friendship), practical reasonableness, and religion (spirituality) and Parfit's list (1984): Moral goodness, rational activity, and development of abilities, having children and being a good parent, knowledge, and awareness of true beauty.

Perfectionist theories of well-being hold that achieving well-being is a matter of perfecting ones' nature. Informed by Aristotle's eudemonia, Hurka's (1993) perfectionism makes claims about the perfect form of humankind based on our natural capacities. For example, Hurka would argue that knowledge is (at least in part) a non-instrumental prudential good because knowledge is an aspect of being human that can be improved upon and perfected. Perfectionist theories are sometimes classified as a subset of objective list theories because they invariably end up as a list of objective non-instrumental prudential goods.

How to Critique a Philosophical Theory of Well-Being

The details of a theory of well-being can sometimes be fruitfully critiqued, such as when a theory is arbitrarily limited in scope, but the most important critiques focus on the prudential rationale. The techniques used to critique prudential rationales are effectively the same as the techniques used to justify prudential rationales – discussing examples, principles, and background theories in a way that affects people's judgments about what has non-instrumental prudential value. The examples are usually hypothetical scenarios about people's lives. The principles are usually simple claims about the kinds of things that can or cannot have prudential value. The background theories are the relevant claims that are well-established in some area such that we generally take them to be true. For example, well-received scientific theories about pleasure and pain might be relevant to evaluating the feels good theory of well-being.

Thought Experiments: The Power of Examples

In practice, examples (the key aspect of thought experiments) tend to overpower principles when assessing potential non-instrumental prudential goods. For example, someone might believe "what you don't know can't hurt you", or more specifically the prudential principle the Experience Requirement: For something to affect my well-being, it must affect my experiences. But they might disregard the principle when asked about a scenario, based on Shelly Kagan's deceived businessman thought experiment (1998), about which of two lives is better for the one living it:

Imagine two people with experientially identical lives. They both had the experience of their partners loving them, their colleagues respecting them, and their work being successful until they died painlessly in their sleep at age 65. One of these people had *genuine* experiences throughout their life. The other was *deceived* by their partner and colleagues and their business failed shortly after their death, although none of this affected their experiences in any way. The deceived person was also then ruthlessly slandered after their death, being accused of heinous acts that they did not commit.

Since the deceived person did not experience any of the deception while they lived or the slandering after they died, the Experience Requirement states that those features of the deceived life do not affect the deceived person's well-being. However, most people judge the deceived life as prudentially worse than the non-deceived life. This judgment can only be correct if the Experience Requirement is false. Faced with this contradiction, the power of most people's judgment that the deceived life is prudentially worse than the non-deceived life makes them give up the Experience Requirement.

When faced with powerful thought experiments like the one above, defenders of principles or theories have also criticised some examples for being "intuition pumps" (Dennett 1980). The criticisms often point to aspects of the scenario that might be misleading or biasing readers' judgments about the lives (Weijers 2013). A lot of philosophical scholarship on well-being takes place at this level – creating and responding to examples designed to criticise theories or principles of prudential value. So, a good philosophical course on well-being or quality of life should include information on how to create and critique these examples. A few classic thought experiments on well-being are listed in Box 2.6.

Box 2.6: Key Thought Experiments on Well-Being

- *Kagan's deceived businessman*: Kagan, S. (1998). *Normative Ethics*, Westview Press, pp. 34–36.
- *Nozick's experience machine*: Nozick, R. (1974). *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Basic Books, pp. 42–45.
- *Rawls' grass-counter*: Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*, Harvard University Press, p. 432.
- *Sen's happy slave*: Sen, A. (1987/2012), *On Ethics and Economics*, Oxford University Press, pp. 45–46.

Prudential Principles

Although thought experiments tend to rule the roost, prudential principles are also important to discuss in any philosophical course on well-being or quality of life. Prudential principles work well as objections to many theories and they help clarify and focus people's often nebulous ideas about what matters for well-being. Assessing principles of prudential value is also a fun way to hone critical thinking skills. A few important prudential principles can be found in Box 2.7. Many of the key terms discussed above, such as subjectivism, internalism, and monism can also be understood as prudential principles. While the strong versions of these principles are discussed below, weaker versions are also possible. Weaker versions of the prudential principles might, for eaxample, state that the goods in question contribute less prudential value (rather than none) if the specified requirement is not met.

Box 2.7: Key Prudential Principles

- *Desert requirement*: For goods to contribute to well-being, they must be deserved
- *Experience requirement*: For goods to contribute to well-being, they must (in some way) affect the experiences of the relevant individual
- *Reality requirement*: For goods to contribute to well-being, they must be sufficiently embedded in reality
- *Resonance requirement*: For goods to contribute to well-being, they must be subjectively appreciated by the relevant individual

The Desert Requirement states that goods only confer prudential value if they are deserved. This prudential principle may be used to argue that achievement that is not worked for does not contribute to well-being. Similarly, it may be used to argue that pleasure from immoral behaviour does not contribute to well-being.

The Experience Requirement states that goods only confer prudential value if they affect our experiences. This prudential principle may be used to argue that anything that occurs after our death cannot harm us (because we cannot experience it). Similarly, it may be used to argue that being deceived in a way that never affects our experiences does not impact our well-being.

The Reality Requirement states that goods only confer prudential value if they are sufficiently embedded in reality. This prudential principle may be used to argue that illusory experiences of pleasure or success, such as might be had in an experience machine do not contribute to well-being. According to the Reality Requirement, seeming real is not enough, our experiences would have to be actually real for them to contribute to our well-being.

The Resonance Requirement states that goods only confer prudential value if they are subjectively appreciated as valuable. In other words, if we do not resonate with the supposed prudential value of a particular good, then we have reason to doubt the truth of the theory that stipulates that good is prudentially valuable.

How to Teach a Course on Well-Being or Quality of Life from a Philosophical Perspective

There are many ways that a philosophical course on well-being might be constructed. In this section I explain and argue for a particular way to structure the course based on Fink's (2013) advice on creating significant learning experiences. Later in this section, specific assessments and syllabi are presented.

Appropriate Pedagogy for Teaching Well-Being from a Philosophical Perspective

Informed by the work of Fink (2013), the fundamental pedagogical idea underpinning my approach is getting students to practice using the skills and knowledge that constitute the learning objectives (instead of just learning about those skills and theories). Some courses take a relatively passive approach to student learning – students might just read articles (in which philosophers propose and criticise theories of well-being) and then take quizzes on who argued for what. In contrast, I recommend taking a profoundly active approach to student learning. The benefits of active learning are well-known to education researchers. They include:

> [engaging] students more deeply in the process of learning… encouraging critical thinking and fostering the development of self-directed learning. … [As well as helping] students to connect the information from the classroom to practice in the outside world. (Van Amburgh et al. 2007, p. 1)

In practice taking a profoundly active approach to student learning means dedicating a lot of class time to activities that demand critical engagement from students. This approach necessarily requires aiming to teach less content during the course than in traditional content-based courses. Some professors may already feel like their students are not learning enough and think that teaching less content will make matters worse. I disagree. Few students are as adept at learning as professors were when they were students. Rushing through complex content robs most students of the time they need to engage deeply with the novel ideas. Little time for engagement with novel ideas means little chance of understanding or recall. So, by planning to cover a lot of content, many content-based courses don't encourage skill development or even their main goal of knowledge acquisition! The learning objectives I have in mind, including the content-based ones, are best realised by slowing down and making space for students to regularly practice using key skills on the content in a supportive environment (Fortune et al. 2007).

Creating a course full of significant learning experiences requires careful construction of the content and assessment. I recommend using a scaffolded learning approach. Scaffolded learning "describes a cluster of instructional techniques designed to move students from a novice position toward greater understanding, such that they become independent learners" (Colter and Ulatowski 2017). To successfully set up the "scaffolding", I suggest planning assignment instructions and lecture notes ahead of time to ensure that my expectations for each assessment are clear and complete. The instructions should include "pro tips", or something similar, informing students of common errors and explaining how to avoid them. Ideally the final assessment should require students to complete a complex task, such as writing a focussed argumentative essay, which they have been practicing throughout the course with different material. I take most of the instructions (scaffolding) away for the final assessment, encouraging them to use the same skills they have already practiced, and think about the feedback they have received on their earlier attempts at the complex task.

Following this process, I can be confident that the learning outcomes have been achieved because students will only pass the course if they have already demonstrated the requisite skills and knowledge in various assessments during the course.

Suggested Learning Objectives and Content for Teaching Well-Being from a Philosophical Perspective

I recommend skill- and content-based learning outcomes, with the main focus on skills. Why emphasise skills over content? That's simple. The Internet provides unparalleled access to the world's experts and their views on the most recent findings about nearly every kind of "fact" imaginable. While professors will always be content experts in their areas of expertise, anyone with good research skills and an Internet connection can become a content expert in any area they choose. However, useful expertise requires skills – the skills of interpretation, appraisal, argumentation, and application (to name but a few).

Given a focus on skills, Fink (2013) suggests asking yourself a key question before writing your learning objectives – what do you want your students to be able to *do* by the end of the course? Pondering this question led me to devise several learning objectives for philosophical courses on well-being, which you can view in Box 2.8. Notice that the learning objectives are focussed on skills in the context of well-being, rather than being restricted to knowledge of theories and arguments about well-being.

Box 2.8: Example Learning Outcomes for Teaching Well-Being from a Philosophical Perspective

Students who successfully complete the course should be able to:

- Think critically about issues in the theory of well-being
- Elucidate and analyse complex problems and concepts arising in the theory of well-being
- Articulate and defend original arguments in support of contentious theses related to well-being
- Make prudential decisions in personal, professional, and public contexts
- Be proficient in the distinctive questions and arguments associated with the theory of well-being
- Communicate information, arguments, and analyses related to well-being effectively in writing and orally
- Identify and defend what they think ultimately makes their life go well for them and for people in general

Suggested Content for Teaching Well-Being from a Philosophical Perspective

Box 2.9 shows an ordered list of topics that could constitute a philosophical course on well-being. Possible readings for the topics are indicated. The specific content should depend on the instructor's areas of interest and competence, as well as the duration of the course. The order and timing of topics should be developed in conjunction with the type and timing of assessments. The choice of readings should depend on the level of the course.

Box 2.9: Example Topic List for Teaching Well-Being from a Philosophical Perspective

1. Introduction (motivation, learning outcomes, assessment, rules, culture, and a taste of what is to come)
2. Methodology (using simple toy theories and examples)
   (a) Crisp, R. (2017). Well-Being. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
   (b) Fletcher, G. (2016). "Introduction", in *The Philosophy of Well-Being: An Introduction*. Routledge, pp. 1–7
   (c) Griffin, J. (1988). "Introduction", In *Well-Being: Its Meaning, Measurement and Moral Importance*. Clarendon Press, pp. 1–6
3. Well-being theories: hedonism
   (a) Weijers, D. (2011). Hedonism, *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
   (b) Nozick, R. (1974). "The experience machine", in *Anarchy, state, and utopia*, Blackwell Publishers, pp. 42–45
   (c) Kagan, S. (1998). Excerpt of "Well-Being", in *Normative Ethics*, Westview Press, pp. 29–36
4. Well-being theories: attitudinal hedonism
   (a) Feldman, F. (2004). "Attitudinal Hedonism", in *Pleasure and the Good Life*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 55–107
5. Well-being theories: satisfaction accounts
   (a) Kagan, S. (1998). Excerpt of "Well-Being", in *Normative Ethics*, Westview Press, pp. 36–41
   (b) Lauinger, W. (2011). Dead Sea Apples and Desire-Fulfillment Welfare Theories, *Utilitas*, 23, 324–343
   (c) Lukas, M. (2010). Desire Satisfactionism and the Problem of Irrelevant Desires, *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, 4(2), 1–25
6. Well-being theories: whole-life satisfaction accounts
   (a) Kekes, J. (1982). Happiness, *Mind*, 91, 358–376
   (b) Suikkanen, J. (2011). An improved whole life satisfaction theory of happiness, *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 1(1), 149–166
7. Well-being theories: objective list accounts
   (a) Arneson, R. J. (1999). Human Flourishing Verses Desire Satisfaction, *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 16(1), 113–142
   (b) Fletcher, G. (2013). A Fresh Start for the Objective-List Theory of Well-Being, *Utilitas*, 25, 206–220

(continued)

Box 2.9 (continued)

8. Well-being theories: perfectionism
   (a) Dorsey, D. (2010). Three Arguments for Perfectionism, *Noûs*, 44, 59–79.
   (b) Hurka, T. (1993). "Part 1: The Perfectionist Idea", in *Perfectionism*, Oxford University Press, pp. 9–51
9. Well-being theories: eastern
   (a) Joshanloo, M. (2014). Eastern conceptualizations of happiness: Fundamental differences with western views. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 15(2), 475–493
10. Well-being theories: indigenous (best made relevant to the nation in which the course is run)
    (a) Durie, M. (2006). *Measuring Māori Wellbeing*. New Zealand Treasury Guest Lecture Series
11. Well-being theories: religious
    (a) Michalos, A. & Weijers, D. (2017). Excerpt of "Western Historical Traditions of Well-Being", in R. Estes and J. Sirgy (eds.), *The Pursuit of Human Well-Being: The Untold Global History*, Springer, pp. 42–45.
12. Well-being theories: from psychology
    (a) Dodge, R., Daly, A. P., Huyton, J., & Sanders, L. D. (2012). The Challenge of Defining Wellbeing, *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 2(3), 222–235
    (b) Hone, L. C., Jarden, A., Schofield, G. M., & Duncan, S. (2014). Measuring flourishing: The impact of operational definitions on the prevalence of high levels of wellbeing, *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 4(1),62–90
13. Well-being theories: from economics and public policy
    (a) Forgeard, M. J. C., Jayawickreme, E., Kern, M. & Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). Doing the right thing: Measuring wellbeing for public policy, *International Journal of Wellbeing*, *1*(1), 79–106
    (b) Frey, B. S., & Stutzer, A. (2007). *Should National Happiness Be Maximized?*, University of Zurich Institute for Empirical Research in Economics, Working Paper 306
    (c) Weijers, D. & Mukherjee, U. (2016). *Living Standards, Wellbeing, and Public Policy*, The New Zealand Treasury

(continued)

Box 2.9 (continued)

14. Science and technology: the science of happiness and well-being
    (a) Layard, R. (2005). "What is happiness?" in *Happiness: Lessons from a new science*, Penguin Books, pp. 11–27
    (b) Huppert, F. A. (2014). "The State of Wellbeing Science: Concepts, Measures, Interventions, and Policies". In F. A. Huppert & C. L. Cooper (eds.) *Wellbeing: A Complete Reference Guide, Volume VI*, John Wiley & Sons, pp. 1–49
15. Science and technology: Ways to increase well-being
    (a) Walker, M. (2011). Happy-people-pills for all, *International Journal of Wellbeing*, *1*(1), 127–148
    (b) Sin, N. L., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2009). Enhancing Well-Being and Alleviating Depressive Symptoms with Positive Psychology Interventions: A Practice-Friendly Meta-Analysis, *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 65(5), 467–487
16. Science and technology: Dystopic futures and the dark side of happiness
    (a) Huxley, A. (1932). *Brave New World*. London: Vintage, 1998

The very first thing I do when teaching courses on the philosophy of well-being is to motivate the importance of the course and set the ground rules and culture of the course. The scaffolded learning approach underpinning my teaching requires students to practice skills during class, in front of their peers. If that is not scary enough, the skills philosophers aim to develop in students require students to argue with each other and justify their own views in a way that is epistemically motivating for people who might not share the same background beliefs.

Since I genuinely want my students to achieve the learning outcomes, and because I know that practicing skills is the best way to develop them (e.g., Fortune et al. 2007), I go to great lengths to create a supportive environment for learning. I dedicate ample time in the first week of lectures to creating a positive classroom culture. I use an inclusive and collaborative approach to get students to demand a respectful attitude from each other and from me. I also stress that mistakes are very normal in philosophy, and that being shown to be wrong is actually a kind of blessing in disguise. To paraphrase Socrates: If we genuinely want to learn, then being proven wrong is helpful because it moves us closer to the truth. Most importantly, I do my best to enact and enforce the collaboratively established values of the class. The main way I do this is though dealing with student contributions during lectures in a respectful and constructive manner.

With the learning outcomes in mind, it is clear that knowledge of the philosophical methods of well-being is essential for success in the course. As such, I recommend starting with a discussion of the methods immediately after motivating the course and setting the ground rules and culture. The methods discussed in this section should be referred back to throughout the course because it is the skilled application of these methods that constitute the majority of the learning outcomes.

When discussing each type of well-being theory, important sub variants should be discussed. I find it can be fun to discuss at least one ancient version of each major theory, but I focus on contemporary accounts because my learning outcomes are more geared toward answering questions about well-being here and now, as opposed to answering questions about exactly what a particular historical figure believed to be true about well-being. Although I discuss various accounts and objections from the literature, I make lots of time during class for students to attempt to generate their own accounts and objections so that they get to practice the core learning objectives.

The final topics in the course help students realise how a deeper understanding of well-being can be applied to their current and future lives, and society more broadly. I find that students respond well to topics on science and technology, especially related to positive psychology and dystopic futures. Some instructors might also want to focus heavily on economics and public policy later in the course, especially given that well-being research is now having a major impact on public policy (Weijers and Morrison 2018).

Suggested Assessments for Teaching Well-Being from a Philosophical Perspective

Assessments should be thought of broadly. Not all assessments need to contribute to a student's final grade for the course. Indeed, an effective scaffolded learning approach will include many no- and low-stakes assessments that allow students to assess their own learning in preparation for more important assessments.

In a philosophical course on well-being, students should be encouraged to practice generating and critiquing theories of well-being, prudential principles, and thought experiments about the prudential value of lives. The majority of these activities will occur during class in a way that is not assessed (at least not in a major way). I stop several times during an hour-long lecture to get students to discuss in small groups what we are learning about. For example, after explaining a new theory of well-being, I will encourage students to generate their own criticisms of it in small groups before asking them to report back to me on what they came up with.

Small group challenges and competitions can encourage energetic participation from students. For example, I might offer extra credit to the group that came up with the best variant of an objective list theory, or organise a debate between hedonists and perfectionists.

In Box 2.10, I outline a possible schedule of graded assessment tasks. The choice of assessment tasks should be informed by the level of the class, the size of the class, and the pedagogical preferences of the instructor.

Box 2.10: Example Graded Assessment Schedule for Teaching Well-Being from a Philosophical Perspective

1. Quizzes (2 multichoice) – 10%
2. Essay 1 – 15%
3. Essay 2 – 20%
4. Essay 3 – 25%
5. Journal – 30%

I use quizzes to encourage students to take and organise notes on the basic concepts, so they have them to refer to when attempting the more significant assessments. I set quizzes early in the course to get students in the habit of doing work for the class outside of class time from the beginning. Quizzes can also be unscheduled so that students do not know when they will occur. This encourages attendance at class and regular homework.

The first essay should be fairly short and worth relatively few marks. In line with the scaffolded learning approach, a lot of instructions should be provided for the first essay. For a lower division undergraduate class, I would set one simple task for the essay, such as evaluating a criticism of a theory of well-being. For example, I might ask students to write about whether the deceived businessman thought experiment is a powerful objection to prudential hedonism. Students are assessed on their ability to explain the relevant theory and objection as well their ability to critically evaluate the objection.

Each essay after the first would be longer and more demanding. New instructions may be added as old instructions are removed. In the second essay, I might ask students to generate their own criticisms of a theory that we had not discussed in detail in class. The idea is for students to apply the skills they have learned so far to new material by themselves. If they can do this, then it is clear evidence that they have already achieved some of the learning outcomes.

In the final essay, I often let students generate their own theory of well-being and defend it from the strongest criticisms they or I can think of. The prior practice critiquing other theories helps students self-critique their theory as they think about its specific details.

When I set journal assignments, I pre-write all of the journal questions before the course and encourage the students to always have their journal with them when they come to class. Each lesson, I will refer to specific questions in the journal so that students can take their own notes. The questions relate directly to the skills and knowledge required for the learning outcomes as well as the upcoming assessments. During the hedonism topic, for example, journal questions include “Which variant of hedonism is the strongest? Why?" and "What is the strongest objection against this kind of hedonism? How would you respond to it?". I can also read student's journals to assess their learning during the course to check whether key concepts and skills have been learnt.

Tips for Teaching Well-Being from a Philosophical Perspective

Creating a course that requires students to take an active approach to their learning works very well in a philosophical course on well-being. Most students will be intrinsically interested in thinking about what makes life go well for people because they have a life and they are interested in it going well for them! So, do not miss the opportunity to organise activities and assessments that allow students to think critically about prudential value and how it relates to their own lives. This can be easily achieved in the early topics by getting students to think about which theory of well-being resonates best with them and what they can learn from each theory about something that might be valuable in their lives. In the second part of the course, students can be encouraged to apply what they have learnt to how they should conduct themselves. For example, they may want to carry out some positive psychological interventions on themselves or protest against policies that seem detrimental to well-being.

Further Readings to Consider Using for Teaching Well-Being from a Philosophical Perspective

For undergraduate courses on well-being from a philosophical perspective, the following monographs might be suitable:

Fletcher, G. (2016). *The Philosophy of Well-Being: An Introduction*, Routledge.
Mulnix, J. W., & Mulnix, M. J. (2015). *Happy Lives, Good Lives: A Philosophical Examination*, Broadview Press.

These collections might also be useful:

G. Fletcher, G. (ed.). (2015). *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Well-Being*, Routledge.
Mulnix, J. W., & Mulnix, M. J. (Eds.). (2015). *Theories of Happiness: An Anthology*, Broadview Press.

Readers are also welcome to contact the author for further reading suggestions, including for a more historical approach to the subject.

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