

# STUDENT STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL WELLBEING:

Emergent themes in the function of rest in the field

ALISON JOLLEY (AJ), EARTH, OCEAN AND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES,  
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, VANCOUVER, CANADA

&

ALEXANDER WATSON, GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF  
CANTERBURY, CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND



## SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF FIELD EDUCATION

- Group work, shared living quarters with peers (and instructors)
- Benefits to teamwork skills, reduction of social barriers
- High stakes, unfamiliar localities, novel living situations
- Isolation from traditional support systems
- Many students experience anxiety before going into the field

*How are positive social relationships fostered and how can we support these earlier and more often?*

e.g., Maguire, 1998; Boyle et al., 2007; Stokes and Boyle, 2009; Mogk and Goodwin, 2012; Petcovic et al, 2014; John and Khan, 2018; Jolley et al., 2018





# RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODS

- Practical need to allocate rest timing and activity plans
- What are students' preferences for the timing and format of rest days on field trips?
  - One off exploratory survey (post-module rest day)
  - Mix of fixed and open response
- How do students perceive and utilize rest days on field trips?
  - Pre/post module rest day interviews

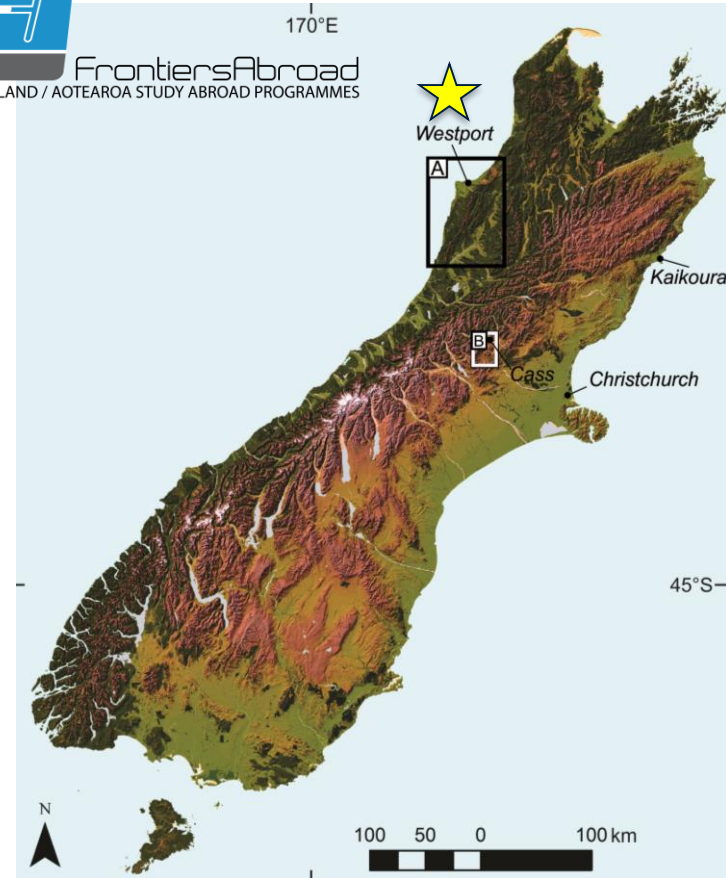


# RESEARCH SETTING

- First one-week module of six-week study abroad field camp (Frontiers Abroad)
  - Intro field techniques and mapping
  - Rest day mid-module
- American students in New Zealand
- Most from small liberal arts colleges



FrontiersAbroad  
NEW ZEALAND / AOTEAROA STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMMES



# STUDY POPULATION

Demographic Characteristics		Frequency (n=16)	Percentage
Gender Identity	Woman	11	69%
	Man	4	25%
	Non-Binary	1	6%
Age	20	9	56%
	21	7	44%
Ethnicity	Caucasian	13	81%
	Caucasian / Latinx	2	13%
	African American / Latinx	1	6%
Major	Geology	11	69%
	Geology / Other Science	3	19%
	Geology / Other Non-Science	2	13%





# WHAT ARE STUDENTS' PREFERENCES FOR THE TIMING AND FORMAT OF REST DAYS ON FIELD TRIPS?

- Students largely expect one day/week of rest on 3 and 6 week field trips
- Rest days are physical and mental:
  - *“It depends on the intensity of the program, but I think at least 1 day a week is necessary, maybe more, to encourage high energy and positive interpersonal relations.”*



# WHAT ARE STUDENTS' PREFERENCES FOR THE TIMING AND FORMAT OF REST DAYS ON FIELD TRIPS?

- 6/16 students (38%) say that travel is not rest:
  - *“No; being in a cramped space with a bunch of other people isn't rest. Rest involves choice over where you are, who you're with and what you're doing.”*



# HOW DO STUDENTS PERCEIVE AND UTILIZE REST DAYS ON FIELD TRIPS?

- Modelling healthy work habits, balance:
  - *“But I do think that having that break was useful for physically recharging and just knowing that you don’t have to push yourself until you break. Which I think sometimes you’re taught in other schools, not super consciously or upfront, but taught that you just keep going and pushing through. And having this rest day I think was actually really important.”*
- Time alone is needed during rest:
  - *“I definitely started to feel kind of constantly being with a group of people, I’d already started to kind of feel the effects of that a little bit. I just read for the better part of the morning and then listened to some music. And that was a good way to recharge, in that sense.”*





# HOW DO STUDENTS PERCEIVE AND UTILIZE REST DAYS ON FIELD TRIPS?

- Interpersonal relationships are advanced through rest:
  - *“I guess over the last couple of days, definitely since the rest day, interpersonal relationships have increased in depth...people have got a little bit more open and willing to share which is really nice...time spent together has felt more purposeful, or activity focused...kind of breaking that barrier between just getting to know people...creating real relationships is awesome.”*
- Building of interpersonal relationships improves comfort and quality of work:
  - *“I think what the strongest, like the biggest change, was just that I felt more comfortable in the group work. In that, you know, maybe I did feel a bit better rested, but I think to me the bigger change was in just having a stronger relationship...I definitely felt like I was more comfortable working with [groupmate]...because we had spent some good quality time yesterday on our rest day.”*



# SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

- Motivation driven by three needs:
  - Competence
  - Relatedness
  - Autonomy
- Relatedness built by community and shared learning
- Attention to social needs serves all aspects of learning



# OCCUPATIONAL BALANCE THEORY AND LIMINALITY

- Occupational balance = self-care, productivity and leisure
  - Developed through culture, values, expectations
  - Balance is a perception
- Needs are varied, giving opportunities for choice and flexibility is necessary
- Liminality = in-between state experienced during rites of passage
  - Social relationships and structures may shift, dissolve
  - Need emotional capital, autonomy to cope
- Aid students in reflecting on skills and relationships to be capable and confident during this transition





# INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

- Social interactions are integral to field work and play
- Genuine rest is needed
  - Does not include travel or physical activities
- Awareness of differing personalities and social needs
  - Rest activities cannot have any implied bearing on course success
- Provide space for guided reflection on social need fulfillment and balance
  - Spillover effects for group work





THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

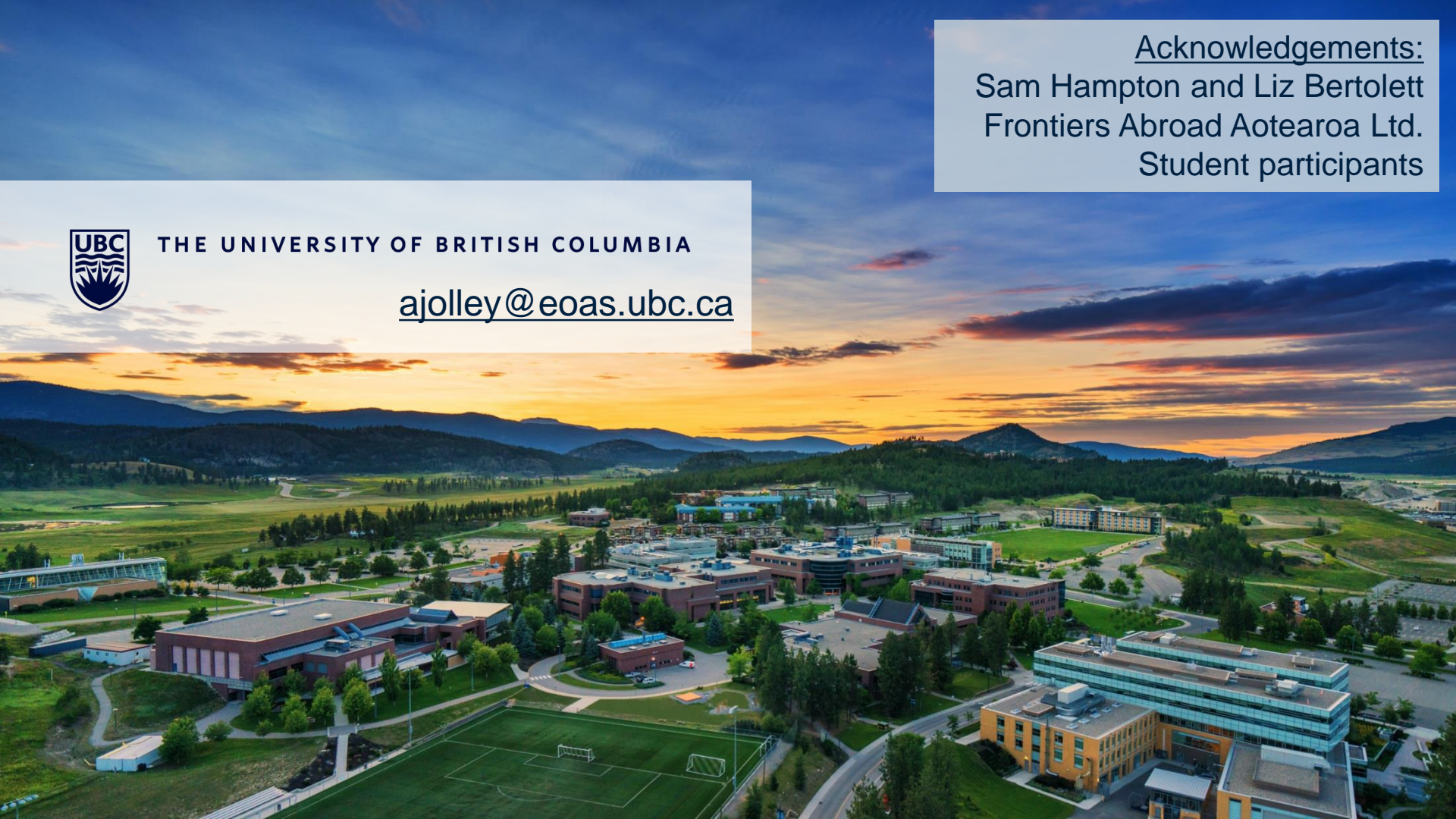
[ajolley@eoas.ubc.ca](mailto:ajolley@eoas.ubc.ca)

Acknowledgements:

Sam Hampton and Liz Bertolett

Frontiers Abroad Aotearoa Ltd.

Student participants





# REFERENCES

- Anaby, D.R., Backman, C.L., and Jarus, T., 2010, Measuring occupational balance: a theoretical exploration of two approaches: *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, v. 77, p. 280-288.
- Andrews, K., 1991, The wilderness expedition as a rite of passage: meaning and process in experiential education, *The Journal of Experiential Education*, v. 22, p. 35-43.
- Backman, C.L., 2004, Occupational balance: exploring the relationships among daily occupations and their influence on well-being: *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, v. 71, p. 202-209.
- Boyle, A., Maguire, S., Martin, A., Milsom, C., Nash, R., Rawlinson, S., Turner, A., Wurthmann, S., and Conchie, S., 2007, Fieldwork is good: the student perception and the affective domain: *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, v. 31, p. 299-317.
- Deci, E.L., Vallerand, R.J., Pelletier, L.G., and Ryan, R.M., 1991, Motivation and education: the self-determination perspective: *Educational Psychologist*, v. 26, p. 325-346.
- John, C.M., and Khan, S.B., 2018, Mental health in the field: *Nature Geoscience*, v. 11, p. 618-620.
- Jolley, A., Kennedy, B.M., Brogt, E., Hampton, S.J., and Fraser, L., 2018, Are we there yet? Sense of place and the student experience on roadside and situated geology field trips: *Geosphere*, v. 14, p. 651-667.
- Jonsson, H., and Persson, D., 2006, Towards an experiential model of occupational balance: an alternative perspective on flow theory analysis: *Journal of Occupational Science*, v. 13, p. 62-73.





## REFERENCES (CONT.)

- Maguire, S., 1998, Gender differences in attitudes to undergraduate fieldwork: The Royal Geographical Society, v. 30, p. 207-214.
- Mogk, D.W., and Goodwin, C., 2012, Learning in the field: Synthesis of research on thinking and learning in the geosciences, *in* Kastens, K.A., and Manduca, C.A., eds., Earth and Mind II: A Synthesis of Research on Thinking and Learning in the Geosciences: Geological Society of America, Special Paper 486, p. 131-164.
- Petcovic, H.L., Stokes, A., and Caulkins, J.L., 2014, Geoscientists' perceptions of the value of undergraduate field education: GSA Today, v. 24, p. 4-40.
- Rattray, J., 2016, Affective dimensions in liminality, *in* Land, R., Meyer, J.H.F., and Flanagan, M.T., eds., Threshold Concepts in Practice, p. 67-76.
- Stokes, A., and Boyle, A.P., 2009, The undergraduate geoscience fieldwork experience: influencing factors and implications for learning, *in* Whitmeyer, S.J., Mogk, D.W., and Pyle, E.J., eds., Field Geology Education: Historical Perspectives and Modern Approaches: Geological Society of America, Special Paper 461, p. 291-311.
- Turner, V.W., 1967, The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 438p.

