

- **OUTLINE OF SESSION:**
- the Preessional and the London Project
- some key issues for Preessional students and well-being
- experiences of staff supporting students
- strategies used to support students on the Preessional



What is the Preessional?

- Intensive Academic English language programme
- International students with conditional offers from UAL
- 600 + students across all colleges, courses and levels from F.E to PhD

Nationality	2018-19
Bulgarian	1 (0.2%)
China	493 (85.5%)
Hong Kong	6 (1%)
Iran	1 (0.2%)
Japan	4 (0.8%)
Korea (South)	28 (5%)
Macanese	1 (0.2%)
Saudi Arabia	1 (0.2%)
Taiwan	30 (5%)
Thailand	9 (1.5%)
Turkey	1 (0.2%)
UK	1 (0.2%)
Total students	576

What is the London Project?

- a 'mini-crit'
- an original artwork based on their experiences of London.
- assessed on a spoken presentation.
- sketchbooks, reflective journals and discussion.



The London Project - a way to connect ?

- artworks are exhibited in end-of-course (end August)

LONDON PROJECT EXHIBITION

- over 600 pieces across all disciplines
- accompanied by artists' statements



The London Project - a way to connect ?

- project not designed to address issues of well-being
- emerges from the process of reflection and discussion
- London can also be a catalyst
- Peer-to-peer discussion



Some key issues for international students

- issues related to transcultural adjustment
- relationship issues and relational-cultural factors
- help-seeking preferences

(in Zheng & West-Olatunji, 2016)

- Preessional - high stakes course

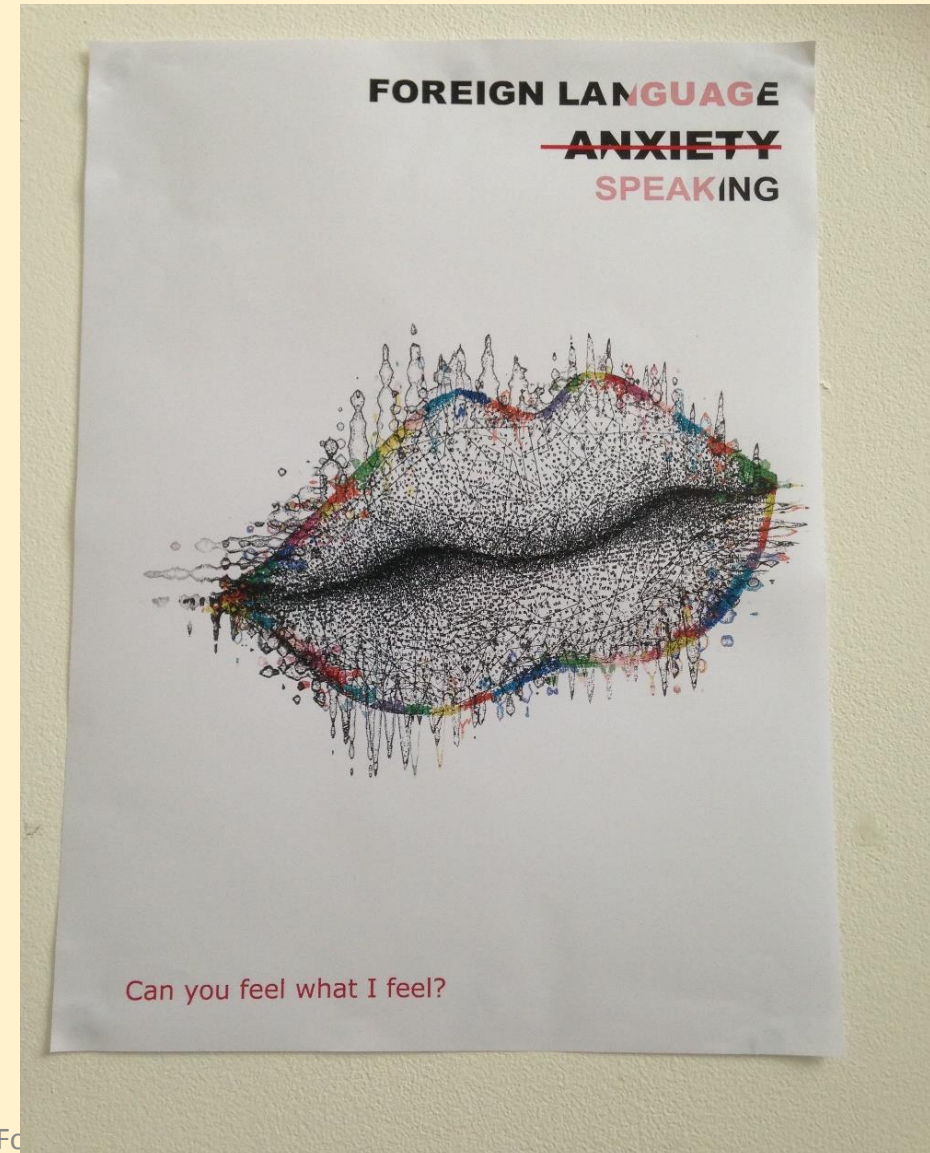


The London Project - a way to connect ?

Acculturative challenges

- a profound sense of loss and homesickness,
- loneliness and social isolation,
- identity and value confusion,
- discrimination and prejudice,
- culture shock, and
- stress due to academic/language shock

(in Zheng & West-Olatunji, 2016).



Relationship issues and relational-cultural factors

- Loss of close-knit family support – one child policy (1979)
- Many not travelled widely
- Faced with new ‘unwritten rules’ on forming relationships
- Fear of ‘loss of face’/rejection
- London –a hard place to make connections
- Difficulty navigating city esp. at night



Help-seeking preferences

- Lower take up of counselling and support services

[majority]...chose not to use professional services to deal with emotional and personal distress. Instead, they tended to resolve issues on their own and within their families, or seek support from friends. (Cheung, 2011),

- fear of exclusion if ask for help or disclose additional needs.



The London Project - a way to connect ?

- Tutor observations

A number of students struggle with anxiety, low mood, making friends

Culturally some of the ideas...around Mental Health means students find the idea of seeing a Mental Health Adviser a scary prospect

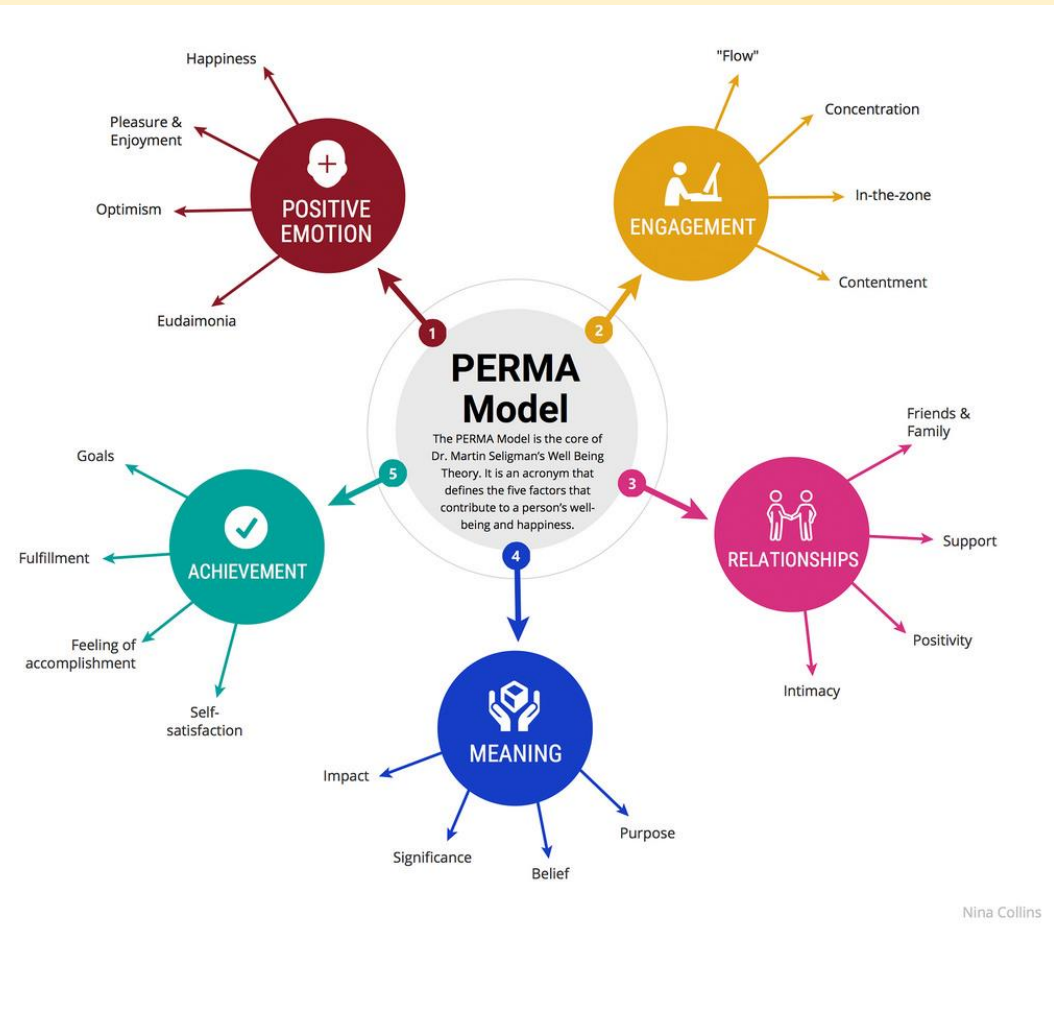
I note more reports of students experiencing racism,

Loneliness comes up a lot

According to the student, it is common for people arriving in London to suffer from depression

responses frequently encompassed themes of anxiety, depression, isolation, identity, belonging, and other disconnects

- **What do we mean when we talk about 'well-being'?**
- American psychologist Professor Martin Seligman created a model for happiness and well-being he called the **PERMA** model :
- P – positive emotion
- E – engagement
- R – relationships
- M – meaning
- A – achievement



The London Project - a way to connect ?

Investigating potential complexities and sensitivities through student artwork is really positive.

LGBTQ students feeling empowered to come out, students willing to discuss mental health issues, the process of making/saying and being heard ... all can be liberating and transformative.

themes around isolation, but also LGBTQA and the fact they can be who they want to be here

as a critically reflective, personal response to London can be quite cathartic.

When done correctly, the LP creates a safe-space that facilitates...exploration

- **Strategies to support students**
- LC has own additional safeguarding policy (*'adults at risk'*)
- All LC staff compulsory, annual safeguarding training
- Dedicated LC Welfare and Liaison Manager on-site
- Induction for staff and students
- Contacts in all handbooks, on student 'business card', posters and on Moodle
- Links to UAL Social Programme and Preessional Facebook and Twitter



ual: language
centre

To report absence: Preessional-Absence@arts.ac.uk

General enquiries: Preessional@arts.ac.uk

Phone: 0207 514 6331

Welfare: a.staddon@arts.ac.uk; 0207 514 8580

Facebook: [facebook.com/PreessionalUAL](https://www.facebook.com/PreessionalUAL)

Twitter: [@LanguageCentre](https://twitter.com/PreessionalUAL)

Letter request: <https://bit.ly/2JiebfD>

Emergency: 999

The London Project - a way to connect ?

With many thanks and grateful acknowledgement to

the staff and students from the

Preessional Academic English Programme (PAEP)



- **References:**

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The London Project - a way to connect ?

Any questions, comments,
thoughts, reflections?

