



WELLBEING IN OUR SCHOOLS: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES



CIDREE

Consortium of Institutions for Development
and Research in Education in Europe

CIDREE Yearbook 2017

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PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

The CIDREE Yearbook 2017 presents a range of articles that explore the increasingly high-profile topic of learners' wellbeing. Countries across Europe and well beyond are placing much greater attention on ensuring that their children and young people develop the knowledge, understanding and skills that will help them demonstrate positive wellbeing. Our 2017 Yearbook explores how 12 countries within the CIDREE network are developing their approaches to improving the wellbeing of children and young people in their schools.

Their different perspectives provide important insights into current definitions of wellbeing, as well as how wellbeing is supported by teachers and promoted effectively amongst learners.

Wellbeing is rightly viewed as integral to a good education system and it is often clearly embedded in curriculum policy and guidance. Through classroom and school activities that promote relationship-building, positive behaviour, healthy and safe living, physical education, sports and many other competences, learners acquire important skills and attributes that they need for their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. Everyone recognises the central place of such skills and feelings in ensuring children and young people have positive attitudes to learning. In many situations, parents and specialist partner organisations work very effectively with schools and teachers to help find specific solutions that support individuals and groups in time of need. How and when should schools draw on the knowledge and expertise of parents and specialist services, and involve the learners themselves most effectively?

One common theme across the articles in this Yearbook is the value that teachers themselves are recognising and placing on ensuring the wellbeing of their learners. Effective teachers are very aware of the clear impacts that both positive and negative wellbeing have on the learners in their classes. They are alert to evidence of wellbeing through the ways learners apply themselves to their tasks, show willingness and motivation to learn and, of course, progress and achieve. The link is simple and direct – positive wellbeing leads to positive outcomes. Negative wellbeing can lead to stress and anxiety that need careful interventions by caring and knowledgeable teachers to ensure that well-judged support is provided. How can teachers identify important early signs of an absence of wellbeing? Which skills do teachers need to address the issues causing weakness in wellbeing and how can they access the professional learning they might need?

Developments in promoting the wellbeing of children and young people highlighted in the articles presented here explore the what, why and how of wellbeing - and provide perceptive views and creative solutions. I am certain that the explanations, developments and advice set out in the articles will provide national education bodies, policy makers, researchers, teachers and partners with well-considered and evidence-based support. Reflecting on the key issues and drawing on the good practice in these articles will help everyone involved in shaping, supporting and delivering effective learning to continuously improve learners' wellbeing. Through this reflection, they will contribute very strongly to ensuring the positive

achievements of all our children and young people at school, in life and in their future careers.

On behalf of all CIDREE members, I would like to express my gratitude to Hal O'Neill and colleagues from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment in Ireland for their coordination and editorial work for our Yearbook 2017. My thanks also go to each of the authors whose articles have combined so well to form another very strong CIDREE Yearbook that adds significantly to our collection of influential Yearbooks since 2001.

Alan Armstrong

*President CIDREE 2014-2017
Strategic Director, Education Scotland*



Alan Armstrong, President CIDREE 2014-2017

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

The theme of the CIDREE Yearbook 2017

Student wellbeing is at the heart of this Yearbook, and the thirteen articles that fill its pages represent a shared commitment across the participating countries to improve the educational experience of children and young people, and so to enhance the wellbeing of learners. Yet even a casual glance at the contents page reveals a wide variety of perspectives; hence our title. From the outset, it would not have been possible in a publication of this nature to explore the full complexity of a definition regarding wellbeing. So, it was important that we set some limits for our Yearbook. The call for contributions presented wellbeing in these terms:

Student wellbeing is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life, and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community.¹

This allowed that authors did not have to grapple with questions of definition unless they chose to do so. We accepted (implicitly at least) that wellbeing is among the broadest of concepts and that individual articles could choose one or more aspects of wellbeing as their focus, without the necessity to contextualise sharply or to justify their relevance to the theme. Therefore, the Yearbook includes articles about teacher qualification, about formative assessment, and about questions of curriculum design and

implementation. And of course, it should, because wellbeing in school has to do with teachers and the qualities and values they bring to school; it has to do with pedagogy and supportive meta-practices; and it has profoundly to do with curriculum because of the choices we make and the values we embed therein. Many of those choices seek to make our schools places where children and students will **learn for wellbeing** through the supportive culture they experience and the nurturing relationships they develop there. Therefore, the Yearbook includes an article which describes schools where every facet of school life is aligned with a vision of the personal development of students. It includes an article which tells about a jurisdiction in which all children have a legal right to wellbeing and where that right is reflected in a whole range of practices including targeted funding that extends to the learning environment and the school buildings. The Yearbook includes articles, too, which discuss the collective agency of a school climate policy designed to ensure that the **objective wellbeing** of students is protected in pursuit of academic achievement and social equality. There are articles that speak of the collective responsibility of all stakeholders in the care-giving areas of education and health to ensure that the physical and mental wellbeing of young people is nurtured, and this from a profoundly-held view that good learning outcomes and a clear focus on pupils' emotional wellbeing and mental health are two sides of the same coin. Reverberating through the articles in

¹ Adapted from WHO definition, (2001)<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Resources-Guidance/Well-Being-in-Post-Primary-Schools-Guidelines-for-Mental-Health-Promotion-and-Suicide-Prevention-2013.pdf>

this book you will find images of active, happily engaged learners, and of policy-makers in search of creative solutions; you will hear of freedom, of independence, of children and young people having positive experiences of school, which will help them to develop confidence and so achieve their potential. Inevitably, such worthy aspirations throw up prosaic questions such as: how will we know they are well; and how can we be sure that the changes we have made at school and system level actually work to the benefit of learners? Therefore, the Yearbook includes articles that say: well, we wanted to learn about young people's wellbeing, so we asked them! These articles raise, directly and indirectly, the thorny issue of how we might assess wellbeing at system and school level. One reports on how data gathered from students and their parents on the impact of a comparatively small-scale initiative contributed to its evaluation and subsequent development, and how it helped to inform policy into the future. Two others discuss data from large-scale surveys of school-going children and young people to ascertain their experiences and perceptions of their own wellbeing. The findings from these studies have been used to gauge the impact of school experiences on student wellbeing and to influence the direction of policy discourse. A quick look inside the Yearbook will further illuminate this diversity of perspective and emphasis.

A GLIMPSE INTO THE YEARBOOK

Twelve countries have contributed articles to Yearbook 2017: Albania, Austria, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Kosovo, Luxembourg, Norway, Scotland, Slovenia, and The Netherlands. A second contribution from Ireland, authored by Prof Emer Smyth of the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), Dublin, brings the total number of articles to thirteen. Here is a quick preview of the book's contents, country by country.



ALBANIA

Teacher qualification – learning process for qualified teachers

The paper from Albania focuses on the process of teacher qualification, and on the findings of a research study into quality assurance. Recommendations for improvement of the process include more stringent monitoring of trainee-teacher portfolios, the need for thorough upskilling of teachers in pedagogy and content knowledge, and, most significantly, development of the concept of the school as a professional development centre where supportive monitoring of young teachers by experienced colleagues can be of benefit. The premise of this article is that improvements in teacher qualification and professional development will make for better quality teaching and relationships within the school community, thereby enhancing student wellbeing.



AUSTRIA

Student wellbeing in Austrian schools

The Austrian article conceptualises wellbeing as the state of being mentally, physically and socially healthy or happy; while regarding pedagogical and humanitarian reasons as crucial to pupils' wellbeing in school. The Austrian school system uses attributes like feeling comfortable at school, satisfaction with school, as well as school anxiety and psychosomatic disorders as indicators for wellbeing. In Austria, pupils' wellbeing is not only seen as instrumental for academic learning, but as a special value in itself. This means the mental and physical wellbeing of children and adolescents is a constant issue for the Austrian School Administration. The first investigation of children's wellbeing in Austrian schools was carried out from 1994 to 1995. This study used questionnaires, interviews and time sampling diaries. The study was repeated using the same methodological approaches in 2005. Data concerning Wellbeing at school (feeling comfortable at school); Pressure (school anxiety and stress) and Positive self-concept (general self-esteem) were aggregated. Currently researchers in Austria seek permission to repeat these studies once decisions on finance are agreed upon.

The findings from this research led to initiatives to make the school experience more attractive and conducive to children and adolescents. They include strategies to reduce pupils' stress, gender mainstreaming and measures to reduce violence at school. In 1997, the number of obligatory school lessons was shortened by three hours for the first year of secondary education, by two hours for the second year, and by one hour per week for the third year. There is an increasing number of approaches to improve social interactions at school. There is also a special focus on supporting children during transition phases in the school system. The guidelines for the "Neue Mittelschule" (New Secondary School) focus on social learning and creating an encouraging atmosphere for all pupils.

FINLAND

Wellbeing as a right and means of learning

The paper sets out the cultural, structural and educational basis for the development of wellbeing in Finland while recognising a range of challenges and opportunities that continue to be present in the Finnish system. The concept of wellbeing has a broad meaning in Finnish education – encompassing physical, mental, social, as well as economic aspects. The wellbeing of pupils in pre-primary and basic education is enshrined in legislation and national core curricula. All children have the right to wellbeing, which also functions as a basis and resource for learning. Student wellbeing is embedded in the objectives for transversal competencies and instruction in different school subjects, as well as in the goals set for the operating culture of schools. ‘Support for learning’ and growth and ‘Pupil welfare’ ensure multi-professional support for students. In addition, practices promoting health include school subjects (health education, home economics, physical education), free school meals, and possibilities for differentiated learning. The government promotes student wellbeing by funding large physical activity development projects. Education providers attend to pupil wellbeing, for example, by ensuring that school buildings and playgrounds offer a safe and healthy environment for pupils. Municipalities offer morning and afternoon activities for young children, as well as leisure time activities. Yet, there are some critical equality aspects relating to gender and minority issues as well as growing differences between regions in a sparsely populated country.

FRANCE

The French ‘school climate policy’: wellbeing as a collective outcome

In France, wellbeing aims at developing the ‘politics of happiness’ and education is viewed as being an important component of the process. The article analyses the concept of wellbeing and the rationale for supporting and promoting it in France. The paper contends that although ‘wellbeing’ can be easily integrated into political language, conceptions of wellbeing can vary considerably especially in the education arena. There is no standard for promoting wellbeing at school yet. Notably, wellbeing was not a concept that was discussed prior to 2015 in France and is not yet at the centre of education policy. Equality and educational achievement are considered more important outcomes for the education system than a convivial atmosphere. Wellbeing is viewed as a secondary outcome arising from a school’s climate. Indeed, the well-established *school climate policy* is the current model of wellbeing in France. The focus of this policy is on how learning outcomes relate to learning environments.

Two conceptual models of wellbeing are provided: collective and subjective. There is a tension between them. The concept of **subjective wellbeing** and its concern for personal growth and development is valued in alternative and private schools where spirituality, creativity and authenticity are nurtured and valued. This promotes a new aim for education: equipping people to lead a fulfilling life. This educational experience is in direct contrast to the seriousness and rationalism of the Republican school system. Within this system for example, the wellbeing of children has low importance in early childhood education where the focus is to mould children into pupils from an early stage. From early on in a child’s learning and development there is an emphasis on **objective wellbeing** centred on collective responsibility and duties. The aim of education is to learn skills and reduce social inequality. Consequently, classroom architecture and organisation is a very strong feature of the republican tradition of French teaching.

 **HUNGARY****Science for wellbeing in secondary education in Hungary**

The focus on wellbeing in this article takes place within the context of the curriculum development process. The authors present an overview of the most important initiatives to improve students' wellbeing in Hungary, succinctly outlining targeted interventions to ensure the needs of each student are cared for, before focusing the review of a curriculum development process for Science in the secondary vocational education track. They outline the situation which led to a decline in the uptake of Science and reflect on the impact of the old science curriculum on students' wellbeing. The article describes how this curricular reform has been exciting for students and teachers, and identifies the challenges for teachers in changing their practice. The article concludes that these changes can contribute positively to student wellbeing by making learning more enjoyable and interesting.

 **IRELAND****Wellbeing in Irish education – towards a common understanding**

Adopting a largely historical perspective, this article follows the emergent thinking on wellbeing in curriculum documentation in Ireland from the implicit support for children's wellbeing in the Primary Curriculum of 1999, through the explicit requirement that wellbeing be a central pillar in children's learning exemplified in the framework for early childhood learning (*Aistear*, 2004), to consideration of the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) where the wellbeing of learners is a key consideration in the curriculum planning and implementation of every post primary school. In addition, wellbeing has been introduced in schools in Ireland as an area of learning in itself, where the emphasis is on not only *learning about wellbeing* but also on provision of learning experiences through which the young person can have a positive experience of their own wellbeing and so develop confidence and motivation to reach their full potential.

 **ESRI, IRELAND****School experiences and children's wellbeing in Ireland: insights from the Growing Up in Ireland study**

This article centres on the increasing emphasis on **children's own perceptions of their wellbeing** in research and policy discourse. However, the potential impact of school experiences on child wellbeing has been relatively underexplored. The paper draws on a largescale, nationally representative child cohort study, the *Growing Up in Ireland* study, examining child wellbeing in terms of behaviour, academic self-image, anxiety, popularity, body image and happiness at the ages of 9 and 13 years. Significant differences are found in child wellbeing across different classrooms and schools, with positive relationships with teachers playing a crucial role in enhancing wellbeing. The findings of the study point to the necessity of developing innovative ways for initial teacher education and continuous professional development to support teachers to engage students, manage classroom interaction and discipline, and provide feedback in such a way as to prevent potentially negative effects on students' self-image and performance.



KOSOVO

Addressing students' wellbeing in the new Kosovo Curriculum: challenges and opportunities

In this article, the authors analyse the Kosovo Curriculum Framework and Core Curriculum for students in lower secondary education and examine the place of wellbeing within the curriculum. They have identified key competences and learning outcomes that specifically relate to the physical wellbeing of students and others that relate to the emotional/social wellbeing of students. The authors have also described some of the challenges faced when implementing the curriculum as designed, such as the limitations in a system that is not explicitly student centred, the lack of suitable activities and methodologies employed, the need for the professional development of teachers and further engagement with parents and other stakeholders.



LUXEMBOURG

Active schools pilot project – 'Clever Move'

Clever Move is an initiative that was developed in Luxembourg in response to a research project that unfortunately confirmed a Europe-wide trend: poor motor skills, inactivity and health risks amongst children have been increasing at an alarming rate over recent years. This article explores the initiative which was underpinned by the 'active schools' concept. Drawing on health as a resource, the project aimed to ensure increased physical activity in the traditional sedentary school to enhance young people's health and learning. The article outlines the various ways in which the project set out to achieve this, including the introduction of increased physical activity, active breaks and active learning approaches. Monitored and evaluated by the University of Luxembourg, the project's results revealed significant increase in the use of active learning relaxation phases, indicating that these activities were equally popular with teachers and students. Similarly, the feedback from parents showed that they had noticed positive changes in children who now took more pleasure in sports, and exhibited better physical coordination. In addition, most parents reported progress in school and classroom climate. In June 2017, those schools that prioritise exercise in their daily school routine received the "clever move" label in recognition of their efforts.



NORWAY

School as an arena for pupils' mental wellbeing: a Norwegian study on systematic development work

The article from Norway offers a commentary on an important collaboration between the Directorate for Education and Training and the Directorate of Health. Based on the outcomes of the *School as an Arena for child and adolescent Mental Health (SAMH)* project combining both public health and education perspectives, the main objective of the paper is to develop an understanding of how schools can best promote mental wellbeing amongst all pupils. In support of the conviction that good mental health is imperative to learning, development and coping with life, the paper argues that schools are uniquely positioned to further learning and development and to promote mental health in all their pupils. Furthermore, promoting mental wellbeing should be viewed as an aspect both of **ways of teaching**, and of **other development work** at schools. Good learning outcomes and a clear focus on the pupils' emotional wellbeing and mental health are two sides of the same coin. The focus of the paper, then, is twofold: to provide knowledge about how schools can best help to promote mental wellbeing amongst all pupils, and how schools can instigate systematic development processes. It also addresses ways in which schools across Norway can take forward a broader approach to mental wellbeing.

 **SCOTLAND****Health and wellbeing: responsibility of all**

This article highlights how ‘health and wellbeing’ has been afforded continuous attention in education policy in Scotland since it emerged as a new curriculum area within Curriculum for Excellence. Indeed, the positioning and alignment of health and wellbeing in contemporary high policy priorities demonstrates that, in many respects, Scotland is leading the world, at least in its policy rhetoric. The article describes the shift from a ‘Health Promoting Schools’ model, to ‘Health and wellbeing Responsibility of All’, where it is embedded across learning. The three detailed case studies provide concrete exemplification of how this policy has been enacted in practice in the best interests of the child, showing how a framework within the ‘wellbeing space’ can, indeed must be, adapted to meet local needs and contexts.

 **SLOVENIA****Formative assessment and problem solving as a wellbeing indicator among early school years**

The article from Slovenia explores the relationship between formative assessment and student wellbeing. Wellbeing in this context is defined as the presence of a culture, ethos and an environment which promotes dynamic, optimal development and growth for all included in the school community. Combining this with the WHO perspective relating to the ability to cope with normal stresses, this article looks at how developing problem-solving skills can aid students in developing these coping mechanisms. The authors draw links between the development of students with a high level of self-reflective ability and that of personal wellbeing. It argues that changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of pupils are the highest aims of the capacity of self-reflective thinking, which is associated with wellbeing. Promoting wellbeing requires an approach that uses these priorities to make decisions which work for pupils. The article centres on monitoring problem-solving skills through the medium of mathematics to explore the transverse effect these skills will have in promoting student wellbeing.

 **THE NETHERLANDS****‘Personal Development’ as a curricular theme**

The Dutch national curriculum is based around the three conceptual areas of qualification, socialisation and personal development. However, ‘personal development’ is a poorly defined concept and in this article the authors examine this concept in historical and contemporary discourse but also in practice in three case study schools. The authors identify three strategies by which schools can develop and implement their views on personal development: a specific subject-based strategy, a general strategy involving a school-wide rationale and an integral strategy whereby every facet of the school and school life is aligned with the vision of personal development. The resultant grid may give schools and curriculum developers a structured framework to develop their thinking on how to improve their implementation of ‘personal development’. The view of ‘personal development’ within the article focuses on the cognitive and moral/spiritual aspects of wellbeing rather than the psycho-physical aspects evident in other frameworks.

CONCLUSION

So, think of this Yearbook not as a manual on 'how to do wellbeing' but as a space in which different perspectives on wellbeing talk to each other – a sort of landscape of conversations, if you will. Some of those conversations are just beginning; others are well-advanced. And, because wellbeing is such a multi-faceted and slippery concept it is useful, perhaps necessary, to think of it in metaphorical terms, as a space we inhabit rather than an idea we grasp. Thus, O'Brien and O'Shea (2017) speak of wellbeing in terms of a *human development spatial metaphor*.

...wellbeing orientation is about equipping students for their own wellbeing journey. Reminding ourselves of the distinction between 'about wellbeing' and 'for wellbeing' reminds us of the difference between the meanings that experts give to wellbeing in literature, and the meanings that people give to wellbeing for themselves in practice so that it makes sense in the contexts of their lives as a whole. Wellbeing needs to be tackled in every particular instance where individuals and communities (including students and teachers) struggle to achieve greater levels of success, happiness, fulfilment, health, wholeness. In such instances wellbeing is always 'for me, for you and for us', taken together and not easily separated.(O'Brien & O'Shea, 2017, p. 18)

In the Irish context, it is of considerable significance that the framework for early childhood education (NCCA, 2009) is entitled *Aistear*, which in Irish means *journey*, in that it conceptualises the learning journey as one in which the four interlinked dimensions of Communicating, Exploring and Thinking, Identity and Belonging, and Wellbeing combine to provide children with learning experiences that support the development of competent and confident learners. The framework emphasises the importance of children's wellbeing, not as an additional or extra dimension, but as an integral part of a holistic learning journey. In more recent developments, the *Framework for Junior Cycle* (DES, 2015) sees Wellbeing as a whole-school endeavour in which the culture of the school supports the wellbeing of all who are part of its community. It also envisages a Wellbeing curriculum through which students learn about physical, social and emotional wellbeing. The aspirations reflected in these educational frameworks are ambitious ones grounded in values of equity, inclusion, and human rights. Those values animate the diverse collection of articles that make up the CIDREE Yearbook, 2017, which, we hope, will provoke reflection and debate among policy makers, researchers and practitioners alike.

Hal O'Neill

Editor

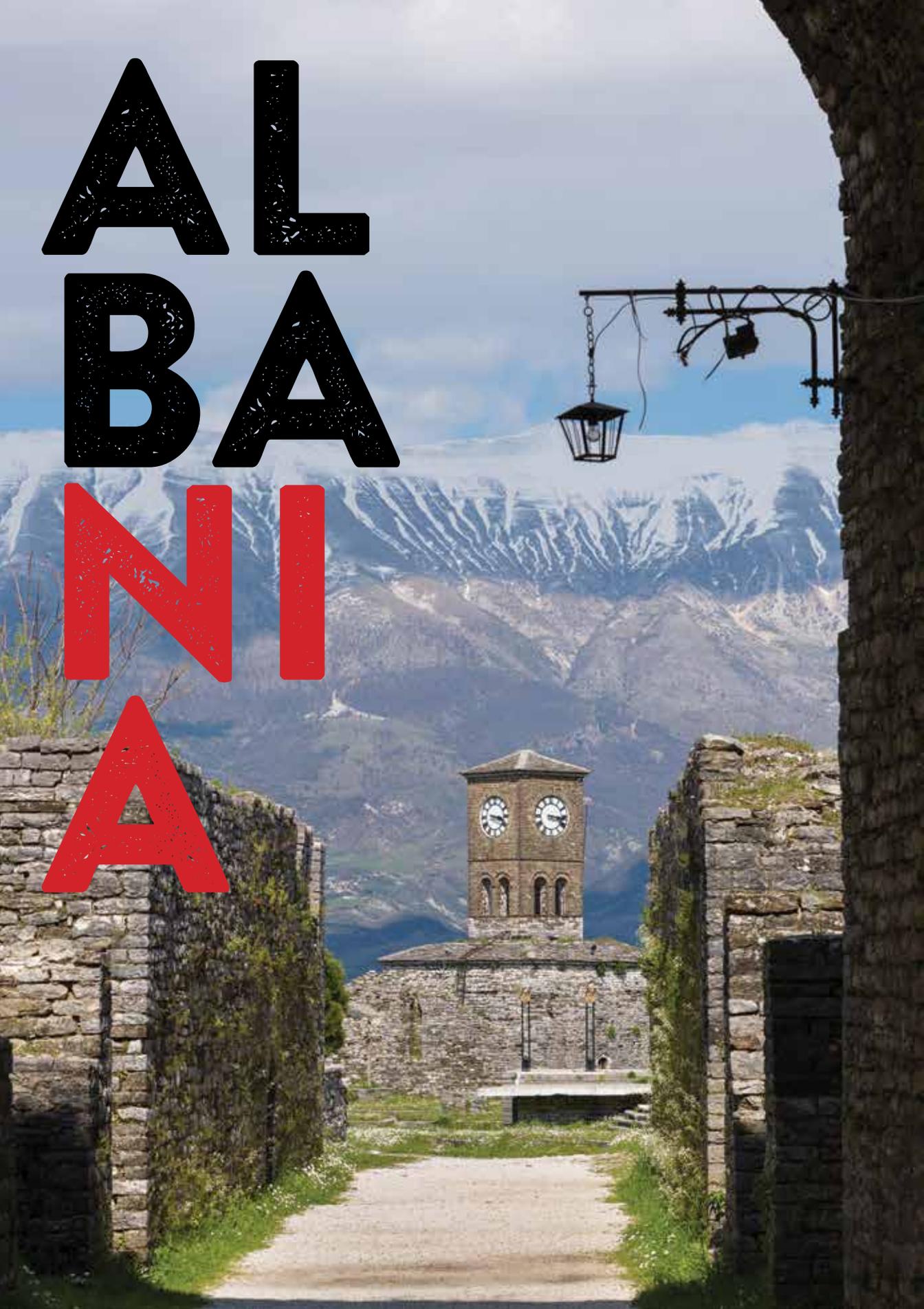
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AL BA NI A



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ABSTRACT



Students' learning is influenced by many factors such as: student's abilities, expectations, motivation and behaviour, attitudes and values, group skills, school organisation, resources that they use, school climate, curriculum and content, but above all it is influenced by student wellbeing, skills, knowledge and the attitudes of teachers. Teachers should clearly and convincingly convey ideas, create effective learning environments for different students, nurture a productive teacher-student relationship, be enthusiastic and creative, work effectively with colleagues and parents. The purpose of this article is to clarify the concept of teacher qualification and to give some conclusions about the results of the teachers in the qualification process. In this context, the article is based on the literature study on qualification and on developments in teacher qualifications over several years. Some of the main recommendations arising from the study of the qualification results can be summarised as follows: a) monitor portfolio of evaluations to make the process more productive; b) teachers according to the cycles and their needs should be in the process of training not only in general formation, but also in subject content to update their knowledge; c) training for teachers of the exact sciences, physical education and arts especially in their core disciplines; d) development of the concept of school as a training centre and professional development of staff within school by experienced teachers to assist young teachers.

Key words: qualification, portfolio, teacher's examination, general training, content training

ALBANIA: TEACHER QUALIFICATION

– LEARNING PROCESS FOR QUALIFIED TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

Student learning is influenced by many factors such as student's abilities, expectations, motivation and behaviour, attitudes and values, group skills, school organisation, resources used, climate in school, curriculum and content, but above all by the wellbeing, skills, knowledge and attitudes of teachers. Schools and classes are complex, the environment is dynamic, and students differ from each other; these factors have been in the focus of the educators' research to link them to the teaching and learning process.

From the OECD¹ studies, which were developed for an effective teaching and learning environment, there have been three broad conclusions about students' achievements:

- a. First, students' achievements connect with what students bring to school, their skills and attitudes as well as their social and family environment. These factors are difficult to handle by policymakers, though they are very important
- b. Second, factors related to teaching are highly significant, and these factors can be addressed by policymakers. Particularly, scholars all agree that the quality of teaching is the main factor influencing student achievement

- c. Third, researchers' conclusions link to the quality of teachers. In this case, most researchers have noted the relationship between student performance and achievement in national tests and teacher characteristics such as qualification, work experience, or indicators of their subject knowledge and skills

These features are difficult to measure, but all scholars agree with the idea that they are vital to the wellbeing of the learner². Teachers should clearly and convincingly convey ideas, create effective learning environments for different students, nurture productive teacher-student relationships, be enthusiastic and creative, and work effectively with colleagues and parents.

In Albania, the demands made upon teachers and schools have become more complex, and society expects schools to create conditions and opportunities for pupils welfare so that they can: cultivate their own national identity and cultural affiliation; embrace general cultural and civic values; develop intellectual, ethical, physical, social and aesthetic aspects; develop responsibility towards oneself, others, society and the environment; be trained for life and for work, in different social and cultural contexts; be trained in lifelong learning; develop the spirit of entrepreneurship and learn to use new technologies³.

1 Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS –OECD 2009

2 Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS –OECD 2009

3 National Curriculum Framework, 2014

On the other hand, teachers should be able to prepare students to meet these requirements. The teachers' issues are constantly in the focus of society; expectations for them are high because they are in daily contact with students and because of this even the morale and the enthusiasm of current teachers have a strong influence on the future generations of teachers.

Teachers today have a much greater role in individual student development, classroom management and the learning process, school development as a community centre, and also the strengthening of links with the parents' community. Areas that are the responsibility of the teacher can include the following:

At student level:

- Management of the learning process in the relevant subject
- Finding effective ways of addressing pupils' needs and interests
- Integrating assessment to learn and evaluate learning.

At the classroom level:

- Integration of subjects and curriculum areas
- Integration of students with special needs.

At school level

- Curriculum planning in collaboration with colleagues
- Systematic planning of students' assessment
- Technology planning in the teaching process
- Presenting good leadership skills in the classroom.

At community level

- Provide advice to parents on the performance of their children
- Building cooperative relations with the community for students' learning.

TEACHER QUALIFICATION PROCESS IN ALBANIA

We have often heard that parents seek qualified teachers for their children and that society is constantly talking about teacher qualifications. But what is the meaning of this term?

Teacher's qualification⁴ means the system of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that enable the successful practice of professional activity, which is proved by a relevant document (certificate, diploma or title). The qualification expresses a type of designation, profile (a set of functions and competencies needed to accomplish them) and a certain level (first, second and third degree)⁵. Giving a qualification to an individual implies that the knowledge and skills of this individual have value in the labour market in his further education and formation. Qualification is provided when a competent body determines, through a quality assurance process, that the individual has achieved the specified standards⁶.

Requirements related to the qualification of teachers and school directors for all levels of pre-university education are supported by specific laws such as Article 102 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, Articles 106 and 107 of the Code of Administrative

4 IBE – Glossary Curriculum Terminology, UNESCO

5 CEDEFOP 2011

6 National Qualifications Framework

Procedures; Article 59 of Law no. 69/2012, dated 21.06.2012 on the *Pre-university Education System in the Republic of Albania* as amended, Decision of the Council of Ministers No.537, dated 26.09.1994 *For the supplement on the basic salary for teachers' qualification and supplementary activities for inspectors of Education* as well as the Ministry of Education and Sports administrative instruction on *Teacher Qualification Criteria and Procedures*. According to the legislation in force there are three qualification categories of teachers and they are:

Qualified Teacher with 5 years' experience as a teacher;

Specialist Teacher with 10 years' experience as a teacher;

Master Teacher with 20 years' experience as a teacher.

Currently, progression across the category of teachers is done through work experience, training, and successful completion of the final exam in the appropriate qualification category. Over eight years, the teachers and principals of pre-university education undergo a system organised in stages to move to a higher degree of qualification. The qualification process is based on teaching standards and teacher training programs. The content of the programs determines the main areas that a teacher should master; i.e.:

- legislation and official documents relating to the activity of teachers
- relevant subject programmes and their planning
- aspects of pedagogy and methodology in teaching and learning in general as well as in the subject
- aspects of communication and ethics in school
- aspects of spelling of the Albanian language
- the scientific content of the subject.



Teacher qualification requirements in Albania envisage two stages:

First step: The professional portfolio of teachers, which consists of planning an activity with students in a given class, a day planning template for a subject, a curriculum project plan, students' ideas for a particular chapter, a model of a subject test. Teachers can benefit from a bonus if they have completed a long-term training, if they hold scientific titles, or a qualification in foreign languages.

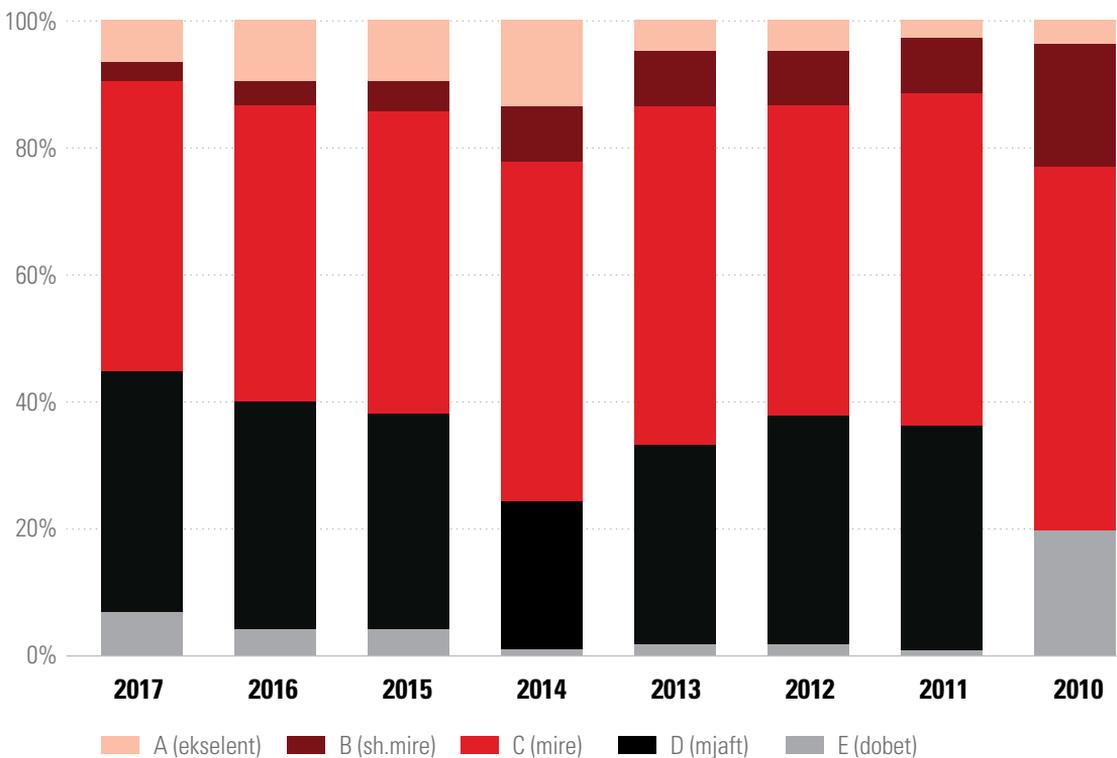
Step Two: Teachers undergo a test, which contains elements from all the above fields. Tests are based on teacher profiles as set out in pre-university education cycles.

A teacher earns a degree of qualification and a salary increase if he or she has gained a minimum amount of points on the portfolio and test scores. There are five evaluation levels: Level A (Excellent), level B (Very Good), level C (Good), level D (Sufficient), level E (Fail).

SOME RESULTS OF THE TEACHER QUALIFICATION IN 2010–2017

Each year there are about 3,000 to 3,500 teachers who meet the above criteria and apply to get the qualification. In this section, some data will be presented from the test results of the 2010–2017⁷. In the first diagram (Diagram 1), we will present the summarised results with all the levels compared over the years 2010–2017.

Diagram 1: Assessment performance 2010–2017

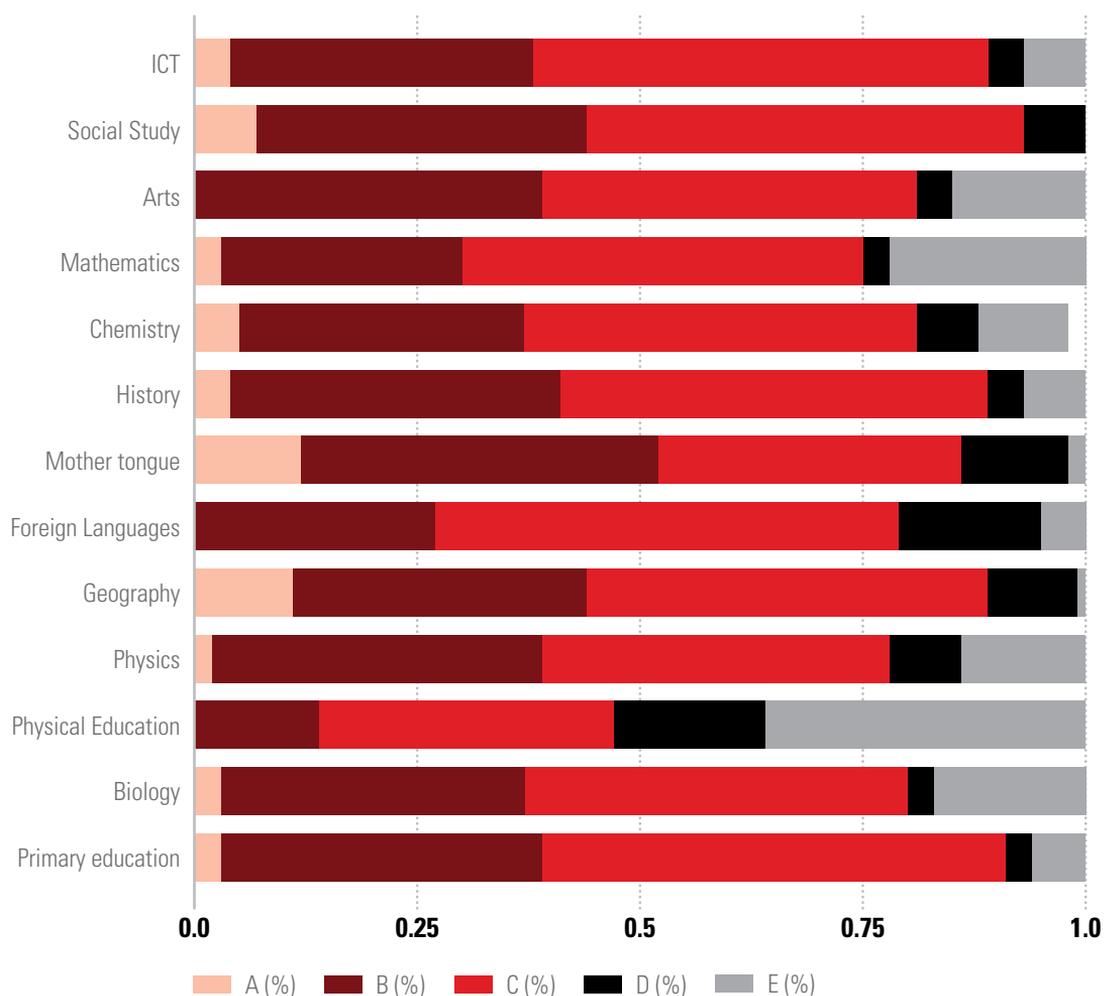


In this diagram, it is clear that in 2015–2017 there has been a significant increase in the number of teachers performing at excellent and very good level compared to 2010. This means that teachers have had improved results in all qualifications. Meanwhile, there is a decrease in the number of teachers with results at Sufficient (Level D) compared to 2010, which means that from year to year teachers have improved their performance levels.

⁷ Qualification Results' reports, Institute of Education Development

In the second diagram, the assessments are represented according to the fields/subjects.

Diagram 2. Assessment according to the fields



As noted in this diagram, the fields (subjects) that have high level A results are: Albanian Language – Literature, Geography and Social Sciences, while these subjects also have high scores at level B. At this level primary education teachers also appear to have done very well.

On the other hand, the diagram shows that the number of teachers scoring poorly are those mainly in Physical Education and Art, as well as in sciences like: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

Diagram 3. Assessments according to the categories 2010–2017

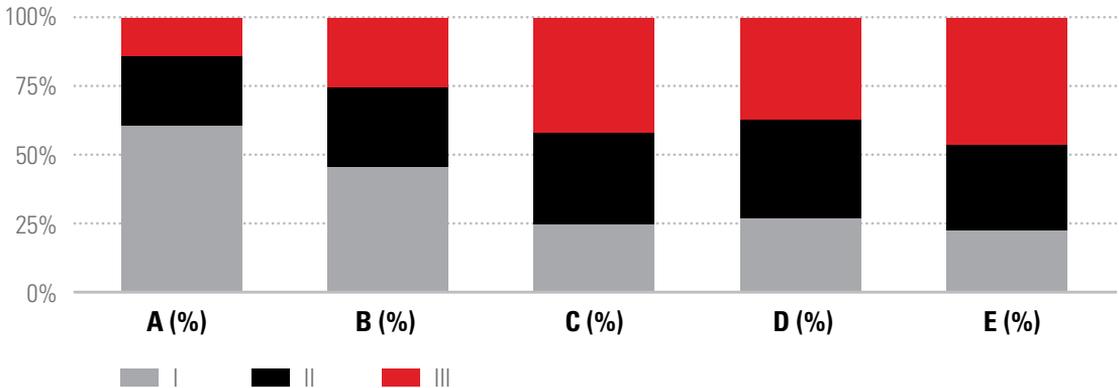


Diagram 3 shows the results of teachers’ assessments for each category by level. The graph results show that first category teachers with 20 years experience have better results than third category teachers with 5 years experience. As we have a look at the graph we can notice that teachers of the first category dominate with great and very good results.

Diagram 4. Assessments by cycle

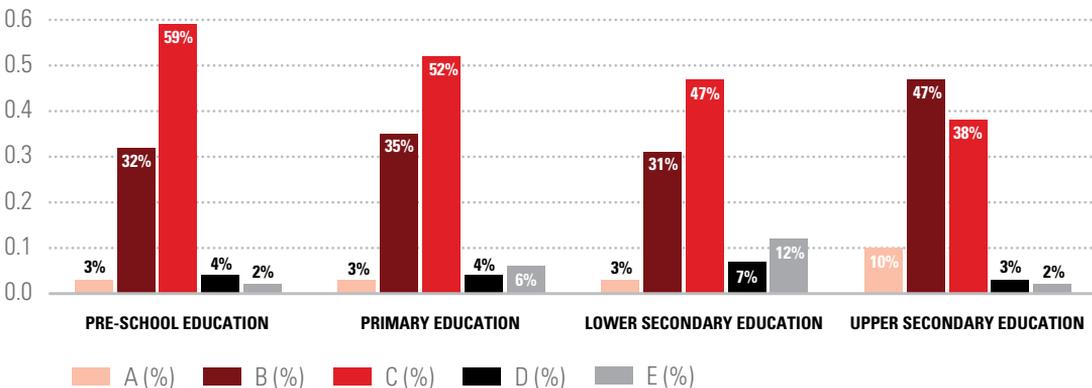


Diagram 4 shows the results of teacher assessments by levels for each school cycle: pre-school education, primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education. Upper secondary education teachers achieve higher scores in the course content compared to other cycle teachers. Meanwhile, the number of teachers with sufficient and poor results is higher among lower secondary education teachers.

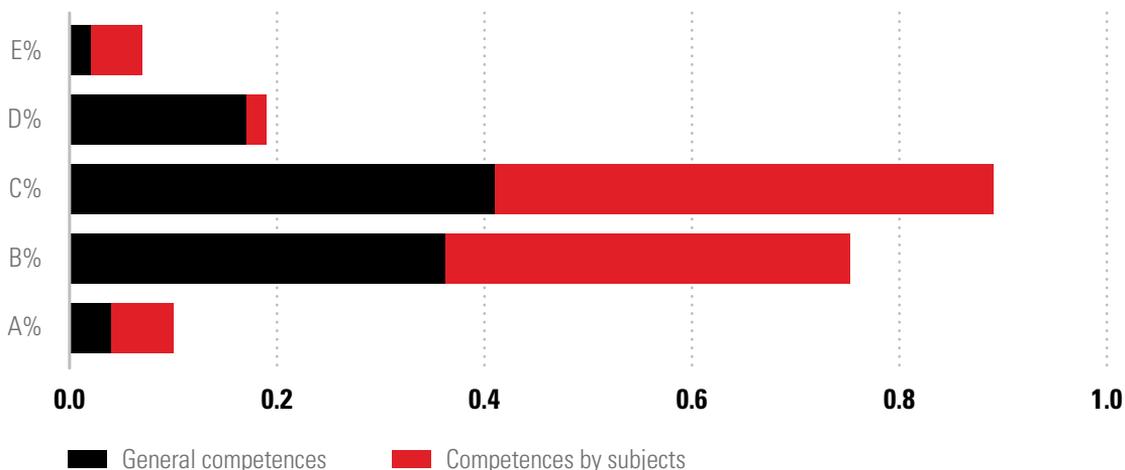
Diagram 5. Assessments by the content of the test

Diagram 5 shows the number of teachers for both parts of the test according to the respective levels. In this diagram, we see that teachers with excellent, very good and good scores have also good results in both parts of the test, but dominate the positive outcomes in the substantive part of the subject. Teachers who have performed at sufficient level have better results in the first part of the test, that of general training. Meanwhile, the teachers with poor results in the test have difficulties in the substantive part of the subject.

If we compare the scores of the portfolio scores and the test scores in Diagram 6 we will notice that there is a significant difference. The average score that teachers receive in the portfolio is close to the maximum points (14 points out of 15), while in the first part of the test where the overall teacher training is again evaluated, the average is lower in relation to the maximum points (22 out of 30 points).

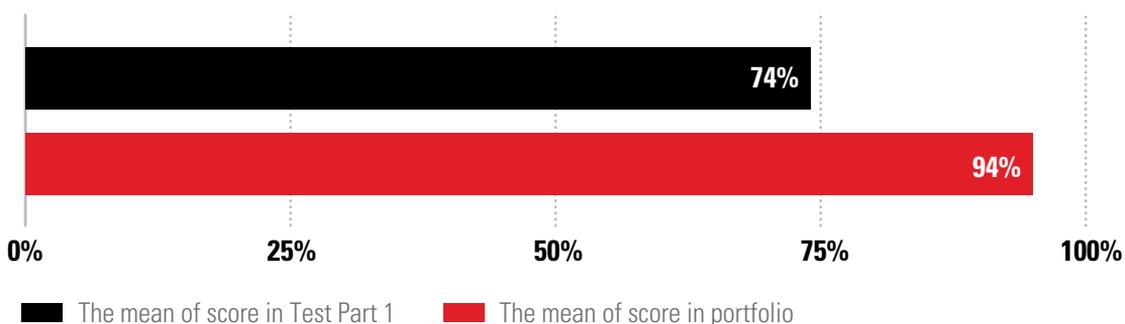
Diagram 6. Comparison of the portfolio and the first part of the test

Table 1 shows the correlation between portfolio scores and test parts. The portfolio and the first part of the test relate to the general formation of the teacher and must in principle have a stable relation, but based on the correlation coefficient values⁸ ($r = .152$, $p < 0.01$) indicates that the link is weak. This connection is also weak with the total test scores, ($r = .177$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 1. The correlation of the portfolio scores with the points of the first part of the test

THE CORRELATION		PORTFOLIO	BONUS	TEST PART 1	TEST PART 2	TOTAL SCORE OF TEST
Portfolio	Pearson Correlation	1	.114**	.152**	.150**	.177**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	2889	2889	2889	2873	2889
Bonus	Pearson Correlation	.114**	1	.167**	.159**	.182**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	2889	2889	2889	2873	2889
Test Part 1	Pearson Correlation	.152**	.167**	1	.484**	.706**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	2889	2889	2889	2873	2889
Test Part 2	Pearson Correlation	.150**	.159**	.484**	1	.928**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	2873	2873	2873	2873	2873
Total score of Test	Pearson Correlation	.177**	.182**	.706**	.928**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	2889	2889	2889	2873	2889

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

8 Davis (1971), the meaning of the values of correlation coefficients: over .70 indicates a very strong relation; .50 – .69 shows important links; .30 – .49 shows moderate (average) links; .10 – .29 shows weak links; .00-.09 shows meaningful connections



CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions based on the results of the qualification process for teachers may be summarised as follows:

- Portfolio scores and test scores have a significant difference. Both of these variables measure the overall training of the teachers. The average score that teachers receive in the portfolio is very close to the maximum points (93.3%), while in the first part of the test, the average is lower compared to the maximum score (73.3%)
- Most teachers get assessed with the “Good” level
- By reference to the levels, the comparative results 2010–2017 show an increase in the percentage of teachers at “Very good” (16% increase). From 20% in 2010 to 36% in 2017
- The results for the subjects show that the results for physics, maths, physical education, chemistry and biology teachers are lower than average
- First category teachers with 20 years of work experience have better results than the third category teachers with 5 years of work experience. The first category teachers dominate with “excellent” and “very good” results
- 50% of upper secondary school teachers achieve high scores at the “Excellent” and “Very Good” levels, while in the lower secondary cycle there are 40% of teachers at these levels. In this cycle, there is also a considerable number of teachers with “Fail” level result (11%)
- The Education Department with the best teachers’ results appear to be the one of Tirana, Elbasani, and the Education Department of Durrësi.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions and recommendations regarding the current qualification process, as a consolidated system for several years, which assesses teachers' performance in some aspects, are as follows:

- Due to the poor connection between the portfolio score and the points gained at the first part of the test, the monitoring of portfolio documents should be strengthened. The teacher should present through the interviews the materials he/she has carried out in his/her portfolio
- Continuous assessment of the performance of teachers who will be qualified (internal and external evaluations) regarding the implementation of their practical skills at school should be listed as part of their portfolio
- The scores of teachers in the national examinations (or in exams organised by the local education units) should be recorded in the portfolios of teachers entering the qualification process
- The education departments should be empowered to coordinate the professional development of teachers in the process of qualification at regional level. Teachers, according to their needs should be in the process of training not only in an overall form, but also in the subject content so as to update their knowledge
- The education departments should put in place effective professional networks of teachers not only for the experienced teachers to benefit, but mostly for teachers who are new to this profession
- A great deal of attention should be paid to the teachers of the exact sciences and physical education, especially in the relevant part of the subject matter
- The qualification of the heads of educational institutions and their certification creates a more cooperative climate in the school, positively influencing the engagement and dedication of teachers, which directly affects their results
- Developing the concept of school as a centre for training and professional development of the staff with school practice by experienced teachers enhances wellbeing at school and is a necessity to improve the learning process. These centres can provide models for improving the quality in teachers' training and for encouraging innovation in the field of education. These centres, through mentoring and the exchange of experiences, support the development of young teachers and support teachers in their lifelong learning.

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AU ST RI A



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Ferdinand Eder, born 1948, graduated in German philology and educational studies. After a period of work at the university of Linz he took up a position as a full professor of Education at the University of Salzburg in 2003, where he worked as the head of the Department of Education until his retirement in 2013. From 2003 to 2009 he was the Head of the "Austrian Association for Research and Development in Education", and is now Editor in Chief of the "Zeitschrift für Bildungsforschung".

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ABSTRACT



The contribution centres on the definition and measurement of wellbeing within the Austrian school system as well as the use of indicators of wellbeing for the development and the assurance of school quality and the quality of the school system as a whole. Within this framework the results of two representative studies of wellbeing in Austrian schools, which were commissioned by the Ministry of Education, are reported. Based on different methodological approaches (survey, interviews, time sampling diary) it is shown that students' wellbeing at school is mainly a matter of social relations at school, especially of those to teachers and classmates, but also a matter of the quality of instruction. The studies also demonstrate that wellbeing is highly impacted by situational influences and by pupils' personal characteristics.

As a result, several approaches were made by the school administration to foster the wellbeing of young people. Enhancing the wellbeing and creating a good climate within schools and classrooms is an explicitly formulated target within the national quality framework for schools, which should be accomplished by reducing psychological strain, creating a smooth entrance and smooth transitions within the system, measures against violence, and continuously supporting teachers to adapt their instruction to the individual situation of their pupils.

Key words: wellbeing, school quality, school climate, empirical pedagogical research

AUSTRIA: Student Wellbeing in Austrian Schools

INTRODUCTION

The care for the wellbeing of pupils in Austrian schools has a long history. The first – and extremely important – approach was a legal one. After a broad reform in 1965, in which the organisation of the entire school system was regulated, the inner processes within schools were regulated by the “Schulunterrichtsgesetz” (School Instruction Act) in 1974. An important part of this law were regulations concerning the mode of exams and tests and the establishment of structures, allowing students to participate in important decisions within classrooms and schools. The main effect of these approaches was to transform the school system from a low regulated, almost arbitrary sphere into a legally well-defined area. Compared to former times, this was a great advance for the pupils.

In the early nineties of the last century, the Ministry of Education initialised an expert discussion on the improvement of the Austrian Schools (cf. Eder & Altrichter, 2009). It aimed at a better use of the potentials of school autonomy and to establish methods and tools of quality assurance and quality development. It was caused on the one hand by difficulties to adapt the school system to the rapidly changing world of work and on the other hand by international developments in steering school systems, especially the increasing trend from input control to output control. Within this framework also a monitoring of the main stakeholders of the school system – pupils, teachers, and parents – was established to learn about the experiences and views of these groups.

In the discussion on what characterises ‘good schools’ (Specht & Thonhauser, 1996) starting about 1990, three dimensions were named as

output criteria: academic achievement, personal development of students, and wellbeing at school. But whereas academic achievement is represented by the syllabus, and personal development in a broad sense should be additionally fostered by a focus on several cross-curricular competencies like social learning, democratic education or environmental education, student wellbeing was sparsely mentioned in school related legal documents. In contrast to this imbalance in official documents, for a long time terms like school stress and pressure, psychosomatic disorders of children, and fear of school were part of the public perception of school. Also in the discussion on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which was partially adopted by Austria in 1992, severe violations of children’s rights within the schools, especially concerning their wellbeing, were stated (Eder, 1994).

The imbalance between the children’s daily experiences in school and the expectations of parents and public media was caused by a substantial change in family education. Starting from the seventies, the relations between children and their parents changed from a culture of autocratic prescribing to a culture of negotiating. Jürgen Zinnecker characterised this change with the expression “From Education to relationship” (1987, p.189). But this social change was not adopted by the teachers, so that schools were places, where “democratic” expectations of children (and their parents) met with strongly autocratic behaviours of teachers.

Responding to the public reception the Ministry of Education in the nineties of the last century decided to monitor the wellbeing of children and youth in schools as well as the wellbeing of teachers. This

contribution reports the process and the main results of empirical studies that were carried out to get an insight into students' wellbeing throughout the whole school system, whereas, for reasons of space, there will not be much attention paid to the wellbeing of teachers.¹

WHAT DOES WELLBEING MEAN?

By inverting the WHO-definition of health ("Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing"²), wellbeing is the state of being mentally, physically, and socially healthy, or happy. Regarding school, attributes like feeling comfortable at school, satisfaction with school, as well as school anxiety and psychosomatic disorders are used as indicators for the state of wellbeing (see contributions in Hascher, 2004). According to Kurt Lewin's (1963, p. 31) field theory wellbeing refers to the situation of pupils in their "life space": It can be understood as the

individuals' "perception of themselves and of their relations to the environment they perceive".

Within this framework and with regard to the school environment as a "life space" often attributes like the following ones are measured:

Table 1. Attributes that constitute wellbeing (examples)

Measures how persons see themselves	self concept, self esteem
Measures how persons feel about themselves	enjoying attending school, feeling comfortable at school, school anxiety, school stress and mental disorders
Relations to environment	quality of relations with teachers and/or peers, quality of physical environment at classroom and school, quality of instruction

1 In the context of discussion on quality assurance within the school system two extensive studies were carried out to evaluate the wellbeing of teachers. Based on self-reports Lechner et al. (1996) investigated the professional burdens and the job satisfaction of the teachers in a representative sample. The results showed a high level of job satisfaction in average, despite of humble opportunities for further career advancement. At the same time, however, it became apparent that teachers use different coping strategies for dealing with occupational stress, which also lead to various psychological and physical consequences.

In an additional study surveys were carried out on the working hours of the teachers, and a sample was also medically examined (Wentner & Havranek, 2002). Important results were, among other things, that teachers – on average – work the same amount of hours as members of other professions, with individual differences being very large. Medical examinations have provided evidence that the health of teachers was very good compared to other professions. The greatest health risks are damages to the vocal chords and impairments of the backbone.

Since these studies were conducted, job satisfaction of the teachers was assessed in various studies, e.g. PIRLS 2006 and TALIS 2008. It seems to be higher than the satisfaction of the pupils with their school

2 see <http://www.who.int/about/mission/en/>

HOW CAN WELLBEING BE MEASURED?

Wellbeing is a "subjectively defined" construct, which implies that only the individuals themselves are able to give valid and reliable information on the extent and depth of their wellbeing. Therefore, methods of gathering data on individuals' wellbeing seem to be more appropriate, the more they demand an immediate and direct answer from a person. From this point of view oral interviews, questionnaires and other forms of self-reports are the methods of choice.

All methods have to take into account that wellbeing may be affected by various personal and situational factors. Tewes and Wildgrube (1992, p. 45) suggest that we differentiate between wellbeing as a "state" and wellbeing as a "trait".

This refers to the difference between a



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momentary state of moods on the one hand, and a stable level of moods on the other hand, which may be a continuous attribute or a lifestyle of a person. If one wants to learn about the current mood of persons, then situated methods are to be used; if one is interested in the stable condition of moods, then methods that stimulate a person to reflect on him – or herself are more appropriate.

REPRESENTATIVE STUDIES ON STUDENT WELLBEING IN AUSTRIAN SCHOOLS

Within the above described context the Ministry of Education commissioned a first investigation of the wellbeing of children and youth in the Austrian schools. It was undertaken by the Department of Educational Psychology of the University of Linz, and was carried out from 1994 to 1995.

In this study, three methodological approaches were used. In a representative study, pupils at almost all stages of the school were asked to fill in questionnaires, in which they had to describe themselves and their life space at school. In

addition to this quantitative approach, a series of interviews was conducted to get deeper insight into the wellbeing of students who experience a high level of stress and pressure in their school. Finally, in a third approach a time sampling diary study was carried out, from which we intended to learn, how situational attributes influence the level of wellbeing. A representative sample of 4408 students ranging from grade 4 to grade 12 were asked to answer the questionnaires. Additionally, interviews were conducted with 60 students who were selected because of being unhappy with school due to low academic achievement or other reasons (see Eder, 1995).

In 2005, the study from 1994 was repeated with a representative sample of 7625 pupils ranging from grade 4 to grade 12, who filled in almost the same questionnaires as were used in 1994. In this study 50 interviews with unhappy students were included as well. Both studies were conducted at the beginning of the second term of the school year (see Eder, 2007).

Main results from the study 2005

Some Highlights

- In 2005, positive scores for diverse facets of wellbeing (e.g. relations to teachers, relations to classmates, understanding classroom instructions) are found: the majority of pupils are satisfied with school and feel well there
- Approximately 30% to 40% of the students feel stressed by school. The generally overwhelming positive feeling of the students is often accompanied with feelings of exhaustion and tiredness, though
- All characteristics of wellbeing are markedly higher for female than for male students: female students report more satisfaction with school but also significantly more psychological strain
- During the pupil's school career, all wellbeing characteristics investigated show a significant decline, above all at the lower secondary level (10 to 14 years)
- With regard to the demands placed on students at school, a particular decrease in average grades can be seen from entrance into and during lower secondary level. In comparison to elementary school, the decrease in grade achievement is by more than one grade level on the Austrian five-point scale. Up to 25% of the students, at all stages, report that they often "do not understand what is happening" during instruction
- In addition, the higher the school class, the less students trust themselves to meet the demands placed upon them at school
- The time spent for class-work and homework reaches or surpasses that of working adults. On average 45 hours per week (lower secondary level) up to 48 hours (Gymnasium), are devoted to school related work. The transition from elementary school to the lower secondary school is coupled with a sudden increase of approximately additional 12 hours for school-related work
- Numerous students complain about physical ailments related to their workplaces (25% to 35% list backache, headache, neck and shoulder discomfort).

The study also gave an insight into the characteristics of students' life space at school. The term comprehends, following Lewin, the students' relations to other persons (teachers, classmates), the activities they participate in (like instruction), their coping with demands, the appropriateness of rooms and spaces in school, especially. Because students are in an active part of their life space, these characteristics are both components and influencing factors of wellbeing. Some selected results:

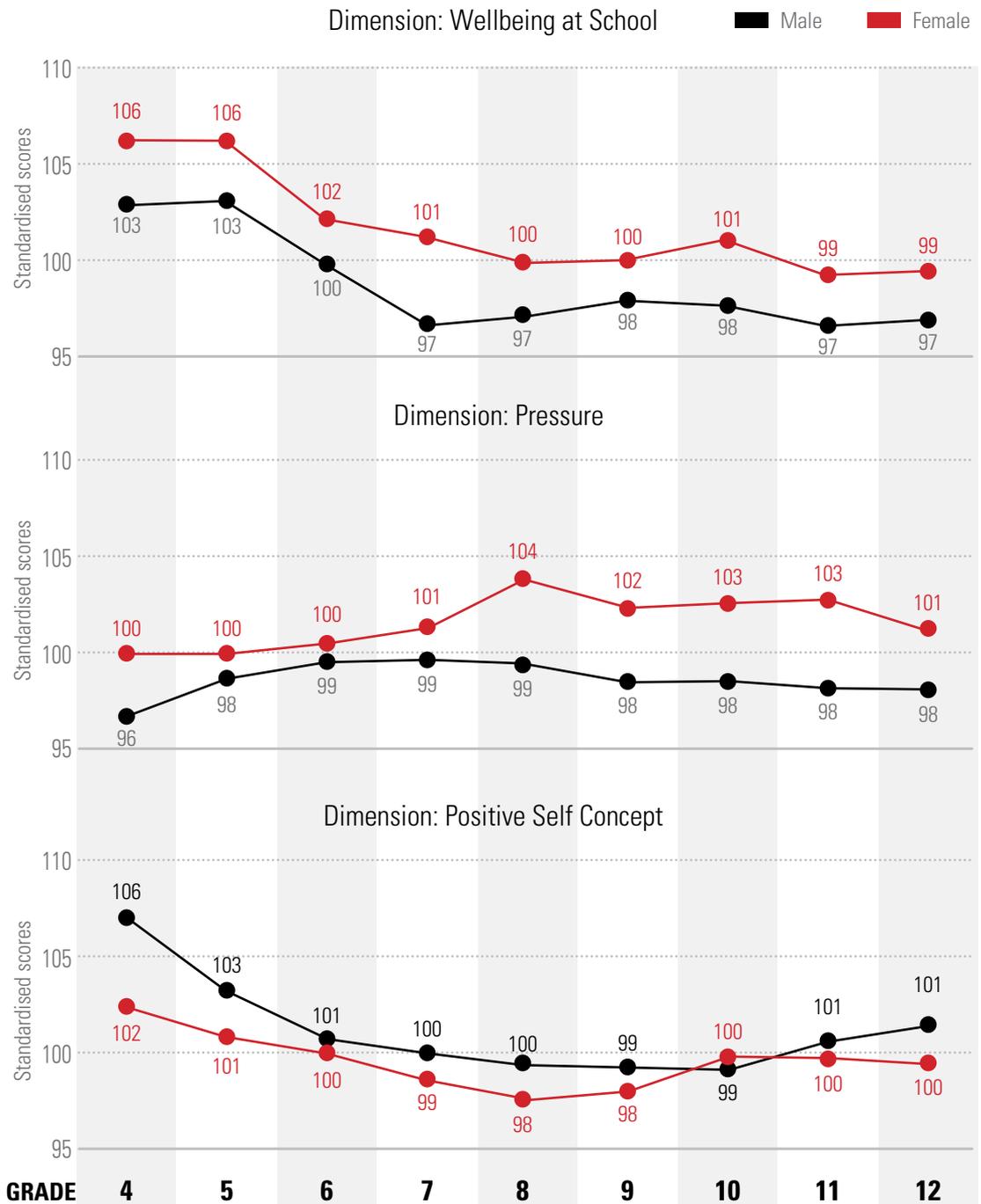
- On average, pupils report good relations to their teachers and to their school mates. A minority of about 5–10% are unhappy with their teachers or their mates, respectively, or show some anxiety about them
- There is also a small number, who are discontented with their physical environment in the classroom – they dislike their classrooms in general or, more often, complain of unsuitable chairs or working tables
- At all grades there is a proportion of about 20% who experience their lessons as unstructured and have difficulty understanding and following them.

To draw a comprehensive picture, data concerning different facets of wellbeing were aggregated to three dimensions:

- Wellbeing at school (feeling comfortable at school, school satisfaction, enjoying school)
- Pressure (school anxiety, stress, psychosomatic complaints)
- Positive self-concept (general self-esteem, academic self-concept, social self-concept)

Wellbeing at school as well as pressure are seen as indicators for the current state of wellbeing, whereas a positive self-concept is recorded as a stable characteristic of wellbeing. Figure 1 gives an impression of the trends in three dimensions of wellbeing during an individual's school career.

Figure 1. Dimensions of Wellbeing at school. Trends over grades.



There is a clear decrease of wellbeing at school, starting at grade 4. This decrease is accompanied by both a corresponding decrease of positive self-concept and an increase in perceived pressure at school. From a motivational point of view this kind of progression seems to be very crucial.

Causes for this decrease seem not to be quite clear. Teachers often ascribe it to the beginning puberty of the pupils, but there is empirical evidence, that this decrease doesn't occur in some types of alternative schools. Probably the decrease is connected to the transition from primary school, where pupils are guided very child-oriented by a very small number of teachers, to the secondary schools after stage 4 with different teachers for almost each subject. Connected with this transition, in the Austrian school system there is also a selection process between academic secondary schools and general schools depending on report marks. This transition also implies a strong increase in the amount of time which is necessary to cope with the requirements of school, and – in contrary to this increased effort – a markable decrease in average grades.

Changes in wellbeing within a decade

The goal of the 1994 study's repetition in 2005 was to find out whether there were any substantial changes in students wellbeing at school during the period of about 10 years, in which some substantial modifications in the school system took place including e.g. enlarging the curricular autonomy of individual schools, a reduction of obligatory lessons in the lower secondary stage, or the implementation of some measures of quality assurance, especially a mandate to the individual schools to develop and evaluate school programmes.

Compared to 1993/94 some interesting changes were found:

- Females, who had lower scores in main indicators of wellbeing in the first study, were in many areas clearly ahead of males 11 years later. They reported more wellbeing at school, gender differences in positive self-concept decreased, and the congruence between school demands and the individual conditions of the females increased
- The social relations between pupils and teachers have slightly improved, in general
- We also found some changes in the amount of students' time for school. In the lower secondary schools we can see a decline of school related time. In spite of this, marks in the lower level of the Gymnasium got noticeably better, as well as in primary schools
- Altogether the time from 1994 to 2005 is characterised by the improvement of the females' situation and by the improvement of student-teacher-relations.

Origins and impacts of wellbeing

Attributes of the life space take a strong impact on the various dimensions of wellbeing. Table 2 shows substantial correlations between the characteristics of life space on the one hand, and wellbeing on the other hand. These correlations support the assumption of a dynamic interaction between the individuals and their life space. Individuals influence their life space because they are members of it, and the life space has a strong impact on individuals by increasing or enlarging their opportunities.

Table 2. Correlations between characteristics of life space and dimensions of wellbeing.

	GENDER	WELLBEING	PRESSURE	POSITIVE SELF CONCEPT
Relationships with teachers	male	0,49	-0,35	0,28
	female	0,48	-0,47	0,30
Inclusive relationships with schoolmates	male	0,35	-0,21	0,20
	female	0,37	-0,20	0,24
Conflictual relationships with schoolmates	male	-0,16	0,30	-0,16
	female	-0,12	0,25	-0,13
Understanding of instruction		-0,33	0,41	-0,37

Note: Pearson correlations. All coefficients are significant at the level $p < .01$. Study 2005.

Wellbeing also influences the students' coping with school. Table 3 reports correlations between the dimensions of wellbeing and some indicators of school engagement and school involvement.

Table 3. Correlations between dimensions of wellbeing and school related behaviour of students.

	LEARNING MOTIVATION	COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOUR IN CLASS	DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR	SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM	TIME SPENT FOR LEARNING AT HOME	
Grade 4-8	Wellbeing	0,55**	0,44**	-0,40**	-0,21**	0,05*
	Pressure	-0,27**	-0,29**	0,26**	0,22**	0,20**
	Positive self concept	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
Grade 8-12	Wellbeing	0,47**	0,32**	-0,23**	-0,09**	0,11**
	Pressure	-0,14**	-0,04	0,10	0,14**	0,23**
	Positive self concept	0,29**	0,19**	-0,05	-0,01	-0,03

Note: Pearson correlations. ** = $p < .01$. n.d = no data. Study 2005.

Results show quite high positive correlations between wellbeing at school and all indicators of school related behaviour. In contrast, perceived pressure and stress are related to reduced learning motivation, reduced cooperative and increased disruptive behaviour in classroom as well as school absenteeism. But it is also to be noted that pressure leads up to spending more time for learning at home, as also does wellbeing at school. The third dimension, positive self-concept, which can only be reported for the upper stages of the school system³, shows positive relations to learning motivation and cooperative behaviour.

It is not the place to discuss here, whether it is acceptable to speak about an “impact” of wellbeing, because the methodological design of the study is not appropriate for a causal interpretation, and there could also be an argument for a reversed causality. As mentioned above we have to think about a dynamic and cyclical interaction between wellbeing and behaviour, in which each factor can be both cause and effect of each other.

Interviews with low scoring pupils

Quantitative approaches like those used in the above mentioned representative studies give interesting insights into attributes of groups and collectives. Their disadvantage seems to be that their results are usually based on means and variances, which are valid in general or in average, but don't meet the situation of individual persons. Complementary qualitative approaches can give an insight into how individuals really experience their environment, what they like and what they suffer from, what triggers wellbeing and how they cope with stress, pressure and non-conductive treatment by teachers.

In the above mentioned studies a series of intensive interviews with 60 (1994) respectively 50 (2005) students aged 10 to 18 were done, who had very low grades in main subjects or had repeated a school year for academic achievement reasons. (Eder & Eder, 1995, Eder, 2007). They were found by oral recommendation, that means that experienced people like parents or classmates were asked to nominate pupils who had essential problems with school and suffered from it. The focus was on how those students perceive their school, what they see as sources of psychological strains, and how they cope with their problems.

The interviews indicate that their psychological strains caused by school result from an interaction of low quality of instruction, disrupted social relationships both to teachers and to classmates, and low motivational preconditions. Many, but not all of them, came from families with a low level of education.

Those students complained the lack of scaffolding and good explanations in their instruction and mis-adaptations of learning to their individual situations. Especially after transitions within the system they reported massively increased demands and achievement expectations. Coping with those they perceived as a “struggle for survival”.

The social relations with their teachers were particularly reported as being characterised by lack of confidence, verbal disparagement, humiliation, discouragement and exposure in front of the class. Not infrequently, those students felt trapped by their teachers, disadvantaged, arbitrarily treated, rejected or harassed.

Low scoring pupils have lost the joy of schooling and learning, mainly because they have little success in school and cannot cope with the massed demands. In addition to this, they often are poorly integrated in the class community and bothered by their classmates.

3 Because of a mistake at the administration of questionnaires these data are not available.

Psychological strains, as can be established from the interviews, are often triggered by negative emotions that arise from the collision of insensitive and non-conductive teacher behaviour patterns and the needs of children and young adults for respect, independence, self-realisation, and knowledge. The students' ability to deal with these negative emotions is relatively restricted due to institutional norms at schools and societal expectations, especially those concerning their parents' achievement expectations. Frequently this collision leads to problematic forms of compensation, such as escape from reality through alcohol, drugs, or aggressive behaviour toward oneself and one's environment.

A time sampling diary study

48 pupils from secondary higher schools took part in a time sampling diary study over 4 weeks (Bergmann & Eder, 2007). They volunteered to participate and were ready to answer the following questions six times each day, at randomly assigned time points:

- How do you feel right now?
- Where are you?
- What are the causes of your present mood/s?
- Who is around you right now?
- How free do you feel at this moment?

The measurement time points were systematically arranged so that the entire day except for some hours during night, with a maximum interval of 7 minutes, was continuously covered by assessments of some students. Their answers were entered in a formalised diary. The main aim of the study was a detailed assessment of the condition or its change depending on situational and personal conditions during school and outside school. In addition, questionnaires concerning the wellbeing at school (like in the representative study 1994), as well as tests of personality attributes were administered.

This procedure resulted in a continuous data stream over 4 weeks, that was used for analyses. Some remarkable results:

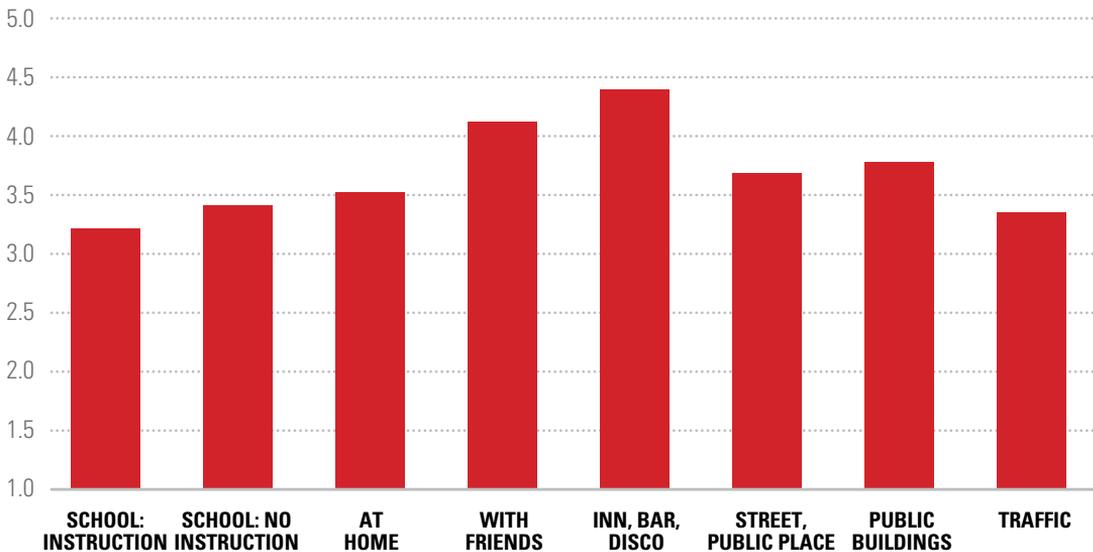
During the four weeks investigated, a positive state of moods was clearly predominant. On a scale from 1 (very bad) to 5 (very good), the mean value was $M = 3.53$ ($N=4716$ observations).

There is a large variation in the average mood of the individual participants, ranging from a rather negative ($M = 2.81$) to an almost very positive mean ($M = 4.70$).

There are systematic differences in wellbeing that are associated with the progress of the day, of the week, and with different locations:

- The beginning of the day is characterised by an average rather mildly negative state. It improves during the periods of instruction in school, although it is still slightly below the overall average of the whole day. After school, the wellbeing continues to rise and reaches the highest level in the evening hours
- Monday, the first day of the week, is characterised by a relatively negative state of wellbeing ($M=3.40$). Starting from the middle of the week it rises to an average level, and on the last working day the wellbeing is highest (3.75). On Sunday, the level of wellbeing is clearly dropping, approaching the low level at the beginning of the week.

Figure 2. Wellbeing at various locations.



- As Figure 2 illustrates, the school is, compared to other locations, the place with the students' most negative moods. But there are also differences: in subjects where personal learning is at the forefront (gymnastics, aesthetical education, religion, courses in philosophy), their wellbeing is much better than in subjects in which pure academic learning and the acquisition of competences are predominant
- Examinations and tests have the strongest negative impact on wellbeing, followed by passive, inattentive participation in a lesson. "Doing nothing" is also seen as a massive burden when it results from boredom in the classroom.

Time sampling methods seem to be a powerful instrument to learn about origins and causes of wellbeing, because personal attributes of the observers do not have as great an influence as they might have in other methods. Furthermore, the study demonstrates, that a person's self-reported wellbeing may be strongly influenced by

specifics of the situation in a broad sense. For example, the reason for pupils not feeling well might not be because they are at school, but because it is Monday.

WELLBEING AS AN INDICATOR FOR SCHOOL QUALITY

Wellbeing as part of the PISA supplementary assessments

Based on results of the representative studies from 1994 and 2005 a set of items measuring wellbeing and some of its components were added to the national supplement of PISA as an indicator of school quality in the PISA studies 2000, 2003, 2006, and 2009. Eder and Haider report an almost continuously progressing, but moderate trend in student's enjoyment in and their satisfaction with school from 2000 to 2009. In contrast to this, characteristics of their life space at

school like quality of instruction or quality of social relations to teachers showed no positive trends (Eder & Haider, 2012, p. 116).

An index of wellbeing for the National Report on Education

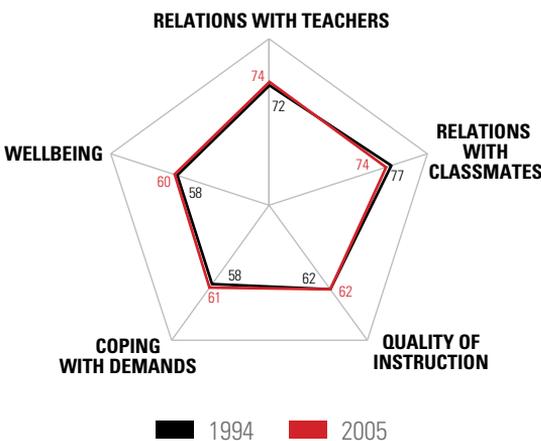
The Austrian Ministry of Education is obliged to give a report on the quality of the education system to the Austrian Parliament. This measure of quality assurance is to be done every three years. For the first “National Report on Education” (NBB), which was edited in 2009, an indicator for wellbeing at school was developed based on the results of the studies reported above. This indicator refers to the interaction between individuals’ level of wellbeing and the perceived characteristics of the life space they live in. That

forms the basis for a five-dimensional indicator of wellbeing, shown in figure 3a.

Scores from Figure 3a can be summed up to a total score. Based on Data from Wellbeing study 1994 the total score is transformed to a *wellbeing-at-school index* with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 10. It may be used for comparisons between school types or between stages within the school system, but also for visualising changes over time, as shown in Figure 3b.

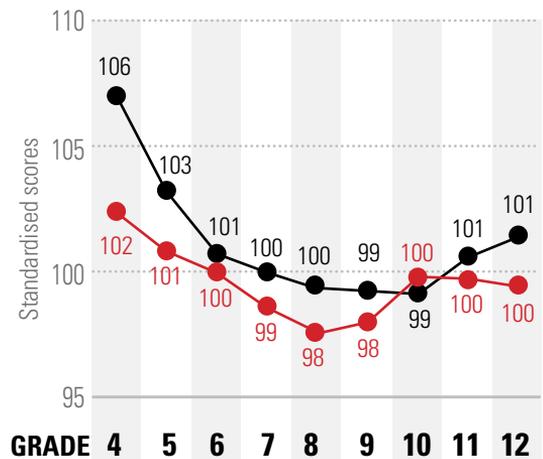
The items of the index were used for several evaluation and monitoring projects, for instance as a supplemental assessment in the context of measuring educational standards, or evaluation reform projects in the school system like the New Secondary School.

Figure 3a. Wellbeing indicator. Scores indicate, which percentage of the maximum (100) is reached.



Source of Data: Wellbeing studies from 1994 and 2005.

Figure 3b. Wellbeing-at-school-Index.



Source of Data: Wellbeing studies from 1994 and 2005.



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Recent developments in promoting student wellbeing in Austria

Since the first empirical study in 1994, the wellbeing of children and adolescents at school has been a constant issue of Austrian school administration. Not least in order to reduce levels of pupils' stress. In 1997 the number of obligatory school lessons was shortened by three hours for the first year of secondary education, by two hours for the second year, and by one hour per week for the third year.

Beside this, a number of initiatives have been put in place to make the school as a life space more attractive and more conducive to children and young people including actions such as gender mainstreaming in the early years to focus on the situation of girls, as well as measures to reduce violence at school. Individual students are continuously being trained as mediators of conflicts between class mates, and class teachers have been trained to deal with bullying and violence among the pupils.

Since the beginning of the millennium, there have been increasing numbers of approaches and

actions to ensure and develop the quality of schools with respect to the quality of learning and instruction as well as improving social relations at school. Internet platforms with materials made available online play an important role, in particular a mandatory national quality framework for school development (see www.sqa.at). Six target areas for quality development are set, one of which is "living space classroom and school" that focuses specifically on the wellbeing of children and adolescents. To meet these quality targets, schools are also offered questionnaires for pupils to help measure improvements in light of the intended quality objectives.

Special attention is put on children's transition phases. In the Austrian school system, there are more such transition phases than in most of the other European countries. The first transition is from compulsory kindergarten into primary schools at the age of six. Another transition follows from primary to lower secondary education and the third one from lower to upper secondary. Any transition phase means entering a new context with new class mates, teachers and in most cases also a new environment and as

such, causes psychological strain for the children, but also for their parents.

Recently, on national level new regulations were introduced for the first of the transitions, when children are leaving kindergarten and entering the school system. Quite some efforts had to be taken to build bridges between the different entities of regulation, administration and financing. By Constitution, kindergarten is regulated at provincial level whereas school is regulated on federal level.

In addition to raising pupils' (language) competences and equal opportunities for all, these developments are focusing on reducing psychological strain and creating a smooth entrance phase into the school system for youngsters. Concrete measures include intensifying the contacts between kindergarten and school by means of temporarily exchanging staff as well as children or at least visiting the other institution, joint projects of the two institutions, delivering information about individual children's strength and weaknesses from kindergarten (for which instruments for observing children in a structured way were developed) to primary school teachers as well as joint in-service training activities for kindergarten teachers and primary teachers. Once the children have entered school, psychological strain is reduced and wellbeing raised by abolishing mandatory grading in the first years of primary school (until the last year) and by some flexibility in the duration of primary schooling, meaning that for the two years of each of the two primary stages children may take three years without being classified as class repeaters.

After a pilot phase lasting from 2013 until 2016 that was duly evaluated (Grillitsch & Stanzel-Tischler, 2017) those new legal regulations for the transition from kindergarten into primary school and the first primary level came into force in 2017.

For the other above mentioned transition phases there are no general regulations focusing especially on children's wellbeing, but most schools address this issue by establishing direct contacts and interactions between those schools who hand over

pupils, and those who receive them, by organising entrance and orientation phases including outdoor camps, activities for getting known to each other – class mates as well as teachers – and welcome parties just to name some.

Contrary to former times, schools are increasingly engaged to support incoming students individually to raise up their knowledge to the level of the new school, thus helping them to cope successfully with the problems of transition and avoiding initial failure and stress.

CONCLUSIONS

Pedagogical and humanitarian reasons are crucial to take care of pupils' wellbeing at school. Regardless of this it is also a mandate by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. From there, mental and physical wellbeing of children and youth at school has become a permanent and continuous issue within the Austrian school system. Starting with a monitoring approach in the last decade of the last century, many efforts have been made to create a conducive atmosphere in schools where young people can live physically and mentally happy and healthy lives. Especially the guidelines for the "Neue Mittelschule" (New Secondary School), which substitutes the former "Hauptschule" (General schools) since 2012, focus on social learning and creating an encouraging atmosphere for all pupils.

We have little data to decide whether Austrian pupils like their school to a greater degree than children in other countries do. We also have no reliable empirical proof whether wellbeing really fosters academic learning at school. The Austrian PISA results do not really support this assumption. Nevertheless, pupils' wellbeing is not only to be seen as instrumental for academic learning, but as a special value in itself and as such, adequate efforts are to be taken to improve. Currently, researchers are making efforts to repeat the 1994/95 and 2005 studies once again in order to have a time series over two decades, but permissions and financing are not yet decided upon.

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FINLAND



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ABSTRACT



The wellbeing of students is embedded in Finnish pre-primary (6 years) and basic education (7–15 years) in many ways. The wellbeing of pupils plays an integral role in Finnish pre-primary and basic education, and is also enforced by Finnish legislation and national core curricula. All children have the right to wellbeing, which also functions as a basis and resource for learning. In the Finnish National Core Curricula for Basic Education, student wellbeing is taken into account in the objectives for transversal competencies and instruction in different school subjects, as well as in the goals set for the operating culture of schools. There are also two systematic practices, 'Support for learning' and growth and 'Pupil welfare', which ensure multi-professional support for students. In addition to these practices promoting health include school subjects (health education, home economics, physical education), free school meals, and possibilities for differentiated learning. The government promotes student wellbeing by funding large physical activity development projects. Education providers also attend to pupil wellbeing, for example by ensuring that school buildings and playgrounds offer a safe and healthy environment for pupils. Municipalities offer morning and afternoon activities for young children, as well as leisure time activities. In addition to the positive basis and good practices in Finland, the article will also explore some critical equality aspects. These aspects are related to gender and minority issues as well as growing differences between regions in a sparsely populated country.

Key words: school culture, wellbeing, instruction, values, challenges, opportunities

FINLAND: Wellbeing as a Right and Means of Learning

THE DEFINITION OF WELLBEING IN THE FINNISH EDUCATION CONTEXT

The concept of wellbeing has a broad meaning in Finnish education, encompassing physical, mental, social, as well as economic aspects. All children have the right to wellbeing – a right which has been integrated into Finnish legislation (e.g. Basic Education Act; Pupil and Student Welfare Act), the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (7–15 years), and local curricula – local extensions of the national curriculum – which functions as the norm. Pupils' wellbeing is viewed as fundamental and important for pupils' learning abilities. In order to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils, the state and municipalities organise free education services available for everyone. In addition to teaching, these services include free school meals, learning materials, transportation if the distance is longer than five kilometres, special needs education services, and free health care and welfare services. The Finnish school system also offers opportunities for alternative studies in languages and religion for minorities. Besides these services, the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2014) stresses the importance of creating an operating culture that promotes pupils' wellbeing and learning in all schools.

SCHOOL CULTURE THAT SUPPORTS AND PROMOTES WELLBEING

The organisation of school work creates pre-conditions for the pupils' wellbeing, development and learning, and ensures the smooth operation of

and well-functioning cooperation in the school community. That is why the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2014) stresses the importance of developing a school operational culture that promotes wellbeing of all the members in schools.

The promotion of wellbeing is part of the duties of every adult in the school, regardless of their roles. In the organisation of school work, the needs, capabilities and strengths of all pupils are considered. From the teachers' perspective this means monitoring and promoting the learning, work approaches and wellbeing of their pupils, ensuring the respectful and fair treatment of each pupil, early recognition of potential problems, and provision of guidance and support to the pupils. The teacher contributes to ensuring that the pupils' rights to guidance and support in the areas of instruction and pupil welfare are enacted. This requires interaction with pupils and guardians, cooperation between teachers and collaboration with the pupil welfare staff. Active school leadership has an important role to play in the development of student wellbeing. It is also a challenge to education providers, who are responsible for evaluating and supporting pupil welfare.

Flexible arrangements and support systems

The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2014) promotes positive differentiation, flexible arrangements in schools, and strong support for all students as part of good operating culture of a school. The aim of differentiation is to promote each pupil's learning and wellbeing. If the means of differentiation are not sufficient, teachers may ask for extra support for the pupil. There are two systems to support pupils: *Support in learning*

and school attendance and Pupil welfare system. Both systems have a legislative basis. These cross-sectoral services are planned and organised in all schools.

There are many ways to be flexible in the classroom. The instruction should be differentiated according to the different needs of each pupil. This may happen by allocating individual learning objectives, individual homework and tasks, different materials to suit individual needs, the use of different amount of independent work and teachers help, or the use of small groups. The range of possibilities grows even wider if the teachers work as pairs and together plan the work of their pupils and arrange flexible groupings for different learning periods.

There is also the possibility of arranging learning in such a way that pupils do not have the need to retake failed classes, but instead complete the required studies at their own pace. For older pupils, this may be through a combination of work practice and teaching periods. In these arrangements, pupils are provided with an individual learning plan and follow a curriculum that includes learning modules.

Pupil welfare is planned in local curricula. Each school has an assigned pupil welfare group that is responsible for the wellbeing of all students. The group allocates the school's resources for remedial teaching and special education resources, as well as for the services of the school psychologist, nurse, and social worker. Whereas in a large school the pupil welfare group usually includes the principal, the special education teacher, as well as the school psychologist, nurse and social worker, in smaller units some of the services may be available only when needed. The pupil welfare group meets regularly to discuss general problems and give consultative help for teachers. Individual student cases are discussed in individual meetings arranged in co-operation with the parents and the child.

The *Support for learning and school attendance* system is also planned in local curricula. This service system consists of three levels: general

support for minor learning problems, intensified support for special problems, and special support. The latter consists of special needs education, and requires a separate decision made by the education provider to be issued to a pupil. General and intensified support may include individual or group teaching by the special teacher, special materials, or other arrangements, depending on what is appropriate. In turn, special support can be provided in the regular classroom or in a small group. Special needs education follows the pupil's individual educational plan.

The pupils' role in a school community

A school culture that promotes participation, realises human rights and operates democratically lays a foundation for the pupils' growth into active citizens. The pupils participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the activities in accordance with their developmental stage. They get experiences of being heard and appreciated as community members. The community encourages democratic dialogue and participation and devises operating methods and structures for them. Student association activities offer important possibilities for pupils to have an impact for the school community. They are complemented by other operating methods, including peer supporters, mentors, voluntary work or different sustainable development activities. They also reinforce cooperation and interaction in the entire school community. Cooperation with various branches of administration, parishes, companies and other actors expands the pupils' ideas of the society and action in a civic society. Contacts with schools in different countries improve skills in acting in a globalised world.

Ensuring a positive and safe school day

School clubs and other activities are an important part of good school day experience. These activities include for example activities during recess, celebrations, excursions, study visits and school camps. School clubs and other activities



support the objectives set for the pupils' learning, development of transversal competences and wellbeing. They also have an impact on creating a positive and safe school day. From the perspective of the pupils, they make possible an integrated and varied day that supports their motivation to learn. The goals guiding the activities and principles of their organisation are determined in local curricula and in the annual plan of each school.

School days are rather short in Finland compared to many other countries. That is why almost all municipalities offer before – and after-school activities for pupils in the first and second grade, as well as for pupils who need special support. These activities are based on the Basic Education Act and national framework. Before – and after school activities aim to reduce the time that children must spend on their own without safe adult presence. These group activities offer care and possibilities for play and other leisure

activities. Parents pay for these activities – the maximum fees are regulated and the income level of the family is considered.

School club activities are provided outside the lessons. The purpose of club activities is to support the pupils' general growth and development and to offer them opportunities to find interesting hobbies. Voluntary clubs are part of free basic education and are organised once or twice a week after school hours. The clubs can promote the pupils' participation and opportunities for involvement as well as their daily life skills and feeling of security. Schools may draw on the expertise of various branches of administration, communities, companies, organisations and other stakeholders of the school in the provision of club activities.

Schools have an obligation to prevent bullying and harassment in all their activities. Most of the Finnish schools are following the 'KiVa school' programme. KiVa is a research-based anti-bullying programme that has been developed in the University of Turku, with funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture. The effectiveness of KiVa has been shown in large randomised controlled trials (e.g. Saarento 2015; Haataja 2016). The programme has proved to be a useful method for schools to develop pupils' socio-emotion skills and give them tools to be aware of and how to act in antisocial situations.

School meals and food education

School meals is an old Finnish innovation we still strongly believe in. The Basic Education Act states that pupils attending school must be provided with a properly organised and supervised, balanced meal free of charge every school day. The Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2014) describes the objectives for school meals and education in food knowledge, health, nutrition and manners. High-quality school meals and eating together are important for the pupils' daily life and promotes wellbeing in school community. The purpose of school meals is to support the pupils' healthy growth and development, ability to study, and enlarge their knowledge of food.

The free school meals are organised in a manner that supports their health-related, social and cultural significance. School meals have an important recreational role, and they promote a sustainable way of living, cultural competence, and the objectives of food-related education and instruction in good manners. A well-timed and unhurried meal as well as possibility of some snacks ensure that the pupils have enough energy to get through the school day. An appealing meal break improves the wellbeing of the entire school community.

School meals are planned along National Nutrition Council's (2016) recommendations. A regular meal schedule is the foundation of good nutrition. It supports healthy weight development. Good eating habits learned in childhood and adolescence help prevent many health problems, the need to treat such problems, and costs related to them. The report *Ending childhood obesity* by the World Health Organisation (WHO 2016) emphasises, for example, school meals and healthy snacks as well as learning about wellbeing as part of a health-promoting living environment for children and young people.

Schools also take into account the pupils' possible health-related diets, providing the pupils with special meals that are appropriate for their diet. Special diets are observed and supervised personally. If a pupil has individual needs related to nutrition and health or medical care, the pupil, the guardian, the staff responsible for school meals, and the school health care services will plan how the pupil's meals and nutrition are organised and monitored. The pupils' allergies, ethics and religions are taken into consideration when planning school activities and meals.

Good eating habits learned in childhood will prevent many health problems in later life. This Finnish innovation in daily education that addresses nutritional activity is considered a long-term investment in learning and wellbeing (Lintukangas and Palojoki, 2016).

Recesses and other joint events at school

The way that daily recesses and different kinds of joint events are organised have an impact on the atmosphere and efficiency of learning in schools. Under the Finnish Basic Education Act, at least 45 minutes of each hour must be reserved for instruction, and this time should be divided into appropriate teaching periods. Some of the working time may be used for introduction to working life, end-of-term celebrations, and other joint events. The act allows for opportunities to vary the structure of school days. Many schools are testing the length of lessons and recesses to find a rhythm that supports efficient learning and gives the pupils enough time to play, exercise and meet their school friends. Joint events may include school celebrations, theme days, and excursions. Study visits and school camps may be planned for the entire school community or for one or several teaching groups. The possibilities for flexible organisation of school work referred to in the Basic Education Decree are also utilised in these. School days begin with a morning assembly either with the teacher or the whole school.

Recesses, morning assemblies, and various events designed for the whole school play a key role fostering the wellbeing of the school community, as well as to support the pupils' healthy development, social relationships, and ability to cope with their studies. They can also be utilised in multidisciplinary learning modules. They reinforce the pupils' transversal competence and give visibility to the school's cultural and linguistic diversity. Study visits and school camps, on the other hand, offer opportunities for expanding the learning environment, learning in authentic situations, and working together with various actors.

In Finland, the education provider has plenty of discretion in how the school day is divided into teaching periods and recesses, what other activities are included in the school day, and what methodologies are used. These solutions contribute to shaping the school culture. When making decisions on them, the principles of developing the operating culture of basic education should be accounted for.

Way to school and school transport

Finland is one of the most sparsely populated countries in Europe. Even though most of the pupils go to the nearest school, the way might be rather long. That is why almost 25% of the pupils in basic education need transportation to school. According to Basic Education Act they have a right to free transportation to school if their journey is longer than five kilometres or if it is dangerous. The pupils who live near their school are encouraged to walk or cycle to the school. The safety of the pupils is taken care in multiple ways. Pupils are taught traffic regulations at school and there is supervision if they must wait for a bus or taxi. In case of bullying or violence during transportation, the schools are responsible for taking action. There are also regulations to the school transportation vehicles.

INSTRUCTION THAT PROMOTES WELLBEING

Previous chapters illustrate how legislation, national guidelines and local practices emphasise the wellbeing of the pupils as fundamental part of school operating culture. Wellbeing is also embedded strongly in the objectives of instruction: in transversal competencies and in many subjects. The following chapters describe the objectives and practices of Finnish basic education, for which the National Core Curriculum (2014) functions as the guiding norm.

Aiming for transversal competence

Transversal competence refers to an entity consisting of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and will. Competence also denotes the ability to apply knowledge and skills in a given situation. Transversal competencies are a new curricular element, introduced in 2014 in the renewed Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education. Competences that cross the boundaries of and link different fields of knowledge and skills are a precondition for

personal growth, studying, work and civic activity now and in the future. **Transversal competence divides into seven competence areas:** Thinking and learning to learn; Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; Taking care of oneself and managing daily life; Multi-literacy; ICT Competence; Working life competence and entrepreneurship; Participation, involvement and building a sustainable future.

The aforementioned competence areas are frequently interconnected. Their joint objective is, in line with the mission of basic education and taking the pupils' age into account, to support growth as a human being and to develop the competences required for membership in a democratic society and conforming to sustainable way of living. It is particularly vital to encourage the pupils to recognise their uniqueness, personal strengths and development potential, and to appreciate themselves. The competence areas have been integrated into the objectives and key content areas of the school subjects. The subject descriptions point out the links between the objectives of the subjects and the transversal competences.

One of the transversal competencies is called **Taking care of oneself and managing daily life.** Managing daily life requires an increasingly wide range of skills. The school community for instance guides the pupils to understand that everyone influences both their own and other people's wellbeing, health and safety. The pupils are encouraged to take care of themselves and others, to practice skills that are important for managing their daily lives and to work for the wellbeing of their environment. During their years in basic education, the pupils learn to know and understand the significance of factors that promote or undermine wellbeing and health and the significance of safety, and to find information related to these areas. They are given opportunities to assume responsibility for their own and shared work and actions, and to develop their emotional and social skills. The pupils grow to appreciate the importance of human relationships and caring for others. They also

learn time management, which is an important part of daily life management and self-regulation. The pupils are given opportunities to practice looking after their own safety and that of others in various situations, also in traffic. They are guided to anticipate dangerous situations and to act appropriately in them. They are taught to recognise key symbols related to safety, to protect their privacy and to set personal boundaries.

This competence area covers besides mentioned issues also acting in the increasingly technological daily life, and managing personal finance and consumption, all of which are elements of a sustainable way of living. Basic education encourages the pupils to think positively about their future.

Besides taking care of oneself and managing daily life all the other transversal competencies are related to pupil welfare. For instance, **Cultural competence** means that pupils are guided in recognising and appreciating cultural meanings in their environment and building a personal cultural identity and positive relationship with the environment. **Participation, involvement and building a sustainable future** – competence means that pupils will take part in planning, implementing, assessing and evaluating their own learning, joint school work and learning environments. The aim of the participatory practices is to empower the pupils as members of a group and society.

Pupil welfare is taken into account in all instruction, in all subjects. There still are several subjects that can be considered as 'wellbeing subjects'. Subjects like Physical education, Health education and Home economics ensure that pupils will get diverse and varied instruction to develop their social, emotional and physical skills and knowledge related to their wellbeing.

For instance, Home Economics includes both theory and practice. Pupils learn, besides cooking, important daily life skills and working together. The instruction lays a foundation for sustainable life style, food knowledge and skills as well as consumer skills. The instruction of home economics covers all aspects of transversal competences.

UNDERLYING VALUES THAT PROMOTE WELLBEING OF UNIQUE PUPILS

Finnish basic education is founded on values that stress uniqueness of each pupil and their right to a good education. Cultural diversity is understood as richness in a society, in schools and their learning environments. It is also stated that the development of basic education is guided by the goals and extensive principles of equality and equity. Education contributes to promoting economic, social, regional and gender equality. Education shall not demand or lead to religious, ideological or political commitment of the pupils. Instead education promotes wellbeing, democracy and active agency in civil society. Learning together across boundaries of languages, cultures, religions and beliefs creates a setting for genuine interaction and communality, which is important basis for wellbeing of individuals. These values are not just words that are spoken or written. Values can be recognised both from structural and pedagogical perspectives in Finnish education.

Global Citizenship – Promoting Democracy

Developing pupils' global citizenship skills as well as promoting local and global democracy are important values in Finnish education. Global citizenship has at least five components: intercultural skills, sustainable way of living, social competence, global responsibility and partnership for development and economical skills. All these are combined with ethical skills, world citizen ethics. Developing these skills is included in various parts of the core curriculum, in general guidelines, pedagogical approaches and in subject teaching. Human rights education and democracy education is also included in various subjects.

'Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression' is one of the aforementioned seven competence areas defined in National Core Curriculum. The competence is aimed at supporting wellbeing in a culturally diverse school and society. Transversal competences are to be promoted in all teaching.

The core curriculum also gives seven guidelines for developing school culture. Among those are Equity and equality and Cultural diversity and language awareness.

“The school community recognises the right to one’s own language and culture as a fundamental right. The pupils become acquainted with cultural traditions, constructively discuss different ways of thinking and acting, and create new ways of acting together.”

“Equal treatment comprises both safeguarding everybody’s fundamental rights and opportunities for participation and addressing individual needs.”

Own Language, Own Mind – Teaching of Mother Tongue

Core Curriculum for Basic Education stresses language awareness. Language awareness means that every adult in a school is a linguistic model and the teacher of the language of his or her subject. It is crucial to understand that the languages that pertain to academic discourse can be very different from the languages that students know well and are at ease with. Students who come from immigrant backgrounds or from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds or with learning disabilities may be particularly challenged, if the school is not a linguistically conscious one.

Mother tongue is the language for feelings, identity and thinking. According to the constitution of Finland everybody living in Finland have the right to maintain and develop their own language and culture. Multilingualism is a great gift and resource. The teaching language in Finnish schools is Finnish or Swedish and in some cases Sámi, Roma or Sign language. The schools may provide also bilingual teaching. In addition to this teaching of mother tongue is provided as supplementary education, financed by separate state funding. Finnish as a second language teaching is provided as long as needed for the student to learn native level language skills.

Same World – Different Beliefs

The majority of Finns, 73% belong to the Evangelical-Lutheran Church, 24,3% are non-religious, 1.6% belong to various religions and 1% belong to the Orthodox Church (Population Register Centre, 2016). The Lutheran and Orthodox churches have a special relationship with the state and are close to being state religions.

In school, all pupils may participate in teaching of Lutheran Religion. They also have an entitlement to teaching in one’s own religion or Ethics (Life stance education). Religion or Ethics are compulsory subjects. It is stated that education in Finland shall not demand or lead to religious, belief or political commitment of the pupils. All teaching of Religion and Ethics follows this rule as well.

About 95% of pupils study Religion, 5% study Ethics. The situation is different in different parts of the country. New core curricula are provided for Evangelical-Lutheran, Orthodox and Catholic religion as well as Islam and Judaism. Other religions may also be taught according to pupils’ needs. Studying one’s own religion is optional, there needs to be a minimum of three parents asking for the teaching of their own religion.

Studying one’s own religion is usually considered to be very important for religious minorities. Ethics is felt to be very important for pupils not belonging to any religious community. The curricula on all religions and ethics include also studying of human rights and especially children’s rights. Basic knowledge of the world’s major religions and secular views is included as a means of promoting tolerance and understanding.

In Finland, all the children usually go to the nearest school run by the municipality. This provides a good opportunity to learn how to live and work with people coming from different cultures and backgrounds – a skill very much needed in a good life. The schools are to be safe places where different views, opinions and beliefs about the world can be discussed with the help of the teacher.

Teaching of own religion and mother tongue creates good contacts and communication with the local religious and ethnic communities as well as bringing the religious knowledge and awareness to the schools as the teachers usually come from these communities. This is very helpful whenever problems need to be solved. It also makes the cultural diversity present and visible in school life and promotes the wellbeing of minority students.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Previous chapters highlight several resources and activities that promote wellbeing of pupils in Finland both at system level and in daily school practices. There are also good databases, with useful indicators to follow up pupils' welfare in schools and municipalities. For instance, TEA-viisari database service, developed by National Agency for Education and the National Institute for Health and Wellbeing, offers a free system to follow up several health and wellbeing indicator locally. Also, School health promotion study, which has been made every other year since 1996 by National Institute for Health and Wellbeing, offers important trend data for schools and municipalities. Most of these trends are positive. For example, Finnish pupils smoke and use drugs less than before and they have a positive attitude towards their own future. These are key findings for wellbeing also in the future. Along with good resources and positive trends there still are several major challenges related to gender, health and minority issues.

Physical activity and sedentary time

Finland invests in increasing children's physical activity and decreasing their sedentary time. Even though Finnish pupils are in relatively good health, overweight, obesity as well as so called sedentary lifestyles are problems. This public health issue has also been a concern of the Finnish Government, and as a result the government initiated the National

Obesity Programme 2012–2018 '*Overcoming obesity – wellbeing from healthy nutrition and physical activity*'. The programme was preceded by another still ongoing national action programme called '*Finnish Schools on the Move*'. The aim of the programme is to establish a physically active culture in Finnish comprehensive schools. Since the programme started more than 70% of Finnish comprehensive schools has joined in.

The National Core Curriculum emphasises the importance of a physically active life for pupils' learning and wellbeing. The '*Finnish Schools on the Move*' programme has proven to be an effective tool for developing the operating culture of Finnish schools. During lessons, sedentary work has been decreased by implementing physically active learning methods and short active breaks. Some lessons are held outside in the school surroundings. There are classrooms without traditional school chairs and desks; the pupils stand or sit on big gym balls or work on the floor. Different subject lessons containing a lot of movement and can be held in the gym. The aim of these changes is to create better learning conditions and to avoid long periods of continued sitting. Successfulness of the programme requires changes in attitudes and pedagogical practices of all teachers, which is not easy. The feedback given by pupils and teachers, who have participated in '*Finnish Schools on the Move*' – programme, has been very positive. They feel the methods used in the programme have increased positive interaction, physical activity and wellbeing in schools. On the other hand, traditional customs in schools are strong. (Aira et al., 2015). The challenge is how to persuade the remaining 30% of schools to take part in the programme. 70% is a good result, but not enough.

Good outcomes and remarkable gender differences

The foundation of basic education is strong and Finnish education has a positive reputation. Finnish pupils have achieved very good results in for example the PISA and TIMSS evaluations. However, the results show a small but steady

decline since 2006 (Vettenranta et al., 2016). The differences between regions and schools are still minor in Finland, but the gender-related differences are high. Even though equality is one of the leading values in Finnish education, it seems that basic education treats boys and girls in an unequal manner. Girls are performing significantly better than boys. This phenomenon is not new, but its recognition has been lacking in education planning. Boys are also over-represented in dropout rates. Nearly all pupils finish their basic education studies, but in secondary education 5% of students drop out every year. While some of them may find their way to education or work, about 15% of 18 to 24-year-old men and 11% of women do not participate in any secondary education (Myllyniemi, 2015). This trend is a result of many factors. One them may be that current basic education does not provide all pupils with adequate learning skills.

On the other hand, latest PISA survey results about 15-year-old pupils' wellbeing and attitudes towards their life in Finland were positive (Väljjarvi, 2017). Our country was once again one of the top performing countries. Finnish boys are especially satisfied with their lives. Finnish pupils in general show a strong sense of community in schools and they have good relationships with their family and friends. Therefore, investing in pupils' wellbeing in schools has proven to have a positive impact also on pupils' lives outside school. However, there is still a lot to develop, especially on the subject of gender-related differences in learning outcomes

Wellbeing of minority students is a challenge

Many aspects of Finnish education promote the wellbeing of minorities. However, problems and challenges remain. The growing presence of negative attitudes and less tolerance, accepting 'hate speech' and even racism in our society is visible also in schools and can be directed at pupils who somehow differ from the majority of pupils. Minority pupils often experience more bullying than their peers in Finland (Huotari et al., 2011).

In spite of all the various forms of support that have been offered to pupils with minority backgrounds, many pupils still struggle to achieve the same learning outcomes as their peers. Schools are to support each pupil's language learning – in the case of migrant pupils, this includes the pupil's mother tongue as well as the language of instruction, which is usually Finnish. Pupils with migrant background are entitled to special support, which encompasses one year in preparatory teaching as well as extra support in the schooling that follows. The latest PISA report, however, shows that migrant pupils' learning outcomes are much lower than those of their peers. In mathematics Finnish – and Swedish-speaking Finns achieved 514 points, second-generation migrants achieved 466 points, and first-generation migrants achieved 438 points. The difference between the points means that first generation migrants are approximately two years behind and second generation pupils are one behind in their studies. Similar differences in test scores were found in reading skills and science as well. The differences between the aforementioned groups of pupils are more significant than in many European countries. Now that the number of migrant pupils is increasing, it is very important to address this issue. In many parts of Finland, the schools have just now received their first migrant pupils. The new core curriculum emphasises language awareness and cultural diversity in all teaching. Good practices need to be developed and shared, and teachers need in-service training on migrant teaching.

There is also a group of pupils who feel excluded. These feelings may be caused by many factors and we should study them thoroughly, because social exclusion creates a risk of radicalisation and even drifts towards violent groups. The violent extremist groups in Finland are mainly neo-Nazi groups or similar. These groups are a threat especially to ethnic minority youth, mainly outside school but sometimes also in school. This may also contribute to the forming of religious extremism, which is yet rare in Finland. Schools need to focus on and find new ways to prevent social exclusion.



While migrant pupils and those of Islamic faith are often targeted, sexual minorities are also under threat from time to time. The studies show that about 80% of students belonging to sexual or gender minorities experience bullying or ill treatment in and outside of schools, sometimes even by teachers (Finnish Ombudsman for Equality, 2016). The schools have a duty to promote equality and equity. Starting with the new core curriculum in 2016 there is more teaching about sexual and gender diversity. The teaching in school is required to be gender-sensitive.

Pupils belonging to minority religions as well as non-religious pupils may also experience human rights violations (Merenmies, 2017). This mainly presents itself in the form of heavily religious practices in school or poor teaching arrangements for Ethics or own religion. Even though schools have developed their self-evaluation practices, it

seems that many schools have difficulties in recognising practices that are not in line with official guidelines. In some issues traditions and habits seem to be stronger than professionally identified goals in national and local curricula.

Equality in a sparsely populated country

Keeping up equal, high-quality education services in a sparsely populated country is difficult. According to international evaluations Finnish schools have succeeded quite well and there are no significant differences in learning outcomes in different parts of the country. There are some alarming signs, though. Municipalities, which are the main providers of education, have a lot of freedom in organising and developing education. Decentralised system is a strength for instance from the innovative aspect. School related innovations very seldom emerge in central administration. The system has also weaknesses.

Many Finnish municipalities have difficulties in financing statutory public services like education. For instance, the quality of learning environments, materials and even school meals may vary between the municipalities. The small municipalities have difficulties in hiring qualified teachers and support personnel. There are also many schools which have serious indoor climate problems, which causes extra costs for the municipalities. All these examples are related to wellbeing of the pupils' now and in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

The focus of this article is to provide insight into how the wellbeing of pupils is supported by different aspects of the Finnish education system, as well as to the challenges we confront. The broad approach that Finnish education takes to wellbeing in schools has resulted in resources that promote the welfare and learning of pupils. Despite of the worrying signs arising from gender and minority issues and the low population density, Finnish schools have many resources which keep up pupil welfare. There are risks that differences in different parts of the country will widen though. Local education providers (mainly municipalities) are responsible for organising and developing basic education and services related to it. The duties for each provider are similar, but their financial resources differ. There is also variation in human resources. National norms and programmes will not be successful if local public services management is not up to date. It may also hinder the development of new (local) innovations. Migration and the ageing population will probably widen the variation between municipalities in the future. Keeping up equal education in all parts of the country is a great challenge to the whole society and there is a need to create new structures and guidance system tools to support municipalities with lack of resources.

This article introduces several activities, resources that promote wellbeing of pupil in Finnish basic education. Individual wellbeing is dependent on the resources which a society can offer. But as

Lagerspetz (2011) reminds us, wellbeing cannot be equated with these resources or with the use of these resources or their subjective profits for individuals. The importance of societal resources are the prospects and opportunities that emerging wellbeing offers to individuals to become and be an active actor in their lives and in society. These ideas are strongly linked in ongoing basic education curriculum reform in Finland. Schools have resources to offer services to individual pupils to keep up and strengthen their wellbeing. There are structural resources like special needs education and free school lunches. In addition to these structural resources schools provide pupils with opportunities for empowering their symbolic resources like identity (this is what I am), behavioural resources, like manners (I will succeed by behaving this way) and social resources, like relationships (I am appreciated and I have got company). (Kiilakoski, 2012). Schools that promote pupils' welfare can make a difference from individual and societal point of view.

Ongoing basic education curriculum reform emphasises the importance of pupils' welfare. Individual approach, taking care of every pupil and offering them meaningful and joyful school days and help if needed is a mission which will reflect on the whole society. That is why succeeding in curriculum reform is important. The first results of studies conducted of the reform are promising (e.g. Pietarinen et al., 2016). Finnish principals and teachers have been very active in national and local curriculum processes. Making a new curriculum of their own has also inspired them to start numerous local school improvement projects. But there is still a lot of work ahead, both on a local and a national level. Developing education system is a marathon, a huge task in rapidly changing world. No country can develop the recipe for success alone. That is why cooperation and exchanging ideas internationally is important. We hope that this 'portrait' of wellbeing in Finnish schools will inspire readers.

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FRANCE

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ABSTRACT



Background: In 2000, the Lisbon Treaty set a common goal to all EU members: “become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010”. Education policy is the primary means to enhance that “human capital”. New research on wellbeing aims at developing the “politics of happiness”, and the *quality of public education* as an important cog in that process. However, wellbeing at school does not yet operate under a coherent and consistent framework. Local differing interpretations or translations remain.

Aims: Analysing the French understanding of students’ wellbeing and the rationale for supporting and promoting it in France, taking into account the specificity of national policy.

Method: a systematic literature review, a conceptual analysis of educational policy and current research initiatives.

Results: Public education in France relies on a strong Republican framework created in 1882. “School climate” policy is consistent with this framework. An essential tension that exists today is the tension between instruction and education. Wellbeing is not seen as the object and aim of instruction (seen as a mark of alternative and private schools), but as a collective outcome. Therefore, most experiments focus on learning environments thanks to new classroom ergonomics and school architecture. Learning skills remains the main goal of these experiments even if there is a notable trend to confuse “school climate” with a convivial atmosphere and person-centred education.

Key words: France, Social transition, school climate policy, happiness studies, ergonomics, architecture

FRANCE: The French “School climate policy”: wellbeing as a collective outcome.

INTRODUCTION

Background

In the early 1990s, also known as the post- “cold war” period, wellbeing became a political issue in international organisations for comparing nations and some national accounts as Canada or UK (Waldron, 2010). New research on wellbeing aims at developing the “politics of happiness” and the *quality of public education* as an important cog in that process (Bok, 2010) to enhance *human capital*, the capital of the 21st century according the Lisbon Treaty. The common goal of the EU is “to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010” (Lisbon European Council, 2000).

In the meantime, France was confronted with a major social transition. During the 1990s and at the beginning of the 2000s, the country was transformed by a new policy of modernisation and the impact of globalisation. In short, it was the end of the so called “French exception”. The clinical category of “suffering” had met with great success in the 1990s: it is both a clinical word used in psychoanalytical psychopathology and a political word to describe a “diagnosis of the times”. Thus, the political call to “listen to suffering” became, in the 1990s, a method of local intervention within vulnerable populations (Fassin, 2004). But these political categories quickly vanished from the French political agenda after a moment of success. Nevertheless, it was a way to understand the new face of poverty in post-industrial society from the local and subjective experience. Social studies showed this need, and education was often seen as a *cause* of this so-called French social suffering:

First, Pierre Bourdieu at the Collège de France, in a bestseller collective volume edited in 1993, speaks about “positional suffering” (*misère de position*) as opposed to material poverty (*misère de condition*) (1999)¹. This concept aims at understanding why the French tend to be so negative when speaking about their life satisfaction, and perceive so much unfairness and despair in their lives. The cause of this negative emotional effect was found in the violent disparity between “academic achievement” (the idea that success in life requires having a degree was a *motto* of the “democratisation of teaching” during the 1980s) and the negative lived experience of having a degree that is neither relevant or adequate to one’s job or of being unemployed and overqualified (Beaud, 2002). “Outcasts of the inside” highlight this hard reality.

This analysis was then reinforced by fieldwork in schools within another sociological tradition. François Dubet (EHESS) developed a sociology of “school experience” focused more accurately on students’ lived experience at each step of the French curriculum (Dubet, 1991; 1996): primary school, middle school, high school (and more recently university). The main goal was to understand how the personality development process (“subjectivation”) depends on the ability to articulate three divergent *logics of actions* within the school universe: integration (to society), strategy (in a market) and subjectivity (developing a personality). For instance, “good students” in high school know perfectly how to balance school life and personal life (Dubet, Martuccelli, 1996: 257).

1 Psychiatrist and anthropologist, Arthur Kleinman (1997) at Harvard University speaks about “social suffering” as well without focusing on education policy.

Although sociological in design, this qualitative approach produces findings (unfortunately only available in French) clearly congruent with the study and definition of “subjective wellbeing” (SWB) covering emotional reactions and cognitive judgments (as feelings of safety and justice) in order to see how French students experiences the quality of their lives. Moreover, the analysis of these skills was studied in a context of a global school mutation and even the dissolution of the “republican school system founded on the rationalistic values of *integration and social cohesion* coming from the Jules Ferry (1832–1893) law of 1882 (when public education became secular, compulsory and free) (Lelièvre, 2000).

Finally, in 2014, when the economist Claudia Senik (Paris School of Economy) reopened the debate on the cultural origins of French “pessimism” (Senik, 2014), she was, unsurprisingly, not really listened to. Written in English and having some echo in international newspapers, her article could be construed as mere “French bashing” and few analysts actually read this quantitative paper as a way to measure and confirm Bourdieu’s and Dubet’s findings of their collective and qualitative inquiry of the 1990s. This misunderstanding comes from the notion of “happiness studies” and the meaning of “happiness” in a country where people feel like they are experiencing a violent social transition. In order to speak of “suffering”, a new language of wellbeing is emerging, coming from the European impulse to reframe most policies: health, work², justice³ and education⁴ as

the paper would show. So, in “The French unhappiness puzzle: The cultural dimension of happiness”, this culture is seen as “mentality” and a set of values coming from school socialisation. As the paper shows, “A set of observations comforts the cultural interpretation of the French idiosyncratic unhappiness: immigrants of the first generation who have been taught in school in France are less happy than those who have not. Similarly, first-generation immigrants who have lived for a long time in France (more than 20 years) are less happy, all else equal, than those who have been there for shorter periods. In turn, French emigrants living abroad are less happy, all else equal, than the average European migrants.” (Senik, 2014, 3–4).

Within this French background, the paper aims to analyse the local understanding of students’ wellbeing and the rationale for supporting and promoting it in France from the specificity of a national policy. In order to answer this issue, a systematic literature review (Ridley, 2012) about “wellbeing at school” was launched at the *French Institute of Education* (Ifé) between 2012 and 2014 in French and English papers. The main finding in French papers was a negative result with the exception of two references: a comparative study between France and Germany focusing on kindergarten (Brougère, 2010) ; a strategic report of the government to precisely develop this new preoccupation (Sauveron, 2013). However, this is an important result: although the word “wellbeing” can be easily integrated into the new political language of contemporary *consensus*, conceptions of wellbeing can radically differ, notably in the world of education.

Conceptual analysis is therefore necessary in order not to confuse very different realities (psychiatric epidemiology and life satisfaction, for instance) under the same keyword or on the contrary differentiate identical issues under different labels (mental health at school before the 1990s, for example and wellbeing at school after the 1990s, school climate and wellbeing). Moreover, the search for (or more accurately: the “quest for”) social indicators require an accurate

2 For the case of the suffering worker (Dejours, 1998, Lézé, 2017) including teachers working for the Department of Education (Lantheaume, Hérou, 2015). ‘Nevertheless, the keyword “psychosocial risks” rapidly replaced the word “suffering”, to speak of “school work” (Romano, 2016)

3 For the case of suicide in prison (Fernandez, Lézé, 2011)

4 Another important fact of the French background: at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, children and adolescents’ violence against themselves (addiction, self-harming, suicide, binge-drinking) or others (assaults and anti-social behaviour became a political mental health issue. Focusing attention on teenage suffering became a virtual cliché (Gansel, Lézé, 2016)

conceptual analysis. So, what is at stake in a political analysis of a policy is assessing whether the change in abstract global political words is really translated into concrete local institutions. Indeed, the desirability of a new political value tells us only one thing: this value has not yet become fact. With these inclusion and exclusion criteria in mind, a new *corpus* was constructed in order to analyse why “wellbeing” was not a word that was actually discussed in education before 2015 in France, but of course *included as a sub-category* in education policy. The main result of this analysis shows that subjective wellbeing is not seen as a political *objective* (a person-centred policy is not yet a consensus) at the heart of an education policy, but as a *secondary positive outcome* of the school climate policy (environment-centred policy). Some educational experiments⁵ show however both strands.

From this perspective, in the first part of this article we reconstruct the French understanding of wellbeing, what was *lost* in translation when we used the word “wellbeing” at school and what is *gained* in translation with the current school climate policy: how these policies support and promote “wellbeing” in schools as a secondary positive effect. In the second part of this article we focus on learning environment experiments, in particular classroom ergonomics, and school architecture.

THE FRENCH UNDERSTANDING OF WELLBEING

Lost in translation: a negative connotation of “subjective wellbeing”

The specificity of French republican education since 1882 is based on a *common morality* for a ‘one and indivisible’ secular republic. Therefore, French schooling is at the heart of the republican

state. *Unity* must prevail over that which divides (Lelièvres, 2000), and the social group must prevail over individuals. How can wellbeing be understood in this political framework? The concept of wellbeing is not self-evident, notably in education and depends on *moral conception* of personhood (Sikes, Nixon, Carr, 2003).

Positive psychology and “subjective wellbeing” concerns “personal growth and development”. Firstly, this utilitarian ethics is individualistic and not consistent with a rationalistic and deontological ethics valourised by the French Republic. Secondly, “local idioms of distress” (Nichter, 2010), but also local idioms of happiness (what is fulfilment in life?) are based on this common morality. Thirdly, the utilitarian ethics is widely seen as a “self-esteem” myth in education (Hewitt, 1998; Famose, Bertsch, 2009) even if these endless discussions turned out to be a reiteration of the causality dilemma known as the “chicken or the egg” problem. Finally, in France, subjective wellbeing seems to be the mark of *alternative and private schools*, more “person-centred” schools where spirituality, creativity and authenticity are opposed to the seriousness and the rationalism of the Republican school. To a large extent, most learning skills (such as “critical thinking”) are systematically pitted against any aspect of subjectivity. One comparative study between France and Germany shows that this Republican school model is observed *very early* on in France, as well as the low importance given to the wellbeing of the child in French nursery schools. The idea is to transform children into *pupils* as quickly as possible (Brougère, 2010).

There is thus an essential tension between two ethics: a moral education based on rationality in which instruction and learning skills for a generation prevail *and* a moral education based on empathy in which “psychosocial skills” and the blossoming and development of individuals prevail over learning skills. This tension could also be seen as a major change in educational focus and priorities in the country, as occurred in the UK, which could become, within the EU, a paradigmatic case: from the student to the *child*,

5 <http://eduscol.education.fr/experitheque/carte.php>

from the classroom to *personhood*, from cognition to *emotion*, from school routine to educational *utopia*, from pain (and stress) to *pleasure and joy*, from mental health to *subjective wellbeing*, from the value of equality to the value of *happiness* (Ecclestone, Hayes, 2009).

Nevertheless, the *collective and objective conception of wellbeing* is consistent with a rationalistic and deontological ethics centred on collective responsibility and duties. An instance of this consistency is the so-called WHO definition of health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social *wellbeing* and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 1946) as in the international *Health Behaviour in School-aged Children* (HBSC) survey, a cross-sectional survey conducted every four years since 1982 under the auspices of the WHO Regional Office for Europe for pupils of 11, 13 and 15 years⁶. French pupils are included since 1994 in the survey. In the French survey of the collective “school experience” (Godeau, Navarro, Arnaud, 2013), consistent with the “school climate policy”, the observation is that there is a marked alteration in the school experience of pupils between leaving primary school and entering college.

Republican translation of wellbeing in public education: *school climate policy*

School climate policy is the current model of wellbeing in France. “School climate” is well established with extensive research since the 1980s. and *The National School Climate Center* at Columbia University (New-York, USA) has developed research and tools on the topic since 1996⁷. Studies show the strong link between a confidence-inducing environment, quality of learning and school success (Debarbieux, E. *and al*, 2012). It is a systemic approach with five dimensions: (i.) collaborative relationships within the school community, (ii.) active teaching and

learning founded on a strong leadership (clear vision of the school project), (iii.) security (the school reacts to harassment and transgressions), (iv.) physical environment, (v.) feeling of belonging to the school community. Quality of life and wellbeing are a collective outcome⁸. The *unit of intervention* is the “learning environment” and this approach is fully consistent with recommendations of the OECD *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA). The main focus of this policy is how learning outcomes are related to learning environments. Wellbeing is only a part of the overall evaluation and is synonymous with *mental health issues* in relation to the possible stress of school environment (competition, for instance).

In France, the local challenge for this policy is *violence at school and thus security*. A national diagnosis was established by the Department of Education in 2010 during a meeting about the security at school (“Etats généraux de la sécurité à l’école”⁹). Since 2013, the new legal framework promotes a new desirable value of care (“benevolence”) in order to rebuild the Republic: “Security and, more specifically, the conditions for a serene school climate, must be established in schools to promote learning, wellbeing, the development of students and good working conditions for all. School-based violence, whose origins are many, requires comprehensive treatment and long-term action, not a purely safe approach that is not sufficiently effective” (Légifrance, 2013). How schools are putting this policy into practice?

Firstly, civic education classes are part of this approach as well as an environment which helps “contain” aggressive and violent behaviours *between students* and encourages learning self-control, conforming to the collective rules and respect for the law. So, the need for a person-

6 <http://www.hbsc.org/about/index.html>

7 <http://www.schoolclimate.org>

8 https://www.reseau-canope.fr/climatscolaire/fileadmin/user_upload/doc_actus/Approfondissement_climat_scolaire.pdf

9 http://media.education.gouv.fr/file/Rentree_2010/48/4/Rentree-2010-0401_fiche_152484.pdf

centred education is often seen as a solution to deviant and anti-conformist behaviours. But if school climate includes discipline (school rules and regulations), it is mostly to be a tool to *prevent* violence between students (peer victimisation and harassment). In fact, the first victims of this violence are the students in class. It is therefore a question of creating a climate of security and confidence. In this framework, benevolence (or care) mean absence of *humiliation* at school (Lapeyronnie, 2014: 26), including in the relationship between teacher and student¹⁰.

Secondly, School climate policy have a new management tool since 2010: national surveys in 2011, 2013 (middle school) and 2015 (high school)¹¹. But this national policy must be the policy of each educational institution as well. The motto is “A framework to be respected, thus a protective framework”. Easy access to a collaborative website¹² was developed to provide concrete help with local dissemination, using a qualitative tool for a diagnosis of school climate¹³. This tool is pragmatic and adapted to the daily reality of the institutions. Therefore, it aims to assess 7 factors which could have a positive or negative impact on school climate, as well as the whole organisation of the educational establishment: team strategy, co-operative pedagogy, school justice, prevention of violence and harassment, co-education (involving the families of students), partnership practices outside of school with, for instance, associations, cultural institutions, and quality of life at school (time and space organisation). These local diagnoses were in fact more relevant than the national surveys, and generally efficient to prevent violence. So,

wellbeing is seen as a political and collective ideal of social cohesion between these dimensions. But institutions are then torn by their dual mission of “protecting” students against the world and “preparing” them for the world of tomorrow.

Thirdly, schools are putting this policy into practice in changing the *learning environments* including design, ergonomics and architecture.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AS CASE STUDIES

In a database of 5943 initiatives in education throughout France, only 257 items with “wellbeing” at school projects¹⁴ can be counted: 25 items promote Sophrology, 22 items promote yoga, 44 items promote Freinet’s active and collaborative pedagogy and 127 items promote “benevolence” at school. These items show several effective examples of wellbeing conceptions at school and give evidence of the two definitions of wellbeing: collective and objective; individualistic and subjective. For instance, two experiments use the *Situation, Perception, Auto-pilot, Reaction and Knowledge* (SPARK) resilience program designed by the positive psychologist Ilona Boniwell (Boniwell, Ayers, 2013). One is a private middle school and the other a state-funded middle school in a priority education network¹⁵. A private elementary school (the *lab school*) was also launched recently in Paris and designed by the psychologist Pascale Haag, assistant Professor at the EHESS, Paris.

These experiments are scattered and very localised. In the idea of “climate school”, it is possible to find a very strong feature of the French Republican school history. School is a collective space and architecture (Derouet-Besson, 1998). Two experiments seem therefore more

10 http://cache.media.eduscol.education.fr/file/Actu_2014/43/5/2014_ecole_bienveillante_bdef_315435.pdf

11 <http://www.reseau-canope.fr/climatscolaire/diagnostiquer/connaitre-les-resultats-des-enquetes-nationales/les-dernieres-enquetes-de-climat-scolaire.html>

12 <https://www.reseau-canope.fr/climatscolaire/accueil.html>

13 https://www.reseau-canope.fr/climatscolaire/fileadmin/user_upload/outilspdf/OUTIL_D_AUTODIAGNOSTIC_1er_degr%C3%A9.pdf

14 <http://eduscol.education.fr/experitheque/carte.php>

15 <http://eduscol.education.fr/experitheque/consultFicheIndex.php?idFiche=12268>

representative of this way to conceive education and the learning environment.

The 'Ideal classroom': design and ergonomics

Architecture is the material translation of political and moral values. Thus, the Republican school has to rethink its values according to a new material translation of the learning environment. Indeed, classrooms have not evolved since the 1980s, not to say since the nineteenth century in the orientation of the room towards the blackboard (today White). On May 27, 2014, the Department of Education launched the contest "Prix Jean Prouvé , the school furniture of tomorrow" during an important Colloquium at L'École Boule in Paris: "Refounding school: a question for design". The objective of the prize is explicitly to develop a new approach "focused on the comfort and well-being of pupils in a changing school". This competition had two parts: one is prospective with schools of design, the other is industrial with professional designers (with one winner for each of the three categories, elementary school, middle school and high school). On February 4, 2015, four prizewinners were awarded in the "Industrial Designers" category: Unqui Designers, Prism Design Studio, Pierre Abello Design and Pierre-Louis Gerlier Design . But a single innovation has gathered sufficient orders and offers of industrialization for a decision to go into production from September 2017: SOFY, Pierre Abello Design, for High school.



The first experiment was developed one year before this event, a mere "brain-storming", brings together designers and ergonomists in order to design the "ideal classroom" for elementary schools only. Classroom organisation is a very strong feature of the republican and rationalist ideal of French teaching: a teacher with authority has to speak in front of a group of pupils aligned in a row, docile and silent. Today, what is the best learning environment for pupils? How can modularity of space be tackled? How can furniture be adapted to contemporary pedagogy in schools? What is the place for media, outside or in the centre of the room? Two *works in progress*, in Marseille since 2013¹⁶ and in Paris since 2017, show how collective wellbeing largely depends on the quality of the layout of interior architecture and materials used for the classroom.

An innovative architecture for translating benevolence

The case of the Niki-de Saint-Phalle nursery and primary school in Saint-Denis by Paul Le Querrec architect, a priority education zone, is a very good example of this trend in school architecture¹⁷, perhaps even a paradigmatic one. The architecture aims at translating the value of a "caring and safe school" and creating a peaceful atmosphere that promotes student learning. "I imagined a place where children feel better than at home, built with simple materials, and whose shapes produce well-being " (Zappi, 2016). The architectural concept was based on the human brain and its two hemispheres. Curved lines are used as well as natural materials. The colour of the building changes according to the perspectives of the pupils. The classroom furniture is handmade and curved as well. Outdoor natural light creates a warm atmosphere

16 https://www.academia.edu/3647582/De_l_id%C3%A9al_du_bonheur_%C3%A0_la_norme_scolaire

17 <http://www.paul-le-querrec.fr/projets/projetannee.php?pageld=43&sortBy=annee> / <http://ville-saint-denis.fr/tv/un-nouveau-groupe-scolaire-%C3%A0-saint-denis-niky-de-saint-phalle>



holding pupils and teachers.. The transparency between the inside and the outside contribute to the ease of an intuitive orientation: “Every choice made on this project takes into consideration the impact architectural design can have on children’s psycho-motor development”¹⁸.

CONCLUSION

Wellbeing at school seems a positive and easy idea around which to build a political consensus in education. But results show in France an essential tension not only between conceptions of ethics of wellbeing, but also between two conceptual models of wellbeing. Happiness studies works for unification, but there is no standard for promoting wellbeing at school yet.

The first model is an *objectivist model*. Wellbeing is an effect of social institution. The school team stands for social institution as well as school

architecture. The unit of intervention is clearly the learning environment. The goal of the school is primarily to train learning skills and to reduce social inequality.

The second and opposite is a *subjectivist model*. The unit of intervention is to change individuals and socialise with “emotional wellbeing” (self-esteem, responsibility, emotional intelligence, empathy, resilience and stress management, etc.). This model actually promotes a new school goal: equipping people to lead a “fulfilling life”. But can a fulfilling life be led without the landmark of succeeding at exams?

These two ideals could be seen reciprocally as mere ideology. The French civil society (here, the family) has a strong claim to education (as opposed to instruction, done in schools) and the French state could be, as in the UK, tempted to abandon the idea of equality at school and educational achievement in the name of happiness at school. But an educational policy must not throw out learning outcomes in favour of a convivial atmosphere. Because a “knowledge economy”, today or in the future, is certainly not a peaceful and unworldly world.

¹⁸ <http://www.designboom.com/architecture/paul-quernecc-school-saint-denis-09-24-2015/>

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A nighttime photograph of Budapest, Hungary, featuring the illuminated Hungarian Parliament Building and the Chain Bridge over the Danube River. The scene is lit with warm yellow lights from the buildings and bridge, contrasting with the cool blue tones of the twilight sky and water.

HUNGARY

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ABSTRACT



The paper takes an overview of the most important interventions of the Hungarian government and the educational policy in the field of the students' wellbeing. It gives a little glance into the efforts made to provide the basic needs of each student by provisioning of free school meals and textbooks for all. The main part of the paper gives a detailed review of a curriculum development process of Science in the secondary vocational education. It presents the situation which led to a decline in the uptake of Science as a subject in vocational education and the focus of the curriculum development which offers students and teachers more freedom about content by asking them to focus instead on skills-development. This has been exciting for students and for the teachers who engage with it, but they have to change their practice from lecturing to active learning for students. These changes can contribute positively to student wellbeing by making learning more enjoyable and interesting.

Key words: Complex science, curriculum development, paradigm shifts

HUNGARY: Science for wellbeing in secondary education in Hungary

INTRODUCTION

The wellbeing of the students is not only a human right, declared in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child¹, but the basis of a successful education. Students who are well nurtured, cared for, healthy, and feel safe, can learn better than those who miss one or more of these characteristics. There is evidence, that wellbeing is a basis for a good cognitive development of students. Students' wellbeing is Characterised by five outcomes (be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic wellbeing) in the 2006 Education and Inspection Act in UK. At the same time the act 'laid a duty on the governing bodies of schools to promote the wellbeing of pupils at school' (Schools' Role in Promoting Pupil Wellbeing. Draft Guidance for Consultation <https://www.education.gov.uk>; p.3.)

INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE THE WELLBEING OF STUDENTS IN HUNGARY

The Hungarian education system is providing an increasing number of services aiming to improve the wellbeing of students at different levels. On the basic levels of Maslow hierarchy of needs (Huitt, 2007), two main actions were taken to mitigate the effects of poverty among children in recent years: the free school meal and the free study book supply opportunities were widened.

The Children Protection Act² declared that children from financially disadvantaged families should be

provided with free or reduced-priced school meals. According to the latest estimates the number of children getting free or half-price meals in primary and secondary schools and kindergartens³ has reached 720.000, which is 60% of the entire school-going population in Hungary. The Hungarian Government is determined to widen its free schoolbook programme for all children learning in public education,⁴ which was gradually developed during the past years and recently has reached approximately 67% of children in primary and secondary schools.⁵

Besides providing help to fulfil the basic needs of pupils, the financial resources of EU structural funds are used to improve school facilities in less developed areas of Hungary and to develop the pedagogical work of the Hungarian school system into a more student-centred and competence oriented direction⁶. The methodological developments are aiming to increase the learning time of the pupils especially for those whose family could not afford to buy extra tuition after school. According to the latest plans, 1.500 primary schools will receive professional support to transform their half-day teaching approach into a whole day system, combined with a more competence-oriented teaching⁷.

1 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

2 http://net.jogtar.hu/jr/gen/hjegy_doc.cgi?docid=99700031.TV

3 <http://www.mszoe.hu/index.php?oldal=alap.php&id=166>

4 <http://www.kormany.hu/hu/emberi-eroforrasok-miniszteriuma/hirek/ingyenes-lesz-az-also-kozepfokunya-elvvizsga>

5 <http://online-kalkulator.hu/mutatjuk-ezek-a-gyerekek-kapjak-ingeny-a-tankonyveket-szeptembertol-ingeny-es-tankonyv-20162017-tanev/>

6 http://moderniskola.hu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/KK_2017.pptx

7 http://eduline.hu/kozoktatás/2017/1/17/Jon_az_allami_Koala_ami_veget_vethet_a_fron_BC2YV3

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HUNGARIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Public education starts at the age of 3 and lasts till the age of 16 in Hungary. Kindergartens are usually run by local municipalities but there are church and private kindergartens, too. The pedagogical work of the kindergartens is regulated by the Basic Programme of Kindergarten Education⁸, which states that kindergarten education has to promote the development of children's personality, respect their human rights, in a way that ensures equal opportunities for high level education for all children. The Basic Programme provides professional freedom for kindergarten educators, and it declares play as the most important and most powerful tool to promote the development of children in this period of their life. From 2016 each three-year old child has to enrol in kindergarten on the basis of the 2011 Educational Act⁹. This regulation aimed to increase the most disadvantaged children's wellbeing. Previously, when kindergarten education was compulsory only from the age of five, children with serious socio-economic disadvantages could not prepare successfully for entering to the primary school at the age of 6.

Primary school has eight grades and it is divided into two main periods. In the first four years (ISCED-I) usually one or two class teachers teach every subject to the class, while in the second period (ISCED-II) teachers are specialised by subjects.

Secondary education (ISCED-III) in Hungary traditionally has had two different branches (Secondary General Education, Secondary Vocational Education) and three types of schools (Secondary Grammar Schools ['gimnázium'], Secondary Technical Schools ['szakközépiskola'],

and Secondary Vocational Schools ['szakiskola']). In Secondary Grammar School and Secondary Technical School education finished with a school leaving qualification called matriculation, which was always necessary to enter higher education. The second branch of the secondary vocational education (Vocational School) offered students a vocational certificate.

The content of the education is regulated by a three level content-regulation system in Hungary. The actual National Core Curriculum (NCC) contains not only the principles, overall goals, development tasks, and key competences which have to be developed by the public education, but also the content of the general literacy in 10 different subject areas. The syllabi (called kerettanterv in Hungarian which literally means "Framework Curricula" in the Hungarian educational legislation) are the next level of the content regulation, give concrete guidelines for teachers taking into consideration the characteristics of the phases of pedagogical work.¹⁰ They define the objectives of education, the subject system, the topics, the content, and the requirements of subjects, the tasks related to the development of cross-curricular knowledge and ability fields, and the obligatory and recommended time frame available for achieving compliance with the requirements. Finally, as the third level of the curricula system, schools have to develop their own local curricula by choosing framework curricula to implement and elaborate their own pedagogical plans fitting into the chosen framework curricula. The local curriculum contains at least 70% of the syllabi (Framework Curricula) while the rest of its content is based on local elements.

8 https://net.jogtar.hu/jr/gen/hjegy_doc.cgi?docid=a1200363.kor

9 https://net.jogtar.hu/jr/gen/hjegy_doc.cgi?docid=A1100190.TV

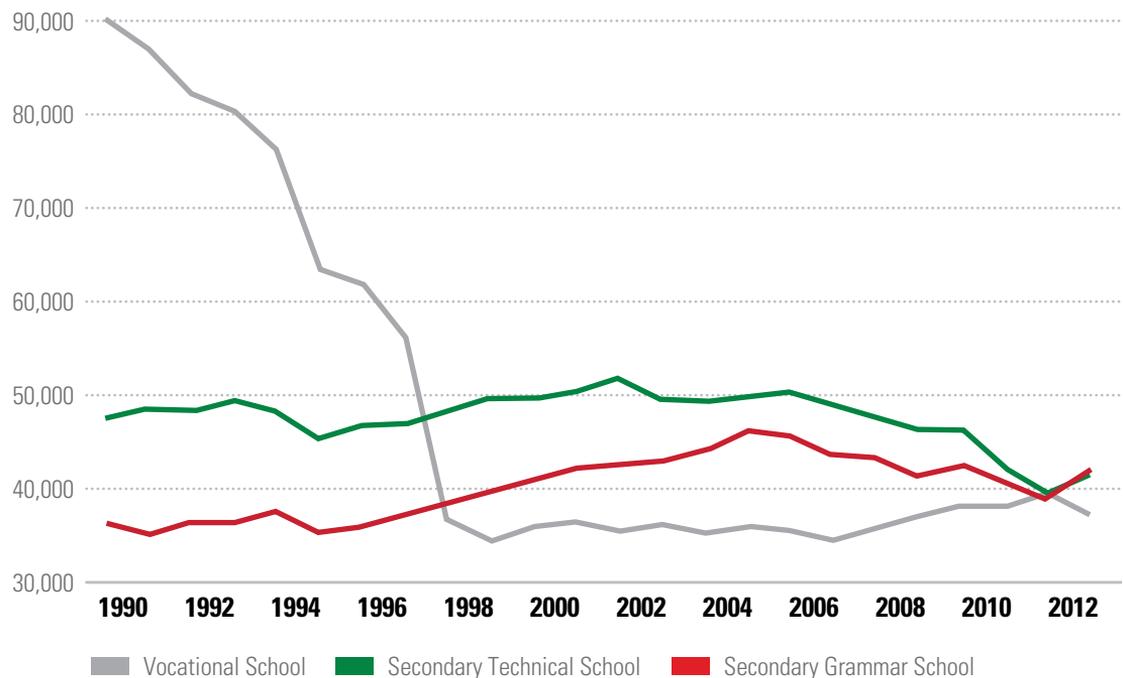
10 regi.ofi.hu/download.php?docID=5846

THE SYSTEMIC REFORM IN THE VOCATIONAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

Some general problems of European countries (e.g. ageing societies and the decreasing number of children resulting in shortages in the labour market) and the rapid change of the technology have created some negative features in the Hungarian economy. As a part of the intended action plan the analysis of the situation have been realised the following problems in the field of the vocational education:

- There is not enough well educated skilled labour who can work effectively in the modern economy
- The quality of the employees is not good enough to work autonomously and creatively in the production of industry
- The basic competences of young workers who leave the secondary vocational education are not strong enough
- The number of the schools preparing students to participate in industrial production has decreased dramatically in the last two decades (see the Figure 1).

Figure 1. Number of students in the secondary vocational education



(Source: Vocational education serves the economy)

The strategic document of the Ministry of National Economy¹¹ set four targets to support the improvement of the economy.

1. Serve the needs of the economy: educate more skilled labour and technicians
2. Strengthen the so-called dual education: promote practice-oriented knowledge, decrease the number of early school-leavers through the provision of practical training in factories
3. Strengthen the prestige of vocational education
4. Improve the system of vocational education: increase the quality, the effectiveness and the efficiency of vocational education.

One of the interventions aiming to improve the prestige of the vocational education has been to renew secondary vocational education from 1st September, 2016, which meant restructuring the system. The previous Secondary Technical School ('szakközépiskola') became Vocational Secondary Grammar School ('szakgimnázium') and the previous Vocational School ('szakiskola') is now named the Secondary Technical School. Vocational Secondary Grammar Schools have four years of education with a vocational and general matriculation. These schools give a possibility for their students to progress to higher education on the one hand, and to enter into the world of work on the other hand. The new Secondary Technical Schools provide three-year education with a vocational school leaving exam, which enables the school-leavers to enter the world of work, but there is a possibility to extend their studies with extra two years to gain the matriculation. The restructuring of the secondary vocational schools went hand in hand with the transformation of their education.

The ideal ratio of theory and training in the vocational education is a never ending debate all over the world. Based on the expectations of the employees and for the benefit of vocational education the practical side of vocational education has been strengthened. One of the results of this process is a significant change in the proportion of academic and vocational subjects and in the numbers of lessons in Vocational Secondary Grammar Schools. After a long professional debate, a ministerial decree (frame curriculum¹²) appeared just before the beginning of the academic year (25. August 2016). It declared a 40%:60% ratio of academic and vocational subjects to practical training in these schools. Earlier the ratio had been the opposite: practical training had 40% and academic and vocational studies received 60%.

The main steps of the content development process of the new complex subject (Science)

The scientific subjects (Biology, Chemistry, Geography, and Physics) suffered the largest losses in the content reform of vocational education. The time allocation for these subjects was reduced by 40% across the whole period of secondary vocational education, but a new subject ('Complex Science') was introduced instead with 108 lessons a year only in the 9th grade of Vocational Secondary Grammar Schools. Because of this situation less teachers of Biology, Chemistry, Geography, and Physics will be needed in the next few years in the vocational secondary grammar schools. This is an existential threat for these active teachers (whose average age is about 57 years) due to the low number of the newly graduated teachers in these fields, this change could also be considered as a tool to deal with the expected labour deficit in these fields.

The Syllabus of the Complex Science for Vocational Secondary Grammar Schools defines the main targets of this subject to improve the

11 The Vocational Education Serves the Economy

12 "frame curriculum" (Kerettanterv)

scientific literacy of the students in a complex way on one hand, and to make a foundation for their further scientific vocational education on the other hand. In the new curricula introduced in 2016, in the grades of 10–12th of Vocational Secondary Grammar Schools only one scientific subject (Biology, or Chemistry, or Geography or Physics) is taught, depending on the vocational profile of the school. For example in a tourist vocational secondary grammar school only geography (and no more Complex Science) is taught in higher grades. This radical change really shocked those teachers, who have to teach the new subject, because they are trained for and are experienced in teaching one or two scientific disciplines, but not complex science. The Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development (HIERD) was asked to give the teachers professional support and was invited to improve the Science Curriculum for the 9th grade of Vocational Secondary Grammar Schools.

The curriculum improvement process is supervised by a board, where the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Education, three different teacher training universities, the Chamber of Teachers, and two professional associations in science are represented. The process is led by the Curriculum Centre of HIERD. Besides the professional curriculum developers, teachers are also invited to take a part in the process of improvement. A short summary of the development process is written in the next part of the paper.

The board and the programme developers agreed on the necessity of revising the aims of the new subject. The new targets (improving the scientific thinking and skills of students, and helping them to become a conscious citizen and live a healthy and happy life) are not too far from the existing ones, but the appearance of students' wellbeing is an important new element in it. To achieve these targets some basic statements were formulated by the experts and accepted by the board. These statements are the basis of the conception of the improvement of the curriculum, and are closely connected to a new concept of scientific literacy.

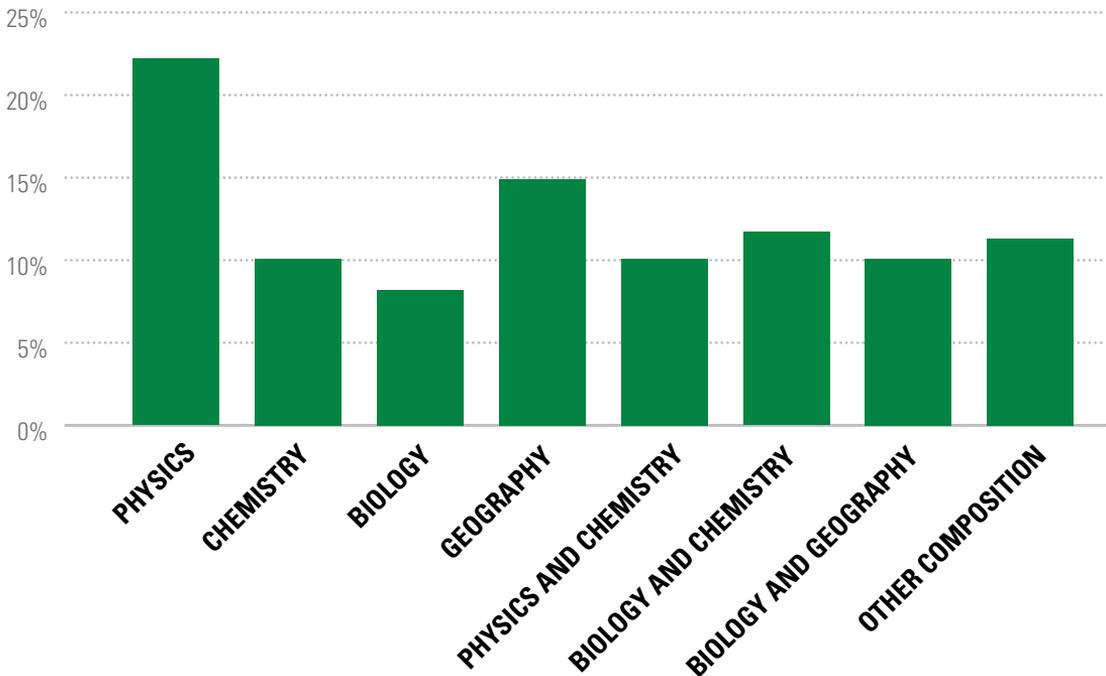
The most important elements of this concept are the following: the shift from the content-oriented curriculum to the context-oriented one and the emphasis on the importance of the affective elements of the learning (Réti, 2011). The basic statements of the curriculum development have been the following:

- Improving scientific skills is the focus of the learning process. So, the subject can contribute not only to the wellbeing of the students, but form a good basis for the scientific education, realised in the grades of 10–12 in the disciplinary form
- The learning has to be based on the examination of different natural phenomena, close to the students' life
- The content serves the development of the students' scientific literacy
- Different methods of active learning should be used in each lesson.

The developers have analysed and summarised the content of the existing syllabus of Complex Science for Vocational Secondary Grammar Schools from the point of view of the basic statements. They have pointed out that the existing 22 topics are too many to encourage active learning. Some of them are even not suitable for inquiry based learning, others do not have practical elements (natural features to examine). Therefore the revision of the topics and that of the content of the syllabus have become necessary.

The big variation between the Vocational Secondary Grammar Schools was an important factor in the development. It is not a uniform type of school. They represent several professional directions and there are big differences in their profile, traditions, and in the interests of the students, equipment and facilities for scientific education. It was clear that one central programme could not support Science teaching in this situation.

Figure 2. The qualification of the teachers who teach Science in the 2016/17 academic year.



One of the biggest obstacles could be the teachers' knowledge and their attitudes to Science. As it was mentioned above, in Hungary there is no Science teacher training, but separate disciplines such as Biology, Chemistry, Geography and Physics in different combinations. Most of the teachers are trained to teach two subjects. A survey, conducted at the beginning of the academic year, revealed the qualifications of the teachers who teach Science in this academic year.

Figure 2 shows that more than a half of the teachers have a degree on one scientific discipline. The biggest part of this group is the teachers with a degree in Physics.

The survey examined the previous experiences of the teachers who teach Complex Science in the feature-based learning and teaching and the organisation of Science lessons in different schools.

Remarkably, the results of the survey show that only about one third (35%) of the participating teachers agree with the statement that the Science subject is a good tool to develop students' scientific literacy.

A desk-top research summarised the expectations and the tradition of Science in Hungary and in some other countries.

A SUBJECT WHICH COULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE JOY OF THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

On the basis of the basic statements, a concept-development group (four experienced and innovative teachers with practical and theoretical orientation led by a professional curriculum developer) drafted the main elements of the pedagogical system of Science teaching in the 9th grade of the Vocational Secondary Grammar Schools. These are the following:

- Pedagogical conception
- Programme
- Learning units
- Learning plans
- Evaluation.

The *Pedagogical conception* summarises the antecedents and the tradition of Science teaching in Hungary and gives a short analysis of the situation. Traditionally Science is taught in the first four grades in the school system, which was widened to the 5th grade in 1978 and to the 6th in 1995. From grade 7 students learn four different scientific subjects in a disciplinary way. The teaching and learning of Science in an integrated way has been the focus of several initiatives in the Hungarian education system during the second part of the last century, but each of these innovations have remained as separate from each other and have not had any impact at system level.

Several reforms have been introduced in the last decades to stop the decline in scientific education reported by PISA studies¹³. Usually more learning material and higher requirements for students have been the results of the interventions, but and they finally generated more frustration and

resistance toward science which is the opposite of what they intended to achieve. The content of these subjects are Characterised by scientifically high standard which is generally too abstract for most of the students and not suited to the characteristics of their age. This could be one of the reasons behind the fact that scientific subjects are among the least liked subjects (Chrappán, 2017; Máth, 2014) and so certainly they are not strong contributors to students' wellbeing. Most of the lessons of Biology, Geography, and specially Physics and Chemistry are scary for students in Hungarian schools. Typically teachers stand at the blackboard and speak about very abstract and far from real life concepts to a passive listening group of pupils. Most of the students are simply bored and some of them are afraid because they know that they should have understood what the teacher explained as their knowledge will be evaluated later. Few students understand the content well and even less enjoy the lessons. The science lessons are frustrating or frightening for students, resulting in a wellbeing-destructive experience for Hungarian pupils.

The aims of the Science teaching in the 9th grade of the Vocational Secondary Grammar Schools and especially the methodologies used to reach these aims focus on the fact that students' wellbeing is a key factor for effective learning. The most important aim of the one-year subject is to give students joy in learning and improve their positive attitude to nature. The appendix of the specification describes the three groups of skills (thinking skills, investigational skills and 21st century skills) that can be developed by Science learning and contribute to the success of students in their future.

The *Programme* is a realisation of the aims on the basis of the frame curriculum. It contains 13 complex topics (e.g. 'In Motion', or 'The Environment we Live in'), the contexts for them (e.g. in the topic of Motion these are: Living organisms, Vehicles, Traffic Tools, Planets) the content of the learning, the problems or features to be examined, and some possible examples for active learning. This part of the conception uses the results of

13 See: <http://www.oecd.org/hungary/pisa-2015-hungary.htm>



Science learning gives a joy for the students

several earlier projects—such as the Problem Based Learning, the SAILS (Strategies for Assessment of Inquiry Learning in Science)¹⁴, or the PRIMAS (Promoting Inquiry in Mathematics and Science Education Across Europe) to promote inquiry-based learning in mathematics and science at both primary and secondary levels across Europe¹⁵. The crucial focus of the section is skill-development. All developers have to keep in mind continuously that the topics are tools for development of different skills in students. Skill development is the main target of the complex subject instead of content knowledge. It contributes to the students' wellbeing if their teachers have positive feelings about the course. Teachers have to change their teaching style which is a great challenge and a frustration for them. They should not feel frustrated because of

the obligation to teach the topics which they are not qualified to teach properly. That is why the programme makes possible for them to support the development of different skills of their students through those topics in which they are educated and experienced. While it is a centrally developed programme, it gives teachers a high level of autonomy to select the most suitable topics to their students' interest and their own experience in addition to creating a supportive learning environment. The developers are aware of the fact that the new pedagogical approach will result in differences in student knowledge in different schools but it is also strongly expected to alter student attitudes to nature in a positive way, to strengthen scientific and critical thinking, to improve active learning and collaboration.

14 <http://www.sails-project.eu/>

15 <http://www.primas-project.eu/en/index.do>

Learning units summarise the learning process on the basis of themes which are closely connected to the Big Ideas of Science Education (Harlen, 2015). They contain the suggested learning topics, the time-frame of the learning (number of lessons), the skills (focusing 1–3 skills) to be developed, the target groups (e.g. the professional profile of the Vocational Secondary Grammar School, or the interest of the students, or girls and/or boys), the content, the suggested learning environment, and learning methodology, suited to the different target groups and circumstances of different schools. An important element of this part of the pedagogical system is the different variations which can support teachers to adapt the program to their own and their students' needs and to the possibilities of the school. The assessment should be focused on the development of the targeted skills and have to be evidence based.

The *Learning plans* are detailed plans of the learning process. They contain the activities of the teacher and the students, the suggested time for different activities, the description of the learning environment, the learning tools and the tools of the assessment.

A wider group of the content developers (who are active teachers and most of them are experienced in teaching Science in the Vocational Secondary Grammar Schools) were invited to join by the group of developers by a public application announced by HIERD. The applicants had to make an abstract for one or more chosen topics where they had to demonstrate a conception of a learning process, in which the basic statements of the conception can be realised. Sixteen teachers from all over the country take part in this process, which will realise about 30 learning units and about 90 learning plans connected to them.

Evaluation and assessment of students is an element of the conception which should be developed in the near future. An online diagnostic measurement of the students' scientific knowledge and skills could help teachers to find the starting points of their students coming from different primary schools. A similar measurement

at the end of the academic year could present data on the development of the students. Teachers should support their students' learning during the academic year, and the possible methods of this should be developed.

RESULTS AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

There are three crucial elements of this development process. (1) The programme developers should find those natural phenomena that are close to the students, interest them, and are not too complicated to examine and understand. (2) The programme should suit the very diverse possibilities for active learning in the different learning environments in different schools. (3) Teachers are the key actors of the implementation of the programme, so their engagement with the programme is very important.

The programme developers are conscious of the big variety of the interests of the 15–16 years old students, learning in different vocational secondary grammar schools. If the programme were focusing on the students' interest, it must have regard to the differences between the life-experiences and professional interests of the students, not forgetting the differences between boys and girls. The examinations show that most of the students in this target group are interested e.g. in their body and health, drugs, the environment, and some diseases. In the same time we have to keep in mind, that boys are more interested in the topic of the technical features (e.g. cars, self-controlled vehicles, or astronautics). E.g. in the topic of the motion boys are interested in the features connected to different sports, while dance is the girls' favourite. Working on the different learning units and learning plans, the programme developers will elaborate different learning routes and methodological solutions to improve particular scientific skills of different students. In this way, the programme can support teachers to adapt the learning to the needs of their students and the capabilities of the schools and the teachers.

The second challenge is the methodology of active learning. In spite of the more general use of the good practices of personalised active learning in the Hungarians schools, the more commonly used methodology – especially in the secondary education – are direct teaching and lecturing. While active learning is one of the core elements of this programme, it cannot be successful without different ways of supporting the teachers to change their teaching methods. The first step in this support is that about 90 learning plans will be created by the end of this academic year. The authors have to make three different methodological suggestions for each learning unit at least. To support this work the programme developers have drawn up a methodological list, with suggestions for their effective use. The first results of these elements of the pedagogical system will be uploaded to the Portal of National Public Education (PNPE), where any teacher can find them. Reflection for the experiences and the uploading of practice will be possible too. The professional forum on the PNPE has good potential to change the ideas of teachers. Professional advisers are continuously informed about the new results of the programme and they are asked to participate in circulating the programme. A special INSET programme will be developed and offered for interested teachers to learn by doing the experience-based learning of Science.

SUMMARY

It is clear that the successful learning of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) is a crucial point for the success of the economy in the whole of Europe. This paper has reported about a small element of Hungarian reform of vocational education, which is not only a small step on the way to renew Science education of the country, but it can contribute also to the students' wellbeing.

As a result of the recent changes in the secondary vocational education a new subject has appeared in the first grade of the vocational secondary grammar schools. The 15–16 year old students of these schools have a lot of experience in their world and most of them have their own learning style. The new subject has caused a lot of excitement among the teachers who had been educated in specialised branches of science and have had teaching experience in that way. However, it has created a lot of possibilities to contribute to the students' wellbeing. It can strengthen the better understanding of the world in which the students live and it can develop some skills which are important in handling the change or creating their own learning style. Teachers are key actors in this process, but they themselves have to change a lot as well. The biggest challenge for them is the complexity and the context-orientation of the new subject. They have to shift the focus of their work from the content to the context, from lecturing to facilitating the active learning of their students. They have to adapt the curriculum to the needs of their students and the possibilities of their schools. About 3,000 teachers are affected by this change and are supported in different ways in order to realise the planned change.

We are at the beginning of our journey and we will reach our target in small steps. Good results could improve the teachers' engagement and this can result in more wellbeing among the teachers and students as well. One of the biggest challenges on this route is to modify the fixed barriers between science subjects and to involve teachers in new and more collaborative ways of teaching. Strong professional support and flexible administrative frameworks are needed in order to start the journey of the development from knowledge oriented, fragmented in 45 minutes lessons biology, chemistry, geography and physics lessons into a holistic subject with opportunity of longer experiments and fieldwork. We hope that the new subject will be enjoyed by students and it can contribute to their current and future wellbeing.

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ABSTRACT



The importance of children's and young people's wellbeing is increasingly at the centre of the educational discourse internationally and nationally. In Ireland, while children's wellbeing is an implicit consideration in the Primary Curriculum published in 1999, Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2009), was first to include explicit reference to Wellbeing. In the new Junior Cycle Framework, the student and their needs are a central consideration when planning for learning and assessment ensuring that students' wellbeing is an implicit consideration in planning conversations. Wellbeing is a new area of learning in junior cycle. The emphasis is on not only the importance of learning about wellbeing but also providing learning experiences in junior cycle where the young person has a positive experience of their own wellbeing and the possibility of reaching their full potential. In the coming months and years, the Primary Curriculum and senior cycle education will undergo change informed by consultations where already wellbeing is a recurring theme.

Key words: Early childhood, primary, post primary, indicators of wellbeing, curriculum development.

IRELAND: Wellbeing in Irish education – towards a common understanding

INTRODUCTION

In Ireland and internationally, there is a growing focus on the importance of wellbeing across the life stages including early and middle childhood and adolescence. Children spend a significant part of their lives in early childhood settings and in schools and therefore ‘their experiences and relationships’ at these locations ‘have an important impact on students’ perceived quality of life’ (PISA, 2017). There is a recognition that children and young people with higher levels of wellbeing have better educational outcomes, experience more positive relationships with teachers and their peers, and feel a greater sense of belonging and engagement in their setting and school.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) advises the Minister for Education and Skills on curriculum and assessment for early childhood education, and for primary and post-primary schools in Ireland. Children and young people’s wellbeing and their positive experience of curriculum and assessment has been a priority for the NCCA over the last decade in developing curriculum and assessment advice across the early childhood, primary and post-primary sectors. At this point in time, in NCCA, we are working towards a shared understanding of what children and young people’s wellbeing includes and the important role of education in this context. This involves a continuing dialogue about a definition of wellbeing that would be useful and appropriate across the sectors. For now, Wellbeing is defined in junior cycle in the following way:

Student wellbeing is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community (NCCA, 2017, p.9)

This paper sets out the international and national context for the focus on wellbeing. It describes how wellbeing features in the curriculum across the different educational sectors in Ireland. The article also describes some Irish initiatives designed to ensure that wellbeing is embedded in the everyday planning for learning and engagement of children in a variety of education settings. Finally, the paper outlines some of the proposed next steps for ensuring that the focus on supporting and promoting wellbeing can remain a central consideration of the work of NCCA.

International context

There is a large body of international research showing an association between children and young people’s wellbeing and their engagement in school, their sense of belonging, levels of disciplinary problems and academic achievement (PISA, 2015). Weare (2000) argues that:

...it is vital that those who seek to promote high academic standards and those who seek to promote mental, emotional and social health realise that they are on the same side. And that social and affective education can support academic learning, not simply take away from it. There is overwhelming evidence that students learn more effectively, including their academic subjects, if they are happy in their work, believe in themselves and feel school is supporting them’. (Weare, 2000).



Student wellbeing was the focus of one of five volumes of the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2015). The survey explored a comprehensive set of wellbeing indicators for adolescents that covered both negative outcomes (e.g. anxiety, low performance) and the positive impulses that promote healthy development (e.g. interest, engagement, motivation to achieve). The research showed a positive correlation between high levels of life satisfaction and learning outcomes. Some of the characteristics of life satisfaction were a strong sense of belonging in school, positive relationships with teachers, good teacher support, a positive approach to discipline and a sense of fairness. These findings have implications for curriculum and assessment design. Ways in which early childhood practitioners and teachers can be supported in embedding wellbeing in the

curriculum to support children’s holistic development – and in particular, their wellbeing – needs further consideration.

Ireland is one of eight participating educational systems involved in ARC¹, the Atlantic Rim Collaboratory. ARC is led by leading education scholars and change leaders. The group works to advance a more expansive vision of educational excellence across the sectors of early childhood, primary and post-primary education to ensure quality and equity for all students. ARC identifies planning for wellbeing as being central to its vision alongside issues such as special education inclusion and diversity. In September 2016, Ireland hosted the ARC Forum on Wellbeing where

1 <http://atrico.org/vision/>

different systems had opportunities to share and critique each other's work in the area of wellbeing. Since then, work in Ireland has focused on creating collaborative partnerships between the agencies who work in the area of children and young people's wellbeing.

National policy context

In Ireland, government policy seeks to promote children's wellbeing. The ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) by Ireland in 1992 has been a key influence here. Among the many rights it sets out are the right for children to achieve their full potential and to have a say in decisions that impact on them. Addressing these rights has implications for public policy including curriculum development and how they can support children's wellbeing.

At a national level, the Irish government is committed to the improvement of health and wellbeing across the population including children and young people. Healthy Ireland (2013-2025) is the national framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Ireland. Its main focus is on prevention and getting people healthier earlier and for longer. Its vision is for an Ireland where:

...everybody can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential. Where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility. (Department of Health, 2013)

Healthy Ireland aims to take a whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach to improving health and wellbeing. It provides arrangements to ensure effective co-operation between the health sector and other areas of Government and public services, concerned with social protection, children, business, food safety, education, housing, transport and the environment. It also invites the private and voluntary sector to participate through well-supported and mutually beneficial partnerships.

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (2014-2020) is the national policy framework for children and young people (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014). This is a whole-of-Government approach to deliver on 'transformational goals and national outcomes' for Ireland's young citizens from birth to 24 years. Its vision is for 'Ireland to be one of the best small countries in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future' (ibid, vi). This framework sets out the vision for all government departments and agencies as well as voluntary and community organisations with a strong focus on wellbeing.

The *Growing Up in Ireland Study*² is a government-funded study of children being carried out jointly by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Trinity College Dublin. This information will be used to assist in policy formation and in the provision of services which will ensure all children will have the best possible start in life. The study started in 2006 and follows the progress of two groups of children: 8,000 9-year-olds (Child Cohort) and 10,000 9-month-olds (Infant Cohort) providing valuable insights into children's wellbeing. See Smith (2017) in this publication for more information on the wellbeing of the 9-year-old cohort.

Finally, wellbeing has been an important reoccurring theme in education policy in recent years. The Department of Education and Skills has supported initiatives aimed at promoting health and wellbeing in schools across the sectors. These include *Developing a Health Promoting School*³, *Wellbeing School Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion in Primary Schools*⁴

2 <http://www.esri.ie/growing-up-in-ireland/>

3 <https://www.healthpromotion.ie/health/schools>

4 <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Wellbeing-in-Primary-Schools-Guidelines-for-Mental-Health-Promotion.pdf>

and in post-primary schools⁵. NCCA’s work on curriculum has also focused on the area of wellbeing for more than a decade.

WELLBEING AND CURRICULUM IN IRELAND

The Irish Primary School Curriculum

The current Primary Curriculum⁶ launched by the NCCA in 1999 is designed for children between the ages of 4/5 and 12/13 years. The curriculum aims to nurture the child in all dimensions of his or her life – spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical. The promotion of children’s wellbeing is implicit throughout the curriculum and promotes a vision

of education that is rooted in the lived experience of the child. ‘By providing children with a successful and happy school experience, by nurturing essential intrapersonal and interpersonal development, and by developing communication skills, children’s self-esteem and self-confidence are raised and their motivation to learn is increased’ (NCCA, 1999a, p.16). It is through this holistic vision of the child, which strives to develop the full potential of each child, that wellbeing is interwoven into the principles of the curriculum and provides a bedrock for all learning.

While the entire primary curriculum is underpinned by a commitment to the holistic nurturing of the child, the inclusion of a new subject, Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE), was particularly significant in the area of wellbeing. It underlines the view that primary schools have a key role in children’s personal and social development. While the whole school and curriculum has responsibility to support children’s wellbeing, SPHE has particular relevance in this area as ‘SPHE provides specific opportunities to enable the child to understand himself or herself, to develop healthy relationships, and to establish and maintain healthy patterns of behaviour’ (NCCA, 1999a, p.57). One of the aims of the subject is ‘to promote

5 <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Resources-Guidance/Wellbeing-in-Post-Primary-Schools-Guidelines-for-Mental-Health-Promotion-and-Suicide-Prevention-2013.pdf>
 6 https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/c4a88a62-7818-4bb2-bb18-4c4ad37bc255/PSEC_Introduction-to-Primary-Curriculum_Eng.pdf

Table 1.

RANK	PRIMARY EDUCATION SHOULD...	TOTAL
1.	help children to develop life skills through a broad curriculum.	39%
2.	help children to be good communicators.	37%
3.	help children to be well.	36%
4.	help children to develop literacy and numeracy skills.	35%
5.	motivate and engage children.	26%
6.	help children to develop a sense of identity and belonging.	25%

the personal development and wellbeing of the child' (NCCA, 1999b, p.9). Of course, as with all curriculum the enactment from policy into practice is key. Recent consultations have highlighted the importance that primary teachers attach to this area of learning, but they have also brought to light some challenges, particularly regarding time allocation. In the curriculum SPHE is allocated 30 minutes of discreet teaching time per week. It has been suggested by teachers that this is insufficient for such an important area. Although the entire curriculum is underpinned by a commitment to the holistic development of the child, having such a short amount of dedicated time allocated to this subject may raise the question of priorities for some.

Priorities for Primary Education: public consultation

While the 1999 curriculum has largely served children well, society in Ireland has changed significantly over the past decade. Schools are now different places. In addition to increased cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity, the integration of children with special educational needs into our mainstream classrooms has increased the range of abilities schools now cater for. The need to focus on wellbeing is increasingly part of education discourse.

With an eye to future curriculum developments, NCCA conducted a public consultation between 2011 and 2012 to find out what people believed to be the priorities for primary education. The resulting report, *Priorities for Primary Education?* was published in 2012. Six priorities for primary education were identified. The results can be seen in the table above. Significantly, the third most frequently cited priority related to children's wellbeing.

There were two main aspects to this focus on wellbeing: developing children's psychological wellbeing and developing children's physical wellbeing which aligns closely with the view of wellbeing set out in *Aistear, the early childhood curriculum framework (NCCA, 2009)* (see below).

Respondents noted the importance of providing opportunities for children to...*feel well about themselves* and, *to enjoy learning*. A positive experience of primary school was considered key to developing children's psychological wellbeing. Other aspects relating to psychological wellbeing included the importance of fostering happiness and self-confidence, nurturing emotional development and supporting a child's spiritual development. In terms of physical wellbeing, the need to prioritise children's physical fitness emerged consistently. Respondents noted the many benefits of physical education in contributing to healthy bodies and minds.

Towards a redeveloped primary school curriculum

A common theme emerging from public consultation events of recent years is whether the current curriculum still meets the needs of primary education. Teacher feedback has suggested that the curriculum is overloaded, particularly in the early years of primary education. In 2015 NCCA published proposals for a new subject, Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB) and Ethics. ERB was described as helping children understand the cultural heritage of the major forms of religion, belief traditions and worldviews which have been embraced by humankind. Ethics would help children to know about ethical issues such as the importance of human rights and responsibilities, the place of justice within society, and the service of the common good. Fostering a positive sense of identity as well as a sense of belonging were described as important components of this learning. A key finding that emerged during the subsequent consultation was the strong emphasis that teachers placed on the importance of the learning in SPHE. For many, this was a critical area of learning and teachers consistently called for more time for this subject.

In December 2016, NCCA published proposals to redevelop the whole primary school curriculum focusing on what the curriculum would include and how time would be allocated to the various components. In the consultation on these

proposals, there were calls for the current allocation of one hour per week for physical education to be increased. PE should, it was suggested by respondents, be central to the child’s learning in school and should retain its weekly allocation to ensure that children received regular lessons in this area. Respondents also expressed some concern that the curriculum would be ‘narrowed’. This seemed to indicate a concern that an instrumentalist approach to education would lead to the prioritisation of literacy and numeracy to the detriment of a holistic education experience for children in primary school.

Almost 20 years after the publication of the current primary curriculum, public consultation events reveal a strong commitment to the holistic development of the child, reflected in the desire that primary education would support all aspects of children’s development – their social, emotional, physical, and academic development. As NCCA embarks on a period of significant change in the primary curriculum, it is certain that such considerations will remain to the forefront of the conversation. Learning from the experience of early childhood education and post-primary education where wellbeing is more explicitly addressed will also be key to the primary developments.

WELLBEING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Wellbeing and Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

In 2009, Aistear, the early childhood curriculum framework for all children in Ireland from birth to six years was published. It was developed by the NCCA in consultation with the early childhood sector and coming ten years after the primary curriculum it had the benefit of advancements in research about children’s learning and development. Aistear is based on 12 principles and describes learning and development using four interconnected themes. The themes are *Wellbeing, Identity and Belonging, Communicating, Exploring and Thinking* (See Table 2 for more information). These themes set out the skills, dispositions, attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding that children need in order to achieve their full potential. See Figure 1.

Figure 1. Aistear’s themes, aims and learning goals

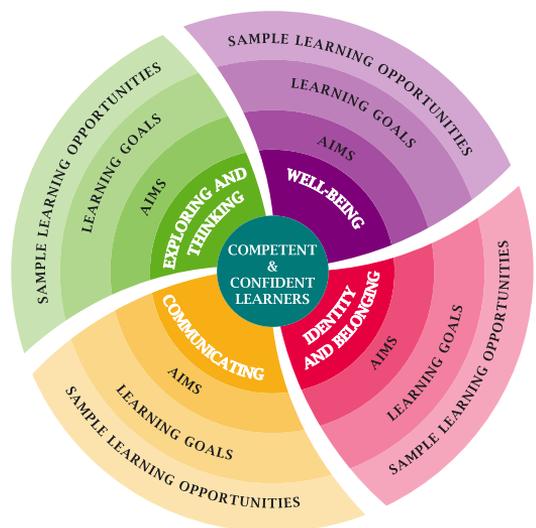


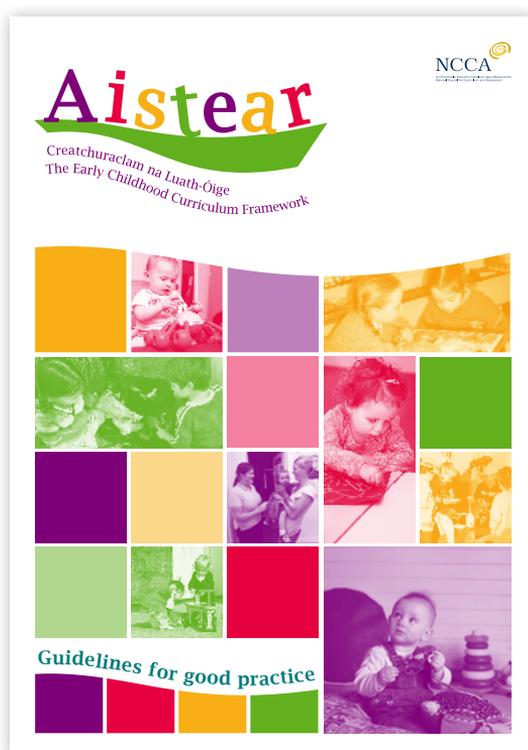
Table 2. Explaining Aistear’s themes

WELLBEING IS ABOUT CHILDREN	BEING CONFIDENT, HAPPY AND HEALTHY
Identity and Belonging is about children	developing a positive sense of who they are, and feeling that they are valued and respected as part of a family and community.
Communicating is about children	sharing their experiences, thoughts, ideas, and feelings with growing confidence and competence in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes.
Exploring and Thinking is about children	making sense of the things, places and people in their world by interacting with others, playing, investigating, questioning, and forming, testing and refining ideas.

The aims of the wellbeing theme are that children will:

1. Be strong psychologically and socially.
2. Be as healthy and fit as they can be.
3. Be creative and spiritual.
4. Have positive outlooks on learning and on life.

Aistear prioritises the building of healthy relationships in homes and in early childhood settings, and it views children as being competent and confident, with views that are worth listening to. Practitioners are encouraged to listen and respond to the views of babies, toddlers and young children as they plan for learning and development through play and hands-on experience inside and outside. The framework is supported by four sets of guidelines for good practice⁷ (2009): partnerships with parents, supporting learning through positive interactions, learning through play and supporting learning and development through assessment. (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. Aistear’s guidelines for good practice

7 <http://www.ncca.ie/en/Practice-Guide/Aistear/All-Guidelines-for-good-practice.pdf>

Impact of and support for Aistear

Since its publication in 2009 many early childhood settings have begun to use Aistear on an ad-hoc basis. However, there was no nationally coordinated implementation or support plan for Aistear and hence no clear focus on supporting children's wellbeing. Yet we know that a focus on wellbeing and on early intervention for those that need it is critical in the first six years of life and using Aistear could be a key resource here.

In 2015 an online Aistear *Síolta* Practice Guide⁸ (www.aistearsiolta.ie) was developed by the NCCA to help practitioners to use both Aistear and *Síolta*, the *National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (CECDE, 2006)* together to enhance the quality of their curriculum. The guide includes a section on curriculum foundations which focuses on developing your curriculum, the principles underpinning Aistear and *Síolta*, the themes of Aistear and professional practice. It also focuses on six pillars of practice:

1. Partnership with parents
2. Creating and using the learning environment
3. Learning through play
4. Nurturing and extending interactions
5. Planning and assessing using Aistear's themes
6. Supporting transitions.

The Practice Guide includes self-evaluation tools, videos of practice, photo presentations, tip sheets and interviews with experts. Many of these are useful in supporting children's wellbeing for example the videos on wellbeing (birth-3 years⁹) and (3-6 years¹⁰), the tip sheets on supporting

quality interactions during caregiving routines¹¹, using a key person approach¹², tip sheets on play¹³ (available in 7 languages) and a suite of podcasts on supporting the transition to primary school¹⁴.

Until recently there has been no national roll out of continuing professional development to support practitioners to use either Aistear or *Síolta*. The *National Síolta Aistear Initiative* was established in 2016 to provide central support and coordination of *Síolta* and Aistear implementation across the early childhood sector. The Practice Guide is a key tool for this work and two national coordinators have been appointed to oversee this work. While the initiative is still at an early stage, it is a welcome development.

Another important related development is the *Preschool to primary school transition initiative*. Moving to primary school is an important part of every child's life and there is much that can be done to support children and their families with this part of growing up. The NCCA has been given the task¹⁵ of developing national templates to record each child's learning and development at the end of the preschool year before they begin primary school. These reporting templates will be available from Autumn 2018. The completed reports can be shared with parents and with their consent, the primary school where the child is enrolled.

As preparation for this task, the NCCA published three research reports about the transition to primary school (O'Kane and Murphy, 2016a,

11 <http://www.ncca.ie/en/Practice-Guide/Nurturing-and-Extending-Interactions/Resources-for-Sharing/Supporting-quality-interactions-during-care-giving-routines-Birth-3-years-.pdf>

12 <http://www.ncca.ie/en/Practice-Guide/Nurturing-and-Extending-Interactions/Resources-for-Sharing/Using-a-Key-Person-approach.pdf>

13 http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Parents/Early_Childhood/Tipsheets/

14 <http://www.ncca.ie/en/Practice-Guide/Transitions/>

15 This task was set on in the *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and for Life: The National Strategy to improve Literacy and Numeracy among children and young people 2011-2020* (DES, 2011, 2015).

8 <http://www.ncca.ie/en/Practice-Guide/>

9 <https://player.vimeo.com/video/131102727/>

10 <https://player.vimeo.com/video/61107224/>

2016b; and O’Kane, 2016). These are available at www.ncca.ie. Key messages from the reports include the following:

- a positive experience for children during the transition to primary school is important
- certain dispositions, skills and knowledge are important for children as they make the transition
- greater alignment in curriculum and pedagogy across preschools and primary schools is critical to children’s learning and development
- supporting transitions is a shared responsibility between children, families, communities, preschools and primary schools
- the transfer of information on children’s learning and development between preschools and primary schools is an important part of the transition process.

Informed by this research, the NCCA is working with a small number of preschools and schools in a pilot transition initiative. The initiative supports practitioners and teachers in helping children and their families experience a positive, effective transition from preschool to primary school. There is an emphasis on building positive, reciprocal relationships between preschools and primary schools through participation in shared transition activities and experiences including the piloting of templates. Everyone impacted by the transition is involved in a meaningful and appropriate way – children, families, preschools and primary schools. Their stories will be shared in the final report on the initiative and a suite of resources to support the transition from preschool to primary school will be added to the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide website. The final templates along with advice on how to support the transition in a meaningful way will be provided by the NCCA to the Minister for Education and Skills in Autumn 2018. A positive move to primary school is a key factor in children’s wellbeing. Likewise, the transition from primary to post-primary school is a key factor in children’s wellbeing.

POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION AND WELLBEING

Junior cycle reform

Post-primary education in Ireland consists of a three-year Junior Cycle (typically 12 to 15 years) followed by a two or three-year Senior Cycle (typically 16 – 19 years), depending on whether the optional Transition Year (TY) is taken. Junior Cycle is currently undergoing significant reform in Ireland commencing with the publication of *A Framework for Junior Cycle* (DES, 2015) which:

*places **students** at the **centre** of the educational experience, **enabling** them to **actively participate** in their communities and in society and to **be resourceful and confident learners** in all aspects and stages of their lives.*

The Junior Cycle Framework places student wellbeing at the heart of the young person’s experience of junior cycle, and it supports schools and teachers to plan a junior cycle that reflects the school’s unique context, ensuring that the students’ needs are centrally important. In this way, the *Framework for Junior Cycle* is like Aistear in that Wellbeing is explicitly addressed in both, albeit in different language, definitions and key terminology. The Framework is underpinned by eight principles, one of which is Wellbeing.



The principle of Wellbeing is described in the Framework as follows:

The student experience contributes directly to their physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing and resilience. Learning takes place in a climate focused on collective wellbeing of school, community and society.

Heretofore, schools offered a very similar junior cycle experience irrespective of school context, socio-cultural considerations and/or geographical location. In the new Junior Cycle, schools now have the autonomy to design a junior cycle for their students in their unique context. It is envisaged that schools in partnership with key stakeholders including parents and students will reflect on current provision through the lens of the eight principles of junior cycle. In so doing, schools can plan for a revised junior cycle that meets the particular needs of their student cohort. Consideration of each of these principles including the principle of Wellbeing, has the potential to significantly impact on a student's experience of wellbeing in junior cycle.

The learning at the core of junior cycle is described, no longer as a list of subject disciplines, but as twenty-four statements of learning.¹⁶ Schools have the autonomy to use the resources available to them, including teachers with the relevant subject expertise, to plan a worthwhile and engaging curriculum for their students in their particular context. It is no longer the expectation that students in very different locations with different needs are expected to learn in the same way. The student and their needs and interests are the key consideration in planning for learning.

There are eight key skills required for successful learning in junior cycle:



Key skills help learners develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to face the many challenges in today's world. They also support students in learning how to learn and to take responsibility for their learning.

Research conducted by NCCA (2006 – 2009) has confirmed that where the key skills are embedded successfully in teaching and learning young people are more engaged, enthusiastic and committed to their learning. Learning experiences designed to develop the key skills result in students having a more positive sense of wellbeing in the classroom. Practical supports for planning and implementation of these changes are provided for teachers through Key Skills posters and teaching toolkits¹⁷.

The biggest change in the new Junior Cycle is in the area of assessment. The primary purpose of all assessments in junior cycle is to provide support for learning. Research conducted by the

¹⁶ https://www.juniorcycle.ie/NCCA_JuniorCycle/media/NCCA/Documents/Framework-for-Junior-Cycle-2015-2.pdf

¹⁷ <http://www.juniorcycle.ie/Planning/Key-Skills>

Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI, 2006) prior to the reform of junior cycle showed that the emphasis on the terminal examination at the end of junior cycle had a significant negative backwash on teaching and learning, causing some students to disengage, many of whom never re-engaged in their learning. The reformed junior cycle shifts the emphasis from summative assessments at the end of the third year of junior cycle toward a broader range of assessment approaches. This new approach to assessment in support of learning is designed to ensure that students have a more engaging and worthwhile experience of assessment, both ongoing and summative, which in turn, will support their wellbeing.

While NCCA is responsible for curriculum and assessment, it does not have responsibility for supporting the implementation of new developments in curriculum and assessment. The Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT)¹⁸ is the professional development support service supporting the introduction of the new junior cycle. NCCA works closely with JCT in an effort to avoid the implementation gap particularly in the initial stages of planning for change. JCT provides professional development at a whole school level and subject department level as new subject specifications become available. It supports teachers to plan for learning and assessment in ways that are meaningful and worthwhile for their particular students. Wellbeing is threaded through all professional learning making links not only with what is taught but also how it is taught and assessed and its potential impact on students' wellbeing. To date, this approach of making the connections explicit between the aspirations of a new junior cycle which places the needs of student at the centre and planning for Wellbeing in junior cycle have been well received.

Wellbeing – an area of learning in junior cycle

Wellbeing is a new area of learning in junior cycle. Historically, post-primary schools have provided for the pastoral care and wellbeing of their students in ways reflecting the particular culture and ethos of the school and the resources available to it. Schools were also required to offer learning in Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Physical Education (PE). There was no overarching vision or shared understanding of what student wellbeing meant. Neither was there a practice of collaboration and shared planning between the subjects associated with learning about wellbeing, e.g. PE, SPHE and CSPE.

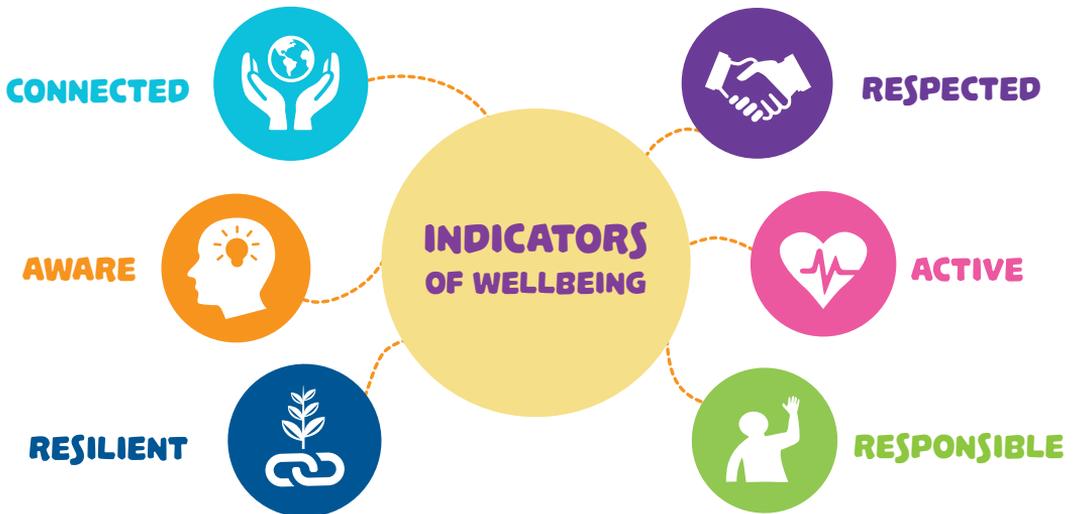
The NCCA was given the task of developing the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (2017) for schools to support their planning for, and implementation and evaluation of Wellbeing. The Guidelines were developed in consultation with key stakeholders including Department of Education and Skills, the Health Service Executive, Department of Health, National Educational Psychologists, students, parents and professional development organisations supporting the implementation of Wellbeing in junior cycle. This was a novel approach as not only did the consultation inform the development process, it also built familiarity and commitment with the key stakeholders in advance of the implementation. All schools are now required to plan for Wellbeing using these guidelines.

Wellbeing in junior cycle is defined as follows:

Student wellbeing is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community.

18 <http://www.jct.ie/home/home.php>

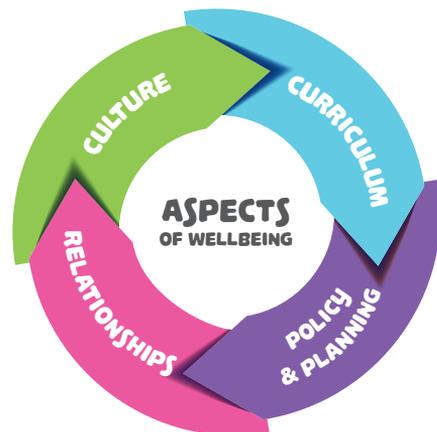
The six wellbeing indicators are:



The definition of wellbeing and the six indicators provide a shared language for conversations/ consultations with stakeholders including students, teachers and other stakeholders about what is important for student wellbeing. They also provide a starting point for planning, implementation and evaluation of the school's Wellbeing programme.

The guidelines reflect the conviction that every student benefits from Wellbeing. Wellbeing is seen as a process rather than a destination; learning to cope with ill-being should be seen as part of all of our lives and learning to deal with ill-being in a proactive way helps to build students' wellbeing.

Wellbeing is intended to pervade all aspects of school life. The Guidelines identify four aspects of Wellbeing in junior cycle:



Wellbeing in junior cycle is a whole school endeavour. It requires that the whole school community consider how the school's culture, relationships, policies, planning and curriculum support young people's wellbeing. The Guidelines include ideas for workshops that can support conversations, planning and evaluation for Wellbeing at a whole school level.

How teaching, learning and assessment happens matters for wellbeing.

Teachers can play a particularly important role in raising self-esteem, motivation and confidence by the way they organise teaching and learning. (OECD: Skills for Social Progress 2015, p. 83).

As mentioned earlier, the JCT emphasises the contribution that every teacher in every subject discipline can make to support young people's wellbeing by ensuring that the curriculum is mediated in ways that are meaningful and interesting for all students. The new Junior Cycle is designed to support greater student engagement. The individual teacher has the task of realising this aspiration.

The Guidelines emphasise the unique perspectives that the different stakeholders can bring to the conversation about building a supportive culture. In particular, students are recognised as the experts of their own experience in junior cycle and as such, can provide valuable insights into how the school might progress its planning for wellbeing. The NCCA in collaboration with JCT are one of five partners involved in an Erasmus Plus Student Voice – the bridge to learning project¹⁹ which aims to build models of partnerships between teachers and students. The project focuses on how these partnerships can be built with every student in the classroom as opposed to representative student voice initiatives where not all students are included. Key messages from this project have informed the design of professional learning opportunities provided by

JCT which aim to build teachers' commitment and capacity to work in partnership with students in support of their engagement and enjoyment of school.

Teacher wellbeing attracts specific mention:

Wellbeing in school starts with the staff. They are in the front line of the work and it is hard for them to be genuinely motivated to promote emotional and social wellbeing of others if they feel uncared for and burnt out themselves (Weare, 2015, p. 6)

Wellbeing also includes learning about wellbeing – the Wellbeing curriculum. The aim of this curriculum is to enhance students' learning about physical, social and emotional wellbeing. Up to 400 hours will be available for learning in Wellbeing beginning with a minimum of 300 hours in September 2017 building to 400 hours in September 2020. Schools have significant autonomy in how they provide for wellbeing-related learning. PE, SPHE, CSPE and Guidance (which encompasses the three interlinked areas of personal and social development, educational guidance, and career guidance) are the four main pillars of the Wellbeing curriculum. Schools must include a minimum threshold of 135 hours for PE with 70 hour each for SPHE and CSPE. Having met these requirements, schools can choose to include other wellbeing-related learning that they consider to be important for their students.

JCT, the professional development support for junior cycle includes a Wellbeing team which focuses specifically on supporting the introduction and implementation of the junior cycle curriculum for Wellbeing. There are other agencies, including the Department of Health and Health Service Executive, whose remit also includes supporting the health and wellbeing of young people. As part of its involvement in the ARC Summit, the Department of Education and Skills is leading an inter-agency group to support partnerships between the agencies involved in promoting the wellbeing of children and young people.

¹⁹ <http://voiceofstudents.eu/>



It is early days for Wellbeing in junior cycle. It has a whole school and a curricular dimension. Every teacher has the potential to make a contribution. CSPE, PE, SPHE and Guidance are the four pillars of the wellbeing curriculum. However, CSPE and SPHE teachers for the most part have had no pre-service education in these subjects and participate in professional learning only on an opt-in basis. In some schools there is a practice of assigning these subjects without prior consultation with the teachers. These issues are likely to have implications for the quality of students' learning experiences in these subjects and for teachers' confidence in teaching topics such as Relationships and Sexuality Education.

Wellbeing is a central theme across all professional development provided by JCT making explicit links between worthwhile learning, assessment supporting learning and student wellbeing. However, it is likely to be challenging to make up the deficits in pre-service education for CSPE and SPHE.

The Inspectorate of Department of Education and Skills includes consideration of wellbeing as an integral part of its whole school evaluation processes (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). However, it will be important that all teachers and not only those involved in the Wellbeing curriculum, plan individually and collectively to ensure that learning in their disciplines is effectively aligned with the aspirations outlined in the definition of Wellbeing and the wellbeing indicators. The importance of ongoing evaluation and reflection on the Wellbeing programme cannot be overstated.

Senior cycle

Following the completion of the Junior Cycle at 15/16 years of age, the vast majority of students continue on to Senior Cycle education. The Senior Cycle builds on the Junior Cycle and culminates in a high stakes summative examination, the Leaving Certificate Examination, which governs eligibility for university placement through a competitive 'points' system. Thus, the Leaving Certificate years tend to be a very pressurised time for both

students and their teachers. The Points Commission Report (Hyland, 1999), following a review of Ireland's system of transition to third level education highlights a number of damaging effects attributed to this points system including a negative impact on students' personal development, a narrowing of the curriculum arising from the tendency to teach to the examination rather than to the aims of the curriculum and an undue focus on the attainment of examination results. Overall the culture of senior cycle education can be very pressurised and often there is a knock-on impact in schools with reduced or non-existent provision for subjects such as Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), citizenship education and Physical Education. The predominantly summative assessment arrangements at the end of senior cycle and the resultant backwash on teaching and learning in the service of these terminal examinations can have a significant impact of young people's experience of wellbeing and on schools' willingness to allocate curricular time to subjects such as physical education and social, personal and health education.

While there appears to be a strong public perception that the Leaving Certificate is 'fair', there is increasing support for a less stressful and more holistic education experience in senior cycle including changes to the ways that young people gain access to third level education (Department of Education and Skills, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Since the publication of the primary curriculum in 1999 with its implicit focus on the importance of children's wellbeing, wellbeing is increasingly attracting greater prominence in curriculum developments, consultations and in the wider discourse. An explicit focus on wellbeing is clearly evident in early childhood policy in Ireland through Aistear, *the early childhood curriculum framework*, in primary education through the outcomes of consultations on a new primary curriculum, and now in junior cycle education as

an explicit area of learning. It is important that future policy developments include explicit provision for wellbeing and a move towards a shared language about wellbeing across the different sectors.

Policy considerations, while important, are only one part of the jigsaw. Children's lived experience of these goals is another matter entirely. Enactment/implementation issues relating to how early childhood practitioners and primary and post-primary teachers make sense of educational policy, and how they enact wellbeing in their practice needs ongoing consideration. It is useful to bear in mind a caveat that policy can only ever act as a statement of intent; curricular practices emerge from practitioners' and teachers' understandings of these intentions, mediated by their prior knowledge, and the structure and cultural resources and constraints afforded by their professional contexts (Priestley 2016, p. 5)²⁰. The importance of professional development opportunities to support teachers' and practitioners' commitment to and planning for wellbeing cannot be understated. Preservice education at post-primary in SPHE and CSPE needs to be prioritised. It is unrealistic to expect that the deficit in some teachers' understanding of the subject and their lack of competence in the related pedagogical skills can be addressed in CPD that is offered to teachers of SPHE and CSPE on an opt-in basis. There is a strong conviction and commitment among the main stakeholders about the importance of wellbeing. Yet, significant challenges to its being properly embedded remain. Conversations within and across the education sectors are ongoing, and working together should result in positive outcomes for children's and young people's wellbeing.

20 http://www.ncca.ie/en/Publications/Other_Publications/A-Perspective-on-Learning-Outcomes-in-Curriculum-and-Assessment.pdf

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ABSTRACT



There has been an increasing emphasis on children's own perceptions of their wellbeing in research and policy discourse. However, the potential impact of school experiences on child wellbeing has been relatively underexplored. This article draws on a large-scale, nationally representative child cohort study, the Growing Up in Ireland study. It uses the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale to take a multidimensional approach to examining child wellbeing in terms of behaviour, academic self-image, anxiety, popularity, body image and happiness at the ages of 9 and 13 years. Significant differences are found in child wellbeing across different classrooms and schools, with positive relationships with teachers playing a crucial role in enhancing wellbeing.

Key words: Wellbeing, self-concept, school effects

IRELAND: School experiences and children's wellbeing in Ireland: insights from the Growing Up in Ireland study

INTRODUCTION

The importance of child wellbeing has been increasingly emphasised in policy discourse in Ireland and elsewhere. Parallel to this development has been a growing awareness of the importance of taking account of children's own perspectives in relation to issues that affect their lives, in particular recognising their capacity to contribute to school improvement (Robinson, Taylor, 2007, 2012; Rudduck and Flutter, 2000; Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007; Zion, 2009). As a result, the value of looking at children's perceptions of their own wellbeing has been recognised and the concentration has shifted away from looking at the implications of children's wellbeing for their outcomes as adults to a focus on their wellbeing in the here and now (Ben-Arieh et al., 2014).

Despite this recognition, there have been relatively few studies of the factors which influence child subjective wellbeing (Holder, 2012). Existing research has tended to focus on adolescence rather than middle childhood and has largely emphasised family characteristics rather than the broader domains of school and peer group (Huebner et al., 2014). The need for such research is all the greater given that previous studies indicate that children and adults often emphasise different factors as salient to their wellbeing. For example, talking to children about their views on wellbeing highlights important factors, such as pets and animals, which are not often recognised by adults (Hanafin and Brooks, 2005; Munn, 2010). Family, friends and having 'things to do' have been seen as crucial from the perspective of Irish children (Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith, 2005).

Recent research drawing on child cohort studies highlights the complexity of the factors influencing child wellbeing. In research based on the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) in England, Gutman and Feinstein (2008) examined four dimensions of child wellbeing: mental health, pro-social behaviour, antisocial behaviour and academic achievement. They found that most children experienced positive wellbeing at primary school but, as they moved through the school system, low-achieving, working-class boys experienced a greater decline in their wellbeing. Children were found to experience a very different environment, even within the same school, based on their own individual interactions with teachers and peers (Gutman and Feinstein, 2008). Using the same data, Gutman and Vorhaus (2012) found a significant relationship between dimensions of child wellbeing at primary level and later outcomes (at ages 11–16). Children with higher levels of emotional, behavioural, social and school wellbeing had higher levels of academic achievement subsequently (at ages 11, 14 and 16). In addition, being bullied was a significant predictor of lower school engagement while having positive friendships enhanced later engagement in school.

In research based on the Growing Up in Scotland study, Parkes et al. (2014) analysed the influence of family and school factors on self-reported life satisfaction among seven-year-old children. A quarter of the children surveyed were characterised as having low life satisfaction. Life satisfaction levels were lower among boys, those born into larger families, and those who had experienced traumatic life events (such as the death of a family member). Lower life satisfaction



levels were found in families with greater parent-child conflict and less positive parenting. Relationships with peers were also crucial, with those with poorer friendships significantly less satisfied with their lives. Finding schoolwork hard and being less engaged with school were also significantly related to lower life satisfaction among these seven-year-old children.

This article draws on information from the Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) child cohort study which contains rich information on child wellbeing alongside a range of other child, family and school characteristics. GUI is one of a growing number of longitudinal child studies across Europe and internationally which provide new insights into the multiplicity of factors influencing child experiences and outcomes, thus building a solid body of evidence to inform policy.

METHODOLOGY

The *Growing Up in Ireland* (GUI) study is a longitudinal study of two cohorts of children: a nine-month-old cohort and a nine-year-old cohort. This article draws on data on the cohort of 8,568 nine-year-old children who, along with their parents, class teachers and principals, were first surveyed in 2007/2008. The children were drawn from a nationally representative sample of 910 primary schools. The sample of children and their families were then randomly generated from within those schools. The response rate at the family level was 57 per cent. The data were re-weighted or statistically adjusted to ensure that the information was representative of the population of nine-year-olds in Ireland. The cohort of children was followed up four years later, at the age of 13, at which stage almost all had made the

Table 1. Pier-Harris Self-Concept Subscales

SUBSCALE	DESCRIPTION
Behavioural Adjustment	A subscale of 14 items measuring admission or denial of problematic behaviours (e.g. 'I am well-behaved in school')
Intellectual and School Status (described in this article as 'academic self-image')	A subscale of 16 items reflecting the child's assessment of his/her abilities with respect to intellectual and academic tasks, general satisfaction with school and perceptions of future achievements (e.g. 'I am smart', 'I am slow in finishing my schoolwork')
Physical Appearance and Attributes (described in this article as 'body image')	A subscale of 11 items about perceptions of physical appearance and other attributes such as leadership and ability to express ideas (e.g. 'I am good-looking', 'I am strong')
Freedom from Anxiety	A subscale of 14 items exploring a variety of feelings including fear, unhappiness, nervousness, shyness and feeling left out of things (e.g. 'I worry a lot')
Popularity	A subscale of 12 items exploring the child's evaluation of his or her social functioning (e.g. 'I am among the last to be chosen for games and sports')
Happiness and Satisfaction	A subscale of 10 items reflecting feelings of happiness and satisfaction with life (e.g. 'I am a happy person').

transition to secondary education. A total of 7,423 of these young people and their families participated at the second wave, representing a response rate of 88 per cent. For 13-year olds, interviews were conducted with the young person, their primary care-giver and their secondary care-giver. Questionnaires on the school context were completed by their school principal.

Within the study, wellbeing at both time-points (9 and 13 years of age) was measured in terms of the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, 2nd Edition (Piers and Herzberg, 2002), which has been widely used internationally. This measure has a number of advantages in that it is based on children's own reports and it captures several dimensions (subscales) of child wellbeing. The subscales relate to children's perceptions of their own: behaviour, academic self-image, anxiety,

popularity, body image and happiness. Table 1 gives more information on the kinds of items included in each of these subscales. The analyses presented in this article look at the extent to which these measures of wellbeing are influenced by child, family and school characteristics.

Children were sampled within a set of schools selected to be representative of the total population of primary schools. Because of school choice patterns and residential segregation, it cannot be assumed that pupils in the same school are completely 'independent' of each other in the way assumed by traditional statistical methods. Multilevel modelling techniques take the clustering of individuals within groups into account (Goldstein, 2003) and provide more precise estimates of the effects of school (and teacher) characteristics. In this article, analyses

are based on a series of three-level models which were estimated using the MLwiN computer package (see Rasbash et al., 2012), with children grouped within classes within schools. These analyses mean that we can look at the effects of school characteristics, comparing 'like with like', on different aspects of child wellbeing.

CHILD AND FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS AND WELLBEING AT 9

At the age of nine, significant differences are found in how boys and girls view themselves. Girls are more likely to consider themselves well-behaved and report slightly higher happiness levels and greater self-confidence in themselves as learners (academic self-image) than their male peers. However, from a more negative perspective, girls report higher levels of anxiety than boys. At this age, there are no marked gender differences in body image or perceived popularity. Family socio-economic characteristics do not make a marked difference to child self-image, a pattern that has been found in other research internationally (see, for example, Parkes et al., 2014). However, children from homes that are the most disadvantaged in terms of financial and educational resources have the worst outcomes in terms of behaviour, happiness and anxiety; in other words, they describe themselves as worse behaved, less happy and more anxious than their more advantaged peers.

Immigration to Ireland has been a recent phenomenon, increasing in the 'Celtic Tiger' years of economic boom. Immigrants to Ireland are distinctive in European comparison in the recency of arrival and in their relatively high levels of educational qualifications (McGinnity et al., 2017). Children from immigrant families are found to be more negative about themselves at the age of nine across all aspects of self-image; thus, they are more self-critical of their academic ability and appearance, are less happy and more anxious, report poorer behaviour and see themselves as less popular than their Irish peers.

The largest individual differences in self-image relate to the presence of a special educational need (SEN). Children with SEN are more negative about themselves across all of the sub-scales of self-image and these differences from their peers are substantial in size. This difference is most marked for those with learning disabilities or emotional-behavioural difficulties, with no significant differences in self-image between those with physical disabilities and their peers.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AND WELLBEING AT 9

Significant variation in child self-image is found between schools and among classrooms (teachers) within schools, though these differences are less marked than for academic achievement, in keeping with previous international research (see, for example, Teddlie and Reynolds, 2000). Overall, school and classroom factors together explain between 4.6 per cent and 8.8 per cent of the variation in child self-image. For most outcomes, more variation is evident between schools than between individual class groups.

Analyses examined whether child wellbeing varied by the composition of students in the school. Two dimensions were examined: gender mix (because of the persistence of a single-sex sector in the Irish context) and social mix (measured in terms of whether schools receive additional funding through the DEIS programme¹ because they cater for a disadvantaged population). Relatively little variation is found in child self-image between single-sex and coeducational schools or between schools with different concentrations of disadvantage. All else being equal, boys in single-sex schools are

1 The Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) programme is a policy instrument designed to address educational disadvantage by targeting additional resources and supports on primary and second-level schools serving disadvantaged populations. A total of 825 schools (640 primary schools and 185 second-level schools) are included in the programme in the 2016/17 school year.

somewhat more positive about their behaviour and physical appearance than boys in coeducational schools but no such difference is found for girls. Furthermore, there is some evidence of higher anxiety levels among children attending the most deprived schools in urban areas.

School size is found to be significantly related to all aspects of child self-image (except anxiety), with more positive self-image among children attending larger schools (with more than 100 students) than among those in medium or smaller schools. This is somewhat surprising given that international research often points to the positive benefits of attending a small school (see, for example, Leithwood and Jantzi, 2009). Three factors appear to be at play. Firstly, smaller schools in Ireland are more likely to use multi-grade (mixed age) classes and lower self-image, especially among girls, is more prevalent in these class settings (see below). Secondly, there appears to be closer monitoring of student behaviour in small schools, with teachers more critical of student misbehaviour than in larger schools. Thirdly, larger schools are more likely to be located in urban areas, where child self-image tends to be more positive.

Three aspects of classroom contexts were considered: whether the class is multi-grade or single-grade, the size of the class and the years of experience of the classroom teacher. Teacher experience has no significant influence on child self-image. There is no marked variation in child self-image by class size but class size is difficult to disentangle from size of school and whether the class is multi-grade or not. However, girls in larger classes (those with 30 or more students) are somewhat less self-confident as learners and have somewhat higher levels of anxiety than girls in smaller classes.

A very significant proportion, a third, of nine-year-olds in Ireland are taught in multi-grade settings, that is, in classrooms that combine, for example, third class and fourth class students. These classes may involve children being taught with older children, younger children or a mixture of

the two (see Quail and Smyth, 2014). Overall girls appear to be more sensitive to being taught in a multi-grade setting than boys. These girls are significantly less confident as learners, report poorer behaviour, have more negative body image and see themselves as less popular than their peers in single-grade classes. This may occur because girls in these classes compare themselves to a wider pool of students, including older peers (see Quail and Smyth, 2014). The only significant effect of being in a multi-grade class for boys is in relation to body image, where multi-grade boys are more critical of their physical appearance, most likely because they are comparing themselves to older, taller boys.

Social relationships with teachers and peers emerge as important protective factors in fostering wellbeing. More negative self-image is found among students who 'never like' their teacher or their school and, for whom, their teachers report discipline problems. Peer relationships emerge as a key influence on self-image. Not surprisingly, children who have more friends see themselves as more popular. Interestingly, boys are more likely than girls to base their sense of popularity on having a larger number of friends. For girls, degree of contact with friends is also influential on perceived popularity. Taking account of number of friends, girls who never see their friends outside school view themselves as less popular and are less happy. Children are also more confident about their physical appearance if they have a lot of friends (six or more). Experience of being bullied over the past year is strongly and significantly associated with poorer self-image across all of the dimensions considered. Those who have been bullied see themselves as less popular, are more anxious, have poorer behaviour, are less confident as learners, are less happy and have poorer body image than their peers. Frequent involvement in sports is also found to foster a positive self-image among 9-year-olds, more because of the social aspects than the physical exercise.

WELLBEING OVER THE TRANSITION TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

The transition to secondary school involves exposure to new subjects and teachers and a new peer group (see, for example, Hargreaves and Galton, 2002; Rudduck, 1996; Lucey and Reay, 2000). It has been characterised as a period of turbulence and excitement in young people's lives (O'Brien, 2000). What effect does this transition have on how young people view themselves? Information from the second wave of GUI was used to look at changes in self-image between nine and 13 years of age (see Figure 1, overleaf). Some aspects of self-image become more positive over time; in particular, young people report they are better behaved and see themselves as more popular at 13 than they had at nine years of age. However, academic self-image becomes more negative over the transition to secondary education. Self-image at the age of nine is significantly predictive of self-image four years later but many young people experience a change in how they view themselves. This is particularly evident for girls, with a widening gender gap in academic self-image, body image and anxiety. Thus, 13-year-old girls are more self-critical about their appearance and academic skills and are more anxious relative to boys than they had been four years previously. The gender gap in academic self-image is noteworthy because, in all other respects, girls are more positive about school and school subjects and spend more time on homework and study than their male peers (see Smyth, forthcoming).

The gap in self-image between young people with special educational needs and their peers also becomes wider over time. This raises significant challenges for inclusion at the school level, given that differences in wellbeing between the two groups of young people were already marked at the age of nine.

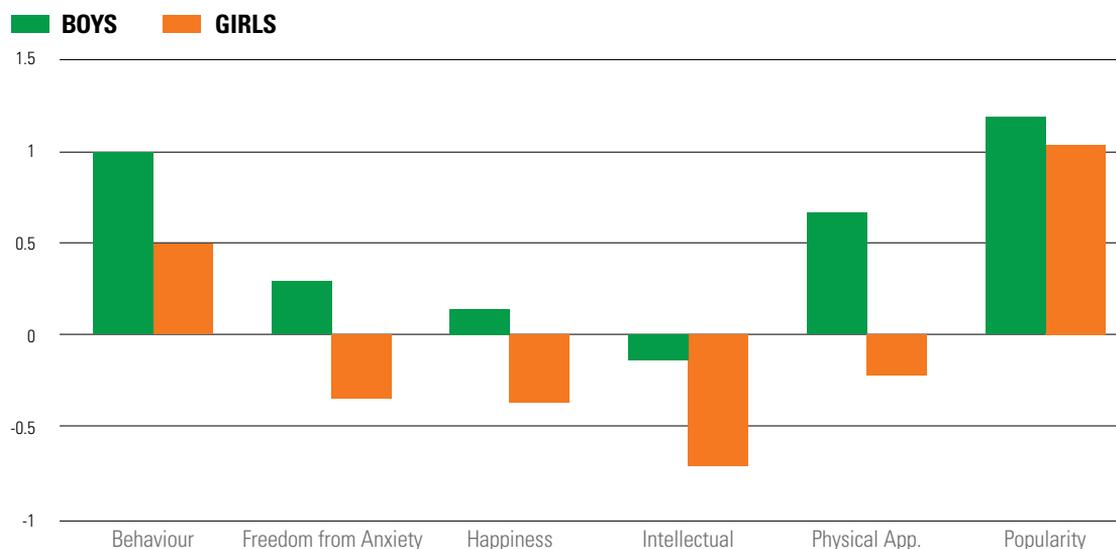
Primary school factors, such as the child's relationship with their teacher as well as their

engagement with school and school subjects, are found to enhance later wellbeing. Not surprisingly, students with higher reading and Mathematics achievement at the age of nine have a better academic self-image four years later. Young people's wellbeing is also shaped by their experiences over the transition to secondary education. Young people who experience difficulties adjusting to the new school context report deteriorating self-image. Relationships with second-level teachers have a very significant influence on young people's self-perceptions. Those young people who had experienced frequent reprimands from their teachers had noticeably poorer self-image at the age of 13.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The study findings indicate that schools and classrooms can make a difference to children's view of themselves across a range of domains. At the same time, even children in the same class group have different experiences of school and react to it in different ways. This poses challenges for teacher practice in accommodating children with differing self-images as well as abilities in the same classroom. This challenge is particularly evident for teachers of multi-grade classes, and hence for smaller schools, where girls in particular appear to make negative evaluations of themselves in relation to (older) peers. The findings of the study point to the necessity of developing innovative ways for initial teacher education and continuous professional development to support teachers to engage students, manage classroom interaction and discipline, and provide feedback in such a way as to prevent potentially negative effects on students' self-image and performance.

Sports participation emerges as a crucial ingredient in fostering a positive self-image among children. However, primary schools in Ireland typically devote an average of just one hour per week to physical education (McCoy et al., 2012). In addition, schools vary in their access to sports facilities and

Figure 1. Changes in Self-Image (Raw Scores) Between 9 and 13 Years by Gender

Source: Growing Up in Ireland study.

in their provision of extra-curricular sport. Smaller schools can face particular challenges in providing facilities. In addition, children differ in their access to, and engagement in, team-based sports outside the school setting (McCoy et al., 2014; Smyth, 2016).

The evidence presented in this article adds to the growing body of literature on the experiences of children and young people with special educational needs in Irish schools (see McCoy and Banks, 2012; Banks et al., 2013, 2015). The gap in self-image between children with SEN and their peers is already evident at the age of nine but widens over the transition to secondary education. The gap is greatest for those with emotional-behavioural and learning difficulties.

The nature of the school and classroom climate, especially the quality of relationships with teachers, emerges as a crucial influence on children's wellbeing. Primary school experiences matter in shaping how children currently view themselves as

learners and in other aspects of their self-image. They matter too in influencing longer-term self-image and engagement with school. Thus, self-image is much more negative among children who are seen as having discipline problems and those who have been reprimanded frequently by teachers. It is therefore crucial that school and class behaviour policy places a strong emphasis on positive reinforcement rather than negative sanctions. The creation of a positive climate should be seen as a central component of school development planning. Continuous professional development for principals and teachers is likely to facilitate change in school and classroom climate; initial teacher education should also emphasise school and classroom climate as many new teachers may not realise the impact they actually have on their students. It is evident therefore that any curricular reform must be embedded in broader policy and practice which fosters positive interaction between teachers and students.

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ABSTRACT



The aim of this analytical study is to identify elements which address students' wellbeing in the curriculum framework and core curriculum in ISCED 2¹ in Kosovo. The study includes an analysis of the main documents drafted and approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) between 2011–2016.

Key elements addressing students' wellbeing such as the content of competences, especially the personal competences for personal health, are highlighted in the study. Furthermore, the main concepts represented in the curriculum area of physical education, sports and health, as well as the learning outcomes of this area, are explored. Through the analysis we have identified elements that address students' wellbeing and which should be part of school practice with students.

We have also identified key challenges facing the implementation of wellbeing for students in Kosovo schools at lower secondary, ISCED 2. Finally, opportunities for successful implementation of a valuable programme for the formation of healthy students are identified in the study.

Key words: wellbeing, competency, learning outcomes, curriculum, and curriculum area.

KOSOVO: Addressing students' wellbeing in the new Kosovo curriculum: Challenges and opportunities

INTRODUCTION

Kosovar society is an evolving society. Many socio-economic and technological areas are undergoing rapid developments and the education system is one of these areas. These changes and developments have contributed to change in education policy, from content to teaching and learning approaches in the classroom. New approaches and expectations have a direct impact on student wellbeing. The wellbeing of students is also affected by the general economic and social situation, and by low levels of education of parents.

International conventions and laws that regulate the educational system aim to protect and safeguard the wellbeing of students. The Education Law of the Republic of Kosovo No.04 / L-032, Section 24: Kosovo Curriculum Framework, in paragraph 5.1. states that it "Promotes the intellectual, moral, cultural and physical wellbeing of learners and society." Care for the wellbeing of students in general, and especially during adolescence, is particularly important for the formation of active and responsible citizens in society. In times of rapid technological development fostering active and responsible citizenship is of great importance. Therefore, an attempt to address the wellbeing of students has taken a deserved place in the curriculum documents developed in recent years.

The Kosovo Curriculum Framework (MEST, 2016a) promotes and encourages the preparation of competent students, able to deal with the challenges of the 21st century such as: innovation and technology, and the changing labour market. The new curriculum includes the core curricula for formal levels, curricula for the class, teacher's guides, and a set of documents which are designed to specifically achieve the objectives and main goals of educational policy as outlined in the Constitution of Kosovo (2008) and the Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo (2011).

The Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education in Kosovo (2016) applies a competence-based approach which aims to shift the focus from the pressure for the mastery of content determined by curricula and school textbooks, to the development of key competencies linked to specific learning outcomes (LO). The development of competencies defined within the curriculum documents is intended to be done through curriculum areas, courses/modules with choice, projects, cross-curricular and extra-curricular activities, etc.

The national policy of the country, the Constitution and the Law for pre-university education (2011), based on international conventions on children's rights and human rights, establishes the rights of each citizen to equality in education and this approach is represented in the main principles of the new curriculum, especially in the principle of inclusion.

The issue of the wellbeing of students in the curriculum is addressed in the description of competences and learning outcomes in the respective curriculum areas as a crosscutting theme. More specifically, wellbeing is included as a personal competence within the area of competences for life, for work and environment.

For the analysis we focused on addressing students' wellbeing through learning outcomes up to ISCED 2, which includes grades 6–9, consisting of students aged between 11 and 15. We also analysed the main concepts of the curriculum, especially the main elements of personal competence – individual health, as well as learning outcomes for the curriculum area of physical education, sports and health.

Analysis showed that wellbeing is sufficiently represented in the curriculum framework (CF) and core curriculum (CC), especially in the curriculum area of physical education, sports and health, and the related learning outcomes. We have also identified the challenges and opportunities for implementation and realisation of learning outcomes which contribute to the wellbeing of students in school.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE NEW CURRICULUM

The curriculum is based on the achievement of key competencies that address the needs of students/teenagers in order to deal with the challenges of the 21st century, to be competitive in the labour market and be willing to live and operate in a world of interdependent relationships.

The competencies included in the Kosovo curriculum are derived from the overall goals of pre-university education and define the main learning outcomes which should be reached by

students in a progressive and sustained way during their pre-university education. In accordance with the goals of Kosovar education, the key competencies envisaged for pre-university education system are:

- Communication and expression competence
- Thinking Competence
- Learning competence
- Life, work and environment competence
- Personal Competence
- Civic competence.

There are seven curriculum areas defined in the curriculum framework, and these include:

- Languages and communication
- Arts
- Mathematics
- Natural sciences
- Society and environment
- Health and wellbeing
- Life and work.

For each curriculum area there are defined learning outcomes, which will enable the achievement of key competencies. Learning areas include one or more subjects or learning modules. Subjects and modules based on the goals and learning outcomes are defined for each curriculum area. Some subjects of one curricular area may appear as integrated at different levels of the curriculum (MEST, 2016a).

Table 1a. Curriculum areas and subjects according to curriculum levels and key stages².

SUBJECTS ACROSS CURRICULUM KEY STAGES (KS)

	Pre-school education Age cohorts: 0–3 years old 3–5 years old	KS 1 Grades: Preparatory 1, 2	KS 2 Grades 3, 4 & 5	KS 3 Grades 6 & 7	
CURRICULUM AREAS	Languages & communication	Activities fostering language communication Mother tongue English language	Mother tongue English language	Mother tongue English language Second foreign language	Mother tongue English language Second foreign language
	Arts	Activities fostering communication skills & artistic expression Figurative art Music	Figurative art Music	Figurative art Music	Figurative art Music
	Mathematics	Activities fostering reasoning & numeracy skills Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics
	Natural sciences	Activities fostering inquiry & discovery of the environment Human & nature	Human & nature	Human & nature	Biology Physics Chemistry
	Society & environment	Activities fostering self-awareness, awareness for the others & development of social skills Society & environment	Society & environment	Society & environment	Civic education History Geography
	Physical education, sports & health	Activities fostering development of physical skills & hygiene habits Physical education, sports & health	Physical education, sports & health	Physical education, sports & health	Physical education, sports & health
	Life & work	Activities fostering capacities to understand & follow procedures & rules, curiosity, creativity & learning in different ways Life skills	Life skills	Life skills	Technology with ICT

2 Curriculum Framework for Pre-university Education in Republic of Kosova (MEST, 2016), p.36–37.

Table 1b. Curriculum areas and subjects according to curriculum levels and key stages.

		SUBJECTS ACROSS CURRICULUM KEY STAGES (KS)				
		KS 4	KS 5	KS 6	KS 6	
		Grades 8 & 9	Grades 10 & 11 (General education)	Grades 10 & 12 (Vocational education & training – VET)	Grades 12 (General education)	Grades 12 (Vocational education & training – VET)
CURRICULUM AREAS	Languages & communication	Mother tongue English language Second foreign language	Mother tongue English language Second foreign language Other languages		Mother tongue English language Second foreign language Other languages	
	Arts	Figurative art Music	Figurative art Music		Figurative art Music	
	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics		Mathematics	
	Natural sciences	Biology Physics Chemistry	Biology Physics Chemistry Geography Astronomy		Biology Physics Chemistry Geography Astronomy	
	Society & environment	Civic education History Geography	History Civic education Sociology Psychology Philosophy		History Civic education Sociology Psychology Philosophy & Logic	
	Physical education, sports & health	Physical education, sports & health	Physical education, sports & health		Physical education, sports & health	
	Life & work	Technology with ICT	ICT		ICT	

Aspects related to the wellbeing of students in school are given a special focus in the curriculum area of physical education, sports and health. The learning outcomes for this curriculum area include elements for certain skills which students must develop and perform in practical situations, until the end of ISCED 2, namely upon completion of grade 9 (15 year olds). Not all students can reach all competencies in the same way and same time, because of individual needs.

To test its suitability and applicability in schools, the new curriculum has been piloted in a selected sample of schools across the country. Prior to implementation, support teams have developed informative seminars in pilot schools, and offered instructions and explanations related to changes from the previous curriculum, and opportunities promoted with the new curriculum. During the process of piloting, schools and teachers had opportunities to assess the shortcomings of the new curriculum and to recommend changes to be made.

THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE WELLBEING OF STUDENTS IN KOSOVO

The Kosovo curriculum framework (CF) and core curriculum (CC) include key elements which address the wellbeing of students. Implementation or realisation of the curriculum in school raises numerous challenges due to the interdependence of the elements that contribute to the complete wellbeing of pupils.

In relation to the students' wellbeing, two main aims of the CF are of particular significance.

Firstly, "students should be encouraged to develop self-confidence and positive motivation, as well as making proper use of their own rights. They will be encouraged to cultivate their curiosity and positive attitude for what is different in the context of ideas, phenomena, persons, cultures." And secondly, "education should enable students

to contribute, with all of their potential, to the reconstruction and wellbeing of Kosovar society, while developing autonomy as individuals who are able to pursue personal fulfilment" (MEST, 2016a, p.12). This applies to all levels of curricula and for all curriculum areas.

What does wellbeing mean?

"Wellbeing – a positive emotional state, associated with general satisfaction by the subject." (Grillo, 2002, p.188). The role of the curriculum is to meet the requirement addressed in this definition, regarding the emotional state and fulfilment of the individual and to provide elements that make the student feel fulfilled or satisfied in daily life.

To support the student's positive emotional state the curriculum provides some learning outcomes in the form of standards, which must be achieved after completing a certain level of education.

Curriculum learning outcomes define the elements of competences on a general level and more specifically for particular competences.

By the end of lower secondary education (grades 6 to 9), students must be able to demonstrate the learning outcomes below:

- demonstrate confidence, personal and inter-personal skills
- recognise and manage their emotions
- co-operate and empathise with others
- know, respect and appreciate their own culture, as well as the values, beliefs and cultures of others
- overcome prejudices and compromise in certain cases
- manage stress and trauma, and resolve inter-personal conflicts constructively
- understand and adhere to codes of conduct in different situations

- understand the components of a healthy lifestyle
- make informed choices and decisions about healthy nutrition, diet and exercise
- pursue personal life plans and assess whether, how and to what extent, goals were achieved
- act autonomously and responsibly, with full awareness of the consequences. (MEST, 2016a, p.19).

If we analyse all the elements required for the development of the healthy individual outlined in the competences presented above, we can see to what degree there is a promotion of wellbeing in the curriculum. These elements include the emotional and social aspects necessary for the wellbeing of the individual.

The recognition and management of emotions is one of the important factors necessary for the wellbeing of the individual. Another aspect which relates closely to wellbeing is the individual's preparation to acquaint and empathise with others, especially to operate and collaborate, learn or play, solve problems or take part in various activities, etc.

Another important element for the cultivation of wellbeing, or for preparing children for a healthy life is the capacity to "know, respect and appreciate their own culture, as well as the values, beliefs and cultures of others" or even at a higher level when the student can "manage stress and trauma, and resolve inter-personal conflicts constructively" (MEST, 2016a, p.23). In a time of rapid technological developments and challenges, managing stressful situations is essential for the wellbeing of students, which in turn is important for social prosperity and maintaining human spirit. Therefore, elements of this competence must be reached by students upon completion of grade nine.

Two elements outlined above which are of vital importance for the physical wellbeing of students, are to "understand the components of a healthy lifestyle", and to "make informed choices and decisions about healthy nutrition, diet and exercise" (MEST, 2016a, p.23). Enabling students to achieve a healthy lifestyle is the most important part of this competence.

To achieve this goal within the curriculum area of physical education, sports and health there are a number of planned learning outcomes which address issues of healthy lifestyle, healthy nutrition, rest and recreation. This curriculum area includes various subjects, developed through relevant content and learning activities with an aim to support students in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and mental and physical wellbeing.

The elements included in this competence outline the basic concepts within the curriculum area which guide the development of the learning outcomes for this area and the respective key curriculum stage. This addresses the educational content and activities to be included in school textbooks and learning materials in school activities and teaching methodologies for the cultivation of this competence.

Furthermore, key concepts of wellbeing are presented and elaborated in the Curriculum Framework (MEST, 2016a), and specifically include:

- Complete physical, mental, emotional and social welfare
- Comprehensive and harmonious development of the body through physical and sports activities
- Promotion of active and healthy lifestyle
- Awareness on the impact of the use of addictive substances
- Environmental education and sustainable development. (MEST, 2016a, p.73–74).

If we analyse the main concepts, which implicitly contain elements of the welfare of the students, then we can claim that it was sufficiently addressed in the curriculum. The first concept of wellbeing addresses the core issues directly, such as the physical, mental, emotional and social aspects, which constitute the basis of the wellbeing of the individual. Based on this concept, the CF (MEST, 2016a) further outlines two learning outcomes that describe what students should know, value and be able to do at the end of seventh grade, and ninth grade:

- Explain and analyse concrete actions for preservation of the physical wellbeing, mental, emotional or social for him/her and others (family, colleagues and community members) in different situations
- Identify persons and services in their environment and know where to seek professional support services and to preserve physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing. (MEST, 2016a, p.77).

The second concept on which individual wellbeing relies is a healthy style of living. The curriculum requires promotion of this concept and other concepts that contain elements of the wellbeing of students, which in itself involves a particular range of activities and content to be realised. The promotion of these concepts through the curriculum aims to increase the wellbeing of students in life in general, which among other things helps overcome a phenomenon that is very present among young people – the abuse of substances harmful to health and human wellbeing, such as tobacco, alcohol, narcotics, etc.

The personal competence ‘healthy individual’ as stated in the Curriculum Framework (MEST, 2016a) includes six core elements, or indications that an individual has reached an appropriate level of wellbeing as follows:

- Demonstrating an understanding of oneself and others
- Demonstrating self-confidence
- Managing one’s emotions and stress
- Expressing empathy for others
- Demonstrating one’s ability to conduct a healthy lifestyle
- Making general choices related to personal health. (MEST, 2016a, p.15).

Therefore at the end of compulsory education (ISCED 2), students of 15 must be able to demonstrate a sufficient level of knowledge of themselves and others in this regard.

Preparing students to build confidence in their abilities and real-life possibilities and the expression of this confidence is important for their emotional and social wellbeing. This is addressed in the individual healthy competence on level 6–9 of lower secondary education. (ISCED 2 : Stage 4 – Strengthening and orientation – grades VIII and IX).

A very important element for wellbeing of the students of this age is enabling them to manage their emotions and to deal with stressful situations in which teenagers can find themselves every day.

Failure to build capability in young people to manage emotions or emotional situations can have consequences for children of this age, but also can become a cause of conflicts and disagreements with adults, peers, and teachers. Social aspects of the individual can be cultivated and expressed only in relation to others and not as an isolated individual. Therefore, as an element of personal competence, the cultivation of empathy for others and how to express it in relationships with others is seen as very important as building relationships without expressing empathy in some cases is impossible. Preparing children to conduct a healthy personal lifestyle is crucial for children’s wellbeing and for future life and careers.

Key stages

The curriculum is structured according to the UNESCO international education levels (ISCED).

Table 2. Description of Education System

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATION	FORMAL LEVELS OF PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION	CURRICULUM KEY STAGES
ISCED 3	Upper-secondary education Grade 12	Key stage 6: Consolidation and specialisation
	Upper-secondary education Grade 9–11	Key stage 5: Basic general and professional development
ISCED 2 ³	Lower-secondary education Grade 8–9	Key stage 4: Reinforcement and orientation
	Lower-secondary education Grade 6–7	Key stage 3: Further development and orientation
ISCED 1	Primary education Grades 3–5	Key stage 2: Reinforcement and development
	Primary education Grades 1–2	Key stage 1: Basic acquisition
ISCED 0	Preparatory grade	
	Pre-school education	Preparatory stage: Early childhood education ⁴

Each ISCED level is divided into stages. ISCED 2 includes stage 3 (grade 6 and 7) and stage 4 (grades 8 and 9). Each stage focuses on a particular aspect of development, progress and learning requirements, organising learning experiences or assessment and evaluation criteria (MEST, 2016b, p.18). Each stage of the curriculum has one brief description of the main goal that should be achieved on completion of that curriculum stage. From the description we have selected only parts which address important issues relating to the wellbeing of the students at the end of level 3 and 4.

As highlighted in the table above (Table 2) in the key stage 3, Further Development and Orientation, a student is expected to:

- nurture their interest to know themselves, others and the social and natural environment better
- develop responsibility for active participation in social life and protecting the environment.

Two aspects of stage 3, Development and Orientation, prepare the student to recognise the

³ Grades and stages with golden colour are compulsory.

⁴ Curriculum Framework for Pre-university Education in Republic of Kosova (2016), p.30.

personal identity and the affiliation of a social group in which he/she grows. This is a very delicate stage because here begins the transition from childhood to the young adult phase, which can seriously affect the mental, physical, and social wellbeing of students. Therefore, addressing the issue in the curriculum is important for the emotional and social wellbeing of the student. The second very important goal which addresses the wellbeing of students in the CF, is: “developing responsibility for active participation in social life and protecting the environment”, which is important to educate the child “for active participation in social life”. To achieve this “active participation in social life,” the student must be prepared in a qualitative way in the family and in school, (MEST, 2016b, p.77) and this obliges the school to aim to fulfil this curricular objective for students.

In the key stage 4, Reinforcement and Orientation, students aim to have gained specific:

- familiarisation with different academic and career choices
- practical training and orientation activities to allow them to clarify their aspirations.

As seen from these two aspects, the students at curriculum level 4 are encouraged to explore different career opportunities and prepare for life after school. In this way, the new curriculum, gives the school autonomy in the development and implementation of curriculum elements to meet the needs and interests of individual students (MEST, 2016b, p.27).

How wellbeing is addressed in the field of physical education, sports and health in CCF⁵?

Analysis of curricular documents pointed out that addressing the wellbeing of students is reflected in many aspects of the curriculum such as the purposes and principles of pre-university

education, the description of the key stages of the curriculum, the core competencies and the learning outcomes. But the wellbeing of students is reflected in particular in the curricular field of physical education, sports and health.

According to the description of the purpose of this curricular area set within the Core Curriculum ISCED 2, this curriculum area should provide students with opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and prepare them for a healthy life so that they can be ready to take responsibility for their health and wellbeing and that of others. In relation to key aspects of student wellbeing in this curriculum area, students are provided with:

- information on ways and actions that improve their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing
- the knowledge and practices on healthy food, supplements and influence of substances that cause addiction
- awareness on health services available and ways of accessing relevant health services
- understanding of their role and responsibility in creating and maintaining a healthy environment, and showing initiative and action towards achieving it
- balancing work and recreation and cultivating critical attitudes to the use of technology.

This relates to guidelines established for this field in the curriculum framework of pre-university education, according to which: “The curriculum area of physical education, sports and health in pre-university education aims to develop students’ knowledge, skills, and necessary attitudes, which ensure their healthy physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing and to successfully cope with the challenges of life”, (MEST, 2016a, p.41). Furthermore, it is stated that “Through this curriculum area, students will be educated on having healthy food, implying sufficient competence on nutrition” (ibid, p.41).

5 Core Curriculum Field/Area

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The need to address the wellbeing of students is reflected in the content of the curriculum and in the purpose and concepts of the curriculum area physical education, sports and health.

Learning outcomes of this curriculum area are the basis for determining the educational content for the classroom. This content is meant to guide the work of teachers in the practice of working with students, a practice which should help cultivate children's wellbeing, especially preparing them for different life situations.

The next section of this article will look at the key learning outcomes in this area which directly address the requirements for the cultivation of student wellbeing.

LO for Stage 3, ages 11–13 years

From the Learning Outcomes for both stages we have selected the main four, the achievement of which develop healthy individual competence. It means that by the end of age 13, a student should be able to achieve the following:

- Explain and analyse concrete actions for maintenance of his/her physical, mental, emotional or social wellbeing and of others (family, colleagues and community members) in different situations
- List and describe the basic rules of various collective sports and demonstrate skills while performing technical elements in collective sports
- Explore the classification system of the labelled food, understand that people have different needs for food and their nutrition needs vary at different stages of life
- Recognise and distinguish dangerous situations, negative phenomena and habits (negative substances, tobacco, alcohol and drugs) and understand how to prevent them. (MEST, 2016b, p.79).

If we analyse only the main concepts in each LO we see that the student is prepared to care "for the maintenance of his/her physical, mental, emotional or social wellbeing." The student is also prepared to care for others in different situations, The requirements of this area promote the wellbeing of children/students, as one of the basic elements of the new curriculum.

To achieve these learning outcomes requires dedication by teachers, parents and the individual so that the LOs are fully achieved. The LOs are on a continuum from primary school to the end of schooling but with an increasing level of requirement for the attainment of each competence. Below we will see the LO at 4 ISCED level 2, age 13–15, compulsory education.

Learning Outcomes Stage 4 state the student will be able to:

- Identify persons and services in their environment and know where to seek services and professional support to maintain physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing
- Describe, implement and interconnect rules of collective sports strengthening motor habits and motor skills when exercising collective sports tactics
- Identify through practical activities main food ingredients, their origin (source), function and describe the relationship between energy, food and physical health
- Understand the positive effects that some substances can have on the mind and body, but is also aware of the negative consequences, serious physical, mental, emotional, social and legal consequences that substance abuse has, (ibid.p.79)
- Students experience rapid changes in their mental and physical development during the teenage years. A student's wellbeing depends to a large extent on personal care for their wellbeing. Often, this wellbeing depends on the impact and help that he/she should seek from

others, especially from the services that are necessary in certain instances of teenage crisis. The intention of the LO is to support the student to be prepared for such situations, and to know where to look for professional help to overcome situations which may affect his/her wellbeing, be it mental, physical, emotional or social.

In the previous curricula, especially in the methodological approaches suggested for the teacher, such support has been lacking because it was considered “problematic” to talk about topics such as puberty, genitals, sexual intercourse, sexual education, protective measures against unwanted pregnancy, etc. In such cases, if a student was not prepared to ask for help or information about the problems or challenges that occur in this stage of the adolescence, he/she might have made efforts to be informed by sources which were often unreliable or simply suffered from the absence of this information.

A survey conducted by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2014) with pupils aged 15, included the question “Have you ever had sexual intercourse?”, and 13.3% of respondents responded positively (WHO, 2014, p.46). This argues for the necessity of such an approach, but also gives some interesting data such as: 13.3% of 15-year old students have had their first sexual intercourse; 25.5% of male respondents had their first sexual intercourse; 4.5% of female respondents had their first sexual intercourse; 32.8% of students had their first sexual intercourse at the age of 14; and 26.5% of those who had sexual intercourse used no pregnancy prevention method. (ibid. 2014, p. 48). These data from the survey prove that our students have been recognised as having insufficient awareness regarding sexual education, and as a consequence, there have been numerous cases of unwanted pregnancy and other health, social and emotional problems. Similar outcomes from the same research have also emerged regarding nutrition, leisure, physical activities, and violence among students. Examples like this, and similar, are good indicators for strengthening the need for implementation of the LO to facilitate the

provision and promotion of the wellbeing of students.

LO 4: “Understand the positive effects that some substances can have on the mind and body, but is also aware of the negative consequences, serious physical, mental, emotional, social and legal consequences that substance abuse has” (MEST, 2016a) clearly addresses the need to understand, but also to take action against the phenomenon present not only in Kosovo but elsewhere, of the use of harmful substances. Two concepts of importance in terms of the LO are: understanding the positive and negative effects of the substances, which have negative or positive effects on physical and mental health of students of this age, and “awareness on the impact of the use of addictive substances.” This awareness cannot be achieved without the active participation of the individuals in the learning activities so that they learn to distinguish the positive and negative consequences in areas such as food, exercise and harmful substances for health and for the general wellbeing of students.

MAIN CHALLENGES

To provide an analysis of challenges for the practical implementation of the new curriculum, particularly requirements under the curriculum for physical education, sports and health, we reviewed the school planning of teachers who were piloting the curriculum. We also analysed a study of the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute for the use and application of syllabuses in schools which implemented the new curriculum.

Based on this analysis, and other data we have about the functioning of the school, in the existing socio-economic circumstances, including the legacy from the previous system, the following challenges have been identified:

- Treatment of the student as the object and not as the main subject of the processes still continues to dominate in school. Therefore it is challenging even to implement part of the

curriculum which addresses issues of wellbeing in an environment and in the circumstance where it is necessary. A change of approach from teachers and other stakeholders inside and outside the school is needed if we are to meet the needs of students, whether emotional, physical, mental or social needs

- Opportunities offered by the new curricula to address the wellbeing of the students in class are not reflected sufficiently in teachers' planning, especially in the parts which describe the teaching methodology and activities with students
- A study conducted by the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute (KPI) on the use and implementation of syllabuses at schools and on teachers who implement the new curriculum in the curriculum area of physical education, sports and health found that students require additional guidance for materials and learning resources for evaluation and implementing of the cross-curricular issues. This indicates the extent of the challenge to implement the philosophy of the new curriculum, which provides schools and teachers with an autonomy and flexibility to select educational content in line with the guidelines provided. A change of teachers' approach to working with students is urgently required
- The traditional teaching approach is still dominant. Meeting the requirements of educational policies is insufficiently fulfilling the interests and needs of students, whether for learning and content or even other activities which should be organised to meet the student needs and demands. It is therefore very challenging to change this approach and thus enable students to learn and acquire in line with their requirements and developmental needs
- The help that school needs to change social development in the family is an important condition for the cultivation of students' wellbeing. So far cooperation between school and family has been more focused on achieving

knowledge and affecting the behaviour of students, but not in matters that have to do with the physical, social and mental wellbeing of the students, although these are interdependent with other aspects of the communication with parents.

CONCLUSION

What Learning Outcomes (LO) address student wellbeing? Is wellbeing sufficiently addressed and promoted? What are the challenges faced? What challenges do teachers face while implementing the new curricula and addressing student wellbeing? These were the main questions explored and analysed in this study.

The analysis revealed that students' wellbeing is addressed with adequate instructions in the basic documents which constitute the basic policy documents, such as the Curriculum Framework (CF) and the Core Curricula (CC). Addressing the wellbeing of students in the CF and the CC was mainly represented through the LOs at the level of competencies, especially the healthy individual competence, and in the curriculum area physical education, sports and health. Addressing students' wellbeing should include mental and physical health, and the social aspect of students in school. The contribution of this area in achieving healthy individual competence and, indirectly, the wellbeing of children, is of particular importance. However, it requires a special mobilisation and commitment of parents, teachers, students and other stakeholders for the successful achievement of the LOs provided by the CC and competencies that address the wellbeing of students. We made an attempt to identify some challenges faced by teachers, students and parents in their efforts to fulfil all the demands and requirements as stated in the CF and the CC. This way, we were able to identify opportunities which might help teachers, students and others in better achieving the wellbeing of students.

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ABSTRACT



The project 'active schools' in Luxembourg was conducted for two years (2014–2016) in three elementary schools and extended to ten primary schools from 2016. The participating schools and their respective child care centres committed to undertake at least 15–20 additional minutes of physical activity each day. To facilitate this, teachers and childcare workers were provided free sets of exercise cards and materials for different modules. In the first year of the project, the schools concentrated on 'active breaks', which was then extended in the second year to 'active learning' activities which develop and enrich learning.

The project was scientifically monitored and evaluated by the University of Luxembourg. The results were more than satisfactory as active learning relaxation phases were found to be used predominantly 5 to 10 times a week. This high frequency points out that these activities were equally popular with teachers and students.

Similarly, the feedback from the parents showed that they had noticed positive changes in children who now have more pleasure in sports, better coordination and most parents see progress in school and classroom climate. In June 2017, those schools that prioritise exercise in their daily school routine received the "clever move" label in recognition of their efforts.

Key words: active learning schools, physical activity, exercise, clever move

LUXEMBOURG: Active Schools

(Pilot Project “clever move”)

CONTEXT

Children attending primary school in Luxembourg have an average of 2.5 hours of physical education (PE) per week. This proportion falls to 2.2 hours per week at the lower secondary level and to 1.6 hours per week at the upper secondary level. Such initiatives by the Association of the Physical Education Teachers (APEP) to introduce 3 hours of PE per week, failed as it was not deemed possible to reduce the curriculum time allocated to academic subjects.

As part of a research project in 2006 (Bös, K. et al), a survey was carried out in Luxembourg into health, motor skills and physical and sporting activity amongst children and young people. The investigation, which was conducted in three age groups (9, 14 and 18-year-olds), unfortunately confirmed a Europe-wide trend: poor motor skills, inactivity and health risks amongst children and young people have been increasing at an alarming rate over recent years. Physical activity as a part of daily life and sporting activities during leisure time and in clubs decrease considerably as children grow older, replaced by a considerable increase in the daily consumption of television and preoccupation with games consoles, computers and smartphones.

As a result, 15% of the primary-school girls in the study and 20% of the boys were overweight or obese. 18% of the children and young people report suffering from headaches, followed by 14% who suffer from sleep disorders and 13% who suffer from backache. 20% of the children and young people undergo regular medical treatment. (see Bös, K. et al., 2006)

The Health Behaviour in School Aged Children (HBSC) Study from 2013/2014 confirms this evolution and Luxembourg is not well positioned in the international ranking.

In recent years, additional arguments have come to light which underline the importance of physical activity at school: the transformation of childhood, the alarming state of the health of children and young people, a lack of focus and behavioural problems as well as findings from research into education and development in respect of the importance of exercise.

The correlation between motor skills, physical and sporting activity and health has long since been established as fact, yet it is proving extremely difficult to increase time allocation for PE and thus the overall number of lessons in school. It therefore makes logical sense to explore other ways of getting children moving whilst they are at school. The concept of active breaks raises concerns if they are perceived to be at the expense of language and maths teaching and the pupils' cognitive development. There are, however, a number of studies which show that exercise optimises not only physical fitness but also mental performance.

One sophisticated quasi-experimental study was conducted between 1970 and 1977 in Trois-Rivières (Québec, Canada). 546 primary schoolchildren were assessed over 6 years. One issue examined was the impact of an hour per day of vigorous taught PE on overall academic performance. The control group received only the standard programme of 40 minutes per week of PE, and despite a 14% loss of time for academic instruction, the overall school performance of the experimental group improved significantly relative to the

controls. Even the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children scores showed small but significant advantages for the experimental students on both verbal and non-verbal items. In standardised examinations, experimental students attained higher scores in maths despite the fact that maths teaching time was reduced by 33 minutes per week. Other studies found that regular physical activity is linked to greater school satisfaction and a reduced dropout rate. When taken together, the available data suggests that in primary school an additional 60–90 minutes per day of physical activity can be provided without jeopardising academic performance. Active students compensated for a reduction in teaching time with greater efficiency of their learning process.

THE ACTIVE SCHOOLS PROJECT

The *active schools* concept arose from the progressive education movement, which emphasises sensory and active learning. The term *active schools* dates back to the Swiss educationalist Urs Illi who used it in the mid-1980s with particular reference to the primary sector. With a rationale based on medical and healthcare concepts (exercise as a health resource) as well as development and learning theory concepts (exercise as a part of child development, exercise as an additional sensory and experiential channel), the fundamental goal is to ensure that there is more physical activity in the traditional “sedentary school”. School can be changed by bringing a rhythmic structure to lessons that is child-oriented, appropriate to what is being taught and learner-friendly, with active, independent learning and active breaks, appropriate furnishings and by having active, inclusive and healthy organisational structures. (Abeling, I and Städtler, H., 2008).

Some of the positive impacts of physical activity include the better embedding of learning as a result of moving and using all the senses, increased cerebral blood flow, beneficial effects on children’s physical and mental development, improved coordination and balance resulting in fewer accidents and higher self-esteem,

development of social and communication skills, improved classroom atmosphere, a developing sense of confidence and wellbeing, reduced tension and stress, a better balance between work and relaxation in the school day and an increase in performance and concentration.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Physical activity can be introduced alongside learning to support it, with the use of relaxation minutes or phases, dynamic sitting or learning stations. It can also, however, be a tool to develop and enrich the learning taking place, which means learning by and whilst doing physical activity, such as counting or memorising whilst moving.



Larochette, Luxembourg: cycle 2, 2014

The term “active break” implies that breaks between lessons are explicitly spent playing and taking part in physical activity. To enable this to happen, pupils should be introduced to particular types of games (e.g. during PE lessons) and the playground should be redesigned appropriately if necessary. Finally, the phrase “active school life” places emphasis on the importance of those aspects of school life related to activity, including sports days or meetings, excursions and school trips which can be organised in collaboration with external partners, such as sports associations or (in Luxembourg) Maison Relais (MR) or child care centres.

Active schools also need to be considered within the context of a school’s development and profile-building, as a school-wide implementation

of the concept involves the participation of all teaching staff and sometimes requires investment in the internal and external design of the school. Integrating the concept into the school development plan is therefore recommended. Focussing on its strengths and without great expense, the “Active School and MR” project is achieving results.

DURATION AND FOCUS OF PROJECT

The “Active School and MR” project in Luxembourg was conducted for two years (2014–2016) in three primary schools (Angelsberg, Larochette, Nommern), involving 524 pupils and 54 teachers and with the hope of extending it to more schools throughout the country.

The participating schools and MRs committed to undertake at least 15–20 additional minutes of physical activity each day. To facilitate this, teachers and childcare workers were provided free of charge with sets of exercise cards and materials for different modules.

Staff from the project schools and educators from the MRs received training in the different strands of active schools, which enabled the concept to be implemented. Two three-hour workshops focusing above all on practice were planned for the first year of the project, with one workshop in the following year. The further training was organised and certified by the National Training Institute of Education (IFEN) in Luxembourg.

In the first year of the project, the schools focused primarily on physical activity as a tool to support learning. This was expanded in the second year to incorporate activity to develop and enrich learning and which was also reflected in the further training programmes.

In the MRs, there was a focus on physical activity during homework time. In Luxembourg, homework forms an integral part of the learning process in daily school life. Homework based on

physical activity is particularly suitable for motivating children to do more exercise outside school. All subjects can set activity homework which might be reading whilst balancing, relaxation techniques before starting or challenging movement tasks, such as juggling.

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

Some examples will illustrate how easily and quickly physical activity can be integrated into the classroom without the need for space or outlay on materials.

Active breaks

Active breaks are breaks in lessons during which specific exercises are carried out. The transition from calm to active phases is more pupil-oriented and conducive to learning and can reinvigorate the lesson. Exercises can be used:

- when concentration begins to wane
- when there are signs of fatigue
- when pupils are restless and apathetic
- to activate, relieve and relax
- to reduce stress.

There are different types of active breaks, categorised by Müller & Baumberger (2004) as those which “mobilise the joints”, “activate the muscles”, “restore concentration” and “promote wellbeing”.



Nommern, Luxembourg: cycle 1, 2016

Active learning

Active learning means structuring lessons in such a way that pupils acquire lesson content by experiencing, thinking and doing and are able to link different aspects of their learning. Content that is learned in this way becomes more firmly embedded in the child's memory. Reading, counting and writing in school can also involve movement, such as hopping on letter mats, counting with large dice or making sentences using word tiles.



Larochette, Luxembourg: cycle 4, 2015

EVALUATION

The Institute of Applied Educational Sciences within the University of Luxembourg offers methodological and scientific support to the project through bi-annual assessments using tests and questionnaires. With regard to the anticipated effects, pupils' social and learning behaviour was paramount. Here are the results:

Teachers' process evaluation

This reveals that relaxation periods and certain types of active learning were used most frequently. The teachers' evaluations of how well these were put into practice are fairly self-critical and are certainly not over positive. As for the possibility of setting active homework, this was hardly ever used. Teachers rated pupils' acceptance of active lessons as good or very good.

Relaxation periods (fig. 1) were chiefly used up to 5 times per week or from 5 to 10 times per week. This is a good rate of uptake and indicates that this element was popular with teachers and pupils. By summer 2015, over 40% of teachers still saw room for improvement in terms of how they were putting this into practice. Later results, however, reveal that an increasing number of teachers indicate that they are now using this type of active lesson well or very well in the classroom.

Regarding the extent that the various building blocks of the active lessons were accepted by the pupils, the teachers reported that this was very good as far as the relaxation and relaxation periods, as well as the active learning were concerned. For the few times they distributed homework assignments, the teachers indicated that students did not like these too much. It should be noted that the impressions vary widely and that there were also a low number of cases.

Pupils' process evaluation

In principle, the results of the process evaluation show that a clear majority of the pupils – often over 80% – regularly took part in the active learning during the entire investigation period. Most pupils enjoyed participating in the physical exercises – even if more than 60% at a somewhat lower level.

The answers to the second question "Have you always participated in the exercises?" are comparable to those of the first question. More than 80% of pupils confirm that they have taken part in the active learning, except the 4th measurement in May 2016, where this figure drops to 75%. This figure is slightly higher in Nommern where the pupils report a participation rate of between 84% to 91%. Considering this rate by cycle, a lower participation can be observed particularly in Cycle 4 where between 73% and 83% of the pupils report that they have always participated in the active learning, with this value dropping to 60% at the last measurement point. In Cycle 2, the value is initially over 90% but falls to 79% and 77% at the 3rd and 4th measurement points.

Figure 1. Teachers’ process evaluation results for the “relaxation period” element – frequency of use (left) and assessment of quality (right). Bund A., Scheuer C. (2016)

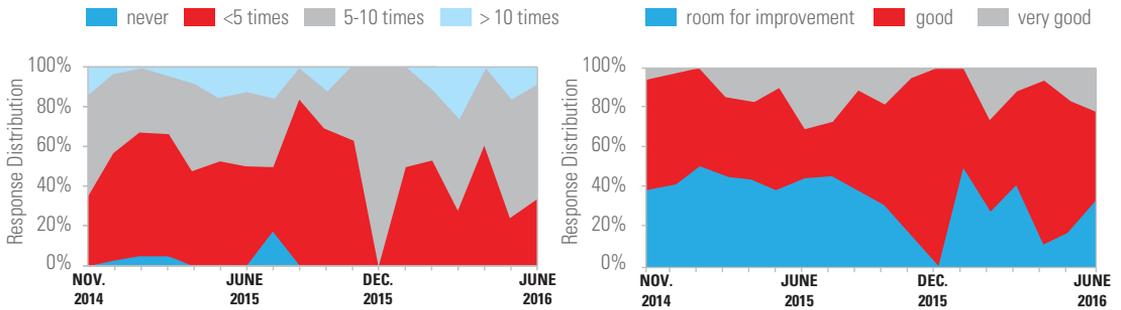


Figure 2. Teacher perception of the evaluation process – student acceptance of the different blocks.

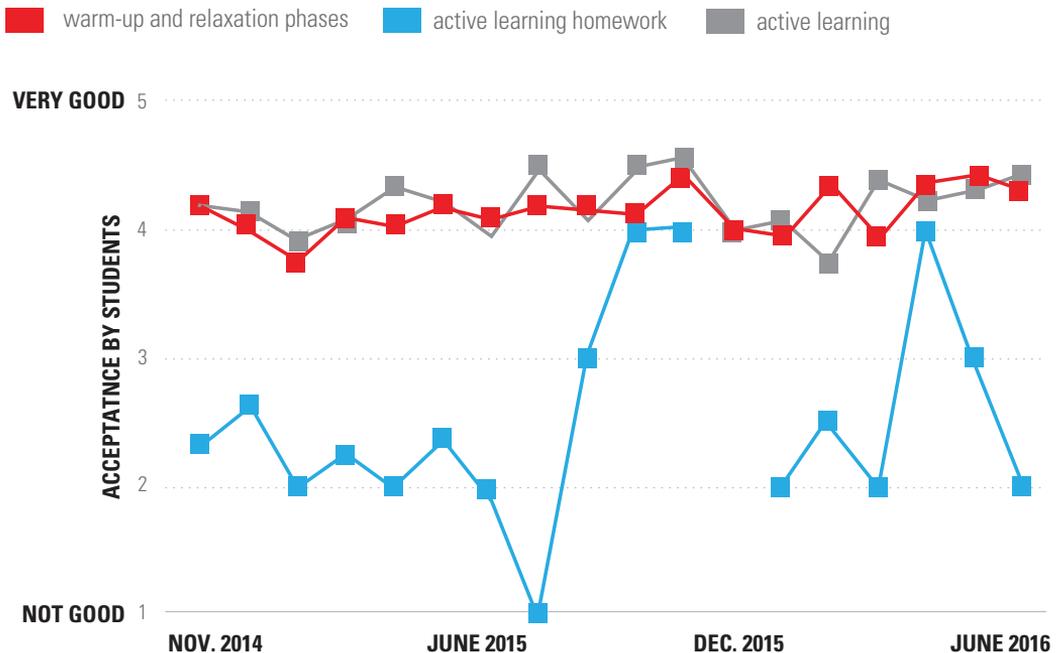


Figure 3. Pupils’ process evaluation results by school and cycle – Bund A., Scheuer C. (2016)

“Did you enjoy taking part in the physical exercises?”

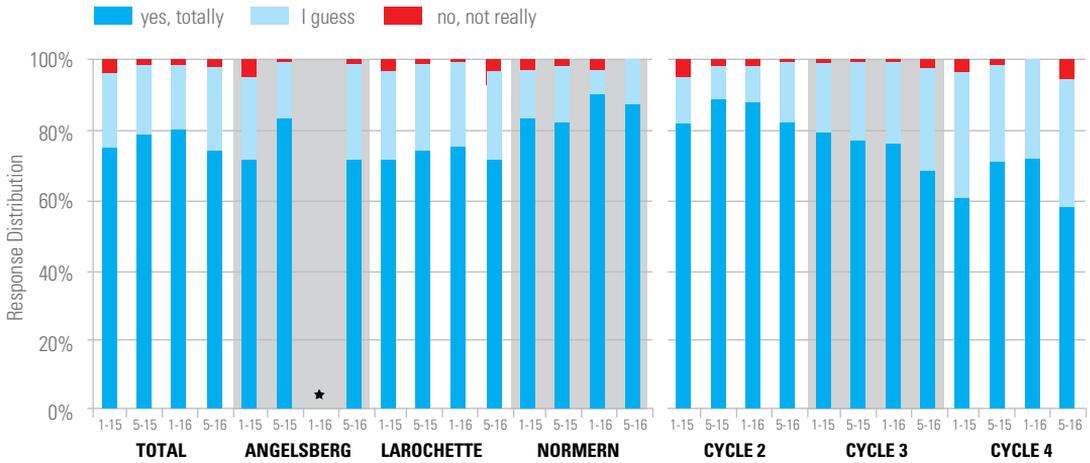
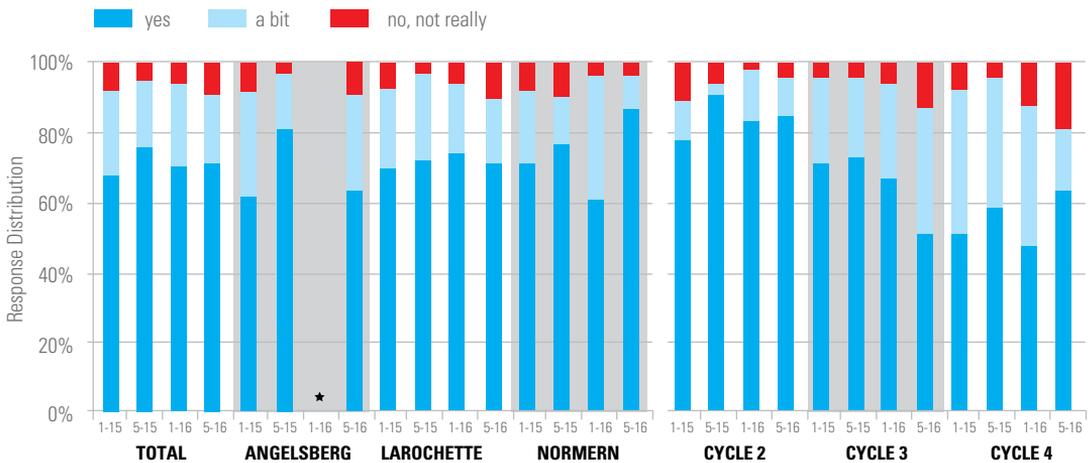


Figure 4. Pupils’ process evaluation results by school and cycle

Did you always participate in the physical exercises?



Parents' questionnaire:

The results of the parents' questionnaire are broadly very positive. Between 60% and 70% of parents responded "yes" or "sometimes" to the items and indicated that they had noticed positive changes in their children. For example, 67% of parents think that overall, their children now enjoy more, both sports and exercise as well as PE in school. 61% also think that they have noticed better coordination. The majority of parents see improvements in the atmosphere at school and in the classroom. In each case, slightly over 60% state that their child now prefers going to school and has a better relationship with teachers and classmates. In addition, their child talks about school more often (63%) and generally seems more even-tempered (62%). In contrast, only 46% of parents agreed with the item about anxiety before tests. 64% and 63% of parents think that

their child has more self-confidence when dealing with the academic pressure of school and their classmates. A somewhat lower percentage of parents (58%) report that their child is better at managing anger. The median rate of agreement for items about sport and exercise is 65%, for school and classroom atmosphere 58% and for self-confidence and anger management 62%.

Examining these results by the different school cycles, findings reveal in particular, that parents of Cycle 1 children report seeing positive effects as a result of active lessons. 85% and 78% of these parents think that their children now enjoy sport and exercise more and also enjoy PE more. In most cases, considerably more than 60% state that aspects of the atmosphere at school and in the classroom have improved, as well as their child's self-confidence.

Table 1. Results of parent questionnaire by cycle. Bund A., Scheuer C. (2016)

ITEM	"YES" OR "SOMETIMES" (%)			
	CYCLE 1 N = 14	CYCLE 2 N = 68	CYCLE 3 N = 73	CYCLE 4 N = 86
I have noticed that my child				
... enjoys sport and exercise more now.	85.7	69.1	69.8	60.5
... is more coordinated now.	71.4	58.8	61.6	60.4
... has more fun in PE now.	78.5	72.1	63.0	65.1
Mean values for sport and exercise	78.5	66.6	64.8	62.0
... prefers going to school now.	64.2	70.6	57.6	55.8
... has a better relationship with teachers now.	71.4	64.7	61.7	62.8
... is less anxious before tests now.	35.7	47.1	48.0	45.4
... is generally more even-tempered now.	71.5	64.7	56.1	65.1
... talks more about school now.	71.5	70.6	64.4	55.8
... has a better relationship with classmates now.	71.4	60.3	56.2	61.6
... finds it easier to make friends at school now.	64.3	52.9	48.0	59.3
Mean values for school and classroom atmosphere	64.3	61.5	56.0	57.9
... has more self-confidence when dealing with academic demands now.	71.4	63.2	71.2	58.1
... has more self-confidence when dealing with classmates and/or friends now.	78.6	63.2	64.4	62.5
... is better at managing their behaviour now when something irritates them.	64.2	61.7	57.6	54.6
Mean values self-confidence and anger management	71.4	62.7	64.4	58.4

Note: The answers "no" and "not sure" account for the missing percentage points.

CONTINUATION AFTER PROJECT PHASE

Following the end of the two-year pilot phase, the project was extended at the start of the 2016 academic year to a total of 10 schools of Inspection Area 17. Participation is still on a voluntary basis: the aim is to motivate schools about the concept and inspire a move towards “active lessons” (cf. Schratz, 2003, p.34 The Innovation Cube). Teachers from the pilot schools presented their experiences to the 7 schools which stimulated the teachers’ interest. The latter then took part in further training before the start of the new academic year. Interested teachers were offered further professional training on “Active learning” which primarily focused on the role of activity in developing and enriching learning.

At the same time, a task group was set up for the new academic year with the long-term aim of expanding the “Active school” project nationwide. The team comprises a number of teachers from various cycles and schools, a representative from the Maison Relais, a representative from the Ministry of Education and the support teacher who is in charge of coordinating the group. To implement the overarching project, the group is working concurrently on several tasks:

- Establishing a name and a logo for the project
- Developing a label with corresponding criteria for schools and for the Maisons Relais centres
- Setting up an internet platform to inform and exchange information, as well as setting up a website in the second phase
- Organising a campaign day where schools are presented with the “active learning” label.

The task of developing a logo has been outsourced to an external company. Thus, active learning schools become “clever move”.



Official Logo

Schools which prioritise exercise in their daily school routine receive the “clever move” label in recognition of their efforts. An online questionnaire is used to identify schools which fulfil the following criteria:

- 3/4 of teachers commit to integrating 20 minutes of daily physical activity into their lessons.
- The school meets the number of PE lessons set out in the curriculum
- The school guarantees each child’s right to activity time (e.g. gymnastics, swimming, breaks, etc.).

Figure 5. School Questionnaire

Questionnaire: "Active Schools and Maison Relais"

1. Coordination

School		Cycle	
Date		Coordinator	

2. Active learning

Have you heard of the "Active learning concept"? Tick one of the following answers.

- Yes, we know this concept and we implement it.
- Yes, we have heard of it but we do not know the details.
- No, we do not know this concept.
- Yes, we know this concept and would like to implement it, but we have a problem to do so.
-

Do relaxation periods take place?

- Yes, _____ minutes per day. No

Are there "active learning-friendly" furniture and material in your classroom?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustable desks | <input type="checkbox"/> Bouncing ball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustable chairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Juggling ball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gym (sitting) balls | <input type="checkbox"/> Towels |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enough place for movement | <input type="checkbox"/> Balance boards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Balance / stability cushions | |

Quarterly meetings are held to ensure that the further training mentioned above does not fade out and that “active lessons” are embedded long-term in the daily routine of the individual classes. At the meetings, each participant briefly outlines the situation of the cycle at their school and reports on positive developments as well as potential stumbling blocks. Based on the experiences of the pilot schools, possible approaches for overcoming these hurdles are suggested in the plenary session. Each teacher then presents an activity that has been particularly popular with pupils. The coordinator collects activities that have proved to be effective and their contents and graphics are then reviewed by a task group and later uploaded to the Internet platform as examples of best practice. As part of a second phase of the project, they will be made available to the public at www.clevermove.lu.

EXPERIENCES FROM THE SCHOOLS

According to the cycle coordinators, the project was well-received by teachers in most of the schools after an initial period of readjustment. At the start, teachers had difficulty in incorporating active breaks systematically into their lessons and would often forget to do so because of a lack of time. Experience shows that fixed times for activity breaks are beneficial when starting out. Furthermore, the teacher can choose a different pupil each week to remind them about the breaks. Another alternative would be to integrate the breaks into a large timetable hanging on the classroom wall or door. Thus, a ritual gradually develops: after a short period of familiarisation, pupils automatically ask about their activity breaks.

This project focuses primarily on cycles 2 to 4, where traditional “sedentary lessons” are common. In cycle 1, children are physically active on a regular basis during lessons. The project has, however, continued to raise awareness of the importance of physical activity.

“At the start, I didn’t worry too much about how often we were doing the different physical activities. But after a very short time, my pupils started reminding me every day because they wanted to do something active.” (Teacher C2.2 Mersch)

“The active learning exercises make the pupils and me laugh, which in itself leads to the next lesson being more open, more fun and pleasant” (Teacher C2.1 Bissen)

“After the active learning break, I can concentrate better” (Pupil C3 – Saeul)

“With the active learning games, our brains get a rest and becomes fitter” (Pupil C2.2 – Bissen)

“My brain becomes cooler and I can think better after” (Pupil C2.2 – Bissen)

“Since we started regularly doing the active learning exercises, I find it easier to integrate the active learning breaks in my schoolday routine. It simply fits there” (Teacher C2.2 – Bissen)

“I love the active learning breaks, because that’s just different than sitting on the chairs all the time. And we almost always do great and funny things” (Pupil C4.1 – Angelsberg)

There is a huge initial enthusiasm from teachers and the challenge is to ensure that this leads to the regular integration of active learning in the school timetable. To encourage this, regular reminder emails to participants have proved to be helpful. The task group coordinator then sends a weekly activity to individual teachers in the district on “active breaks” or “active learning”. It is also important to discuss the project regularly during weekly staff meetings. Exchanging ideas at least every 3 weeks is highly recommended. Many schools created a folder containing the activities received, others made use of the local server or the Cloud (Onedrive, Dropbox, etc.) to exchange resources.

Activity days, trips and sporting activities are being planned for the future as part of the “clever move” project.



CONCLUSION

Firmly embedding active breaks in teachers' practice raises the importance of physical activity as a tool for developing and enriching learning. The interest in and the demand for active learning are specially increasing in the upper cycles (3 and 4), because teachers with pupils in this age group are caught between "more active lessons" and "the pressure of time and the curriculum". Yet all the teacher feedback confirms that the activities were popular with pupils from the very start, leading to pupils increasingly requesting physical activity during lessons. This observation was also confirmed in the university research findings: about 80% of all pupils reported that they like and regularly take part in active learning lessons.

This positive trend is further reflected in the survey of parents where about 60% of them mention the benefits of active learning. They realise that their children experience more fun in movement and in sport and that their eye movement coordination improved. Moreover, the parents report that the children prefer to go to school and find that both the classroom climate as well as the relationship between the teachers and the pupils significantly improved.

Following this pilot phase, the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth intends to gradually roll out the project at the national level, by encouraging all primary schools and after-school child care centres to enrol in the project and adapt it to the local context so that all pupils can benefit from the value-added generated by "clever move".

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Fig. Teacher perception of the evaluation process – student acceptance of the different blocks

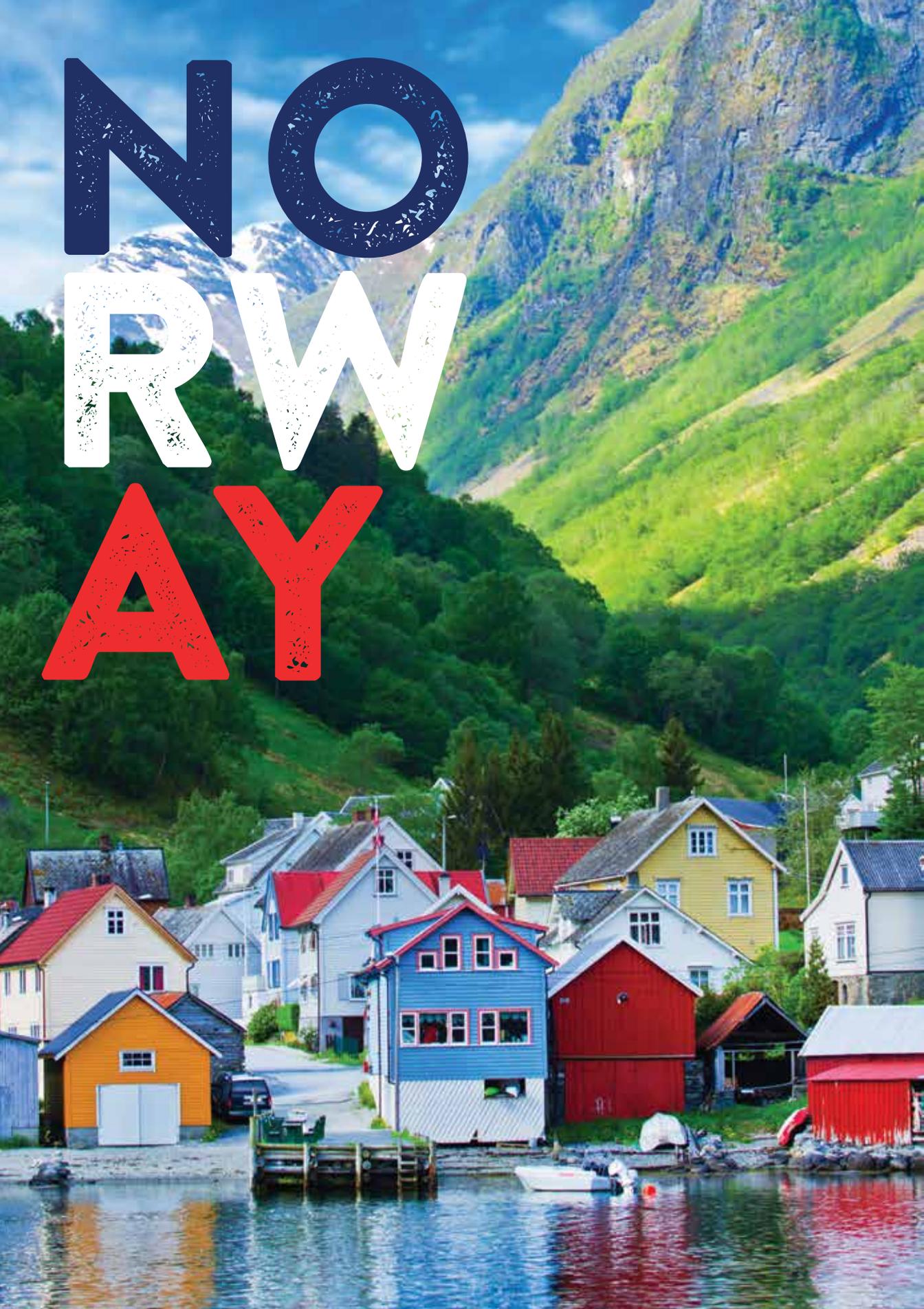
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ABSTRACT



Good mental health is imperative to learning, development and coping with life. Schools are uniquely positioned to further learning and development and to promote mental health in all their pupils. The main objective of the paper is twofold; to provide knowledge about how schools can best help to promote mental wellbeing amongst all pupils, and how schools can instigate systematic development processes. The article highlights that working for a better school for all, means taking a broader approach, applying a wide interpretation of competence and working across subjects. Promoting mental wellbeing should be viewed as an aspect both of ways of teaching, and of other development work at schools. Good learning outcomes and a clear focus on the pupils' emotional wellbeing and mental health are two sides of the same coin. It requires school management and teachers to know what promotes and hinders mental wellbeing. The project takes on the form of an action research project. The research promotes, supports, and follows up learning and change processes taking place at the participating schools, municipal and county authorities. This research approach aims to help develop new and better practices through a combination of increasing and unlocking knowledge in the school sector.

Key words: Mental wellbeing, systematic development, competencies, R&D/research and development

NORWAY: School as an arena for pupils' mental wellbeing: A Norwegian study on systematic development work

BACKGROUND

The ongoing Norwegian R&D project "School as an arena for child and adolescent mental health" (hereafter referred to as SAMH), was instigated by the Directorate of Health and the Directorate for Education and Training. The SAMH project combines public health and education perspectives and seeks to provide knowledge about *how schools can best help to promote mental wellbeing amongst pupils*. The objective of the project is to gain insight in how good practice in schools and municipal services work to encourage child and adolescent mental wellbeing. Such insight will give us a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of schools, municipal and county services and the ways they work to safeguard and encourage children and young people's mental wellbeing.

Focusing on pupils' mental health and wellbeing in a teaching situation is not new in a Norwegian or Nordic context, although the term 'mental health' is rarely used explicitly in education legislation. However, the general perspectives on children and young people's learning and development as expressed in the Norwegian schools' mandate are consistent with the definition of the term mental wellbeing, as applied in this article. Wellbeing is a factor in issues surrounding class management and learning environment etc. (e.g. Christensen and Ulleberg, 2014; Aasen, Nordahl, Mælan, Drugli and Myhr, 2014). Yet researchers are seeing a tendency where the socio-emotional aspects and the academic elements of teaching and classroom situation are separated as in two separate

dimensions. This tendency leaves the development of pupils' social competence apart – as an isolated issue. Schools tend to limit social competence to those skills that they deem to be features of socially competent behaviour (Lindbäck and Glavin, 2015). The researchers on the SAMH project therefore believe it is important for schools to adopt a more comprehensive interpretation of competence in order to challenge this dichotomous view on the academic and psychosocial aspects of education. The Work Research Institute at Oslo and Akershus University College (hereafter referred to as WRI) is the R&D- performing institution. The project started in May 2013 and will conclude in 2018. The study includes four local authorities and a total of 20 schools in addition to other relevant services. In 2014 the project was extended to include four county councils with four upper secondary schools. In this paper, I will look into the findings gathered from primary and lower secondary schools.

The principal mandate of the Directorate for Education and Training is to help realise the Norwegian government's goal of ensuring good quality in the kindergarten sector and in primary and secondary education and training. The Directorate's priority is to ensure the quality of the provision given to children, pupils and apprentices, and to ensure a good learning environment and good learning outcomes for all. The Directorate is responsible for the national obligations in terms of exercising authority, analysis and quality development of kindergartens, primary and secondary education. The Directorate of Health mandate is to promote

public health through a holistic and targeted approach across services, sectors and administrative levels. The Directorate of Health exercises this mandate based on its roles as a consulting body, regulator and executive agency for health policy. Such cross-sector collaboration is important in order to develop new knowledge and practices at the different structural levels.

There are related reasons why the Directorate for Education and Training and the Directorate of Health wished the project to take this approach. Firstly, they wish to test an R&D strategy for the school sector where research is not primarily intended to measure the results of introducing “fully developed” measures for promoting mental wellbeing among pupils, but to provide research-based support to a process where all school staff play a part in further developing and renewing own practices. This approach places emphasis on development processes taking place locally at the schools (local authorities), and will ensure that the outcome of the project will be something more than just examples of new and better practices. The project will also help enhance process expertise in school development, among school management and staff – and show how obstacles relating to development work requires a coordinated practice and collaboration across different sectors, such as in this case – public education and health sectors.

The research intends to support local development work at schools, at local and county authorities – to develop general knowledge about mental wellbeing within a school context. The project takes on the form of an action research project. The research promotes, supports and follows up learning and change processes taking place at the participating schools, municipal and county authorities. On that basis, the project shall document, collate and make available any observations, knowledge and examples of good practice – to provide benefits beyond the project itself. As part of the concept of mental wellbeing, knowledge from different fields combines to find the best approaches to promote mental wellbeing at schools. The SAMH project seeks to identify a

repertoire of good practices to help promote mental wellbeing amongst pupils. This article builds on findings from an early stage of the project, published in a Norwegian professional journal for school staff (Pålshaugen and Borg, 2014).

Although the project is set in a Norwegian context, the findings will be relevant to schools and interest groups beyond Norway’s borders – both in the Nordic countries and further afield. There is a consensus both in and outside Norway and the Nordic region that research-based knowledge is key to ensure understanding and obtain good practice. Yet, neither researchers nor political authorities agree on what kind of research-based knowledge is required to strengthen and further develop good practice in the various sectors.

Pålshaugen and Borg (2014) pose the following question: *How can we ensure that research-based knowledge is actually used in practice?* The discussion stems from the various interpretations of the concepts involved. I would like to address these at the outset and will therefore look more closely at the terms mental *wellbeing* and *competence* – before providing a more detailed account of the methodological aspects of the study.

THE CONCEPTS OF MENTAL WELLBEING AND COMPETENCE IN SCHOOLS

One of the main challenges in the project has been to identify and understand the conceptual understanding of mental health. In a Norwegian school context and in the public debate in Norway, the mental health of children and adolescents are often connected to mental disorder and ill health. The concept of mental wellbeing in public health is new and there is no suitable or comprehensive Norwegian term for the concept of wellbeing.

Much of the work with schools and municipalities in the project has therefore been to explore and



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understand a wider concept of mental health – one that is closer to WHO's definition of wellbeing and mental health. In this particular context, *good mental health* is understood as mental wellbeing, and the WHO's interpretation of term is applied: “... a state of wellbeing in which the individual finds that it has opportunities, is able to cope with the stresses of everyday life, and is able to work and contribute to society” (Klepp and Aasheim, 2010). This definition recognises the subjective experience of environments and events as an important element in considerations on what is their real/objective status. The interaction between the individual and its surroundings is particularly important when discussing mental wellbeing amongst children and young people. Mental wellbeing is therefore understood as a subjective perceived opportunity for self-realisation. For the sake of simplicity, I use the concept *mental wellbeing* in the article. Firstly,

because one of the project's goals is to expand the Norwegian term of mental health, and secondly for the lack of a comprehensive term for wellbeing in Norwegian.

In the summer of 2015, a national Commission published the report titled *The School of the Future* (NOU 2015:8). The task of this Commission was to take a long-term view on education: to assess the efficacy of the subjects studied in compulsory education versus the competencies required for participation in society and working life in the future. This report provided input to the debate on how to prepare schools for future occupational and societal demands. The broad definition of competence applied by the Commission forms part of the backdrop to the SAMH project's understanding and use of the concept of pupils' competence (NOU 2014:7). This approach is supported by international research showing that

pupils are at least as concerned with social objectives as learning objectives while at school (e.g. Wentzel 1989). The importance of maintaining a clear focus on the school’s psychosocial environment and to analyse the impact of the practices of the school staff upon the pupil’s mental wellbeing, is likely to become even greater in the future, as research suggests that stress and mental stress among adolescents are on the increase (Bakken, 2016). Research from both Norway and Sweden find that perceived exhaustion and sleep problems have increased significantly among young people in the last few decades (e.g. Murberg and Bru, 2009; Schraml 2013).

Following its analysis of the future needs of society, the labour market and the individual, the Commission identified four important areas of competence for tomorrow’s schools: subject-specific competence, competence in learning, competence in communicating, interacting and participating, and competence in exploring and creating (NOU 2015:8). These four categories of competence are all requisite elements in the combined competence that the school of the future should promote. The Commission asserted that a broad concept of competence involving both cognitive and practical skills, social and emotional learning and development are present in all the four areas of competence. It also concludes that social and emotional competences include engagement in and attitudes relating to the subjects and one’s own learning (NOU 2015:8). This succinct sentences says it all: “Pupils develop competence by working with the subjects... This means that when the pupils develop competence, they will develop their thinking and practical skills, and they will also develop socially and emotionally” (NOU 2015:8: 18). This implies that teachers must emphasise the aspects highlighted in the broader definition of competence, including mental wellbeing, in their teaching practice – and in every subject.



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‘Everyone’ agrees that it is important to keep a positive focus on mental health in our schools, but as the SAMH researchers observe – changing opinions is one thing, changing practices is quite another. This is where the SAMH research project really gains relevance, because it represents an attempt to dismantle this dichotomy by setting teaching practices on the agenda at the schools participating in the study. In order to elaborate on this, I first have to give a brief account of the methodology used on the R&D project, of the context, and of the participants in the study.¹

¹ Reporting from the project in the form of articles and status reports is currently only available in Norwegian, but the final report due to be submitted in the summer of 2018 will contain an English summary which will be published at udir.no.

THE ACTION RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE R&D PROJECT

Main participants in the study

The SAMH project is a preventative project aiming to promote and ensure mental wellbeing in *all* pupils. The project does not focus particularly on pupils struggling with mental health issues, but includes all pupils' mental wellbeing in general. For that very reason, participation in the project is not restricted to welfare staff in the participating schools but involves the entire staff. The teachers are the most important participants both in numbers and in practice. The study seeks to find and isolate the aspects of the teaching situation instrumental in promoting mental wellbeing among the pupils.

Consequently, the project includes all pupils and staff in the participating schools. The researchers are also looking into co-operating with external services such as school nurses, child and adolescent psychiatry, outpatients wards etc. The researchers note that one of the reasons the project has been so well received by the schools, is that it involves all pupils, and secondly because it is based on a considerable amount of pre-existing knowledge. The schools first identified the existing practice at the schools, and then singled out one particular area to for the local development work at each school. The researchers met a certain degree of resistance from the schools early on. The schools were already involved in other development projects, which put a strain on their available resources. Still, the researchers argued that all development processes should necessarily contain elements of mental wellbeing. In other words, the schools (and the researchers) could link SAMH to existing development projects.

Why choose action research as a strategy?

Research shows that the level of process expertise, that is, competence in organising and performing development processes, is highly variable in the school sector (Blossing, Nyen, Söderström and Tønder, 2012). The Directorate of Educations' observations point in the same direction. The researchers working on the project therefore provide support in developing process expertise during the project to schools or local authorities that ask for it. This is the main reason why the R&D project chose methods used in action research. From a research perspective, the contribution to the local development processes is twofold in that it seeks to produce new knowledge while also incorporating existing knowledge – research knowledge combined with the participants' own knowledge (Borg, Christensen, Fossetøl and Pålshaugen, 2015; Pålshaugen 2014). This research approach aims to help develop new and better practices through a combination of *increasing* and *unlocking* knowledge in the school sector.

The research strategy is further based on the view that a *dialogue-based* relationship between researchers and participants in the field is important. It offers new opportunities for uncovering better and more practical ways of handling the relationship between existing experience-based knowledge and research-based knowledge. This would also allow more experience-based and research-based knowledge to be utilised in development work in schools. In this way, dialogue between research and the field can become an integral element in the method for identifying challenges and develop practical solutions locally and developing general knowledge.

The project is ongoing, which makes it premature to draw final conclusions. On the other hand, there are certain aspects of the way in which the schools and school owners have met the challenges they encountered along the way. This experience may be of general interest to others.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE PROJECT'S FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

The research strategy is just as much about *how* to develop good practice as *what* constitutes good practice. We know that solutions rarely can be copied in practice. New ways to solve local problems need to be adapted to match local needs, but knowledge gained from an array of practices is valuable. The transfer value of knowledge generated by the project is significant.

The aim is to generate new research-based knowledge about *how schools can instigate development processes* improving the way in which they promote pupils' mental wellbeing. To reach this aim two prerequisites are preferable: 1) *Local development work should be undertaken as part of an overall strategy for school development*, and 2) *The development work should be carried out in ways that enhance the skills of staff and the school/organisation's capacity for school development*.

By emphasising these two general aspects in its dialogue-based support to the schools, the project will not only generate knowledge of how to develop better practices in promoting pupils' mental wellbeing, but it also creates new research-based knowledge. This knowledge is relevant both to those tasked with school development policy *and* to those in the education sector responsible for organising and implementing such development processes.

Most of the participating schools, were familiar with the SAMH project theme. The concept of mental wellbeing was not new territory for them. But, the working method adopted by the project made many participants feel – especially in the beginning – that they sailed in uncharted waters. The problem was not the concept of mental wellbeing in itself, but rather *how* schools could improve their practices. In the initial phase, the schools set out to map their previous activities and measures relevant to their pupils' mental

wellbeing. In many cases, the results of the mapping process showed an array of activities ranging from staging musicals to employing welfare leaders during breaks and in lessons. The participants found that the mapping process had some effect, in terms of raising awareness of how multifaceted mental wellbeing measures and activities at the different schools were. The most obvious effect of making lists served to highlight the fact that most of the activities clearly fell within the social rather than the academic domain. This find lead the researchers to conclude that the need for further development rested within this latter domain – the academic.

Most of the larger schools in the project, reported a need for process support from the researchers – which they received. Given the necessity to involve all academic staff in the project, the researchers pointed out that the best strategy to concretise the content of the local development processes would be by involving all of them. Working together with the project management teams in the participating schools, the researchers designed so-called dialogue meetings in which all staff participated. By engaging the staff in organised dialogue – both in groups and plenary – they were free to suggest and to agree upon which areas they wanted to work on and improve. In this phase, they also decided how the development work should be organised in practice.

Schools tend to keep stricter time schedules than most other workplaces. Yet, there are variations in how schools organise their day, in both individual and common planning time (Vibe, Aamodt and Carlsten, 2009). The researchers advised the schools to arrive at a consensus on common planning time in the most effective and efficient way in relation to the timetable and the day-to-day running of the school.

Most of the schools in the project opted to use team time and common planning time for this purpose. In general terms, the development process linked to the teaching situation should alternate between dialogue and action. This

means that ideas and measures – intended to result in improved practices – are tried out in the classroom, while the discussion and exchange of experience, critical evaluations and ideas for further improvements etc. take place in the teams. This way, much of the development work involves a combination of individual testing and trialling together in the classroom – while collective discussions are exchanged with colleagues. SAMH therefore meets the need, as has been acknowledged by most teachers, for working with mental wellbeing as part of the learning environment (Holen and Waagene, 2014). When a teacher gives input to how a systematic plan can be implemented in practice, and want to spend part of their team time in doing so, this is findings suggesting that she or he genuinely recognises the importance of this work. Such involvement is also about taking responsibility. This was very much in evidence as school staff themselves offered suggestions for how the development work on the topic should be organised.

This model – involving broad participation – is not necessarily more time-consuming, but it requires the development process to be sustained for a longer period. At the time of writing this article, the SAMH project has been through an establishment phase, a concretisation phase and a trial phase. The trial phase involves discussing initiatives and measures designed to lead to better practices. The researchers point to a couple of examples made during the trial phase. These examples highlight two general problems that many schools encounter when engaging in development work of this kind. One concerns the format of the development process, while the other concerns the content of the development process. This is what the researchers describe as two sides of the same coin.

Two examples of the format and content of development processes in the schools

The amount of time spend on the development process and implementation have varied from school to school, but after around a year of trialling, many of the schools realised that their

actual implementation process was far from smooth. There was room for improvement – both in continuity and quality in the teams’ development work. The researchers posed the question of how to improve the quality of the team meetings. Several of the schools reported issues, such as unproductive team meetings due to lack of preparation and poor meeting discipline. The researchers recommended that the school leaders presented this issue as a question. How could the schools professionalise their team meetings? The staff itself held many of the answers and solutions. Their proposed changes can be broken down into four categories: the organisation and chairing of the meetings, meeting techniques and methods, external frameworks and context, and attitudes. Three of the four categories involve concrete actions. The fourth is of a general nature, and involves changing attitudes. The researchers showed that the dialogue-based method contributed to make the meetings more professional in a relatively short space of time. Improving the quality of the meeting format also elucidates the content-related problem of instigating discussions that keeps the development work moving ahead.

A second example is pulled from one of the participating schools where they had a discussion on which aspects of the teaching situation would be relevant to promote the pupils’ mental wellbeing, and which methods could work in practice? During this discussion, one of the teachers suggested a method involving the use of “whiteboard maps” to involve pupils in the teaching. Before starting work on a new topic, the teacher invites the pupils to write on the whiteboard one or more keywords related to the topic – and to give a brief verbal comment – if they wish. In this way, the teacher may introduce the topic already knowing where the pupils stand in terms of knowledge, interest and enthusiasm rather than hypothesising about their position. According to the teacher, this was an example of a general method that can be used across different subjects, for instance in social sciences, natural sciences and language classes. However, the researchers found that both this particular teacher

– and the team as a whole – struggled to see the relevance of this method as a factor in promoting pupils’ mental wellbeing.

The researchers then pointed out that the use of “whiteboard maps” in fact was both a method of involving each pupil, a method of adapted learning (all in), and a deductive device for making the individual pupil experience a certain achievement/progress – all of which contribute to promote each pupil’s mental health. This interpretation was accurate enough to help strengthen the team’s faith in discussing their own teaching practices and experiences as a mean for promoting pupil’s mental wellbeing. However, in their article, the researchers point out that such discussions do not work if the team meetings lack organisation. This brings us back to the question of the connection between what constitutes (examples of) good practice and how to best develop such practices (in the schools).

CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS, DILEMMAS AND IMPLICATIONS

How can schools get better at promoting mental wellbeing amongst all children and young people?

As we have seen, one key finding in the study is that working for a better school for all, means taking a broader approach, applying a wide interpretation of competence and working across subjects. Promoting mental wellbeing should be understood as an aspect of other development work at the school. Pupil participation is both a goal and a means of improving pupils’ awareness of mental wellbeing while developing their emotional/social competence.

From a research perspective, one main aim of this study is to document a certain repertoire of cases of how new forms of good practice on mental wellbeing in schools have been developed in different thematic areas and in different contexts.

Using specific examples like the whiteboard map, the researchers can make general statements about why the correlation between the types of practice that have been developed and how the development process has been organised, is so important to developing knowledge on this project. The whiteboard map is only one out of several examples of what teachers do and can do in the classroom to promote their pupils' mental wellbeing. Many of the teachers already use different actions in their individual teaching practices, both planned and improvised activities, and the arsenal of potential examples is therefore great. However, few of these individual practices actually promote better practices at a school level unless they are thematised in dialogues with colleagues, in team meetings or in other meetings as part of a joint process for school development. Without any kind of collective discussions in collegial forums, the knowledge of good (and bad) practices will stay with these individual teachers, and the improvement potential, both in individuals and in the school as a whole, remains unfulfilled.

In practice, many schools are engaged in multiple projects and initiatives simultaneously. These activities are often organised in parallel. Difficulties in finding the time and space to act, lack of co-ordination etc. are common problems when engaging in school development (Eriksen, Hegna, Bakken and Lyng, 2015). Most initiatives and projects taking place simultaneously will concern teaching practices. Many of them touch upon various aspects of the teaching situation. For that reason, discussions about own teaching practices are an appropriate way of integrating and co-ordinating the different initiatives and projects as part of a holistic strategy for school development. Generally speaking, team meetings or similar fora are suited to this purpose. It is not without reason that staff recognises this when they are invited and challenged to discuss how to best hold staff discussions as part of a school development process. However, as the researchers have found with SAMH and other projects: good processes do not materialise out of thin air – working on the organising of processes is a job in itself. Irrespective of whether a school

wants to improve practices by introducing evidence-based practices or by primarily refining its existing practices (or a combination of both), the discussions need to be organised in the various staff fora. This is important to ensure that the development work, that each initiative requires in practice, can take place as part of a comprehensive strategy for school development. The role played by research will differ on projects that seek to introduce evidence-based practices and projects concerning methodologies or strategies for developing good practice. However, these two kinds of projects do not have to be mutually incompatible and neither do the different research approaches.

As we have seen, the SAMH research maintains a *process focus* that emphasises the need for all development work in schools to be organised and carried out as part of a holistic strategy for school development. All of the initiatives must not only work; they must work together. The strategy for each initiative is rarely optimal in this respect. Optimisation and integration should in practice be carried out locally. School owners, school management and teachers must work together to make the effects of each project interact in the classroom for the benefit of the pupils. In every workplace, interaction requires dialogue and the most important tool in a development process is the spoken word – provided it is being heard in a structured forum. Labour research, education research and stakeholders in the education sector have a lot to talk about in this respect. In their article, the researchers point out that this will continue to be the case in the school of the future.

Dilemmas when designing policies for research-based school development

The SAMH researchers believe that the explanations to many of the questions associated with highlighting the importance of mental wellbeing in schools are actually quite complex. It is linked to disagreement and different interpretations of the concept of competence. It is also linked to divergent political views and differing assessments amongst those in charge of



designing policy in a given sector and those who practice their professions in that sector. It is also about professional disagreement and differing views within research itself – between different research approaches – to questions that nobody has the definitive answers to. For example, nobody can give a conclusive answer to how to utilise research-based knowledge to use – in practice. The dilemmas here are numerous:

- the relationship between politically driven initiatives and “top-down” development initiatives
- local adoption and involvement at a “grass roots” level
- the relationship between the day-to-day running of the school and school development measures

- the relationship between various parallel initiatives instigated centrally
- the relationship between local participants in schools and at the local authority.

The correlation between SAMH and other mental wellbeing research

Research and analysis linked to mental wellbeing are present in a number of projects initiated by or associated with the Directorate for Education and Training. There is hardly room to elaborate on all of the relevant projects here, so I will simply provide a few examples of pertinent studies. The Norwegian research project ‘A Support Network

for the Pupils' looks at how best to apply multidisciplinary expertise in the best interest of the pupils in terms of learning environment and learning outcomes and to support teachers. Five different models have been developed for the use of multidisciplinary expertise in schools following a preliminary project. This was organised as a pilot study in which researchers collaborated with five schools. Two variants of these models are now being trialled. Other examples include impact studies of a systematic process to prevent and reduce drop-out rates in upper secondary. Four research institutions are assessing the impact of and processes surrounding the implementation and use of different models. Two of these studies are currently carried out in upper secondary schools.

The SAMH researchers are involved in both of the above-mentioned studies. They are expected to apply the knowledge they gain from the different projects to create synergies – both methodical and analytical. The findings and implications discussed in the reports should be seen in this context. These projects are all unique in their different methodological approaches, designs and research questions.

WRI's research strategy represents a perspective that the college itself refers to as "critical pluralism" on issues surrounding research approaches to school development and policy design (Pålshaugen 2013). Such a perspective does not imply that 'everything goes'; or indeed that all approaches are equally valid. The point is rather that not *one* singular approach has proved to contain a high degree of validity and applicability – be it application in policy design or in local development in different sectors. Against this backdrop, we keep an eye out for research approaches that can generate better results by *combining* them. In this particular context, that means watching with a *critical eye*. Having initiated the research, the Directorate for Education and Training will keep a critical eye on the findings and recommendations resulting from the studies. The aim is to convert this knowledge into practice – for the benefit of the pupils.

Cooperation across sectors increases pupils' mental wellbeing in school

OECD analysis shows that to get past hindrances in the way of wellbeing require a coordinated range of services from several bodies and sectors (OECD 2013). In practical terms, OECD recommends improved collaboration between the work and welfare administration, GPs and district psychiatry centres etc. It would therefore be advantageous to increase resources to strengthen cooperation between the health sector and the education sector and initiate more R&D projects as SAMH to learn more about how to improve pupils' mental wellbeing in school.

Wellbeing is high on the agenda both nationally and internationally. The OECD's initiatives according to this have gained a particularly high profile thanks to its "Better Policies for Better Lives". This highlights the importance of 'equipping people to build the mental wellbeing of themselves and of others, and involves an explicit focus on active citizenship. These ideas are also prevalent in the process to renew the national curriculum in Norway, where the Core Curriculum identifies public health and life skills

as one of three interdisciplinary topics (White Paper 28 2015/2016). This means reinforcing the public health perspective on mental wellbeing in schools and expanding our knowledge of different life skills relevant to good mental health and wellbeing in pupils. SAMH, the above-mentioned projects and similar studies may – both individually and collectively – make essential contributions in making schools a better place for everyone. We believe that this goal can be best obtained through research-based knowledge, trialling of measures and systematic development work.

The research referred to in this article suggests that good learning outcomes and a clear focus on the pupils' wellbeing and mental health are two sides of the same coin. The SAMH study shows that it requires school management and teachers to know what promotes and hinders mental wellbeing. Ensuring mental wellbeing is a key aspect of our schools' mandate is important. By working to promote mental wellbeing in schools, it will provide a firm set of foundations for meeting a very important objective for pupils and for society as a whole. Children and young people all over the world spend a lot of time at school, and this is the arena to carry out this work. One difficulty/obstacle facing further research and informed debate on the importance of working systematically with mental wellbeing in schools is how to assess, measure and evaluate this knowledge.

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I currently have the privilege of being the Senior Education Officer for Health and wellbeing (HWB) and Outdoor Learning in Education Scotland. I work with a team of Development Officers and Inspectors to support staff in educational establishments across Scotland on all aspects of HWB and Outdoor Learning. I am inspired by the people I work with.

I started my career as a physical education teacher in a secondary school and during this time I completed a MEd and then a MSc in Applied Social Research. I moved into Higher Education as a Graduate Assistant at the University of Stirling followed by a Lecturing post at the University of Glasgow. After time out for family, I returned to the secondary sector as a Senior Teacher and then as a Principal Teacher before moving to a secondment with Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS). I continued my involvement in Higher Education through various roles including Teacher Fellow at the University of Stirling, Associate Tutor at the University of Edinburgh and External Examiner at the University of Glasgow.

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ABSTRACT



Health and wellbeing has been afforded continuous attention in education policy since it emerged as a new curriculum area within Curriculum for Excellence. Indeed, the positioning and alignment of health and wellbeing in contemporary high policy priorities demonstrates that, in many respects, Scotland is leading the world, at least in its policy rhetoric. There has been a shift from a 'Health Promoting Schools' model, still prevalent across Europe, to 'Health and wellbeing Responsibility of All', where it is embedded across learning. This shift in policy is underpinned by an increasing body of research that suggests that health and wellbeing and learning are connected. This article will provide exemplars of how this policy has been enacted in practice in the best interests of the child.

Key words: wellbeing indicators, legislative and policy framework, initiatives, outcomes

SCOTLAND: Health and Wellbeing: Responsibility of All

INTRODUCTION

“We want Scotland to be the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. We want a Scotland where the rights of children and young people are not just recognised, but rooted deep in our society and in our public and voluntary services. And we want a nation that treasures the whole wellbeing of children and young people.”

National Youth Work Strategy 2014–2019, P. 2

As a nation, Scotland has high aspirations for its young people. In common with many developed societies, Scotland faces increasing challenges to public health arising from lifestyle behaviours, wider social-cultural factors that prevent positive health choices being made, and a modern environment that impacts on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. We know that the drivers of good health are for the most part in our homes, schools and communities and that improving public health means creating the conditions where people have the hope and purpose to think better choices are available to them. That means looking to the deep-rooted causes of social and economic inequality, which result in children born into Scotland’s most deprived communities being likely to live in good health for 20 fewer years than those from more affluent communities. It also means recognising that improving public health will require concerted effort across the whole public sector and beyond. This paper focuses on the education sector and the contribution it makes to the health and wellbeing of our young people. In particular, it explains how the policy landscape in Scottish education and health provides a concerted,

sustained and comprehensive approach to improving health and wellbeing through targeting particular health behaviours, and taking a whole learning community approach to prevention and early intervention.

THE SCOTTISH CONTEXT

From Health Promoting Schools to Responsibility of All – the Development of Health and Wellbeing in Scotland’s Education System

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has been a major influential body in health education and health promotion in schools for the past thirty years. The catalyst for development came from the publication of the Ottawa Charter (WHO, 1986), which laid down the foundations for health promotion. Health promotion addresses inequity with the aim of reducing differences in current health status and ensuring equal opportunities and resources, to enable all people to achieve their fullest health potential. Concerted action is required from education, professional, commercial and voluntary bodies, and within the agencies and institutions themselves.

Health promotion policy has found leverage as part of a preventative spend to increase the economic performance of many countries. Scotland used this as a springboard to take concerted action and address its own record of ill-health, which for many years was at the top or near-top of international “league tables” of the major diseases of the developed world (Towards a Healthier Scotland, 1999). Like many European countries in the second half of the twentieth century Scotland’s education system moved towards school education “producing” young people who were more able to

serve the economic needs of the country. Once this principle of *the curriculum being used as a vehicle to respond to national needs* was well established, then governments easily extended it to tackle “crises” such as the HIV and AIDS epidemic or the growth of substance misuse. There was a clear shift in educational thinking towards the end of the century, where a very broad educational approach took a more holistic view of the curriculum, defining it in terms of the totality of learning experiences a school offers to its students. (Curriculum design for the secondary stages, Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum, 1999).

This philosophy underpinned the development of the Scottish Health Promoting Schools Unit (SHPSU) in 2002, with an expectation that all schools would be health promoting by 2007. Working with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and Learning and Teaching Scotland (the national agency for curriculum development – now part of Education Scotland), Health Scotland established a specialist unit to develop health education and health promotion in schools. A key aim was to embed the health promoting schools approach within the education sector at both the strategic and operational levels. This raised the profile of health promotion in schools significantly; health promotion was built into the daily business of schools rather than being perceived as a peripheral issue. The SHPSU released a National Framework providing, for the first time, a coherent structure to develop a whole-school approach to health promotion.

By December 2007, the SHPSU report to the Health Minister concluded that all schools in Scotland were ‘actively engaged’ in health promotion (Porciani, 2013). This provided an endorsement to include health and wellbeing (HWB) along with literacy and numeracy, as a core element in the reform of the curriculum, that is, the development of Curriculum for Excellence by 2010. Health and wellbeing alongside literacy and numeracy, sit at the heart of Scotland’s curriculum as the foundations of the knowledge, skills and attributes which equip children and young people for learning, life and work. There has been a shift from a Health Promoting Schools model, still

prevalent across Europe, to Health and Wellbeing ‘Responsibility of All’, where it is embedded across learning. Educational settings provide the opportunities for sustained participation in activities that develop mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. The fact that one of the most important measures of children’s wellbeing—life satisfaction—is associated with aspects of their engagement at school, suggests that schools may be able to help improve children’s wellbeing (Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children, World Health Organisation Collaborative Cross – National Survey, 2015).

The Local Authorities, the Scottish Government and Education Scotland all have important – and sometimes related – responsibilities. Schools at an operational level may use compelling research evidence as a call to action to address local health priorities. However, with competing demands to deliver all aspects of the curriculum in the twenty-first century, it requires a more strategic level of engagement to ensure health and wellbeing is given the focus and attention required at all levels for systemic improvement. The values and principles of the Health 2020 European Health Policy Framework (WHO, 2012) support action across government and society for health and wellbeing and recognises the connection between health and education and advocates for policy coherence, inter-sectorial action and strong partnerships. These values and principles have been at the heart of Scotland’s agenda for health and wellbeing both at strategic and operational level. The vertical and horizontal policy coherence found across the education system outlined below, as well as the compelling evidence for change outlined above, has ensured that a systemic approach to health and wellbeing has been enacted in the best interests of the child.

Health and wellbeing has been afforded continuous attention by the Scottish Government, local authorities and schools with its inclusion in legislation and policies to address the cultural and societal inequities that have been prevalent for too long. The legislation and policies outlined below have been the vanguard for change. The common feature throughout is ‘the child at the centre’.

SCOTLAND

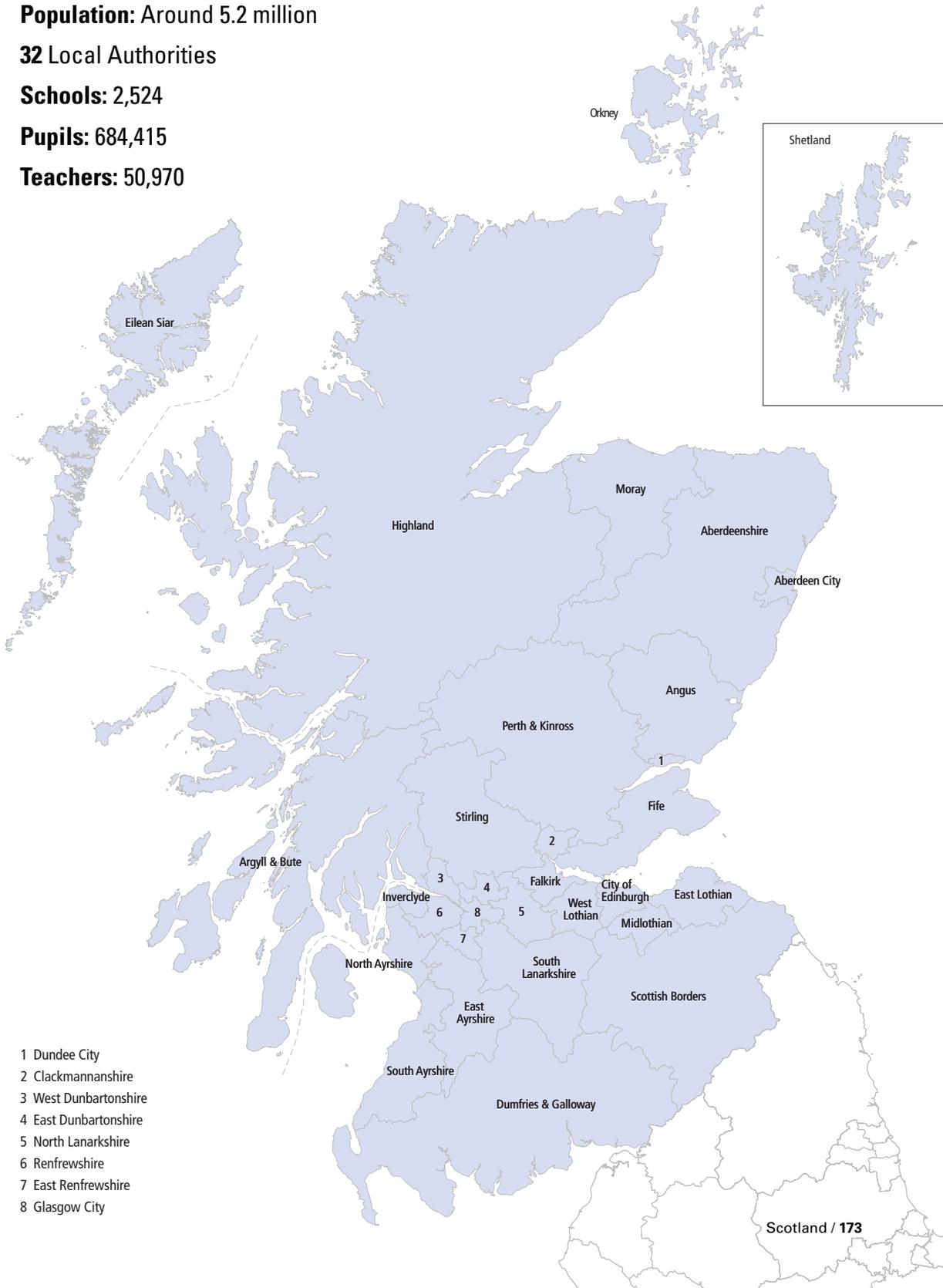
Population: Around 5.2 million

32 Local Authorities

Schools: 2,524

Pupils: 684,415

Teachers: 50,970



Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014

This Act sets out to improve the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland through ensuring the systematic and consistent recognition of children's rights. The Scottish Government is committed to recognising, respecting and promoting Children's Rights as part of its wider commitment to improving life chances for all children and young people. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) lies at the heart of policy and practice:

Pupils said that opportunities to participate in all areas of school life were highly valued and a rights-based education was integral to their achievement and attainment. Pupils had substantial opportunities to formally and informally take part in a variety of meaningful activities, to take responsibility for events, make contributions to school life, and have their views considered in matters that affected them. The conclusive evidence from the report shows that a rights-based education is better understood as a way of working across all school life.

(How young people's participation in school supports achievement and attainment, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, 2015, p2)

The Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014 also provides a definition of wellbeing, critical to ensure a shared understanding across a multi-agency approach.

Definition of Wellbeing

To help make sure everyone – children, young people, parents, and the services that support them – has a common understanding of what wellbeing means, it is described in terms of eight indicators. The eight wellbeing indicators are commonly referred to by their initial letters – **SHANARRI**:

Safe: Protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community.

Healthy: Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare and support in learning to make healthy, safe choices

Achieving: Being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem, at home, in school and in the community.

Nurtured: Having a nurturing place to live in a family setting, with additional help if needed, or, where possible, in a suitable care setting

Active: Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community.

Respected: Having the opportunity, along with carers, to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them.

Responsible: Having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision, and being involved in decisions that affect them.

Included: Having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities, and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn

How are the Wellbeing Indicators Used?

- Each child is unique and there is no set level of wellbeing that children should achieve. Each child should be helped to reach their full potential as an individual.
- The wellbeing indicators help make it easier for everyone to be consistent in how they consider the quality of a child or young person's life at a particular point in time. The named person will work with the team around the child using the child's plan to determine the support/targeted intervention.

- All services working with children and young people, and those who care for them, must play their part to promote, support and safeguard children and young people's wellbeing.

The following case study (Case Study 1) illustrates how one primary school links the wellbeing indicators and attainment data to each child's circumstances to ensure that their approach is personalised and meets the needs of all learners. The school actively promotes the pupil voice, giving pupils a say in what matters to them in order to help them access the right support or advice.

CASE STUDY 1: Kirkton-of-Largo Primary School, Fife Council

Kirkton-of-Largo Primary School is situated within a close knit rural community in East Fife and has around 50 pupils. Health and Wellbeing sits right at the heart of everything they do, and their approach, built around the Wellbeing Indicators, is highly responsive and fully personalised to pupil needs. A recent example is that the school explored different kinds of families prior to one pupil being adopted into a same sex family so that by the time this happened no one viewed it as anything other than a joyous occasion. This nurturing and caring approach certainly results in learners who feel respected, safe and included.

Staff follow a comprehensive Health and Wellbeing programme, completed by teachers within their cluster: the local secondary school and its associated primary schools to ensure clear, progressive pathways. They also look closely at attainment data and link this to other data including: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation; free school meals; gender; pupils with English as an Additional Language; and family circumstances. Above all, however, they remain very reactive to individuals and their unique circumstances.

The school involves their learners very effectively in making improvements or resolving problems through activities including Committees, Houses and Action Afternoons. Another example is a new confidential file which learners created this term entitled 'Things I Wish My Teacher Knew' and an action plan is now in place as a result of some of the findings.

There is a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer including running, cycling and rugby and every learner in the school has their own bike which is kept in school. As a result, learners here are very fit and active and have a strong awareness of the need to make healthy choices in their lives.

There are no 'SHANARRI' wall displays around the school but it's clear to the visitor, as described above, that they have reached a point where the Wellbeing Indicators are very much understood, fully embedded and 'in action' on a daily basis.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN SCOTTISH EDUCATION

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

Curriculum for Excellence is the curriculum framework in Scotland which applies to all children and young people age 3 to 18, wherever they are learning. It aims to raise achievement for all, and prepare all young people in Scotland to take their place in a modern society and economy through enabling young people to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to succeed in learning, life and work. The framework includes a broad general education from ages 3 to 15 followed by specialisation leading to National Qualifications in the senior phase (ages 15 to 18).

Under Curriculum for Excellence everyone involved in a child's learning is responsible for developing, reinforcing and extending learning in three core areas: **health and wellbeing**; literacy; and, numeracy. All teachers, regardless of subject, and all non-teaching staff regardless of role in the learning community, should reflect these core areas in their lessons/work practices – they are the 'responsibility of all'.

Learning and teaching in Health and Wellbeing (HWB)

The curricular area of HWB is made up of six organisers:

- **Mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing**
- **Planning for choices and changes**
- Physical education, physical activity and sport
- Food and health
- Substance misuse; and
- **Relationships**, sexual health and parenthood.

The organisers in **bold** are the 'responsibility of

all'. It was recognised that 'learning through health and wellbeing promotes confidence, independent thinking and positive attitudes and dispositions', therefore, it is the 'responsibility of all staff' to contribute to this area. (Building the Curriculum 1, 2006).

In Broad General Education (ages 3–15), the curricular area is structured around Experiences and Outcomes that are planned as part of learning and teaching. There are a number of Experiences and Outcomes that sit beneath each organiser and it is up to all staff to plan learning that enables children and young people to develop and learn the key skills for learning, life and work. For example, under mental and emotional wellbeing, one Experience and Outcome reads:

I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them.

HWB 0-01a / HWB 1-01a / HWB 2-01a / HWB 3-01a / HWB 4-01a

The number plating above illustrates that children and young people will have the opportunity to revisit the key learning from the experience throughout the twelve years of their Broad General Education recognising the nature of development and learning in HWB. For many learners, progression in HWB is neither linear nor coherent. Life circumstances can change so quickly with a subsequent impact on mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. The Experiences and Outcomes should be regularly revisited through a wide range of relevant and realistic learning. The other aspects of HWB, including the subject areas, should through their specialist knowledge and skills, contribute to, and reinforce the capabilities and attributes and skills for learning, life and work.

The importance of HWB is reflected in its position at the centre of the curriculum and at the heart of children's learning. Learning in health and wellbeing is designed to ensure that children and young people develop the knowledge and



understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes that they need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing now and in the future. All staff should be proactive in promoting positive relationships and behaviour in classroom, playground and wider learning community. There will inevitably be variation in teaching from school to school as Curriculum for Excellence is based on the needs of learners at local level, including taking account of local health and wellbeing priorities. Therefore, it is important that the content of HWB is flexible enough to take account of these local priorities. While there are clear expectations about how children should progress in their learning, teachers, head teachers and education professionals rightly decide what is taught in Scotland's schools and how it is delivered.

Staff, learners, parents and partners should know what is expected as well as having evidence of their fulfilment of statutory duties from a number of legislative and policy frameworks (see Appendix 1). How Good is our School? 4th Edition, Scotland's framework on self-evaluation for

school improvement is clear on the importance of the 'responsibility of all':

"A passionate commitment to social justice, equality, wellbeing and learning for sustainability is a moral imperative for every teacher in Scotland"

(How Good is our School? 4th Edition, 2016, p. 6)

The following case study (Case Study 2) illustrates the approach one secondary school has taken to the Responsibility of All aspect of HWB, evidenced through an inspection visit in 2017. This includes building the capacity of staff through the commitment of each faculty to elaborate their distinct contribution to learning in Mental, Emotional, Social and Physical Wellbeing (MESP), and their participation in Career-Long Professional Learning (CLPL). As a result of the approaches to ensuring the wellbeing of young people, the school is improving outcomes for almost all students.

CASE STUDY 2: Larbert High School, Falkirk Council

Quality Indicator (QI) 3.1 ENSURING WELLBEING, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- Wellbeing
- Fulfilment of statutory duties
- Inclusion and equality.

As a result of the very high-quality provision across the school, including very well managed universal and targeted support, inspectors found young people to be achieving the following outcomes:

Young people understand their rights and responsibilities and respond to situations accordingly. Interactions between all members of the school community are positive and focus on the needs of young people. As a result, young people have positive working relationships with one another and staff.

Expectations of high standards in every aspect of school life, based on the principle that 'only the best will do', is a hallmark of Larbert High School. The strong conviction that all young people have talents and the capacity to benefit from their educational experience results in a strong sense of pride in the school on the part of young people. They are confident about who they are, and feel valued.

As a result of the approaches to ensuring the wellbeing of young people, the school is improving outcomes for almost all students. Young people are provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to, influence and lead on aspects of their learning within health and wellbeing. Consequently, they are acting as positive, credible role models for younger learners.

The full engagement of staff is evident in the commitment of each faculty to elaborate their distinct contribution to learning in Mental, Emotional, Social and Physical Wellbeing (MESP), and in the participation of staff in Career-Long Professional Learning. Young people would benefit from greater support in recognising how they are applying their health and wellbeing skills in other areas, and understanding the links between their wellbeing and skills for learning, life and work.

Young people recognise the positive impact initiatives such as the Leadership Academy, the discursive approach to MESP and the extensive access to physical activity are having on their wellbeing. A minority of young people reported that the school could do more to teach them to be healthy.

There are a number of targeted interventions in place that are resulting in young people feeling safe, cared for and nurtured. Young people in the nurture base, Lily Pad, have shown an improvement in their attendance, developed social skills, and improved attainment. More widely, they have engaged successfully with their learning, and school more generally.

The school builds confidence in young people which empowers them to confidently take on roles in support of others, for example leading work to raise awareness of Amnesty

International, writing and producing a drama highlighting domestic abuse or undertaking training in Mental Health First Aid to support peers' wellbeing.

Almost all young people feel that there are members of staff who know them well and to whom they can go with any concerns. Changes in the pupil support structure continue to develop well. Most young people who spoke with HM Inspectors report that they are better known and have someone they can turn to when needed. Senior leaders should continue to evaluate the impact of the restructure on young people's outcomes.

Consistent approaches to monitoring, recording and tracking achievement across key aspects of learning ensure that appropriate progress is being made by young people facing additional challenges. There is outstanding practice in the way the school monitors attendance, late-coming, exclusions and progress for particular young people facing additional challenges such as looked after children, and those from the most deprived areas. This is resulting in improved outcomes for young people.

Targeted groups of young people are achieving and feel well supported. For example, all young carers, with their consent, have mentors who track performance and wider wellbeing to ensure that they are nurtured, included and achieving at the school. There are innovative programmes in place to support young people that are resulting in improvements to their wellbeing.

There are effective approaches to inclusion that result in young people achieving real and meaningful success in their school lives. Young people report an authentic sense of achievement where they feel their successes are valued and celebrated.

Young people understand that they are responsible for their actions and that actions have consequences. Young people who display behavioural issues are supported very well and are developing skills to manage their emotions and make better choices when responding to new challenges.

The approaches adopted to support young people focus strongly on equipping them with the necessary skills and attainment to prosper on transition to their next placement or when leaving school to take up their place in the community. Young people are optimistic about what they can achieve.

As a result of very well-planned and targeted partnership working, young people act as responsible citizens who show respect for others, who understand different beliefs and cultures, and who are developing informed, ethical views of complex issues. They are knowledgeable about equalities issues, and are confident in challenging discriminatory attitudes that openly and tacitly legitimates some form of exclusion. The school should proceed, as planned, to further develop their approaches to support young people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transexual or Intersex.

Almost all young people feel that bullying is dealt with effectively. They know where to go for support when things go wrong and have the confidence to report incidents, they feel that these are not always effectively resolved. The school should continue to support the review by young people of its anti-bullying policy and include information gathered from young people on their experiences of prejudice based bullying and barriers to reporting.

The school's compliance with statutory requirements and codes of practice is improving outcomes for young people.

Developing good relationships and positive behaviour in the classroom, playground and wider community is essential for creating the right environment for effective learning and teaching.

There are a number of key approaches which are used to promote positive relationships and behaviour in Scottish schools. These include restorative approaches, solution oriented approaches and nurturing approaches. Research clearly demonstrates the impact that Nurture Groups can have on attainment as well as social and emotional competences. At the heart of nurture is a focus on wellbeing and relationships and a drive to support the growth and development of children and young people, many

of whom come from areas of disadvantage and require additional targeted support to close the equity gap. Nurture Groups in Scotland continue to target support towards children and young people with additional support needs but a wider nurturing approach is also increasingly being promoted in many primary, secondary and early years' settings to support the needs of a wider group of children and young people.

Case Study 3 illustrates how one school is raising the aspirations of its young people through a targeted approach as well as a whole school nurturing approach. The positive outcomes include raised attendance and children being ready for learning and more able to succeed.

CASE STUDY 3: St. Philomena's Primary School , Glasgow City Council

St Philomena's is an example of a primary school who supports children through a targeted Nurture Group and a whole-school nurturing approach. St. Philomena's Primary School is a denominational school in an area of high deprivation in Glasgow with a roll of 223 pupils. Nurture Groups and nurturing approaches are a key strategic priority within Glasgow and the school has had a Nurture Group since 2010. They have also embedded a nurturing approach within their overall approach to Health and Wellbeing and use the 6 Nurture Principles along with the Wellbeing Indicators to inform both their assessment and intervention. A key priority within the school has been improving attainment through focusing on attendance and promoting children's readiness to learn. In this respect, the school has excelled by increasing attendance figures to above the city average and by engaging the children in learning by promoting their social and emotional wellbeing within the context of a Nurture Group. Many teachers and parents comment on children who were not able to engage with learning at any level, returning full time to their class ready to learn and able to make progress, after several terms of targeted support in the

Nurture Group. The school use a range of measures such as the Boxall Profile, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and the wellbeing indicators to ensure that the children are on track with their progress. They also promote an understanding of wellbeing through regular professional learning sessions around the Nurture Principles which include:

- Children's learning is understood developmentally
- The classroom (environment) offers a safe base
- Nurture is important for the development of wellbeing
- Language is a vital means of communication
- All behaviour is communication
- Transitions are important in children's lives.

These principles along with an understanding of attachment and wellbeing informs all of the school policies and processes. A nurturing approach, lies at the heart of everything they do in St. Philomena's, resulting in an inclusive and welcoming ethos and culture throughout.

A continued focus on health and wellbeing in Scottish Education: 2007–2017

From Health Promoting Schools in 2007, through HWB Responsibility of All as a core element of Curriculum for Excellence in 2010, to the Delivery Plan for Scotland's Education (2017), HWB has continued to be at the forefront of education policy and practice in Scotland. This has been made possible through concerted actions and consistency of message that reinforces the importance of HWB along with literacy and numeracy, as a driver for improvement. A number of systematic key policies and practices listed in Appendix 1 contributed to this continued focus. More recently, the Scottish Attainment Challenge (2015) and the National Improvement Framework (2016) set out a clear **vision** for Scottish Education: **Excellence through raising attainment** and **Achieving Equity**. They were developed to bring a greater sense of urgency in achieving equity in educational outcomes through targeted improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and **health and wellbeing** in specific areas of Scotland. Staff have been guided to 'prioritise health and wellbeing, along with literacy and numeracy, to ensure that learners make the best possible progress in their learning'. (Statement on Curriculum for Excellence, 2016). The stakes are higher than ever with one of the priorities from the National Improvement Framework being 'improvement' in children and young people's health and wellbeing.

CONCLUSION: AN IMPROVING PICTURE

Scotland has set out a clear vision of its aspirations for children and young people. It has put in place a legislative and policy framework to sustain the concerted effort to address some of the chronic ill-health and deep-rooted inequity in Scottish society. Education cannot close the poverty-related attainment gap on its own, rather it requires policy coherence across all sectors and strong partnerships between the home, school and community. Education Scotland is currently working closely with the Scottish Government to

take forward important initiatives, including the £120 million Pupil Equity Funding released to education establishments in April 2017 to address the poverty-related attainment gap. Education Scotland will continue to support practitioners to develop their practice using research-based evidence, disseminate good practice nationally, and continue to use its inspection activities to support schools to improve HWB and close the poverty-related attainment gap.

There remains the challenge around the evidence of improved outcomes and how we 'measure' these in a way that shows improvement. Also, like many European countries, there are a number of persistent challenges around obesity and mental health. Improvement in health and wellbeing is not a quick fix; often it requires generational change.

Overall, health in Scotland is improving, and people are living longer, healthier lives. However, the gap between those with the best and worst health and education outcomes persist. Reducing the poverty-related health and education gap between people in Scotland's most deprived and affluent communities remains as one of our greatest challenges.

To get this right for every child, we must...

- Use what we know to drive what we do
- Focus relentlessly on ensuring we make a difference through our positive impact
- Challenge assumptions and the status quo
- Inspire and release those who can make a difference
- Ensure everything we do promotes positive change.

2018 is to be Scotland's Year of Young People. This will bring with it many opportunities to shine a light on the wonderful contribution that young people make to communities across Scotland every day. What a platform to continue our relentless focus on the health and wellbeing of all our children and young people.

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APPENDIX 1

Fulfilment of Statutory Duties

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/welfare/ASL>

Looked after Children (LAC)

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/children-in-care/>

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/contents/enacted>

Equality Act 2010

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/HLivi/foodnutrition>

POLICIES AND LEGISLATION ACROSS ALL ASPECTS OF HWB

The Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools Regulations – 2008

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2008/09/12090355/15>

Better Eating, Better Learning: A New Context for School Food, 2013

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/03/1606>

Preventing Overweight and Obesity in Scotland: A Route Map Towards Healthy Weight, 2010

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/02/17140721/0>

General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), 2014: The Standards for Registration: mandatory requirements for registration.

<http://www.gtcs.org.uk/>

Beyond the School Gate, 2014

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/05/4143>

2 hours of core physical education per week in primary schools and 2 periods (minimum 2 X 50 minutes) in secondary schools: Secondary 1 – Secondary 4

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2005/11/PEReport2005>

10 year Physical Activity Implementation Plan (PAIP)

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/Sport/paip>

Giving Children and Young People a Sporting Chance – Sport Strategy 2014

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/06/7317>

Guidance for Teachers on the Conduct of Relationships, Sexual Health and

Parenthood Education in Scottish Schools, 2016
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/12/8526>

Creating a Tobacco-Free Generation Strategy, 2013

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/03/3766>

Pregnancy and Parenthood Young People Strategy, 2016

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/03/5858>

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<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/03/7388>

Scottish Attainment Challenge, 2015

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/Raisingeducationalattainment>

National Improvement Framework, 2016

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<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/NationalImprovementFramework>

How Good is our School? 4th Edition 2016

https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK2_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2_HGIOS4.pdf

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<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/08/24085708/0>

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Delivering excellence and equity in Scottish education: A delivery plan

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<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/03/1750>

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<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/information-sharing/cyp-information-sharing-bill-2017>

A vibrant landscape photograph of a turquoise river flowing through a rocky canyon. The river is surrounded by lush green forests and mountains in the background. The text 'SLOVENIA' is overlaid on the left side of the image in large, colorful, perforated letters.

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AUTHORS



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Sandra Mršnik is a Senior Consultant for primary education at the National Education Institute in Slovenia. She received her doctorate in Faculty of Education Koper: The Achievement of Pupils in Mathematics and Teachers' Attitudes towards Solving Mathematical Problems. The research is a relevant foundation for determining the attitudes of pupils of basic school grades 1 to 5, towards solving problems and their impact on the performance on examination of knowledge and teachers' attitudes towards solving problems. Its contribution to research finding primarily consist of the confirmation that pupils' intrinsic motivation is an important factor of the efficiency of problem solving. It is thus not the frequency of problem solving that is important, but the approach to solving mathematical problem. Her recent publications include formative and summative assessment, inclusive pedagogy and didactic approaches: Mršnik, S. et. al. (2017) *Inclusive practice in primary school*. ZRSŠ. Ljubljana and Mršnik, S. et. al. (2014): *Selfreflective thinking and formative assessment in problem solving*. ZRSŠ, Ljubljana. Her current research interests include formative assessment, EBL, reading literacy and problem solving skills.

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Leonida Novak is a Senior Consultant for primary education at the National Education Institute in Slovenia. She received her doctorate in Faculty of Education Ljubljana: Motivation for Literary Competences Development in the First Triad. The thesis researches Slovenian primary school learners' (aged 6–11) ability to read and understand literary texts. It focuses on developing reading competence of learners who have the potential for high reading performance. The research questions aimed at collecting and exploring information about teachers' ability for differentiating instruction strategies which stimulate development of their learners' reading competence. Collected data helped us highlight both weaknesses and strengths in the process of developing reading competence of learners with an aptitude for maximal achievement when engaged with reading literary texts.

Her publications researched include developing reading competence, formative and summative assessment, inquiry based learning, student portfolio and didactic approaches.

Her current research interests include formative assessment, IBL, reading literacy, didactic and portfolio.

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ABSTRACT



A teacher's encouragement of self-evaluation and personal responsibility in pupils is of value, especially when it is done in accordance with the principles of formative assessment (FA). In solving mathematical problems, the teacher monitors students, provides support, guides by questions, and thereby encourages learners to assess their own work. It is important to monitor pupils' progress in the learning process because the teacher obtains information on the level of understanding and of gaps. Changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of pupils are the highest aims of the capacity of self-reflective thinking, which is associated with wellbeing. Promoting wellbeing requires an approach that uses these priorities to make decisions which work for pupils. Our contribution will focus upon a case study that looks at the process of monitoring the development of problem solving with younger pupils. We will draw attention to strategies of problem solving which empower pupils to be more efficient and more successful. The evidence of the process of learning and student attainment, which is the result of the research done by the authors, will support the article.

Key words: formative assessment, problem solving, responsibility, promoting wellbeing

SLOVENIA: Formative assessment and problem solving as a wellbeing indicator among early school years

INTRODUCTION

The Foresight Report (2008) defines wellbeing as a dynamic state, in which the individual is able to develop their potential, work productively and creatively and build strong and positive relationships with others. The emerging consensus is that wellbeing is multi-dimensional: that it needs to be contextualised, and that it needs to be considered in a holistic way. The priorities that promote positive wellbeing for young children in the vital early school years are the creative conditions to learn and develop their potential for problem solving, for example in mathematics. The skills and knowledge that are necessary to the process of problem solving involve adequate content knowledge, thinking skills as well as a generalisation and the ability to deal with the unknown. When solving mathematical problems, pupils discover a lot about the problem itself if they are solving it individually, if they are making decisions regarding the path leading to the solution and if they are discovering what will bring them to solution at the same time. If they are solving problems with other classmates they develop positive relationships with others and to a degree self-reflective thinking, which is important in learning. It is important that the teacher leads the pupils to explore and evaluate the way of solving problems and thereby encourages self-reflective thinking in a supportive learning environment. Research (Myers, 1992 etc.) shows that problem solving and decision making skills are also effective on wellbeing. Cenkseven-Önder et al. (2013), D'Zurilla (1988) defines problem solving as a cognitive-emotional-behavioural process which

includes effective ways to cope with the problems experienced in daily life and to define and explore individual (or group) efforts.

THE UNDERSTANDING OF STUDENT WELLBEING IN SLOVENIA

Wellbeing is where each individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community (WHO, 2013). Wellbeing is conceptualised as encompassing aspects of emotional (affect/ feeling), psychological (positive functioning), social (has good relationships with other students, teachers, parents and other people in society), physical (physical health) and spiritual (sense of meaning and purpose in life) wellbeing (Barry and Friedli, 2008). For the purpose of this article and in the context of the Slovenian school system, wellbeing may be defined as the presence of a culture, ethos and environment which promotes dynamic, optimal development and growth for all included in the school community. It encompasses the domains of relationship, meaning, emotion, motivation, purpose and achievement. Adult wellbeing and child wellbeing share similarities. These are: happiness, acceptance and peace of mind. But they also have differences: children face different challenges and children have different priorities. Results of PISA 2015 (The Programme for International Student Assessment) showed that most 15-year-old Slovenian students are satisfied with their own

lives. In comparison to students of other OECD (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries they are similarly nervous before exams and they report similar rate of bullying. The key concepts of our work are based on research findings about formative assessment (Wiliam, 2011, 2013; Clark 2008; Black and Wiliam, 1998; Marsh, 2009; Komljanc 2008; Novak, 2016); experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), self-regulated learning (Zimmermann, 2001; Pečjak in Košir, 2002) and 21st century skills: problem solving (Schoenfeld, 1985, 1992; Facione, 1998; Verschaffel et al. 1999; Mršnik, 2016).

Wellbeing is multi-dimensional

Schools should implement teaching, learning and the development of wellbeing as parallel, integrated and complementary processes. At first glance, it seems that formative assessment is associated with health, but also elements of formative assessment help teachers to understand the needs, wellbeing and skills of each individual student. In recent years, the National Education Institute of Slovenia (NEI) has been intensively cooperating with teachers in the development of formative assessment. Consultants from different subject fields (e.g. mathematics, Slovene language, etc.) work with a group of teachers. The main topic of study meetings is formative assessment. The aim of formative assessment is to:

- help students develop sense of responsibility
- develop students' self-regulatory abilities
- raise learning achievement levels
- encourage motivation to learn
- make learning visible for all learners, including specific groups of students.

Each consultant works with two teachers who practice and develop the principles of formative assessment. This approach has been running for two years and its primary objective is to develop best possible practices in Slovenian schools.

With the help of formative assessment, NEI carried out a number of projects in general and specific areas: PROLEA (Professional Learning in Complex Settings through Reflection and Portfolio), ATS (Assessment of Transversal Skills); Eufolio (Students Electronic Portfolio), BRIDGE (Student Voice – the bridge to learning).

Skills and knowledge for problem solving

Van Damme (2017) noted that the label “21st – century skills” is being increasingly used and sometimes misused to indicate that the rapidly changing economic, social and cultural environment of the current century demands a revision of what we think are crucial subjects for the next generations to learn.

Success at solving problems is influenced by different factors: previous experiences, pre-knowledge, motivation for problem solving and metacognitive ability.

We cannot neglect psychological characteristics, which can be a limitation. Children become more alert around the age of seven and they also develop communicative skills which allow them to restate a problem in their own words. Experiences they get from solving actual problems, help them to form general rules of problem solving. Siegler (1998, in Marjanovič Umek and Zupančič, 2004) determines that children with higher cognitive development solve problems with greater understanding and they form holistic rules for finding solutions.

Researchers (Anderson, Osborn in Tierney, 1984) who study emotional-motivational factors of problem solving emphasise that we often neglect these aspects of problem solving. Positive motivation is of highest importance in solving a problem which was also confirmed in a study presented below. Cencič and Cencič (2002, p. 80) state tolerance of uncertainty, moderate level of concentration, persistence, curiosity, cognitive flexibility, self-esteem with self-criticism and acceptance of failure are positive personal characteristics which enable effective problem

solving. As negative characteristics, they note heightened emotional intensity, anxiety and stress that reduce levels of functioning. To master certain strategies for problem solving, we need a lot of pre-knowledge and positive experiences.

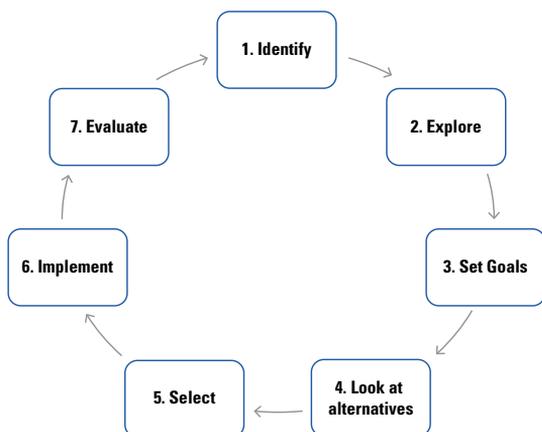


Figure 1. Steps to problem solving (adapted from UniSA)

1. Identify the problem

First it is necessary to identify the problem so the children can find an appropriate solution. It may not be clear to children what the problem is or they may feel anxious or confused about what is getting in the way of their goals. The teacher can encourage children to try talking to each other as this may help them identify the problem.

2. Explore the problem

When the children recognise the problem, they need to think about it from different angles. The questions that help are:

- How is the problem affecting me?
- How is it affecting others?

- Who else experiences this problem?
- What do they do about it?

Seeing the problem in different ways is likely to help children find an effective solution.

3. Set goals:

Once children have thought about the problem from different angles they can identify some goals. What is it that they want to achieve? For example, do they want to:

- Improve their health?
- Improve time management skills?

Different goals will lead children in different directions, so formulating their goals is a vital part of the problem-solving process.

4. Look for alternatives:

When children have decided what the goal is, they need to look for possible solutions. The more solutions they can come up with, the more likely it is they will find the one that works. They brainstorm for ideas to collect a long list of possibilities. It does not matter whether the ideas are useful or manageable: they just write down all ideas as they come into their heads. Some of the best solutions arise from creative thinking during brainstorming. They can also seek ideas by talking to others. The aim is to collect as many alternative solutions as possible.

5. Select a possible solution

From the list of possible solutions, the children can sort out which are most relevant to their situation and which are realistic and manageable. They can do this by predicting the outcomes for the different solutions.

6. Implement a possible solution

Now they are ready to put their solution into action. This may take some time and effort, so they will need energy and motivation. They can prepare to implement the solution by planning when and how they will do it, whether they talk with others about it and what rewards they will get when they have done it.

7. Evaluate

Just because they have implemented the best possible solution, they may not have automatically solved their problem, so evaluating the effectiveness of their solution is very important. They can ask:

- How effective was that solution?
- Did it achieve what I wanted?
- What consequences did it have on my situation?

If they feel dissatisfied with the result, they can take another look at the seven steps. Otherwise, well done! They've solved their problem.

The teacher leads the pupils to explore and evaluate the way of solving problems, and thereby encourages self-reflective thinking. It is important to monitor pupils' progress in the learning process. With formative assessment, the teacher obtains information on the level of understanding and gaps. When the teacher is taking the principles of formative assessment into account, s/he encourages self-evaluation and responsibility for students' own knowledge. In solving mathematical problems, the teacher monitors a student, provides support, guides by questions and thereby helps the learner to assess their own work. Changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of pupils are the highest goals of self-reflective thinking (Novak, Mršnik, 2014).

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment comprises two phases: diagnostic assessment and formative assessment: the latter should be based on a variety of information sources (e.g. portfolios, work in progress, conversation, student-teacher conferences) (Sentočnik, 2012). Clarke (2008) writes that formative assessment is recognised as a significant strategy in raising a student's achievements – or indeed any learner's achievements. In the project Eufolio-Slovenia we define AFL as a group of strategies (Wiliam, 2013).

Key highlights of these strategies are (Figure 2): co-participation of students in creating learning purposes and determining the success criteria

- building on students' prior knowledge
- providing effective feedback
- collection of diverse evidence of learning
- peer-learning as a source of learning and teaching
- self-evaluation for self-regulation of learning.

Figure 2. 5 Formative Assessment Strategies to Improve Student Learning (Wiliam, D. (2013). The role of formative assessment in effective learning environments. In: The Nature of learning. OECD).

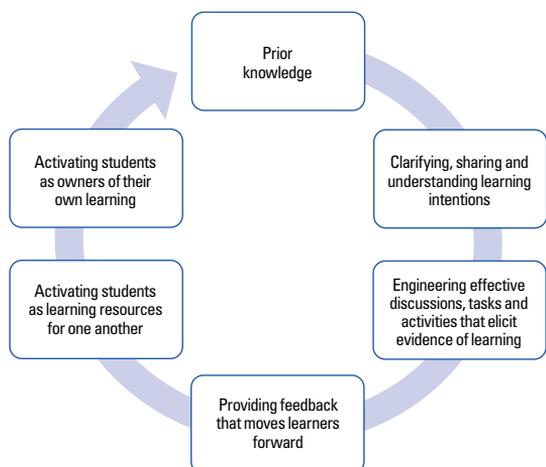


Figure 3. Students direction to a personal goal



One of the two general aims in Slovenia is implementation of formative assessment (FA) principles in the process of problem solving, teachers encouraging students to self-evaluate their knowledge and skills. Doing so, they get an opportunity to identify their strengths and weaknesses and then, considering this, they specify their personal goals and success criteria in the context of the goals set by their teachers (Figure 2, Figure 3). With formative assessment, knowledge builds on strong, already formed knowledge and personal interests (Komljanc, 2008). With strong knowledge, students can eliminate weaknesses and explore new knowledge. A student is directed to a personal goal, described as an expected result, adjusted to the curriculum standards of knowledge (Komljanc 2009).

By solving the problem, we can follow the formative assessment principles. The feature consists of five elements:

a. Aims of learning

Bandura (1997, p. 11) shows that emotions, effort, perseverance and learning influence individual assessment of learning effectiveness. With this in mind, we can say that the motivational factors and emotions have a major indirect influence on learning achievements. Students should be assisted in setting realistic goals. The fact that the student adopts the goal that he himself sets encourages the motivation. When students see how the goals can be set and later reached, their self-esteem improves and they take greater responsibility. Achieved short-term goals help the student gain a sense of self-efficacy. Komljanc (2009) notes that personal goals offer opportunities for independent, collective learning and performance respectively. Success criteria must be generated by students to have maximum impact (Clark, 2008, p.93). Tools and procedures that can be useful for co-planning goals and success criteria include sample case studies, discussions, etc.

b. Prior knowledge

Planning learning goals needs to focus on what students already know, what they want to know (knowledge), and which skills they want to learn (processes) (Clark, 2008, p.71). Activating prior knowledge should include (Pintrich, 2005) content knowledge (Know what? – information, data, facts, concepts, schemes), procedural knowledge (Know how? How to perform certain things?) and knowledge of circumstances (When and how to use the knowledge?). Options that are exploited are questionnaires, role play, record, report (What do I already know?), check lists, a group conversation, etc.

c. Strategy

On the basis of prior knowledge, the teacher plans strategies, methods and forms of work. Together student and teacher select, plan, implement and evaluate instructional path approaches through which they attain the standards of knowledge – in line with the personal goal of the learner.

d. Evidence

The student is thinking about how to prove that the objective is achieved. Through the process of learning, he assesses what is the proof of his learning.

e. Self-assessment

Teachers organise discussions with students about their achievements, which prove that the objectives were reached, so students can choose the kind of evidence they want to use for each goal. During the stage of self-reflection, students use a variety of devices (cues, questionnaires etc.) and receive feedback (from teacher, classmates). Options for implementation are sheets of anecdotal records, checklists, diary of learning / feedback, diary for reflection and goal setting, questionnaire, reflective letter, etc.

The process of problem solving represents a student's progress, achieved with quality formative assessment from a teacher, parent's

encouragement, and the use of different sources and learning opportunities (Komljanc, 2009). In the process of formative assessment (FA) as we define it, teachers encourage students to evaluate their knowledge and skills prior to its introduction. In doing so they get an opportunity to identify their strengths and weaknesses and then, considering this, specify their personal goals and success criteria in the context of teachers' goals. Teachers organise discussions on students' achievements, which prove that the objectives were reached, so students have the opportunity to choose the kind of evidence they want to use for each goal. In the stage of self-reflection, students use a variety of devices (cues, methods, questionnaires ...) and feedback (from teacher, classmates ...) in all stages of the process. It is essential that a student receives feedback, which is specific, descriptive, and relates to the student's intent versus his effect in relation to the goals and criteria, thus helping students to reorganise what they have done, and empowering them to decide what they want to do in direction of the learning goals and success criteria (Sentočnik, 2012).

Wellbeing and assessment for learning

Commonalities between wellbeing and assessment for learning are (Hargreaves, 2004):

- Engagement – both increase the student's engagement in learning, in the activities of the classroom and the life of the school
- Responsibility – both increase the student's responsibility for himself, for learning and behaviour, in part by giving the student more control over them
- Meta-cognitive skills – both increase the student's control over thinking and learning
- Relationships with teachers and students – both give these relationships greater maturity, since they become more open, more honest, and more collaborative: the relationships are characterised by mutual respect, grounded in self-esteem. As soon as students compare themselves with someone else, their mental



energy becomes focussed on protecting their own sense of wellbeing rather than learning anything new (Wiliam, 2013)

- Social skills – in both, the student’s capacity to communicate, to construct a coherent argument, to make a presentation and to undertake a leadership role are all enhanced by the development of new interpersonal skills; of particular importance is the capacity and confidence to talk about work and learning
- Participation – in both, the student’s active participation in classroom and school is enhanced because he is involved in the design of learning, teaching, assessment and the life of the school through processes of co-construction.

Formative assessment and problem solving as a wellbeing indicator

What exactly is expected from a teacher, of what should he be aware and what should he encourage among students? (The Nature of learning, 2014)

- to activate and connect pre-knowledge with newly obtained knowledge
- to solve problems through dividing them into smaller, manageable problems or steps
- to search deeper structures (e.g. with strategy of graduate comparison, analogies, graphic images ...)
- to integrate structures of knowledge – building a whole step-by-step
- to organise information and hierarchically arrange them in a way that supports students to construct complex mental representations and helps them to make connections in “their heads” (Hinton, Fischer).

In the Table 1 we want to show the connection between the three areas, which are described in this article: formative assessment, problem solving and wellbeing. Connecting elements pointed out are: engagement, participation, relationships, responsibility, social skills and meta-cognitive skills.

Table 1. The connection between the three areas

ELEMENTS	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT	PROBLEM SOLVING	WELL BEING
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-participation in creating learning goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affect/feeling • Sense of meaning and purpose in life
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on students' prior knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive functioning • Emotions • Purpose
Relationships with staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing effective feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing a possible solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive functioning • Sense of meaning and purpose in life • Achievement
Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection evidence of learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the problem • Looking for alternatives • Selecting a possible solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive functioning • Achievement
Social skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer-learning as a source of learning and teaching) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking for alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affect/ feeling • Physical health • Sense of meaning and purpose in life • Relationship
Meta-cognitive skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation for self-regulation of learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical health • Achievement

METHOD

Participants

The study was conducted with a total of 518 pupils of basic school grades 1 to 5, of which 249 were females and 269 were males, they attended different elementary schools from different Slovenian regions. Their ages are between 6 and 10 years.

Data collection tools

The test was developed by Mršnik (2016) to measure the performance of pupils in mathematics at different levels of knowledge. The scale was also developed by Mršnik to research the effect of attitudes on pupils' performance. The scale is a five point Likert scale, which consist of 14 items, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". The internal consistency of the scale has been observed 0.74.

Procedures

Before data collection, all of the necessary permissions were taken and information about the study was explained to the participants. The test took 35 minutes to complete; questionnaires took 10–15 minutes to complete and were completed in classes under the teacher's supervision.

Questionnaire for students

Questionnaire regarding problem solving for students was a part of the test. It consisted of 14 statements which related to students' view on problem solving and which comprised 3 areas: (1) students' relation to mathematical problems (positive or negative); (2) how do students see the role of a teacher in connection to problem solving and (3) what motivates them for problem solving. For each statement there were three possible answers: (1) I agree, (2) I partially agree, (3) I disagree. Statements that were used:

1. If a mathematical problem is interesting, I do not stop while searching for solution
2. In comparison to others, I am better at solving mathematical problems
3. I like solving mathematical problems
4. I have fun while solving mathematical problems
5. Solving mathematical problems is hard in my opinion
6. I solve mathematical problems only if I have to
7. Some mathematical problems are too hard for me and I do not understand them
8. When I solve a mathematical problem I feel like I succeed
9. Solving mathematical problems makes me feel tired
10. I suggest to the teacher that we should solve mathematical problems
11. I can explain to others how to solve a mathematical problem
12. The teacher teaches me how to solve mathematical problems
13. I can also solve more difficult mathematical problems
14. The teacher asks me how I solved a mathematical problem

Before filling out the questionnaire students received standardised instructions. They filled out the questionnaire after they had completed a mathematical test.

In our case the KMO measurement value is 0,744 which indicates that using this factor analysis is reasonable, since the value is greater than 0,5. Value near 1 indicates that the connections are relatively compact and that the extracted factors will be reliable.

When forming the questionnaire, we wanted to include following contents: positive/negative relation to mathematical problem solving, importance of the teacher for problem solving, connection between achievements and self-assessment when solving problems and motivation for problem solving.

Factor analysis confirmed planned contents in great measure.

Table 2. Factors and variables

FACTORS	VARIABLE	NAME OF THE FACTOR
Factor 1	Solving a problem makes student tired (Q9)	Negative relation to problem solving
	Solving the problem only if he has to (Q6)	
	Solving problems is hard (Q5)	
	Some problems are too hard, he does not understand them (Q7)	
Factor 2	He is better in solving problems than his classmates (Q2)	Positive relation to problem solving
	He has fun while solving problems (V4)	
	He can explain to others how to solve a problem (Q11)	
	He suggests to solve problems (Q10)	
	He likes solving mathematical problems (Q3)	
Factor 3	The teacher asks how he solved a problem (Q14)	Role of the teacher
	The teacher teaches him how to solve a problem (Q12)	
Factor 4	He feels like he succeeded when he solves a problem (Q8)	Intrinsic motivation for problem solving
	When the problem is interesting, he does not stop solving it (Q1)	
	He can also solve more difficult mathematical problems (Q13)	

FINDINGS

We determined the performance of pupils at individual levels of mathematical knowledge and the correlation of performance with their attitudes towards problem solving. We found that the attitudes linked to intrinsic motivation have a positive effect on pupils' performance. We have further determined teachers' attitudes toward solving problems and compared the frequency of solving problems with pupils' performance. We found that higher frequency of solving problems does not necessarily result in higher performance of pupils in examinations of mathematical knowledge, but intrinsic motivation has a positive effect. Learning and teaching can be improved to support mental health and wellbeing of students with:

- clear expectations, learning objectives
- clear, accessible course information (available online)
- staggered deadlines
- approachable / available academic staff
- study skills development (especially group work, presentations)
- regular, clear feedback
- more opportunities for peer interaction.

Approaches of formative assessment are connected with wellbeing through good teaching practice, choice and flexibility in course design, potential to minimise stress and maximise success. With every lesson school can use formative assessment to build confidence, teachers availability, different teaching methods, effective feedback and more small group work.

Formative assessment in using evidence of achievement to adapt what happens in classrooms to meet learner needs (Wiliam, 2013).

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research is a relevant foundation for determining the positive attitudes of pupils towards solving problems as the cognitive component of subjective wellbeing. Its contribution to research findings primarily consists of the confirmation that pupils' intrinsic motivation is an important factor of the efficiency of problem solving and wellbeing. Furthermore, the finding that the frequency of solving problems does not necessarily yield better pupils' performance explains the significance of quality teaching of problem solving. It is thus not the frequency of problem solving that is important, but the approach to solving mathematical problems. At the end of the study it is observed that having intrinsic motivation and subjective wellbeing predict higher problem solving skills.

The support necessary to help scaffold teacher transformation usually includes a combination of approaches, but for lasting success, it needs to be clear, focused, and sustained over time. Elements for support must be: providing feedback, providing follow-up information, linking scientific content and inquiry, evidence based explanations, developing appropriate assessment, building a solid presence, creating strong relationships in a respectful environment, setting high expectations.

The possible implications of our study for educational policy and pedagogical practice in Slovenia can be: teaching and learning and the development of wellbeing must be parallel, integrated, complementary processes; approach to wellbeing must be planned; students should be provided with opportunities to connect, succeed and thrive that are relevant to their stages of learning and development; students have responsibility to be active learners who exercise self-regulation appropriate to their age and level of understanding.

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THE NET HER LANDS

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ABSTRACT



Initial plans for an integral reform or realignment of the Dutch 'national' curriculum-framework included the wish to arrive at a better balance between the three major aims of general education: qualification, socialisation and 'personal development'. In anticipation of actual reforms to take place, the Netherlands institute for curriculum development, SLO, has tried to get more conceptual clarity on what 'personal development' is, and how it can be addressed and/or integrated in the curriculum in a more substantial way.

In this chapter, we will show how we have come to analyse this 'fuzzy' concept as a typical melange of historical and contemporary strands in educational thinking and practice. Three cases of schools working consciously with concepts of 'personal development' are presented. These cases do seem to corroborate our hypothesis that, in practice, different perspectives on or aspects of 'personal development' seem to be invoked, albeit not always explicitly or consciously. Further curricular work at the meso-level of schools and school-boards might benefit from a more deliberate focus on the basis of clearer concepts. A more concise and practical grid to help schools planning their curriculums in this respect will be therefore be presented.

Key words: personal development, curriculum, conceptual clarity, practical grid.

THE NETHERLANDS:

Personal Development as a curricular theme – Deliberating wellbeing, freedom and success in the Dutch curricular landscape

INTRODUCTION

In 2015 and 2016, the educational community in the Netherlands was engaged in a national debate on the needs and possibilities of a new curriculum for primary and secondary education. Given the history and nature of the Dutch educational system, such a curriculum cannot be conceived however as an overtly prescriptive framework. One of the outcomes of this debate was that a new national curriculum ought to support schools to find a contemporary balance between the three major aims of education: *qualification* (knowledge, skills, a degree), *socialisation* (social and civic education; attitudes) and 'personal development'. After twenty odd years of policies to enhance children's achievement and re-inform their belonging to our socio-cultural order, schools seem to have lost not merely the skill but also the language to think about schools and education as places where children get the space and opportunities to develop as individual beings (Biesta, 2012, 2013; Onderwijsraad, 2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2016). This call to reassign 'personal development' its due place in the school's curricular and other practices has given way to a

number of conceptual questions. Especially the definition of and the boundaries between the social aims and endeavours of education, and the realm of 'personal development' in and by means of school, seemed in dire need of further elaboration.

To explore these conceptual questions the Netherlands institute for curriculum development (SLO) has worked out a rough and preliminary framework to conceptualise the many-faceted, and rather fluid concept of 'personal development'. Tracing ways of how 'personal development' in and through schools has been conceived historically, SLO has tried to build three (or four) different categories for how 'personal development' as a curricular theme is conceptualised in the present discourse. With the help of these categories, it has identified three possible strategies for schools to develop and implement their view on what 'personal development' is or ought to be.

In this paper, we take the opposite pathway. Having sketched the context of the present curricular debate in The Netherlands (Section 2), we will present our preliminary grid to conceptualise 'personal development' in Section 3. This grid is used to reflect on three case studies of schools in the Netherlands (Section 4, case studies 1 to 3). From the perspective of curriculum theory, a coherent, shared vision or theory of what 'personal development' in school is or might be, is fundamental for planning, developing and

1 In Dutch: *persoonsvorming*, which might technically be translated in 'moulding the person', but bears connotations that cannot effectively be translated into English. Alternative concepts (with alternative, but equally strong connotations) are 'individuation', 'self-fulfilment', 'subjectification', the 'pedagogical duty of the school', and many, many others.

assessing curricular practices working towards stated aims. Our working-hypothesis will be, however, that in practice, it is rather a ‘fluid’ melange of visions associated with wellbeing, freedom and success, used interchangeably and both consciously and subconsciously, that informs curricular practices (Section 4). Further conceptual and practical work on different aspects of ‘personal development’ as a curricular theme at the meso-level of schools and schoolboards might help to make this often implicit ‘muddiness’ more explicit. With the help of a readjusted grid to serve practical purposes – curriculum development with teachers and principals – we hope to give teachers and curriculum-developers – not only in the Netherlands – tools to disentangle different foci or objectives to arrive at a better-informed balance between wellbeing, freedom and success.

A NEW ‘NATIONAL’ CURRICULUM?

Context

In 2015, the Dutch Ministry of Education launched a national debate on a new ‘future-oriented’ curriculum for primary and secondary education. Informed by a societal dialogue supported by (social) media, a special committee took almost a year to gather ideas from society at large, so as to build a framework for a new curriculum for the whole of foundational education (K4–18). Within the wider context of recent and ongoing curriculum reforms across the globe, neither such an endeavour to embark on curricular renewal, nor its proposed aims (systemic and holistic approach, future-oriented content) may seem odd at all. In the context of the Netherlands, however, where the last national debate on the curriculum of both primary and secondary education took place around 1857 (!), raising public interest in questions of curriculum and content seemed new and, frankly, quite daring.

Like elsewhere, the Dutch educational landscape has largely taken shape during the 19th century. And like elsewhere, the expansion of state-funded education has been ‘guided’ – to put it mildly – by processes to negotiate power between national, local and religious authorities (Verhoeven, 1994).

The Dutch version of this ‘culture war’ has resulted in a rather hybrid system of education in which the state shares sovereignty with civil society. Ever since 1920, two thirds of all schools are organised by and on behalf of legal bodies representing parents and their religious organisations. Of the remaining third part of ‘public’ or religiously ‘neutral’ schools, only a few are still run by local authorities, the majority by now too having legal autonomy from the government. In this ‘public-private’ system, schools are free to determine *how* and *to which* fundamental *aims* children are educated. In such a decentralised landscape, curricular reform on the macro-level is potentially even more contested than in other, more centrally geared school systems (Braster, 1996).

Legally, the Dutch government is responsible for funding schools to cater for all children, and to guarantee the ‘*quality and general morality of teachers*’. Over the course of the 20th century the state has generally gained more power over the curriculum – albeit hesitantly (Kuiper, Nieveen & Berkvens, 2013). Up to the present, however, the national curriculum is not explicit in what children up to a certain age or level have to learn exactly – let alone to which final end – but only about the (general) goals schools have to aspire to. As these general goals are of course normative in their own right, tension between the ‘national’ curriculum and in fact any national educational policy on the one hand, and the freedom of (denominational) schools on the other, remains a significant feature of Dutch system.



Plan?

Expectedly, the outline of the new curriculum to be developed, presented in January 2016, did stir quite some debate. The main site of contestation, however, seemed not to be the historical one between schools and the state, but rather between teachers and the educational establishment.

The main object of the draft document (“Our Education 2032”) was to rethink the aims of the national curriculum in such a way that it provides room to address and strengthen cohesiveness both vertically and horizontally. From the national debate on this theme – on social media and at different meetings across the country – three main strategies to reach this emerged:

- a curriculum planned in domains, rather than in subjects – including the senior years of secondary education – to ensure consistency and make multidisciplinary learning possible
- more systematic focus on (general) skills at the expense of factual, only reproductive knowledge (among other things to battle real or perceived ‘curriculum overload’) and
- a rebalancing of educational goals, with a more equal focus on citizenship education and personal development, while continuing to aspire to clear-cut levels of (cognitive) achievement (OnsOnderwijs2032).

Presented in outline form in January 2016, it took more than a year for the government to decide upon new steps. Quite a number of (semi-) governmental and other stakeholders, including (religious) school-boards and the unions, had high

stakes in the plan to succeed. Others, especially organised subject-teachers, used old and new media to express their doubts about the need, the feasibility and the pedagogical foundations of the curriculum. In the Netherlands, with the strong culture of consensus, that meant that new rounds to organise more acquiescence and common ground with all the different interest-groups had to be organised. As of April 2017, parliament finally approved of the scheme, with subject-teachers as proposed co-creators of the new curriculum, albeit with rather drastic curtailment of its scope and integral character.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTUALISED

As said, one of the main aims of the new curricular model was to help school rebalance the allegedly separate ‘domains’ of cognitive, social and personal development of children in and through education. Whether these three domains can indeed be separated, both in theory and in (curricular) practice, cannot, however, be concluded so easily, at least not from the foundational text of the curriculum-scheme.

Especially the domains of social or civic education and ‘personal development’ seem intrinsically linked, as no individual can develop outside of any social context (Hooge, 2016, Visser 2017). Of the concept ‘personal development’, the curriculum-committee gave neither a definition, nor an indication of its scope or borders. Throughout the text, ‘personal development’ is referred to in a number of different ways, alluding to diverging goals and traditions, including children’s ‘individuality’, their physical, social and emotional ‘wellbeing’ as well as their ‘talents’, to be developed by ‘broad general education’. At the same time, no explicit reference to religious or moral education is made – the foundation of two thirds of all schools and one of the traditional pillars, as we will see, of ‘personal development’ (OnsOnderwijs2032, Visser, 2016).

In order to gain more clarity about the different concepts and issues associated with ‘personal development’ a working-group on ‘citizenship and personal development’ at the Netherlands institute for curriculum development (SLO) has tried to get more clarity on this topic. In order to do so, we have visited a number of schools, both in primary and in secondary education, some of which do, some of which do not, present themselves as having something special to offer in terms of personal development. At the same time, we have done rather extensive literature review on how ‘personal development’ has been conceived in historical times, and how it appears in present-day educational discourses. Together with the results of an expert-meeting held with (inter)national specialists representing a variety of philosophical, religious and/or pedagogical strands or leanings, we have tried to gain more clarity on the concept of ‘personal development’. On the basis of this research, we have tentatively discerned four *historical* and four *contemporary* categories in which ‘personal development’ is debated, and three strategies in which it (or elements of it are) implemented:

Historical categories

From a historical perspective, ‘personal development’ has appeared in theory and practice in at least three, possibly four distinct veins. These categories may be too crude to do full justice to the different traditions discussed in brief, but may help to illustrate the connotation of concepts in contemporary debates – also for non-Dutch readers. When debating the topic of ‘personal development’ in and through school-based education, different authors at different times, often explicitly, sometimes implicitly seem to refer to four broad historical categories:

H1. *Religious and/or moral education.* Considering that humans can become humans only as moral and/or religious beings, ‘personal development’ has traditionally been conceived of as part and parcel of socialisation i.e. as instruction in the codes of conduct of a particular religious group and/or ethical tradition (Meijer, 2013 Verhoeven, 1994).

- H2. *Bildung or general education.* Following a particular continental (i.e. German) tradition, individual development or fulfilment is the result of a thorough introduction in human (viz. classical) culture. Although difficult to separate from socialisation, this enlightened version of Liberal Arts claims to foster individual freedom by means of knowledge (Gude, 2016; Humboldt, 2006; Stralen & Gude, 2012).
- H3. *Self-fulfilment.* With and without explicit reference to Rousseau and his idea of 'negative education', educationalists have thought of schools as environments in which children can develop 'from within' and reach their potential. Rather popular in public discourse and imagery, this romantic vision of children and their education is in the end radically individualistic, if not anarchic, and therefore not unproblematic.
- H4. *Emancipation.* Often conceived as a result of 2 or 3 (see above), sometimes also explicitly in terms of 1, social advancement of underprivileged groups or individuals has also been understood as an example of or force for 'personal development.' Even though this 'personal development' by means of qualification and socialisation might not be the type aimed for in the 2016 curriculum-model, we have added this combined fourth category for analytical purposes.
- C1a. *Success (1): personalisation.* School-critique may be as old as the modern school itself. In contemporary discourse, elements of it are (still) used to decry the 'factory-like' make-up of schools, and propose more personal, individual routes to educational success. Often, this 'personalisation' of learning – preferably using ICT – offers itself as a form or instance of 'personal development' by means of individual learning and success. As such, this strand in education tends to equate personal development with achievement, that is, with plain qualification – for a future global workforce (see e.g. Priestley, 2011).
- C1b. *Success (2): talent development.* Either starting from the very same critical stance, or as a means to get more parents and children to choose their institutions, many schools offer other and/or advanced courses or content, so as to cater for the specific needs of diverse gifted students or learners. With and without reference to concepts of broader (general) education (*Bildung*) and/or *self-fulfilment* (see above, H2 and H3), such attempts to broaden the curriculum and/or extra-curricular supply may have other goals, but do contribute, in the end, to more individual roads to educational success.
- C2. *Freedom:* As in many other countries in the developed world, the Netherlands' school-system has recently been subject to policies to maximise its output, using standardised tests and other instruments associated with neoliberal policies (Kneyber & Evers, 2013; Visser, 2015). Partly in response to this, and what is widely felt as an 'onslaught' on 'true' education, older traditions of (continental) pedagogy as the 'theory and practices of freedom' are revived again (Visser, 2015; 2016). Inspired by different philosophical, religious and /or moral traditions and working under different names in different fields, this category seems rather fuzzy in itself. In the end, however, all groups, movements and individuals in this category seem to strive for 'deeper', more meaningful (often also more

Contemporary discourse

Arguably, these three or four *historical* concepts or strands still play a role in contemporary discourse, albeit in different guises and combinations. Easy rhetoric may hold that school has to '*help children live up to their full potential*', but there are and remain many different, and mutually exclusive ways to try to do so. In this babylonian confusion of good intentions, we again discern three or four main strands or categories that shape present day educational discourse in the Netherlands.

philosophical) education for children to achieve more political and/or moral autonomy (see e.g. Biesta, 2013; Masschelein, 2017; Meijer, 2013; Pols, 2016).

- C3. *Wellbeing*. Even though the 'movement' or shift towards more 'wellbeing' in schools is by far not as developed in the Netherlands as in the Anglo-Saxon world, a number of individuals, groups and institutions do make pleas (and offer translated methods) to enhance (aspects of) children's physical and mental health, social wellbeing, happiness, et cetera (e.g. Boerefijn & Bergsma, 2012; Duckworth, 2016; Schechtman et al, 2013). Given the fact that elements of this more physically and/or psychologically defined 'wellbeing' did show up in the recent curriculum-scheme, and with respect to growing international awareness around this theme, we expect the importance of this particular aspect to rise.

Strategies to move from theory to practice

Given the nature and complexity of the Dutch educational landscape, we did *not* expect the government to prioritise certain interpretations of 'personal development' over others. Freedom of education has meant and will mean in the Netherlands that it is up to schools to choose, to which final aims² children are taught and how. As of spring 2017, parliament has indeed decided that 'personal development' can definitely *not* be taken into account in the further process to revise the national curriculum. That doesn't mean that the 'quest' for personal development as a curricular theme has ended: many school-boards and individual schools struggle to give curricular shape to their ideas about other than mere cognitive skills and achievement. And, by means of the school-inspectorate, schools are held

accountable to show how they have embedded their particular vision or idea in their school, and how the effects of such endeavours are noticeable in school(-culture) and /or in the demeanour of children. For these and other reasons, schools across the country, both primary and secondary, are asking for help to address 'personal development' in and through their school-based curriculums. Apart from the categories built above, who might help to get them started with re-conceptualising their school's vision and mission, we discern three main strategies for schools to move from theory to practice:

- S1. *subject-strategy*. At some schools 'personal development' is anchored in subjects or strands: religious and/or humanistic education (in different varieties; mostly taught as a single subject) and/or tutoring. Given the fragmented reality of education, especially in secondary school, any demand for a stronger effort on the element of 'personal development' might give way to a stronger appeal for these 'soft' elements already present in the curriculum. In fact, we suspect (but cannot actually prove) that especially religious schools struggling with their identity are 'using' the more general idea of 'personal development' or specific interpretations of it, to replace or add to traditional forms of religious education.

From a curriculum-perspective, allotting aspects (or the whole idea) of 'personal development' to a single or selected 'subjects' or teachers, seems not the most effective strategy to work towards educational goals. At the same time, the introduction of 'personal development' as a well-planned single subject or domain could be the vantage point for schools to start off new curriculum thinking, either specifically around this topic or as a means to 'think' their whole curriculum anew.

2 This has been changed back and forth in this text, but it is crucial to understand: we are not discussing what children are taught, or what they need to achieve, but the fundamental aims of education (in a nearly Metaphysical sense)



- S2. *general strategy.* More challenging at least from a curricular point of view, seems to be the strategy to develop a rationale for a school (a worldview, an anthropological view, in any variety or combination of the categories mentioned), and make sure education in many / all subjects actually contribute to reaching the goals as stipulated. As promising as this might look in theory, recent practice, e.g. with the introduction of citizenship-education seems to show that it is not easy for schools, either to formulate such a vision, or to embed parts of it in the content matter of subjects. In order to move beyond mere good intentions ('window dressing') actual help with curriculum-planning at the level of schools and classes might be needed here.
- S3. *integral strategy.* During our investigation, we have not merely read about, but actually encountered schools – in primary education, but also in the secondary domain – where 'everything' is or seems to be aligned with the school's idea of what education needs to achieve: curriculum, pedagogy, the architecture of the building, the materials used, the food offered. Such educational or pedagogical communities may work out very well – pervasive ideas having strong effects on the personal development of 'everyone' within the school-community. As such an educational community is also vulnerable³, a further strengthening of the school's idea in the curriculum offers itself as a means to stabilise both the school (community) and its identity.

³ Our own investigations suggest e.g. that schools with outstanding profiles and practices are highly dependent on their principals.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE

Part of our endeavour to conceptualise aspects or forms of ‘personal development’ was a qualitative research into actual school practices. The three cases presented here were part of our sample for this further research. They are neither representative of the (heterogenous) Dutch school-landscape, nor exemplary for any of the ‘pure’ forms or strategies categorised above. As real-world examples, they do, however, shed a light on some of the possibilities and pitfalls of school-based curriculum development within the Dutch context. They may also hint at challenges for schools to enact curricular reform devoted to ‘personal development’ and, hence, help schools and / as curriculum developers to anticipate these (see: section 5).

Case 1 Edith Stein College, The Hague

Edith Stein College is a former girl-school in the inner city of The Hague. The school provided Catholic girls from the middle classes, after 1971 also boys, a thorough general education laced with cultural activities and – of course – Catholic virtue. From the late 1980s onwards, the school and its profile have changed rather drastically – both because of and with regards to a changing school-population. Formally still run by a ‘special’ (denominational) school-board in the greater The Hague-area, Edith Stein now is a rather typical inner-city school with a mixed population, a large part of which consists of second – or third generation migrant children with a Muslim background.

Ascertaining a gap between the school’s Catholic history and the multi-religious present, teachers in Religious Education have tried to find ways to adapt to the realities of both the school and its pupils. Over the past four years, they have developed a course in ‘personal development’ (persoonlijke vorming), mandatory for all children in their first year (12–13 year-olds). Alternating with drama-classes, split groups of 12–16 students

“engage with the question, who they are and what they stand for. Themes we touch upon are: setting goals for the current school-year, developing your position towards traditions, becoming aware of the influence of others on one’s own identity, take someone else’s perspective, learning to think critically and imagining the (near) future” (Edith Stein, 2017; Bruin-Raven, Wassink & Bakker, 2016).

The school has formulated five ‘key-values’, the first three of which are foundational for the one year’s course: trust, concern, growth, integrity and freedom. Activities to work around these values are reflection (on students’ own thoughts and behaviour), non-cognitive experiences (poetry, imagination, arts, etc.) and knowledge (about e.g. meanings of ‘identity’ and the different values stipulated).

The content and pedagogy of this ‘personal development’ is in the process of getting (more) integrated in other courses, such as drama, PE, and Arts, but in the context of an existing (secondary) school that proves to be a difficult process. Likewise, the plan that *‘from year two onwards, bridges will be built from the different subjects to the realm of personal development’* seems hard to realise in the typically ‘fragmented’ reality of secondary schools with predominantly subject-oriented teachers.

Case 2 Het Houtens in Houten

Het Houtens is a relatively new vocational school in the suburban village of Houten, near Utrecht. *‘Fed up’*, as he says, *‘with an instrumental approach towards education’*, a renowned senior school manager has been given the opportunity to literally build his own school. In a spacious, transparent and environmentally friendly building that seems to quote anthroposophical architecture, some 600 children from the wider area are prepared for careers in administration and finance.

Formally, the school is subject to a local Protestant school-board, but this tradition seems not to play

any role, neither internally, nor in the school's external communication. Instead, the school manager is inspired by the writings of the Jewish philosopher Emanuel Levinas and those of the Dutch educationalist Luc Stevens. Hence, the development of children's talents (C1b)⁴, paired with the recognition of human interdependence (S3), are leading in the school's endeavours. Within and in relation to the school, human action is guided – so the mission statement expresses – by the conviction that *'all humans are valuable and equal, that every human is meaningful for others and every child deserves to have prospects'* (Houtens, 2017).

To make sure education is indeed guided by such principles, teachers and other staff are required to meet extensively every week, and get extra training in pedagogy, developmental psychology, coaching, and the likes. Congruent with its philosophy, the school has built strong ties, not only with parents, but also with the larger community around it. Architecture, both inside and outside, furniture and food-supplies are aligned with the school's vision and mission. It organises plenty of cultural / creative activities and makes room for students to engage in them autonomously. Apart from this, and the possibility to take on French as an elective, few efforts seem to have been made to translate the school's vision on humanity and human interaction into the curriculum in a stricter sense of the word. That may account for the fact that the 'atmosphere' in the school, the interaction between students and teachers and among peers was actually rather different than in other, comparable vocational schools; conversely, the actual lessons we observed and the materials and methods used were pretty much the same as 'everywhere' in the Netherlands.

Case 3 De Bras, The Hague

Starting in 2002, Catholic primary school De Bras, in a suburban area north of The Hague, has decidedly developed a radical alternative: adaptive, personalised education that enables students aged 4 to 12 to follow their own pathways and find out about their own strengths and weaknesses. Hence, the school has no age-based classes but mixed 'family-groups', offers no standardised, linear curriculum, uses no printed textbooks, and no (or hardly any) summative tests.

Individually, in pairs or in groups, children take divergent routes through five different 'clusters' of experience: Arts (including Dutch and English languages), Economics (calculus and entrepreneurship), General Sciences (humanities), Lifestyle (identity, happiness, health, leisure and vitality) and natural sciences (including technology and a 'maker-space'). Assessment of student learning is based on portfolios, as well as on a self-made monitoring-system that tracks the socio-emotional development of children, as well as their grasp of different (21st century) skills.

The school describes its education as *'dreamt and capricious education for the 21st century'*. With reference to Luc Stevens, mentioned already in Case 2, and a vast number of other educational theorists, both 'personal development' and 'wellbeing' are stressed as the primary aim of education. In full, the school's mission-statement stipulates: *"At De Bras, we are concerned about children and ourselves, too, taking the chance to work at the fulfilment of our own talent and our happiness. Everyone at De Bras has to look for his or her own passion, wellbeing, autonomy and authenticity. He or she gives and takes room to do so in relationship with others, in order to understand or come to grips with the world, filled with hope and courage. Our attention for the uniqueness of every child and his or her personal involvement and social orientation is partly the result of a translation of our Christian values into our daily practices around learning and teaching.'* (Schoolplan De Bras, 2015)

4 The codes in the text of these cases (and the discussion) refer to the categories described in section 3.

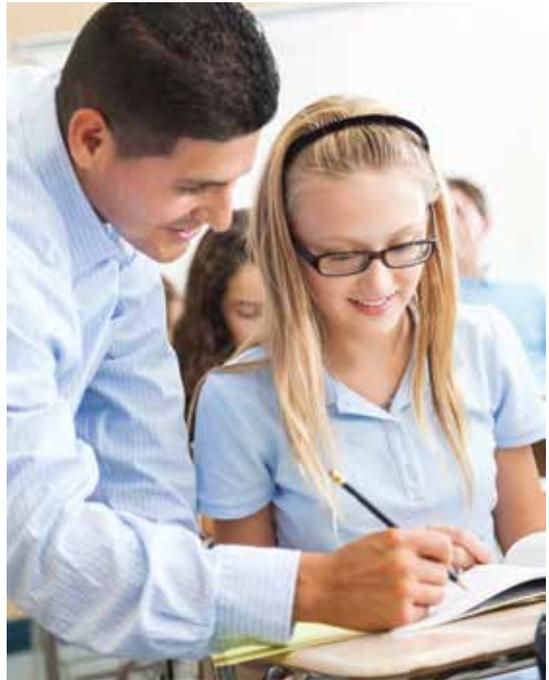
Analysis of the cases

What this short sample of cases shows, first of all, is the range of possibilities within the Dutch system to shape education based on local needs and particular ideas. All three schools mentioned are regularly funded, and all three, including the latter, abide by the (general) rules of the government concerning quality (management) and work within the frame as set by the key goals of the national curriculum.

Each of the three schools uses this freedom to promote the 'personal development' of their students, but each conceives of it in a different way and takes different (curricular) routes to enhance it. In doing so, they defy – quite expectedly – the categories we built in Section 3. At the same time, these categories or concepts can be used to analyse 1) what these school do or aim at in the field of 'personal development', 2) what role(s) the curriculum plays or might play here and, possibly, 3) which directions can be taken further to strengthen 'personal development' in and through the curriculum.

Case 1 might seem to fit neatly in the category of schools assigning 'personal development' to a single subject (S1). In fact, 'personal development' is thought here to replace or rephrase religious education for a multi-religious population. Conceived and planned in strong alignment with the school's (new) general vision and mission, it seems both desirable and rather difficult to make other teachers / subjects adopt aspects (or indeed the 'gist') of the programme (S2).

In terms of content, this particular version of 'personal development' seems to combine aspects of (socio-emotional) wellbeing (C3) with faded, but still discernible remnants of *Bildung* (H2) and, especially, religious education (H1). With regards to the population served – underprivileged urban kids – one suspects, finally, both complex problems in and around the school and the urge to encourage the social advancement of children (H4). From a curricular point of view, disentangling and explicating these different motives and traditions might prove useful to



upscale the programme for personal development and / or to make the school's vision and mission actually more central in its own curriculum. Phrased in the terminology of our grid that means: further develop the school's curriculum from S1 to S2 or even S3.

Both starting from scratch rather recently, the schools in cases 2 and 3 have opted from the outset for an integral – or, most thoroughly in case 2, a community-based approach (S3). In that vocational school (Case 2), leading ideas about both the autonomy / freedom (Stevens) and the interdependence of children and other human beings (Levinas) have been successfully – noticeably – engrained in the *culture* of the school: relationships, pedagogy, the building as such. The school explicitly mentions its efforts in the field of talent-development (C1b), but most of these are in fact extra-curricular. Few efforts have been made to 'translate' the school's strong vision on 'personal development' in terms of a

school-based curriculum. Observing that the school's success seems rather dependent on its founder / school-leader, stronger alignment of the school's curriculum with its vision/mission might be a way to ensure that the school 'survives' when he has left.

The school described in Case 3 is publicly lauded as an example of 'future-proof' (primary) education. Popular and fast growing in its own context – suburban, educated classes – it is an open question, whether its '*organically grown*' model could be transferred to another place e.g. the inner city or on the countryside. With both 'personal development' and children's 'wellbeing' as explicit goals of their education, De Bras seems to tick almost all our boxes: success (C1a and b), freedom (C2) and wellbeing (C3), guided by ideas of both self-fulfilment (H3) and religious tradition (H1). Conceptually, there seems a latent tension between at least some of these objectives; more detailed research into the school's practices and its 'added value' to the lives of children would be needed to see, whether these become manifest in practice.

In some publications, the school claims that it has got rid of textbooks altogether. They do make use, however, of prefab digitalised materials. It would be interesting to find out, how a distinctly school-based curriculum, developed at and for this, or any for other such 'personalised' reform-school, could be conceived, constructed and implemented. Can you actually plan a curriculum that at the same time promotes (individual) success, freedom, wellbeing and – in this case – also Catholic values and virtues? Or can such only be *enacted* or *dreamt*?

The three schools in our sample all have a denominational background – but all relate to their tradition rather differently. Interestingly, the most 'radical' one in terms of educational reform is also the most explicit about its original foundations and has for example knit close ties with a local parish. That may account for the fact that all three at least partly define 'personal development' in terms of moral or religious education (H1). As

mentioned before, the movement towards more 'personal development' (or 'meaning') in education seems to be partly driven by an urge to define new identities in a largely secularised and/ or fragmented cultural context. Non-religious ('public') schools may not have this problem (or chance) in the same way their counterparts have. Our research and that of others seems to suggest, however, that many of them, too, are engaged in processes to redefine themselves and (the final aims of) their education (Overdiep, 2010; Onderwijsraad 2016a). Whether they do so in terms of their legal duty to organise some form of citizenship education, or opt for varieties of 'personal development', described and analysed in this paper, in either case a reassessment of the moral dimension of education seems omnipresent in the secular sphere, too (also: Hooge, 2016).

DISCUSSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

In 2018, nine different working-groups consisting of teachers, school-leaders and curriculum-developers, will embark on an experimental process to develop the foundations for a new curriculum for the whole of foundational (general) education (4 to 18). This basis will be used to develop a concise core curriculum that provides schools with ample space to add on this, based on local needs and the school's vision and mission. 'Personal development' is not an explicit ingredient of any of these working groups, as this is considered a matter that should be taken care of by schools themselves / at the school-level. Many teachers and schools, do want to take this responsibility, given for example the resurgence of (continental) pedagogy in the Netherlands and the growing interest in concepts of wellbeing. In the wake of these and other 'movements' in the educational field, varieties of practices around 'personal development' are being (re)developed at many different schools. Expectedly, these practices tend to show the same 'fuzziness' as the concept itself. Especially in cases 2 and 3, described above, different ideas about and



expectations of ‘personal development’ seem to be working at the same time. Many different factors seem to determine the ways in which schools develop practices to foster ‘personal development’ such as their denominational background, student population, parent’s wishes (and demands) and their educational ambitions. In an attempt to address all of these at the same time, schools tend to opt for a combination of different perspectives (or discourses) rather than choosing for an in-depth-focus on one of the varieties sketched.

The conceptual scheme presented above to analyse the complex concept of ‘personal development’ has helped us a great deal to arrive at a better understanding, not only of the concept itself, but also of all these divergent practices. Especially the three strategies (S1 to S3) to either introduce or further develop curricular practices at a school level, have been lauded by teachers and others in ‘the field’ of education, too, as they point

out more practical ways to strengthen their endeavours – moving, e.g. from S1 to S2

From a curricular point of view, deeper insight into the explicit, often also implicit aims of the school seems desirable. The categories we built to analyse may have that function. For practical purposes, however, engaging into processes of curriculum development with schools, they might as well prove too narrow, or too prescriptive, to be functional. Further reduction of our preliminary grid to its essentials, then, seemed necessary.

Not only because of its intuitive proximity, we have debated whether the concept of ‘wellbeing’ in the way it has been defined and operationalised by the OECD, would offer such a more concise model to work with (OECD, 2015a, 2015b, 2017). Stronger adherence to such a validated international model would have the obvious benefit of being more aligned with international discourse and research. Together, however, those variables of ‘wellbeing’ as identified by the OECD

that can be controlled or influenced by schools, do not fully correspond to what in Dutch discourse counts as ‘personal development’. The model’s strong focus on psycho-physical education is, as said, still rather underdeveloped in the Netherlands, where more (and other) stress is laid on both the cognitive and the moral/spiritual domain as agents of ‘personal development’.

Individual schools and other educationalists in the Netherlands who decide to work with ‘wellbeing’ as a form of ‘personal development’, may, of course, be greatly helped with the OECD-model as a starting point for their curricular work, as much as they have the freedom to opt for alternatives, like e.g. the radically child-centred and more ‘holistic’ programme for wellbeing as developed by the L4WB-consortium (EIESP, 2017).

In our role as partners in school-based curriculum development, we have decided not to make any such choices. For our particular context, a broader model that gives schools something to choose from, and at the same time helps them to get more conceptual clarity, seemed needed. So, on the basis of the analysis presented here, as well as on some further conceptual work (Visser, 2017a),

transformed our initial model, presented and used above, it into a more easily accessible two-dimensional grid (Figure 1). This short-cut version distinguishes three larger, more open categories of child-development, practitioners can more easily connect with (psycho-physical-, cognitive – and moral/religious development).

In combination with the levels or strategies for implementations described above (S1 – S3), these domains or perspectives might help teachers and schools to define their primary aims and the strategies to materialise ‘personal development’ as part and parcel of their curriculum. As an extra tool to help these and other partners ‘think’ beyond mere good intentions and the much obliged practice of ‘reflection’, we’ve added *five* performatives that seem to cover a wide range of interventions / activities, schools can organise to foster ‘personal development’ (experience, practice, express, reflect upon, deliberate). Whether this adjusted – new – model of ‘personal development’ will indeed inspire curricular practices in Dutch schools – or elsewhere – we cannot tell. We hope to be able to report about our further quest with schools and their curriculums in due time.

Figure 1. re-conceptualised grid ‘personal development’ for school-based curricular development.

	SCENARIO	SUBJECT-BASED	GENERAL / MULTIDISCIPLINARY	INTEGRATED – OR COMMUNITY-BASED	[PERFORMATIVES = ACTIVITIES]
ASPECT	psycho-physical (wellbeing)				experiencing practising reflecting upon deliberating expressing
	cognitive (general education; higher-order skills)				
	moral/religious (norms, values, virtues)				

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