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Measures of Success – Exploring the Importance of Context in the Delivery of Wellbeing and Social and Emotional Learning Programs in Australian Primary and Secondary Schools

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Abstract

A significant majority of Australian schools now include school based wellbeing and/or social emotional learning (SEL) programs and initiatives within their school timetable. These programs are delivered, often with significant investment of money and time, in an attempt to successfully nurture social, emotional and academic competency, and promote positive mental health within the staff and student community. This chapter explores the impact of the school context on the effectiveness of these programs. The key aspects of school context considered here are the school social environment, the overall school culture and the school climate. The school social environment includes student-teacher relationships and the social and emotional competency of the teachers, their attitude, values and approach to teaching, along with their attitude and approach to their working relationships. The social environment also subsumes many aspects of the physical environment given that they have to a large degree been configured by social processes. As such the school social environment is also concerned with the built environment and the artefacts on show in the school that represent the school culture, values and overall school climate. The school culture and climate is evidenced in the social and physical environment and also in the policies, practices and social norms established in classrooms and in the wider school community. Taken together, these features of school context encompass important aspects of schooling that have an impact on how SEL and wellbeing programs are implemented. The chapter proposes that Australian schools need to more carefully consider how the messages being delivered by any wellbeing and SEL program can be assimilated into the wider school context. They also need to give greater consideration as to how that wider context can successfully accommodate the aims of

each and every wellbeing and SEL program. Overall, the findings of the chapter strongly suggest that Australian schools need to implement SEL and wellbeing programs with a far wider consideration of context than is currently evident.

Keywords: wellbeing, SEL programs, school context, social context, social environment, physical environment

Introduction

This chapter aims to address the importance of ***school context*** in the delivery of wellbeing and social and emotional learning (SEL) programs in Australian primary and secondary schools. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the increase in popularity of school based wellbeing and SEL programs over the past fifty years. It goes on to observe how this same time period has seen a widely reported increase in mental health issues in young people. The chapter proposes that these two seemingly incongruent increases may in part have occurred due to a lack of consideration of the importance of context in the development and delivery of wellbeing and SEL programs in schools. It is suggested that many school based wellbeing and SEL programs in Australia are aimed at supporting ***individual*** wellbeing, albeit with consideration of individual social skills. It is further suggested that an individualized approach to wellbeing is limited when applied to groups of people (i.e. in classrooms and schools). The chapter suggests that, in any group situation, social identity is arguably a more powerful driver of social and emotional wellbeing than is individual identity. As such the chapter concludes that far greater consideration needs to be given to the role of context in the design, development and delivery of wellbeing, and social and emotional competence (SEC) in Australian schools.

The 'school context' is taken here to refer to all aspects of the school's identity and expression that impact on student life. School context may, or may not impact the uptake, delivery and effectiveness of school wellbeing and SEL programs (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). The key aspects of school context considered here are the social environment of the school, the overall school culture and the school climate. Barnett and

Casper define a 'social environment' in terms of the immediate physical surroundings, social relationships, and cultural milieus within which defined groups of people function and interact (Barnett & Casper, 2001). Consequently, for the purposes of this paper, the 'school social environment' includes student-teacher relationships and the social and emotional competency of the teachers, their attitude, values and approach to teaching, along with their attitude and approach to their working relationships. For example, teachers may be stressed and overloaded or, in contrast, display high levels of SEC. They may be autocratic, democratic or authoritarian. They may believe in the concept of SEL or believe that their role is purely concerned with academic learning.

The social environment also subsumes many aspects of the physical environment given that they have to a large degree been configured by social processes. As such the school social environment is also concerned with the built environment and the artefacts on show in the school that represent the school culture, values and overall school climate. For example, the school reception may acknowledge outstanding achievement with a display of trophies and awards or it may prefer to acknowledge the importance of cohesion and community with shared projects and photos.

The school culture and climate is evidenced in the social and physical environment and also in the policies, practices and social norms established in classrooms and in the wider school community. For example, practices about behaviour management, social norms about student-teacher communication and school policy on free time and homework could all potentially contribute to the wellbeing of the school students and to the effectiveness of any program within the school that is designed to nurture wellbeing. Taken together, it is believed that these elements of the school context encompass

important aspects of schooling that have an impact on how wellbeing and SEL programs are implemented.

The Explicit Teaching of Wellbeing and SEC in Australian Schools

Over the past fifty years, a burgeoning world-wide interest in youth wellbeing has been accompanied by increased interest in how the explicit teaching of wellbeing and SEC can effectively occur in schools (e.g. Eccelstone, 2015; Street & Porter, 2014). In 2016, we are acutely aware that we cannot make assumptions about the implicit wellbeing and SEC of young people. Schools in Australia, as in many other countries, arguably provide an ideal opportunity, and a moral and ethical duty, to actively nurture wellbeing in all children and adolescents within their care. It is no longer seen as viable or even sensible to focus mental health interventions purely on vulnerable members of the community, or high risk groups (Layard, 2003). Paradoxically, the largest numbers of vulnerable young people come from the mentally healthy majority, rather than from minority high risk groups, simply because the healthy majority are by far, the greatest in number (Huppert, Baylis, & Keverne, 2004). In line with Huppert, Bayliss, and Keverne's (2009) definition of wellbeing and Keyes' (2009) definition of positive mental health, positive mental health and/or wellbeing are defined here as a combination of a healthy level of hedonic wellbeing (including happiness and life satisfaction) and eudaemonic wellbeing (including engaging and progressing in life). The terms 'positive mental health' and 'wellbeing' are deemed as equivalent and therefore used interchangeably in this chapter.

A myriad of school based wellbeing and SEL programs have been developed in response to this call to better support mental health in young people (e.g. Askell-Williams

& Cefai, 2014; International Academy of Education, 2005; Weare, 2010). Elias , Frey, and Davies (1997) defined SEL as the process of acquiring core competencies to recognize and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, appreciate other's perspectives, develop positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations constructively. SEL school based programs aim to foster the development of five interrelated aspects of SEC in an individual or group of individuals: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2003). Although an SEL program may not explicitly aim to develop individual wellbeing, it is taken that SEC is required for positive youth development. As such, SEL programs aim to indirectly support wellbeing through the direct development of SEC.

The term *positive psychology* was first coined by Maslow (1954) and represents the psychological study of wellbeing with consideration of SEC. Positive education is defined here as the interplay between positive psychology and education such that a school developing positive education is a school aiming to incorporate the principles and practice of positive psychology in all aspects of teaching and learning.

Current Australian programs differ in their specific aims and objectives, but are commonly built on the theoretical underpinnings of social and emotional competency (SEC) and/or positive psychology (Huppert et al., 2004, Norrish, 2015). They are frequently skills based and individually focused. As such they aim to nurture wellbeing within group settings with a mix of SEL and positive education practice. Programs aiming to develop SEC focus on teaching skills which nurture individual and social awareness, self-management, prosocial behaviours and responsible decision making

(CASEL 2003). In addition, programs which aim to help young people to flourish in some capacity (to feel well and behave in a positive and community focused way) focus on one or more areas of positive education (e.g. resiliency, mindfulness, intrinsic motivation and character; Norrish, 2015).

It is contentiously suggested here that the precise focus of specific Australian programs varies according to the current popularity of underlying psychological constructs in the broader zeitgeist. Currently, many Australian schools are choosing programs that aim to develop mindfulness (e.g. Etty-Leal, 2010), resiliency (e.g. Noble, 2014) and growth mindsets (Dweck, 2006). In addition, other popular programs aim to prevent bullying (Rigby, 2007), develop character strengths (e.g. Linley & Harrington, 2006) and build community (e.g. Roffey, 2014). Since the popularity of positive education and whole school wellbeing came to the fore over the last ten years, whole school wellbeing programs tapping into a range of wellbeing ingredients have also become increasingly popular (Weare & Nind, 2011).

Recent reviews of the impact of school based wellbeing programs have supported the importance of considering context in the planning, development and delivery of such programs (e.g. Wells, Barlow, & Stewart-Brown,2003; Weare & Nind, 2011). Weare and Nind's (2011) comprehensive investigation of 52 reviews and meta-analyses of school based wellbeing programs found that although there was little negative impact of programs, positive impact was highly variable. Weare and Nind (2011) found that the most effective school programs were universal, aimed at the entire school population and operated to support the whole child across all areas of education. Thus, the most effective programs appear to be those that have the biggest impact on overall school culture and

climate. There is clearly more to successful wellbeing promotion than carrying out a well-designed intervention

The Ineffectiveness of Popular School Based Wellbeing Initiatives

In their bestselling book 'Nurture Shock', Bronson and Merryman (2009) describe one of the United State's most popular programs to prevent substance abuse 'DARE'. DARE stands for Drug Abuse Resistance Education and was originally developed by the Los Angeles Police Department in 1983 to teach students about the negative impacts of crime and drug addiction. The program was embraced across America to such a wide extent that by the mid-1990s it was reaching 25 million American Students and also being delivered internationally in several nations including Australia (Wysong & Wright, 1995).

Yet, despite its popularity, DARE was repeatedly found to be completely ineffective at reducing harmful substance use and abuse. The majority of long term research studies on the program found little or no long term reduction in adolescent smoking, drug abuse or alcohol abuse as a result of program participation (e.g. Bronson and Merryman, 2009). A meta-analysis by West and O'Neal examined the findings of 11 robust studies investigating the program's impact and concluded that DARE was, at best, an ineffective program (West and O'Neal, 2004). What is perhaps even more surprising is the fact that these results came to the fore in the face of many US teachers, parents and community members enthusiastically supporting the program for more than two decades. In fact, during the late 1990s, even in the face of disappointing early research findings, teachers and parents held onto DARE as 'the answer' to America's teenage drug problems (Wysong & Wright, 1995).

The DARE evaluation findings stress the danger of mistaking good intentions for good ideas. The incredible popularity of DARE could be attributed to the fact that it made intuitive sense to teachers and parents; and 'appeared' to be a great idea from the outset. These proposed factors, combined with a growing concern over youth substance abuse, resulted in a great deal of time and money being invested in something ineffective. It is suggested that misplaced faith in popularity ratings, as if they are a source of reliable data, has cost schools dearly. In fact, DARE executives often pointed to the program's wide uptake as evidence of its credibility. As Glenn Levant, the former LAPD officer who directed DARE in the early 1990s, told the LA Times in 1993, "Knocking DARE is like kicking your mother or saying that apple pie doesn't taste good" (Newton, 1993). Beliefs about DARE became so embedded in the American education identity; they were not challenged or questioned in any objective way within the community.

A similar tale from the UK in 2007 relates to a social and emotional school wellbeing program called SEAL. SEAL, the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning program, evolved in response to the increased interest in SEL in young people during that time (Wigelsworth, Humphrey & Lendrum, 2011). The program quickly became popular, and was ultimately implemented in 70% of UK state primary schools. The result of SEAL's popularity in UK primary schools led to a decision to roll out the program into secondary schools on a nationwide scale. However, as with the DARE program, the popularity of SEAL did not reflect its true impact. Wigelsworth, Humphrey and Lendrum (2011) conducted a comprehensive study into the effectiveness of SEAL in 22 UK secondary schools in response to a direct request from the UK Department of Education.

They found little effect of the program on young people's SEC. Popularity and face validity had once again been mistaken for credibility and impact.

The SEAL program incorporated teaching across a range of wellbeing factors that mirror those embraced in SEL and positive education settings today; namely self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. It is arguably understandable that inclusion of these key facets of wellbeing led many to believe that SEAL is a worthwhile program for adolescents. In fact, so compelling was both the face value and early trials of SEAL that is was brought to scale in UK secondary schools without any considered research of the program in real world settings.

The lack of impact of DARE and SEAL in secondary schools should not be taken as an indication that the promotion of social and emotional skills or health promotion are not important or worthwhile endeavours for schools. In fact other meta-analyses have found a significant positive increase in wellbeing in students undertaking school based SEL programs (e.g. Durlak et al, 2011). Rather, it is suggested that lower than anticipated impact of many of these programs provides support of the dangers of not paying enough attention to the context of program delivery. There are many popular and intuitively credible school based wellbeing programs that have also later been proven to be ineffective, or worse, potentially damaging to wellbeing if delivered without attention to school context (Weare & Nind, 2011).

In 2015, educational psychologist Professor Kathryn Ecclestone wrote an article for the UK Conversation in which she suggested that school wellbeing programs are largely a waste of time and resources (Ecclestone, 2015). In the article she stated that that her "forthcoming research has found that some of these interventions actually have

negative effects. In general, the research field is fragmented, one-sided, inconclusive and methodologically flawed".

Resistance to Change

The lack of strong support for many popular wellbeing and SEL programs raises several issues pertinent to a whole class or whole school approach to nurturing positive mental health in young people. First, it highlights the difficulty in creating positive behaviour change in individuals that is extrinsically directed. In general, individuals change their social and psychological behaviour far more readily when they are self-motivated to do so, not because of extrinsic motivational pressure (Ryan & Deci, 2008). As stated by author and clinical psychologist Professor George Burns (2016), who has helped over 2000 individuals to successfully change their health related behaviours in a therapeutic setting, there is little point attempting to help someone to successfully change if their only motivation to do so, is based on social obligation or to satisfy someone else's desires.

It is reasonable to assume that, in Australia, the majority of people who enter into a therapeutic relationship to positively change their feelings or behaviour do so because they have made a personal decision to seek help and have consequently sought out psychotherapy independently or after first seeing a general practitioner. In fact the recognition of distress is a precursor to seeking help and gaining a referral to an appropriate counsellor (Lancet, 1981). Thus, the majority of people seeking counseling are self-directed to some degree. Moreover, premature dropout from psychotherapy (i.e. before a mutual agreement to terminate psychotherapy has been made between client and

therapist) occurs more readily when clients are lacking in self-motivation and also when they are younger (Jung, Serralta, Nunes & Eizirik, 2013).

Behaviour change is also far more likely to stem from self-motivation (intrinsic motivation or self-regulation) if it involves change that is considered to be in line with social and cultural norms (Street, 2010). For example, a study of 947 primary school students over the course of one year, found that classroom social norms about aggressive behaviour significantly predicted actual reports of aggressive behaviour over time (Mercer, McMillen & DeRosier, 2009). Thus a significant lack of individual self-motivation to participate in school based programs is potentially evidence of disparate social norms within the wider school community.

Ecclestone (2015) believes that the tendency of many current programs to encourage a focus on identifying and managing feelings is leading to an overly sensitive generation who have been encouraged to believe that everyday discomfort signals a need for a treatment strategy. In particular, she has said that students who are unwilling to enter into group discussion about their feelings have been encouraged to believe that they may have an emotional issue that needs addressing. In reality they may simply be quiet children or uninterested in introspection. Schools advocating a whole school approach to wellbeing need to be careful not to single out children who do not respond well to program strategies, as children with emotional issues that need addressing. As such, it is vital that supporters of popular programs do not automatically equate program ineffectiveness with individual difficulties rather than with issues arising from the context of program delivery.

It may be argued that the majority of young people participating in whole class or whole school wellbeing programs today, are primarily doing so because they have been told to. Whole class or whole school programs are generally incorporated into the curriculum with an expectation that all students will participate. The students have not necessarily chosen to self-seek behavioural or emotional change. These factors highlight a potential problem of imposed whole group wellbeing programs, and the need to deliver programs within a context that encourages self-motivated learning.

The Importance of Social Context and Social Norms

Lack of program effectiveness across a broad spectrum of topics and methods of delivery has increasingly been attributed to failure to consider the complexities of human relationships in program delivery (Weare & Nind, 2011). Findings from research in UK and Australian schools have repeatedly shown that academic, social and emotional learning are all positively linked to teacher SEC (Roffey, 2012). If teachers display poor SEC, possibly due to severe stress and work overload, then it will be far harder for them to establish healthy relationships and to successfully teach any academic, social or emotional program. Supporting teacher SEC as a means to supporting healthy student-teacher relationships needs to be a fundamental role of all schools Australia-wide.

More recently, a study of 1741 Lithuanian students identified significant links between three aspects of school context and wellbeing, namely perceived teacher support, attachment to school and open classroom climate for discussion (Pilkauskaite-Valickienea, & Gabrialaviciutea, 2015). These three factors all allude to the importance of socially and emotionally competent teachers who use democratic approaches to teaching and build positive relationships with students. The impact of the teacher on

program effectiveness was also established in a model exploring teacher SEL and classroom outcomes (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009) and in a review of 30 studies of school based programs by Cuijpers (2002) among many others. Cuijpers' (2002) findings strongly supported the need to pay more attention to teacher competency. She reported that the most effective programs involve substantial amounts of interaction between instructors and students—and between students. They teach students important social skills and give them opportunities to practice these skills with other students. Cuijpers' findings also highlight the importance of peers as positive role models in classrooms for those with challenging behaviours and social and emotional behavioural difficulties.

Cuijpers' (2002) findings offer further valuable suggestions for why so many 'good looking' programs are less effective than anticipated, and how future wellbeing programs could become more effective in schools. Again the importance of considering social context in wellbeing program delivery is highlighted. It is not enough to pass on factual information; students need an opportunity to discuss how well new ideas and strategies fit into their wider social world. Cuijpers also identified effective programs as those which take into account the importance of social norms and the dominant school culture. For example, in drug abuse prevention programs, success needs to include an emphasis on the idea that abstaining from drugs is 'normal' and therefore saying no does not equate to becoming a social outlier. This emphasis on establishing healthy social norms was noticeably absent from both the DARE program and the early roll out of the SEAL program.

Certainly, in addition to the lack of consideration of relational aspects of social context, the lack of significant impact of many programs may well be a reflection of a

lack of consideration of social norms within the wider school culture. This includes consideration of the school's policies, school wide practices and the physical artefacts on show in the classroom and school environment. For example, Kohn (1999) has frequently argued that any program supporting intrinsic motivation will be thwarted by a school culture favouring extrinsic reward systems as a normative school wide practice. Similarly, it is hard to believe that a play-based program designed to encourage creativity would not be overshadowed within a school culture that ultimately expects students to spend the vast majority of their 'free time' on homework or participating in organized adult-led activities. Simply put, school staff and students need to believe that the messages being delivered within a program are representative of established social norms within the classroom and within the wider school community. Otherwise, the program will not be seen as relevant, or reflective of real school life.

Taking a Whole School Approach to Wellbeing

A strong body of research stemming from the 1990s to the present day supports the use of SEL programs in schools to help prevent problem behaviours and promote positive youth development (e.g. Weissberg & O'Brien, 2004). As previously stated, the most effective programs appear to be those delivered across the whole school community with a focus on both individual skill development and supporting a positive social and emotional experience for all community members (e.g. Weare & Nind, 2011). It is proposed that the superior impact of school wide interventions is due to their greater impact on building desired social norms across the entire community. They move beyond an individual and curriculum focus and work with a multilayered approach within the school (e.g. Catalano et al., 2002; Greenberg et al, 2001).

In contrast, the lack of consideration of social norms and social context by less effective programs indicates that the desire to nurture wellbeing in schools has been equated to a focus on individual skill acquisition in a group setting, as offered in the majority of SEL programs (Hoffman, 2009). Hoffman (2009) proposes that the importance of social context in supporting wellbeing has, at best, been minimalized, and more frequently completely neglected. It could be argued that it is far easier to 'teach' individuals to manage their emotions than it is to change the wider environment that accommodates them. Without a balance of attention on teacher SEC, continually challenging social norms and building a mentally healthy culture, as well as on teaching the skills for healthy participation in that culture; it is suggested that the success of any SEL program will at best, demonstrate inconsistent benefit.

Despite its apparent lack of consideration in the delivery of many programs, the importance of the generalization of social skills across real world settings is not new. For example, Stokes and Bayer (1977) suggested that unless social skills can be reinforced in a natural setting, they will not be utilized and taken on board by students. Similarly, Mathur and Rutherford (1996) have suggested that although the social skills training approach has been validated by research and shows it is indeed possible to teach appropriate social skills to students, the challenge lies in making sure the students can generalize these skills to other settings and situations. Thus, there remains a significant need to conduct interventions that can successfully promote the generalization of social skills taught in one setting to other 'real world' settings and contexts.

Understanding Wellbeing Needs

Leading proponents of self-determination theory (SDT) believe that children need competence, autonomy and relatedness in order to be pro-active and engaged in life (Deci & Ryan 1985, 1987, 2000). As such, SDT conceptualizes positive mental health in terms of self-motivation (a mix of intrinsic motivation and self-regulation) and wellbeing. The theory is particularly interested in the impact of context in meeting these three stated needs. Similarly, proponents of play based learning and creativity suggest that optimum child wellbeing stems from a mix of play and the presence of a nurturing environment (e.g. McInnis et al, 2011, Whitebread, 2012). McInnis et al.'s (2011) research suggests that for any activity to be viewed as positively playful, it needs to involve choice and control for the children. It is suggested that the need for choice and control significantly overlaps with SDT's focus on autonomy (Deci & Ryan 1985, 1987, 2000). These leading approaches to youth wellbeing are in agreement in their consideration of the need for children to have opportunity to be autonomous and self-directed within a healthy social environment in order to flourish. The desire to 'teach wellbeing' all too easily overshadows the need for children to have choice and control over the 'learning of wellbeing', both in and out of the classroom.

Current understandings of positive education also include reference to the importance of the school social environment. The constructs of positive education include an emphasis on the importance of positive relationships and the importance of having a 'sense of purpose' within the six listed components of wellbeing (relationships, a sense of purpose, accomplishment, engagement, positive emotions and health) (Norrish, 2015). In addition to the emphasis on the student's social world, positive education emphasizes the need for a sense of 'accomplishment' as one of its six listed components (Norrish,

2015). It is suggested that the need for accomplishment overlaps significantly with the need for 'competency' stated as one of the three key needs for wellbeing in SDT (Deci & Ryan 1985, 1987, 2000). Competencies can be defined as strengths and skills in a particular area of functioning whereas accomplishments are measurable outcomes generally believed to represent these strengths and skills

Development theories embracing play and creativity along with both SDT and positive education theory, all amplify the benefit of schools supporting young people's wellbeing with a focus on meeting students' needs for autonomy (along with choice and control), competence (and accomplishment), and a nurturing environment (which includes relatedness and social belonging). Theoretical and research understandings about how best to meet the need for autonomy and the need to create a nurturing environment highlight the importance of both social and emotional skills and context. As such the aims of any program supporting autonomy and/or the creation of a nurturing environment need to be reflected in all aspects of the school culture. Moreover, the discussion presented here, emphasizes the need for both SEL and wellbeing programs to support both autonomy and a nurturing environment either implicitly or explicitly.

Autonomy and the Creation of a Nurturing Environment

Positive education does not explicitly focus on autonomy as a specified key domain, however, positive education practice does make reference to engagement which has long been explained in terms of underlying intrinsic motivation, choice and control, all key elements of autonomy (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). In contrast, SDT along with theories emphasizing the importance of creativity and play in healthy child development (e.g. Gupta, 2009), emphasize autonomy as a central theme. It is suggested that both SEL

and positive education programs need to put greater emphasis on autonomy in all aspects of program design and delivery, if they are to have maximum positive impact. This entails time and attention being given to both the foundations on which a program is being built, and to the precise nature of program delivery. For example, children would arguably respond optimally to guidance in prosocial behaviour that encourages personal control and choice, and does not include the use of controlling extrinsic reward systems.

In contrast, as discussed in this chapter, positive education makes overt reference to the importance of a nurturing environment (Norrish, 2015). A nurturing environment is one in which children feel emotionally safe, develop intimacy with significant others and feel part of a close social community (Meyers & Meyers, 2003). As such the concept of a nurturing environment encompasses the quality of both individual's relationships and the wider social milieu. The importance of a nurturing environment to child wellbeing has been established in research over many years (Cole, 1987). Researchers have repeatedly found that children in healthy social relationships generally perform better academically, sportingly and have greater self-esteem and self-worth than those with relationship problems (Battistich and Hom, 1997; Solomon et al., 1996). In contrast, Battistich and Hom (1997) found that children unable to form good relationships are more likely to have increased rates of depression, anxiety, drug abuse, eating disorders and many other psychiatric and social problems than are socially competent children.

In addition to a deficit of social support being linked to poor mental health, the presence of a nurturing environment has been significantly linked to the development of skills that promote wellbeing. For example, it is suggested that individual resilience can be taught as a skill to some degree but also stems naturally from the development of

meaningful social connections (Baker et al., 2003). Individual skill acquisition, such as self-awareness and self-regulation, is important for supporting wellbeing but so too is context, in terms of its contribution to feelings of emotional intimacy, social cohesion and the creation of healthy social norms. Similarly, other research has found that supportive school environments, characterized by a positive climate, feelings of belonging and security, and high levels of support and participation, can act as positive health-promoting settings (Eccles & Roeser, 2011).

The importance of a nurturing environment also further supports the need to support teacher SEC. Teacher SEC is arguably pivotal in the development of a cohesive community as well as the delivery of SEL programs focusing on individual skills (e.g., see Collie, 2016 this volume). According to SDT, the positive impact of teacher support on school life has been attributed to its potential to promote competence and autonomy among the students and to meet the students' need for relatedness (Danielsen, Samdal, Hetland & Wold, 2009)

The 1970's Self-Esteem Legacy

In addition to current alarming rates of teacher stress, it is proposed that the legacy of the 1970s self-esteem movement plays a pivotal role in creating school contexts that have countered the aims and objectives of many wellbeing programs. The self-esteem movement stemmed from the publication of 'The Psychology of Self-Esteem" by Branden (1969). In this and subsequent publications, Branden proposed that self-esteem was the most important facet of any person in that it significantly contributed to positive social, emotional and academic outcomes. These mistaken claims led to world-wide interest in the promotion of self-esteem in students. Not only was the impact of self-

esteem misunderstood, the strategies for supporting self-esteem in young people were also substantially misguided. Teachers and parents across the western world aimed to increase young people's self-esteem by repeatedly telling them that they were wonderful. During this time many American school bought programs that embraced 'you can do anything posters' and helped teachers to ensure that no one had to deal with a sense of failure at school (Weissbourd, 1996).

This chapter suggests that the self-esteem movement's adherence to the idea of blanket praise (Seligman, 1995) was responsible for Australian schools embracing 'well-done' as a defined place to come in a race on school sports day, and the handing out of stickers to pre-pubescent children at every opportunity. Sadly, the lack of distinction between winners and losers in any domain of school functioning resulted in students becoming skeptical of all 'supportive feedback' and losing the ability to self-reflect and be self-critical of their learning performance (Kohn, 1999; Street, 2014). It is suggested that the self-esteem movement has been pivotal in the creation of a school environment that undermines the very needs of autonomy, competency and nurturing that it wanted to support. Although current wellbeing programs are generally delivered on far more robust theoretical grounding than the self-esteem programs of the 1970s and 1980s, they are often still embedded in the reward based systems established during this era. As evidenced in this chapter, programs that are delivered without consideration of the contradictions of the wider school culture, are being delivered within a system that undermines their potential impact.

Conclusions and Future Directions

Successful wellbeing interventions result in a significant shift in the mean level of wellbeing of the entire population as opposed to an increase in wellbeing in a targeted minority subgroup (Park and Peterson, 2003; Huppert al., 2004). But what makes them effective whole school interventions rather than individualized interventions delivered to large numbers of people? The answer may in part, lie in the consideration of the social context of program delivery and the influence of social norms on behaviour change and overall wellbeing. This chapter proposes that Australian schools and colleges need to carefully consider how the messages being delivered by any wellbeing and SEL program can be assimilated into the wider school context. They also need to consider how that wider context can successfully accommodate the aims of each and every wellbeing and SEL program. It is suggested that schools need to implement school based wellbeing programs and initiatives with a far wider consideration of context than is currently evident.

In consideration of the reasons why well designed programs are not more effective, this chapter raises issues of context and consequently of the availability of school and government resources. Schools have limitations in terms of the time, financial cost and numbers of competent people required to deliver programs effectively. As such, we need to ask if it is possible to deliver effective wellbeing programs that are economically, socially and culturally viable in Australian schools. Moreover, we need to explore the popular notion that doing something (i.e. enlisting one or two small programs or initiatives) is really better than doing nothing at all to explicitly develop wellbeing in the school environment.

This is not to say that we need to dismiss programs that focus on a particular building block of wellbeing, or a particular wellbeing skill as a poor use of valuable resources. Rather, it is suggested that focused programs (such as those building mindfulness, resiliency or positive relationships) need to be delivered with consideration of the wider school context at all levels, at all times. It is hoped that a wider consideration of context will encourage academics, clinicians and educators to move away from ideas about the effectiveness of the latest wellbeing program. Instead it is hoped that the future will bring an increased desire to ensure that schools nurture ***positive learning environments*** that support autonomy, competence and positive relationships for every student as a means to support improved wellbeing and intrinsic motivation in Australia's youth.

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