3

Positive Education in Practice

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This chapter is addressed especially to readers who want to implement positive education in practice: teachers at all educational levels, from early education, to primary, secondary, tertiary, and alternative sectors; school counsellors, psychologists, and social workers; as well as parents, carers, and other stakeholders. The last chapter provided an overview and some approaches to positive education. This chapter focuses on how to translate into practice the elements of positive psychology in educational settings, and how to address barriers and obstacles that may arise along the way. Certainly, both theory and practice are essential for educators, who need to have knowledge of human wellbeing and the resources to promote it with children and young people, as well as understanding which experiences can work well. Thus, the objectives of this chapter are to bridge the gap between theory and practice; to provide ideas about possible content areas to implement in classrooms; and to explicate current trends in the implementation of positive education, outstanding evidence-based programs, and factors that enable or hinder the practice in this field.

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The Practice of Positive Education: Related Topics and Typical Content

Positive education is not an isolated movement, but has strong connections with other related educational topics, such as social emotional learning (SEL), positive youth development, character education, civic education, and moral education, among many others. It is likely that many practitioners are familiar with some of those topics and have access to resources to implement practices pertaining to them in their classrooms. Particularly, SEL constitutes an essential point-of-reference for the field of positive education. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that positive education has a broader focus, integrating psychosocial skills together with many other aspects, including happiness, engagement, character, morality, meaning, and physical health (Slemp et al., 2017).

As noted, positive education includes a variety of topics that include happiness or wellbeing, character strengths, mindfulness, social and emotional skills, resilience, mindset (Dweck, 2006), grit (Duckworth, 2016), intrinsic motivation (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2017), active-constructive responding (Gable, Reis, Impett, & Asher, 2004), and many others. Sometimes educators run the risk of being too focused on a specific topic—for example, focusing solely on optimism, resilience, or perseverance. This can lead them to delve into one or a few topics and work them very thoroughly, but at the cost of neglecting other content areas that could also be implemented with their students. The best recommendation is to adopt an approach that is as multidimensional as possible, so as to implement as wide a range of interventions to promote knowledge, skills, and attitudes pertaining to positive education as possible.

Present Outlooks and Trends in Positive Education

As previously noted, the practice of positive education in educational settings is diverse and varies according to many circumstances and situations. For example, with regard to **program design**, Grenville-Cleave (2013) distinguished between what she calls (1) off-the-peg programs (the implementation of a ready-made curriculum), (2) tailor-made programs (creating one's own program, adapted to a specific school or set of objectives), and 3) mixed strategies. If we look at **integration of contents into the school curriculum**, Green (2014) identified two different approaches: (1) explicit or *taught* curriculum (for example, wellbeing classes, based on stand-alone courses on

positive psychology), and (2) implicit or *caught* curriculum (experiencing and living positive psychology, embedded within the whole-school curriculum). Both approaches have benefits and disadvantages, and successful positive education programs would probably require a combination of both (White & Kern, 2018).

There are other differences in the practice of positive education. So, in looking at the **target population**, implementation could focus only on the wellbeing of students, while other efforts could include the wellbeing of teachers or the entire school community or involve families, communities, and other stakeholders. As for **people promoting those practices**, there are a myriad of possibilities, from the isolated action of one or a few teachers in a school to the collaborative action of groups of teachers, the entire teaching staff, or the school community.

Special consideration should be taken with regard to **the practice of mindfulness**, which has become a popular component of many positive education programs. Over the last few years, there has been an increase in research on this field, supporting the benefits of mindfulness practices for children and young people (Arguís-Rey, 2014; García-Campayo, Modrego, & Demarzo, 2017; Meiklejohn et al., 2012). But mindfulness practices alone are not sufficient to promote positive education. Instead, such practices can be a first step to implementing a comprehensive model of positive education, for example, combining mindfulness with the education of character strengths (Arguís-Rey, Bolsas-Valero, Hernández-Paniello, & Salvador-Monge, 2012; Niemiec, 2014). Thus, the cultivation of a conscious lifestyle—the ultimate aim of mindfulness—can pave the way to building a well-balanced and harmonious personality in students, which includes education on character strengths.

Examining the recent evolution of positive education, one can detect the significant growth of such programs and experiences around the world. However, it should be noted that not everything published or presented under the name of 'positive education' is actually based on this field or has to do with the principles of positive psychology. Thus, the quality of differing approaches varies markedly: some are based on rigorous standards, while others are driven by a fad or profit motives that induce some authors to use the label 'positive education' to increase their own commercial benefits, ignoring necessary scientific rigour. The take-home message is that not all that glitters is gold, and practitioners should be cautious when deciding upon curricula, buying books on this topic, or enrolling in teacher training activities.

Practical Resources for Positive Education

As has been noted, there are an increasing number of programs addressed to implement positive education in educational settings. Though not exhaustive, the general overview of resources available for practitioners in this section provides a good starting point for practitioners. In some cases (see Table 3.1), these are complete programs integrating diverse contents from a multidimensional approach. In other cases (see Table 3.2), they are more focused resources referring to very specific aspects that can be included in the practice of positive education.

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive evaluation of each of these resources in the context of this chapter, but in general, they are well-known tools, utilized widely across many educational contexts. Most of these programs have research supporting their effectiveness or such research is in process. In addition, there is a notable lack of tools and resources available for no cost, with the exception of two programs included in Table 3.1 (Happy Classrooms/*Aulas Felices*, and the character education programs of The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues), as well as many of the complementary resources cited in Table 3.2. This is an important issue to consider because, from a social justice perspective, positive education should be available for all children and not only for children in schools that can afford to pay for resources, including programs and teacher training. A subsequent section of this chapter discusses these issues more fully.

Key Factors to Successful Positive Education Practices

As noted previously, in looking at the present outlook and trends in positive education, there is considerable variability in the quality of existing experiences and programs. This is understandable, as positive education is a relatively young field and still in its early stages of development. As such, it is important to establish clear guidelines that ensure high quality in the design of programs, practice, evaluation, and research.[1] In the absence, currently, of such standards, this chapter puts forward some suggestions to improve the practice of positive education now and in the future.

[1]Note that at the point in time this book was in production, the Education division of the International Positive Psychology Association was designing quality standards to establish guidelines to orient program design, practice, assessment, and research within positive education that will, eventually, be available online at https://www.ippanetwork.org/divisions/education/.

Table 3.1 Exemplary positive education programs

Programs	Main components	Educational levels	References
Bounce Back!	Wellbeing, resilience, and social emotional learning	Preschool, primary, and secondary education	www.bounceback.com.au
Celebrating strengths	Character strengths	Preschool, primary, and secondary education	www.viacharacter.org/blog/celebrating-strengths-a-school-project-using-via-strengths/
CorStone programs	Various resilience programs to improve wellbeing for youth, focusing on adolescent girls as critical change-agents in their communities	Secondary education	https://corstone.org/
GoZen	Online programs to manage stress and build resilience for kids	Preschool and primary education	www.gozen.com/allprograms/
Happy Classrooms/Aulas Felices	Mindfulness and character strengths (*Gratuitous and for free distribution, in Spanish and English*)	Preschool, primary, and secondary education	http://educaposit.blogspot.com Lombas et al. (2019)

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Programs	Main components	Educational levels	References
KIDsmART	Academic achievement, in-depth learning, and problem-solving skills. Using the arts to create connections between content and different ways of learning	Primary and secondary education	www.kidsmart.org
KidsMatter Primary & MindMatters	Social and emotional learning; working with parents, carers, and families; support for students who may be experiencing mental health difficulties	Primary and secondary education	www.kidsmatter.edu.au www.mindmatters.edu.au
Learning Curve	Positive engagement, relationships and optimism, meaning and purpose strengths and emotions, skills and achievement, and exercise and vitality	Primary and secondary education	www.learningcurve.com.au

Programs	Main components	Educational levels	References
Maytiv	Happiness, morality, and success	Preschool, primary, and secondary education	http://portal.idc.ac.il/en/main/research/maytiv/pages/default.aspx
Making Hope Happen (MHH)	Four components of hope in students: goals, pathways thinking, and agency	Secondary education	Lopez, Rose, Robinson, Marques, and Rais-Ribeiro (2009)
Penn Resiliency Program (PRP)	Optimism, assertiveness, relaxation strategies, coping skills, and decision-making skills	Secondary education	https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/research/resilience-children
Personal Wellbeing Lessons for Secondary Schools	Positive self, positive body, positive emotions, positive mindset, positive direction, and positive relationships	Secondary education	Boniwell and Ryan (2012) Boniwell, Osin, and Martinez (2016)
Self Science	Social emotional learning skills	Primary education	www.6s.org
SMART Strengths	Character strengths	Primary and secondary education	Yeager, Fisher, and Shearon (2011)

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Programs	Main components	Educational levels	References
Strath Haven Positive Psychology curriculum (SHPPC)	Character strengths, relationships, meaning, and positive emotional experience	Secondary education	Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, and Linkins (2009)
Strengths Gym	Character strengths	Secondary education	Proctor and Fox Eades (2009) Proctor et al. (2011)
The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues	Character strengths (*gratuitous and for free distribution*)	Primary and secondary education	www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1610/character-education/resources
YouCanDoIt!	On-line social emotional learning programs addressed to promote success, improve relationships, reduce stress, and increase wellbeing	Preschool, primary, and secondary education	https://youcandoiteducation.com.au/
Youth Connect	Skills and knowledge to be successful in secondary education. Promotion of further learning and employment opportunities	Secondary education	www.youthconnect.com.au

Table 3.2 Sources for educational resources useful for the practice of positive education

Sources	References
Berkeley Greater Good Science Center	https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/who_we_serve/educators/educator_resources
Character Lab	https://www.characterlab.org
IPEN (International Positive Education Network)	http://ipen-network.com
Mayerson Academy	https://www.mayersonacademy.org
The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues	http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk

Arguís-Rey et al. (2012) proposed four basic conditions that should be considered by those who wish to design and implement positive education programs:

1. A **solid scientific foundation** based on the tenets and results derived from positive psychology and related scientific fields. Programs and practices should have a strong theoretical basis, including evidence-based and empirically supported activities.
2. A **multidimensional perspective** combining diverse areas of intervention and going beyond occasional interventions focused on very specific topics.
3. Positive education activities and programs should be **integrated into the school curriculum** of current education systems, within different subjects in the school curriculum and beyond, as well as embedded into the school culture.
4. Positive education practices must be **built on a system of ethical values and make these values explicit**. These practices need to be backed by a values system based on respect for human dignity and that encourages healthy development and solidarity with others. This includes not only students' personal development, but also the need to foster a social perspective to balance personal growth with the rights of others, reinforcing solidarity and respect for human dignity.

These conditions could be a starting point, providing four factors that can lead to successful positive education practices. However, there are other aspects to be taken into account, and the following section will provide information on these.

One of the additional factors mentioned in the literature on positive education is the need for **whole-school approaches** (Norrish, Williams,

O'Connor, & Robinson, 2013; Slemp et al., 2017). Educational communities are systemic in nature, so positive education programs should be addressed not only to individual students, but also to teachers, staff, families, and the broader community. As noted by Slemp et al. (2017), schools might focus first on staff, gain support from leadership, and eventually address students. An excellent model that illustrates this process well is that implemented at Geelong Grammar School in Australia, a school that has become an international reference for best practices in positive education. This model, originally proposed by Seligman et al. (2009), was later refined by Norrish et al. (2013), and its most recent version has been reworked by Hoare, Bott, and Robinson (2017). The Geelong model consists of four successive stages that intend to build an itinerary to gradually integrate positive education as a whole-school approach:

1. **Learn it.** This first step is focused on teacher training, which should also be extended to non-teaching staff and students' families. Initial training, together with ongoing training activities, based on the tenets of positive psychology and the different positive education domains, can ensure that all community members have a common language and a shared perspective on how to educate to promote both wellbeing and academic growth.
2. **Live it.** The training received by all the school faculty and staff paves the way for this second stage, which consists of experiencing what has been learned, bringing it into play in one's own life, as well as when working with students. Thus, faculty and staff members are encouraged to use their character strengths to meet the challenges of daily work, to practise mindfulness in everyday life, to lead a healthy life, and to strengthen social relationships. The objective is that the training received does not remain at a theoretical level, but also permeates the daily life and work of all the members of the educational community.
3. **Teach it.** In this step, educators are already able to teach their students the skills for wellbeing. This can be done through both explicit and implicit instruction. The first, explicit instruction, can be done by organizing stand-alone sessions with students to provide instruction about specific content derived from positive psychology. Implicit instruction consists of integrating the contents of positive education within the typical subjects of the school curriculum.
4. **Embed it.** Finally, the ultimate goal of the Geelong model is that positive education is integrated as an element within the culture of the educational community. This integration process can include things like: 1) the

> wellbeing assessment of students and staff members as well as traditional academic evaluation; 2) the establishment of organizational guidelines to ensure that wellbeing is promoted in an effective and coordinated manner throughout the school; and 3) promoting wellbeing as a goal to strive for in both school and after-school activities.

The Geelong process provides a good example of how to implement a whole-school approach. Hoare et al. (2017) summarized the approach as such:

> We propose that the ordering of *Learn it, Live it, Teach it, Embed it* is a logical approach for school implementation. The sequence proposes that schools should first provide opportunities for the adults in the school community to learn about the science of wellbeing, then provide time and an environment which enables staff to put into practice and live the key tenets, then prioritize time within the curriculum for students to be taught the skills and knowledge of wellbeing, and finally, to gain maximum benefit, ensure the lens of wellbeing is applied sensitively to each facet of the school. (p. 64)

Another factor frequently mentioned by experts in the field is **the combination of explicit and implicit approaches** (Green, 2014; White & Kern, 2018), an aspect already mentioned in the discussion about the Geelong approach. This issue is also often referred to as the *taught* and *caught* curriculum, and according to White and Kern (2018), both approaches have advantages and limitations. The explicit or taught curriculum involves the teaching of positive psychology and wellbeing content within specific sessions of scheduled class time. The implicit or caught curriculum refers to the inclusion of this content across school subjects and beyond, embedded into the school culture, and visible in the language used, people's interactions, and the school norms.

A clear benefit of an explicit approach is that it allows more time to deal with certain topics in greater depth, but using this approach exclusively may involve considering positive education as a marginalized topic, not related to the rest of the contents of the school curriculum. An implicit approach establishes the relationship between positive education topics and the content in the school curriculum. Schools often struggle with an overcrowded curriculum and lack of time, so an implicit approach makes it possible to work on academic content and wellbeing simultaneously in the classroom. The limitation of this approach is that it may reduce time spent on content related to wellbeing. It seems evident, then, that the best approach is to combine both taught and caught approaches. Future research is needed

to clarify how both perspectives can be combined and to what extent, in order to promote best practice in positive education (White & Kern, 2018).

Another important aspect to highlight for the promotion of successful practices is that positive education needs to be **content and context focused**. One of the criticisms that positive psychology has received in recent years has been the neglect or lack of enough consideration of contextual and cultural variables. These and other criticisms, far from invalidating the positive psychology movement, have helped to promote its development and generate a more mature and grounded perspective, which some authors have called positive psychology 2.0 (Wong, 2011), the second wave of positive psychology (Lomas & Ivtzan, 2015), contextual positive psychology (Ciarrochi, Atkins, Hayes, Sahdra, & Parker, 2016), or Systems Informed Positive Psychology (Kern et al., 2020). These authors have pointed out that if these criticisms are not addressed, it could jeopardize the positive education movement, and positive psychology interventions could run the risk of being primarily centred on changing content, neglecting the importance of contextual and cultural factors. Content, according to Ciarrochi et al. (2016), refers to "the forms of private experience, including thoughts, feelings, images, attitudes, and beliefs" (p. 2), while context has to do with "situational and historical events that exert an organizing influence on behavior" (Hayes, Boyd, & Sewell, 2011, p. 33). For example, it would be useless to focus exclusively on promoting self-esteem and perseverance in a student who fails in mathematics, if the main cause of this failure is poor pedagogy. In this case, it would be necessary to change contextual factors, specifically the teaching methodology or the way in which the teacher relates to the student.

An approach that does not take into account the necessary changes in context can have the unintended consequence of making people feel guilty, believing that the cause of their mistakes lies primarily in their abilities or their ways of dealing with experiences, rather than in the environment that surrounds them. Therefore, change efforts in psychology and education should not focus exclusively on the internal states of people, but take into account their interactions with the context and inherent cultural climates.

Measurement and evaluation constitute a key issue that has been gaining momentum in positive education over recent years. Positive education is committed to adhering to the scientific intent of positive psychology, so it is reasonable that evaluation should become a fundamental aspect of the positive education movement. Accordingly, it is not enough to promote wellbeing in classrooms, but it is necessary to start from scientifically grounded (and validated, if possible) interventions and to evaluate outcomes using validated measures. To this point, evaluation in positive education has too often been

limited to observations with no systematic means of providing evidence of impact or efficacy (Slemp et al., 2017).

Traditionally, measurement and evaluation in education have focused primarily on academic outcomes, but there is growing interest in evaluating other, so-called non-cognitive outcomes of schools. As such, the wellbeing of students has become a topic of interest in the field of educational policy. For example, the 2015 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) included wellbeing as one of the elements to be evaluated (OECD, 2017). There are three common approaches to measuring personal qualities other than cognitive ability: self-report questionnaires administered to students, questionnaires administered to teachers about their students, and performance tasks (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015). Those tools are typically used for several purposes, including program evaluation, accountability, individual diagnosis, or practice improvement, and all of them have advantages and disadvantages. According to Duckworth and Yeager, it is important to use a plurality of measurement approaches, though more research is needed to develop novel and innovative measures that contribute to complement and improve the existing tools.

Seligman and Adler (2018, 2019) highlighted the importance of evaluation as one of the hallmarks of positive education. They identified three areas of measurement that are important to evaluate wellbeing, both before and after a positive education intervention: (1) happiness, (2) unhappiness, and (3) measures of academic success. Wellbeing involves multiple elements and, therefore, it is fundamental to include measurement tools related to variables such as satisfaction with life, positive and negative affect, self-esteem, motivation, emotional intelligence, school climate, mindfulness, social relations, and so forth. Another important point is that the presence of happiness does not necessarily imply the absence of unhappiness (both can coexist), and this is why the inclusion of unhappiness measures is recommended. Moreover, it is advisable not to use only one-dimensional measures of wellbeing, but to combine their use with other multidimensional measures, which can provide more detailed information, identify strengths and limitations that can be used to shape subsequent interventions, and allow more individually targeted interventions. For example, the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) is a one-dimensional measure that provides a general index of students' overall satisfaction with life, but the information it provides can be complemented with information from the EPOCH Measure of Adolescent Wellbeing (Kern, Benson, Steinberg, & Steinberg, 2015), which is a multidimensional measure that includes

five specific areas (engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness, and happiness). Both scales are illustrative examples of measures related to the hedonic and eudaimonic components of wellbeing, respectively, two aspects that should be taken into account in order to have a broader perspective on wellbeing (Adler & Seligman, 2016).

When discussing measurement and evaluation in education, it is important to distinguish between two general approaches: (1) academic research, typically aimed at validating the effectiveness of certain interventions or programs; and (2) traditional evaluation processes that take place in school settings. The former refers to a scientific process in which a variety of methods—including experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, or qualitative—are used to gain information about the scope and limitations of an educational intervention and to provide knowledge and contribute to scientific advances. In the latter case, from a more modest but not less important perspective, what is intended is to gain knowledge about students' levels in certain areas of instruction, document students' evolution over time, identify areas of instructional need, and so forth. Both forms of evaluation should be addressed in positive education.

Since the focus of this chapter is the practice of positive education from the perspective of educators, it is important to provide some detail about measurement and evaluation to assess student performance and progress. To this end, a first step is to specify what to evaluate. This can be quite wide-ranging and include information about what students have learned; changes produced in students as a result of an intervention; changes in the school climate; how the teaching team has implemented a specific intervention; and information about the program itself, including its effectiveness, if it is being correctly implemented, or its acceptance by teachers and students. To achieve this objective, there are a variety of tools that can be used: systematic observation procedures (anecdotal records, checklists, rubrics); students' work samples (student notebooks, written text, oral productions, summaries, monographic works, portfolios); oral activities with students (dialogues, interviews, sharing sessions, assemblies); exams (oral or written, multiple choice, true/false, essay or short-answer exams, solving exercises); self-evaluation, student peer evaluation, questionnaires (for teachers, students, non-teaching staff or parents); and external observations, to name a few. One practice to highlight is assessing the wellbeing of an entire school or educational context, an evaluation area that has been growing in recent years and for which there are models from which to learn, such as the experiences developed in Geelong Grammar School, St. Peter's College, Adelaide, or Tecmilenio University (IPEN, 2017; White & Kern, 2018).

There are, undoubtedly, many other factors that contribute to successful practices in positive education. Although it is not possible to describe them in detail in this chapter, it is worth identifying a few that are most relevant:

- **Customized programs**: there are no one-size-fits-all programs or experiences, so teachers should build upon best known research and practices. This involves personalizing and tailor-making their own initiatives, beginning with practices that are already working well and adjusting them to the specific characteristics of the community (Green, 2014).
- **Teacher and staff training**: initial and ongoing training is needed to provide the necessary theoretical foundations and the practical strategies to implement positive education.
- **Establish leadership support**: initiatives cannot be based on isolated actions carried out by individual teachers, but must be supported by leadership, including principals, leadership teams, and school governing boards.
- **Teacher engagement**: as a final consideration, we cannot forget the importance of the active involvement of teachers. Although it is sometimes possible and desirable to count on external experts, teachers in each school should be fully involved in the implementation of initiatives, working actively and enthusiastically to achieve shared goals.

Some Common Obstacles and Possible Solutions

There are a number of factors that hinder progress in the implementation of positive education. The following four frequently identified barriers are discussed, as well as possible ways to address them (for a more in-depth review on this subject, see White, 2016).

1. **Wellbeing is not an important issue for schools**. Sometimes topics like wellbeing are seen as irrelevant or as distracting from the academic mission of the school (White, 2016). To address this, it is important to raise the awareness of policymakers, educators, and families about the fact that teaching skills for wellbeing is as important as promoting academic performance. Most people want to be happy, certainly, and this is something that can be learned from childhood. Nevertheless, if this argument is insufficient, additional justifications include: (1) adolescence is a challenging developmental period marked with declines in life satisfaction (Waters, 2015); (2) depression is the main cause of illness and disability

in adolescents, and suicide is their third cause of mortality (World Health Organization, 2014); (3) 10–20% of children and adolescents experience mental disorders (World Health Organization, 2000); and (4) 75% of mental disorders begin before 25 years of age (Kessler et al., 2007). Consequently, adolescence is a challenging time, and promoting happiness and wellbeing may be important to counter those above-mentioned trends.

2. **Academics and wellbeing are considered incompatible**. Teachers complain about the lack of time they have to cope with seemingly overwhelming curricular or assessment demands. If they teach wellbeing, they often indicate, it takes time away from traditional subjects, so they have to choose between wellbeing or academic success (Adler, 2016; White, 2016; White & Kern, 2018). To refute this reasoning, policymakers, administrators, teachers, students' parents, and other stakeholders need to be convinced of the importance of efforts to promote wellbeing on academic outcomes by providing them with research-based data. There are several investigations showing that wellbeing programs not only produce improvements in personal and social development, but contribute to better academic performance (Adler, 2016; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Waters, 2011). In addition, teachers can be shown that it is possible to teach wellbeing within the context of the school day by aligning such instruction with other content areas.
3. **Lack of support from other teachers, principals, leadership teams, or governing boards**. Positive education initiatives need the support of leadership and staff, otherwise it is difficult to promote successful instructional experiences (Slemp et al., 2017). Both top-down and bottom-up initiatives are necessary. If there is not enough support from governing boards, changes can be initiated from the bottom up, starting with small experiences carried out by one or several teachers. With the passing of time, those initiatives can spread to the rest of the staff, convincing the leadership team of their importance and, eventually, becoming part of the whole-school focus.
4. **Teacher training provided by unqualified professionals**. An important concern is the presence of unqualified professionals offering teacher training services in the field of positive education, making money from wellbeing training activities, though in too many cases without the necessary qualification or experience. Therefore, it is important to ensure high-quality teacher training, provided by professionals with a wide knowledge of positive psychology and with practical experience in positive education.

Positive Education for All Schools: Promoting a Democratic Perspective

It is clear that if positive education is to have the potential to promote happiness and better academic performance, its implementation should be accessible to all educational communities: from preschool, primary, and secondary schools to universities and alternative sectors. There are two barriers that can pose serious problems to this endeavour: the type of educational context and the financial resources available. With regard to the first, for example, the type of educational context determines the way teachers are hired, and this may impact the development of positive education experiences.

In some countries (e.g., Spain, France, or Greece), public school teachers are civil servants that obtain their position through a selection process and keep this position for life. These teachers usually apply for vacancies through a public bidding process, joining the educational centre they choose. In contrast, in other countries (such as the USA or the UK), both public and private school teachers are recruited by local school boards or school administrators. In these latter countries, teachers are under contract and they must abide by the conditions established by their employers. This is why it may be easier to implement positive education practices in schools where teachers are under contract. For example, these schools can organize compulsory training in positive psychology or require teachers to carry out positive educational experiences. If teachers do not meet such requirements, they run the risk of being fired—unlike civil servant teachers, who usually enjoy life tenure and may not be dismissed except in very extreme cases. This has advantages since it ensures that all teachers in private schools work in the same direction and share identical principles. The drawback is that teachers may feel compelled to apply positive education, carrying out their work with a lack of authentic commitment. In contrast, in public schools where teachers have a lifetime civil servant status, teachers have greater pedagogical freedom, and principals or leadership teams cannot so easily boost the implementation of positive education practices: this is a process that requires willingness and agreement from the entire teaching staff. As for the second barrier, financial resources, implementing positive education requires initial and ongoing staff training, purchase of programs and materials, or external advice to conduct wellbeing assessment. These are resources that not all schools may have. As such, positive education runs the risk of being implemented only in those educational contexts that are able to hire their own staff and have adequate resources.

As mentioned previously in this chapter, positive education should be available for *all* schools, regardless of their characteristics or financial

resources. Fortunately, there are some initiatives to provide free resources for schools, including educational programs, teacher training, and tools for well-being assessment. Table 3.2 provides online resources through which readers can find free resources related to the practice of positive education. Furthermore, Table 3.1 provides references to two multidimensional approaches, which are also freely available, and which will be briefly described below: the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1610/character-education/resources), and the Happy Classrooms Programme (Arguís-Rey et al., 2012).

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues is part of the School of Education at the University of Birmingham (United Kingdom). That Centre is a pioneering interdisciplinary research centre whose activity is addressed to efforts to promote character, virtues, and values education so as to promote human flourishing. A team of experts at this centre has developed resources for teachers and other education stakeholders to be used in schools and other educational settings. Among these available tools are the following:

- **Teacher resources:** a character education program for primary students (aged 4–11) and another for secondary students (aged 11–16), an evaluation handbook for schools, teacher education resources, and some guidelines to teach character through subjects.
- **Parent resources:** reading and writing resources, as well as some activities for use by parents with their children to help them reflect on character strengths.

The Happy Classrooms Programme is a project launched in Spain, aimed at promoting positive education with children and young people ages 3–18 years old. It includes two fundamental axes: mindfulness and character strengths. This initiative is the result of several years of work by a team of teachers and psychologists—the SATI Team. They have grounded the program in the most recent contributions from positive psychology and offer general guidelines as well as more than 300 hands-on activities for students. It is freely available in English and Spanish (http://educaposit.blogspot.com). The Happy Classrooms Programme has achieved widespread and international recognition by the scientific community and education professionals and has been included as a reference manual in university training programs, master's degrees, and doctorates by various Spanish and foreign universities. In addition, there are currently several ongoing investigations to experimentally validate the effectiveness of this program. The first of these investigations

has recently been published and provides promising results (Lombas et al., 2019).

Wellbeing Assessment for Schools: Guidelines from Spain

In recent years, several models related to wellbeing evaluation in educational settings have emerged, and it is expected that their number will increase, as happiness becomes a more important matter in schools. There are some noteworthy models that are being used in many schools: Visible Wellbeing (Waters, Sun, Rusk, Aarch, & Cotton, 2017), AWE (Assessing Wellbeing in Education; www.awesomeschools.com), Social-Emotional Wellbeing Survey (SEW; www.acer.org/gb/sew); Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS; www.gl-assessment.co.uk); and "Emociómetro" (Technology for Emotions; www.technologyforemotions.com), to name a few.

It should be noted that these and other initiatives require payment, and there is a lack of free evaluation models for schools. This is often because the development of assessment and measurement must be scientifically validated and meet high-quality standards. This requires starting from a solid theoretical framework, developing tools with adequate levels of validity and reliability, having a proper knowledge of statistical data analysis methods, and so forth. For all these reasons, it is understandable that many teachers prefer to delegate these tasks to experts outside the school. However, as mentioned previously, not all schools have the resources to pay for such services. Thus, the Spanish team, SATI, has been developing tools for free distribution (http://educaposit.blogspot.com). At this time, they are available only in Spanish, but might provide some utility for speakers of other languages. The following sections describe some characteristics of the SATI model.

Educational Levels

These resources are addressed to all educational levels: preschool, primary and secondary education, universities, and non-formal education.

What to Evaluate and How to Evaluate It

The objective of this model is that teaching staff in every educational context can carry out a wellbeing evaluation, with the necessary quality psychometric requirements. This evaluation can be addressed to one or several groups of students, to all students in an educational context, as well as the evaluation of the wellbeing of teaching and non-teaching staff and of students' families.

If the objective is to evaluate the wellbeing of all students in an educational context, the strategy may consist of measuring wellbeing at different times. For example, in a secondary school, evaluation can occur at three times: when students start this educational stage, halfway through this stage, and at the end of it. In this way, year by year results can be compared and used to assess the evolution of students' levels of wellbeing. SATI developers recommend using an online platform, creating an account in Google Forms, which facilitates the collection and processing of data.

What is measured is the level of happiness and unhappiness of whomever is being assessed, as well as other complementary variables of interest. For this, it is recommended that both happiness and unhappiness measures be included, as well as one-dimensional and multidimensional scales of wellbeing, measuring the hedonic and eudaimonic components of wellbeing. Other variables can be included, such as school climate and mindfulness. It is recommended to use not only self-report questionnaires administered to students, but also questionnaires administered to teachers about their students, performance tasks, systematic observation checklists, indicators of students' behaviour, and measures of academic success.

Available Resources

By clicking on the "Wellbeing Evaluation" tab on the SATI website, users will find, among other things, the following resources:

- a general guidance document;
- a collection of questionnaires and observation scales for children and young people ages 2–18 (some of which are also applicable with adults);
- models of questionnaires already created in Google Forms as examples so teachers can design their own online forms;
- a wellbeing evaluation project carried out at Santiago Hernández High School in Zaragoza (Spain), which can serve to guide the process in other educational contexts;

- a protocol with instructions on how to conduct evaluation sessions with students;
- examples of Excel spreadsheets with analysed questionnaires, which can be used as templates for data analysis;
- an example of wellbeing evaluation report for a school; and
- guidelines for analysing data through the free statistical programs R Commander and PSPP.

Although the questionnaires available on this website are in Spanish, these are well-known scales that are also validated in other languages and countries, and users should be able to find the original versions in English or in their respective language.

Procedure to Follow

First of all, users—students, staff, or families—should fill in the questionnaires, and teachers should collect additional data through other complementary tools. A second stage will be the analysis of results and preparation of an evaluation report, which should be delivered to the entire school's staff. Finally, the evaluation report should be discussed in teacher meetings, making it possible to plan intervention strategies to address issues found through evaluation. The process, as such, is:

1. Completion of the questionnaires by the target population (students, staff, or families) and collection of additional data through other tools.
2. Analysis of results and preparation of an evaluation report.
3. Delivery of the report to the entire school's staff.
4. Detailed analysis of the report in teacher meetings and planning of intervention strategies to address issues found through evaluation.

Possibilities for Analysing Results

In theory, any teacher can perform a wellbeing assessment in their educational context using these resources. However, the level of depth of the analysis will depend on previous knowledge of computing and statistics. Based on this, three levels of analysis can be distinguished:

- **Level 1** (users with a very rudimentary level of computing and statistical skills): once the questionnaires are completed, Google Forms automatically generates very simple graphic summaries. However, the information provided in this way is quite limited.
- **Level 2** (users with an initial to average mastery of Excel, and a basic knowledge of statistics): Google Forms allows downloading data to an Excel sheet. Through the examples and guidelines provided on the SATI Team's website, it is possible to determine means and percentages, which provide richer information.
- **Level 3** (users able to handle statistical software and with average or advanced statistics knowledge): users who want more complex analyses can use the free programs PSPP and R Commander, which allows the determination of any significant differences between groups of students, or between the same group in different years, to detect gender differences, to calculate correlations between variables, and so forth.

Usefulness of Wellbeing Evaluation Results

Wellbeing evaluation in educational settings can provide multiple benefits. First, it helps make wellbeing visible in schools, raising awareness of its importance and the need to nurture it. It allows for the assessment of levels of happiness, unhappiness, school climate, mindfulness, school behaviour, academic performance, and many other variables by groups of students and by educational levels. It also provides direction for the design of intervention programs, based on the analysis of areas in which unsatisfactory results have been detected. Moreover, wellbeing evaluation makes possible to detect at-risk students who may require special attention and follow-up.

A caveat to note is that when comparing results on different variables from one year to the next, it is difficult to infer improvements due to the implemented programs or interventions. For this to be possible, a control group would be required with similar previous conditions and no treatment, something not always possible in schools. In this case, the evaluation would have the character of research, with all that this implies adequate sample selection, control of other variables that can affect the results, etc. If this is not feasible, it does not mean that results are useless: on the contrary, the data may provide valuable information about students' levels in certain variables, their individual and group evolution, and what areas of instructional need exist for them.

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