Chapter 28
Children and Young People's Wellbeing in the School Context

Ros McLellan

Abstract Policymakers, academic researchers and the general public have become increasingly interested in wellbeing in recent years. Although there is consensus that wellbeing is important, there is considerable debate as to what exactly wellbeing is and hence how it might be enhanced. This chapter provides an overview of research on wellbeing and argues that the different disciplinary lenses generate unique insights that must be considered collectively for a cohesive picture of wellbeing to be developed. Furthermore, it is argued that research on adults' wellbeing cannot be unproblematically applied to children and young people. Substantially less research has focused on children and young people compared with adults' wellbeing, and even less work has considered wellbeing in the school context. The contribution of McLellan and Galton's work in this area is outlined, and outstanding issues about children and young people's wellbeing are raised.

Keywords Wellbeing • Children and young people • Subjective wellbeing • Eudaimonic wellbeing • Hedonic wellbeing • Social wellbeing

Introduction

In the early summer of 2010, Maurice Galton collared me in the staff social area and asked me whether I'd be interested in bidding for a project on wellbeing. We hadn't worked together before but had had chats over coffee during which we had identified our common interests in motivation and creativity and realised we were both interested in what actually happens in classrooms. He shared findings from the large-scale ESRC-funded SPRinG (Social Pedagogic Research into Group-work) Project, which culminated in the well-regarded book 'Motivating your Secondary Class' (Galton et al. 2009). He was also undertaking some work for the Arts Council and Creative Partnerships to explore the pedagogy of creative practitioners in schools and talked enthusiastically and entertainingly about the different approaches taken

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by creative practitioners, compared to the classroom teachers (Galton 2010). When I first met him, I was working as the researcher on a Gatsby-funded project entitled ‘Subject Leadership in Creativity in Design & Technology’ so I in turn discussed with Maurice the emerging ideas the Principal Investigator and I were having about why young people were not being creative in their D&T work. Motivation is seen as one prerequisite for creativity (Amabile 1996), and as I had just finished my PhD exploring the role of motivation in student learning in science (McLellan 2006), the role of motivation was explored further in that work (McLellan and Nicholl 2013; Nicholl and McLellan 2009). Later on discussions with another colleague interested in teacher motivation and wellbeing (Demetriou and Wilson 2009, 2012) lead me to consider the close relationship between motivation and wellbeing. These ideas in turn were discussed over coffee with Maurice when we bumped into each other.

So it is perhaps not that surprising that Maurice sought me out when Creativity, Culture and Education, the charity administering the Creative Partnerships scheme, approached him to see if he was interested in bidding for a project examining the impact of Creative Partnerships on student wellbeing. I felt flattered to be asked to work alongside such a well-known and respected academic, and we were fortunate to be successful in our bid, completing that project in May 2012 (McLellan et al. 2012). We then embarked on a project funded by the Nuffield Foundation to examine the impact of transition from primary to secondary school on young people’s wellbeing, with additional funding from Creativity, Culture and Education to explore the relationship between wellbeing and health over that transition. I feel very privileged to have worked with Maurice over the last 4 years. Not only have we gone on a wonderful voyage of discovery about young people’s wellbeing, but I also feel I have grown as an academic moving from a position of legitimate peripheral to full participation (Lave and Wenger 1991) in the academic community under his expert, encouraging and watchful eye. Maurice is not only extremely sharp and academically stimulating but also amazingly energetic with a real zeal for research, which is infectious. He is talking about retirement but I’m hoping he might be persuaded to do one more project so we can continue our work in this area.

In this chapter I will draw on what Maurice and I have learned in our work together to consider what we know at the present time about children and young people’s wellbeing, particularly in the school context, but will also flag up areas where there is still much to be learned.

Introducing Children and Young People’s Wellbeing

It is interesting to note that developments in what we know about children and young people’s wellbeing in some ways run parallel to Maurice’s research career. Maurice’s first major contribution came with his work on the ORACLE (Observational Research and Classroom Learning Evaluation) studies, funded by the SSRC, which led to the major publication ‘Inside the Primary Classroom’ (Galton et al. 1980), and this work was so significant that a follow-up study was commissioned 20 years later (Galton et al. 1999); however he was already an established researcher by then. His earlier work, with PhD supervisor Jim Eggleston in science education, had led to a number of publications in the early 1970s (Eggleston et al. 1973, 1976; Galton and Eggleston 1971), and in this period the methodological approach that is characteristic of his research, namely, classroom observation, was developed and honed. In comparison research on wellbeing, notwithstanding the contribution of ancient Greek philosophers, in modern times, can be dated back to a review on the correlates of happiness in the late 1960s (Wilson 1967), but the field did not develop significantly until the late 1970s when a number of empirical studies were undertaken (for instance, Andrews and Inglehart 1979; Campbell 1976) and then in the early 1980s when Ed Diener in particular started to theoretically conceptualise the notion of subjective wellbeing (Diener 1984).

Thus, in considering what we know about young people's wellbeing at the present time, I aim to provide an overview of the literature that has accumulated since Wilson's 1967 review before outlining the small contribution made by that the work Maurice and I have been doing recently. As will become apparent, there is no agreed definition of wellbeing, which tends to be conceptualised in slightly different ways in different disciplinary areas. For instance, sociological approaches tend to be more structural and objective, whilst psychological ones are more based on subjective reports of personal feelings and emotions (Fegter et al. 2010). Definitional variations of wellbeing have led to different studies measuring wellbeing in different ways, encapsulating different variables. In addition, studies into adult wellbeing cannot be extrapolated unproblematically to children and young people. In exploring these issues in the following sections, the complexity of the field will be conveyed, and gaps in understanding will become apparent.

I will start, however, by considering why it is important to consider wellbeing at all, particularly in the current context in English schools where wellbeing, which was previously considered a key issue in schooling with the launch of several government agendas including 'Excellence and Enjoyment: A Strategy for Primary Schools' (Department for Education and Skills 2003b) and 'Every Child Matters' (Department for Education and Skills 2003a) and the emphasis on Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (Department for Education and Skills (DfES) 2005), no longer appears to be seen as important by the current government who has swept aside these initiatives in favour of a tighter focus on teaching and learning (see Bangs et al. 2011, p. 118 for a quote from an interview with the current Secretary for Education, Michael Gove, that explicitly states this) and has removed all traces of wellbeing from the school inspection framework (see Office for Standards in Education 2012).

The Importance of Wellbeing

Although empirical research on wellbeing is a relatively new phenomenon, philosophical debate on the importance of wellbeing for society dates back to the ancient Greeks. For instance, according to Waterman (1993), Aristippus of Cyrene decreed that pleasure was the sole good in life; therefore people should enjoy pleasurable activities to experience meaning in life. This view sits behind the principle of utilitarianism, introduced into public debate in the eighteenth century by economic philosophers Bentham and Stuart Mill, which states that governments should act to create the greatest good for the greatest number of people (Bentham 1781; Stuart Mill 1863).

More recently governments have realised that traditional indicators of economic development, such as gross domestic product, do not capture the progression and condition of societies. Myers (2000), for instance, had demonstrated that although personal income had grown in real terms between the mid-1950s and 1998 in the USA, the percentage of people indicating they were very happy had remained approximately constant. So although economic indicators suggested a positive development, as happiness had not changed, it could be argued that American society had not improved since the 1950s. The Beyond GDP conference in 2007, which brought together influential bodies including the European Commission, the European Parliament and the OECD to discuss such issues, can be seen as a seminal event in policy circles. Sarkozy subsequently hired Nobel Prize winning economists to lead a Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (Stiglitz et al. 2009). In criticising indicators such as GDP as measure of quality of life, a key message was:

> The time is ripe for our measurement system to shift emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people's well-being. (Stiglitz et al. 2009, p. 12)

Public opinion in the UK supports the notion that government should be more concerned with wellbeing than economic wealth, with a relatively recent poll finding that 81% of respondents agreed that the prime government objective should be the 'greatest happiness' of its citizens rather than 'greatest wealth' (Michaelson et al. 2009). Interestingly, despite the lack of interest in wellbeing from the current Secretary for Education, other UK government departments are actively concerned with this issue. The Office for National Statistics has recommended that three broad types of subjective wellbeing measures should be used to capture wellbeing, tapping evaluation (global assessments), experience (feelings over short periods of time) and 'eudaimonic' (reports of purpose and meaning and worthwhile things in life) (Dolan et al. 2011). There has been public consultation about domains and headline measures (Corp 2013; Self and Beaumont 2011), although the actual indicators in use in panel studies at the present time are limited to four questions on life satisfaction, worthwhileness, happiness and anxiety (for instance, see Office for National Statistics 2013a).

This section has demonstrated the importance of wellbeing for society and provided a flavour of the political interest in the topic. It has also, in outlining some of the potential facets of wellbeing, begun to show the complexity of the construct both in terms of definition and measurement. Part of the complexity can be understood if the different disciplinary traditional conceptions that government statisticians have drawn on are unpacked and it is to this I now turn.

Conceptualisations of Wellbeing in Different Disciplines

Wellbeing has been traditionally conceptualised by economists in objective terms (i.e. economy, personal wealth, health, educational qualifications, environment, etc.), and whilst such indicators are important and indeed form part of current UK government thinking on wellbeing appearing in the National Well-being Wheel of Measures (Office for National Statistics 2013b), the argument advanced above makes it clear that such objective measures are only part of the story and indeed, given the apparent limited relationship between wealth and happiness and more specifically the suggestion that material goods do not ultimately make people happy (Kasser et al. 2007), subjective measures of wellbeing may be more important in understanding the human condition. Understanding subjective experience has long been the domain of psychology, so not surprisingly much of the thinking in this area has been developed by psychologists building on the work of philosophers. However other disciplines such as sociology and development studies have shed some insight. These contributions are reviewed below.

Psychological Conceptualisations of Wellbeing

At the beginning of my introduction to wellbeing, I indicated that modern interest in wellbeing really began in the late 1960s with Wilson's (1967) review on the correlates of happiness, with a steady trickle of empirical work amassing during the 1970s and 1980s. However it wasn't really until Ed Diener began to theorise the notion of subjective wellbeing (Diener 1984) and delineated this from happiness that interest in the concept was really sparked in the community of psychologists. Diener argued that subjective wellbeing comprised more than just momentary moods or emotions and described it as:

> …a broad category of phenomena that includes people's emotional responses, domain satisfactions, and global judgements of life satisfaction… We define SWB [subjective wellbeing] as a general area of scientific interest rather than a single specific construct. (Diener et al. 1999, p. 277)

In this conceptualisation wellbeing comprises two main components, affect (i.e. feelings, emotions and mood) and life satisfaction, which factor analytic statistical techniques identified as distinct constructs (Lucas et al. 1996). Subjective wellbeing is being experienced when there is a preponderance of positive over negative emotions (Diener 1984). Life satisfaction is a cognitive evaluation of how satisfied an individual is with their life. The notion of wellbeing in different domains is also highlighted, and of course as educationalists, the idea of wellbeing in school as a specific domain is important. Overall such a conceptualisation of wellbeing can be classified as hedonic as the focus is on considering what makes life pleasurable and what makes people feel good (Kahneman et al. 1999), and this harks back to the ideas first proposed by Aristippus of Cyrene described earlier.

The next important development was the naming of positive psychology as a distinct branch of psychology, launched by Martin Seligman in his inaugural address as president of the American Psychological Society in 1999 and quickly followed in 2000 by a special edition of the *American Psychologist* devoted to positive psychology. The guest editors, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, provided a comprehensive rationale for this new field in their introduction noting that:

> The aim of positive psychology is to begin to catalyse a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities. (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000, p. 5)

With its focus on understanding issues such as what makes individuals satisfied with their lives, what brings them happiness and how wellbeing can be influenced to allow individuals to flourish, positive psychology provided a home for psychologists interested in wellbeing who might have previously felt marginalised. The introduction of new journals such as the *Journal of Positive Psychology* and the *Journal of Happiness Studies* provided publication outlets further legitimising the work. Consequently there has been a large volume of studies since 2000 badged as positive psychology.

Although hedonic conceptions of wellbeing still dominate the literature with much lively debate about conceptualisation and measurement (see, for instance, Eckersley 2013; Gadermann et al. 2010), there has been growing interest in alternative conceptions of what constitutes the ‘good life’, as hedonic approaches to wellbeing have begun to be seen as a bit limited (Vitterso 2004), as they focus only on what makes us feel good, which ultimately may not be good for us (think chocolate and obesity). In this respect, ancient Greek philosophy has again proved a fruitful vein to mine. In particular Aristotle rejected hedonism in favour of eudaimonia that is ‘activity expressing virtue’ (Aristotle 1985, p. 284; cited in Waterman 1993). Modern philosophers had developed these ideas arguing that eudaimonism requires people to recognise and live in accordance with the daimon or ‘true self’ (Norton 1976), which represents the potential or ideal of perfection, and provides meaning and direction in life. Thus Waterman (1993) argues that eudaimonia, which is associated with personal expressiveness and self-realisation, can be seen as a different way of conceptualising the ‘good life’ and, for him, happiness. Eudaimonic conceptualisations of wellbeing are therefore concerned with functioning well rather than feeling well. A special edition of the *Journal of Happiness Studies* devoted to the area (Deci and Ryan 2008b) demonstrates the level of interest in this conception;

however it is clear that much recent thinking is rooted in earlier ideas and theories, particularly from early humanistic psychologists (for instance, in Maslow's 1954 hierarchy of needs where self-actualisation is at the apex of the hierarchy).

A number of psychologists have put forward theoretical conceptualisations of eudaimonic wellbeing. Seligman (2002), for instance, has argued that there are three routes to happiness, namely, living the *pleasant life* (enabling the individual to experience high levels of positive emotion and gratification), living the *good life* (enabling the individual to experience absorption in activities, engagement and flow) and finally living the *meaningful life* (enabling the individual to deploy their strengths in the pursuit of something greater than oneself). Whilst the first conceptualisation is hedonic in nature, the latter two could be described as eudaimonic with their focus on functioning rather than feeling well. Csikszentmihalyi's theory of flow, the state characterised by absorption in an activity to the exclusion of anything else representing an optimal state of intrinsic motivation where a person is functioning to their fullest capacity (Csikszentmihalyi 1975, 1990), was originally developed as a theory of intrinsic motivation to explain the intense concentration artists displayed when working. However, with its focus on optimal functioning, flow has more recently been described as the source of happiness (Csikszentmihalyi 2002) and hence a eudaimonic conceptualisation of wellbeing. Ryff and colleagues have theorised psychological wellbeing as comprising self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations, environmental mastery and autonomy (Ryff 1995; Ryff and Singer 2006), again focusing on functioning well. Finally, and perhaps most influentially, given the large volume of empirical work utilising this framework, self-determination theory, originally developed to understand motivation (Deci 1975; Deci and Ryan 1985), has been specifically recast as a eudaimonic conceptualisation of wellbeing (Deci and Ryan 2008a; Ryan and Deci 2000; Ryan et al. 2008). At the heart of self-determination theory lies the ontological belief that 'all individuals have natural, innate and constructive tendencies to develop an ever more elaborated and unified sense of self' (Ryan and Deci 2002, p. 5); thus the theory is actually concerned with the development of the self. Healthy development and hence eudaimonic wellbeing depend on the fulfilment of three core needs, namely, the need for competence, autonomy and relatedness, with humans possessing the capacity or 'will' to choose how to do this, with self-determination being the 'process of utilising one's will'. In fulfilling these needs, again an individual is functioning well (i.e. experiencing the sense of competence, autonomy and relating well to others).

Some of the most recent work has started to draw together hedonic and eudaimonic conceptions of wellbeing to create a more comprehensive picture of wellbeing. At a theoretical level, Seligman, for instance, has built on his earlier ideas described above to put forward the PERMA (P, positive emotions; E, engagement; R, relationships; M, meaning; and A, accomplishments) model of flourishing as a conceptualisation of wellbeing (Seligman 2011), which clearly comprises hedonic and eudaimonic elements. At the same time, at an empirical level, policymakers are also attempting to capture both types of wellbeing. As noted earlier the Office for National Statistics in the UK has recognised the need to include 'eudaimonic' as well as subjective aspects of wellbeing (Corp 2013; Dolan et al. 2011) but has yet to put this into practice; however an additional module to the European Social Survey did include eudaimonic and hedonic indicators (Huppert et al. 2009; Huppert and So 2013; Michaelson et al. 2009).

Contributions from Other Disciplines

Psychological conceptions of wellbeing, with their focus on individual feelings and function, tend to under-theorise the role of the social context, and this is where sociology has a contribution to make. Keyes (1998) outlined five dimensions of social wellbeing: social integration, social contribution, social coherence, social actualisation and social acceptance, and these are strongly related to the concept of 'social capital', particularly the model developed by Robert Putnam, in his influential book *Bowling Alone* on the decline of social capital in America (Putnam 2000), where the social networks that an individual possesses are valuable not only to that individual but also to the community and wider society to which that individual belongs. This suggests that not only are individual indicators important for measuring wellbeing but that the more collective indicators of the extent of social ties within neighbourhoods, participation rates in community initiatives and how inclusive these are also need to be considered in a comprehensive model of wellbeing. Such a framework has been posited by La Placa et al. (2013), encompassing a range of domains beyond individual subjectivity, to incorporate the family, community and society as a whole.

A final useful contribution comes from development studies in the form of capabilities theory (Sen 1999), which has been developed and extended by Nussbaum (2000) in applying the approach to marginalised groups who she argues do not expect and demand basic what she terms 'central requirements of a life with dignity' (Nussbaum 2003, p. 40) which can be interpreted as necessary for wellbeing. The ten central requirements or human capabilities identified include elements such as bodily health, emotions, affiliation, play and control over the environment. Together these appear to include objective measures of wellbeing (e.g. health), subjective wellbeing (e.g. positive emotions) and eudaimonic wellbeing (e.g. control over the environment), and in capabilities theory all capabilities or entitlements need to be in place for a person to flourish and experience wellbeing. Some of these capabilities overlap with entitlements identified in the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations 1989) which directly influenced the *Every Child Matters* reforms in England (Department for Education and Skills 2003a) discussed earlier.

Towards a Synthesis of Disciplinary Perspectives

This section has demonstrated the wide range of work that has been done in different disciplines to theorise and assess wellbeing. Psychological work, particularly from the field of positive psychology, has put a welcome focus on theorising wellbeing for all and legitimised work in this area, although the field is not without its critics (Kristjansson 2012; McNulty and Fincham 2012). Subjective wellbeing, with its components of affect and satisfaction, has tended to dominate but there is still ongoing debate into how best to assess this construct with question marks raised about existing measures. Growing interest in the concept of eudaimonic wellbeing, with its roots in philosophy and humanistic psychology, has provided an alternative way of viewing wellbeing from the predominately hedonic approach. A number of different eudaimonic approaches have been suggested which encompass different aspects, and it is something of a challenge to bring these together and see commonalities. Some, such as self-determination theory, are concerned with growth and meaning, whilst others such as flow are more concerned with self-actualisation raising the question of whether wellbeing is a process or outcome. The lack of clarity has led to some to suggest that the concept of eudaimonic wellbeing is in a bit of a mess (Boniwell 2008) and it is apparent that this construct needs much more unpacking and exploration.

Sociological work puts the spotlight on the social context, but social capital theorists do not always recognise the active role people, including children and young people, play in producing their own social capital and hence wellbeing (Holland et al. 2007). Nevertheless, speaking as a psychologist, it seems apparent that psychological conceptions would be enriched if the full complexity of the context is considered, and if frameworks such as that outlined by La Placa and colleagues were married with psychological theories, then a more sophisticated understanding of wellbeing might be realised. The relatively new field of complexity theory may have something to offer in this respect (Guastello et al. 2011) to consider the different levels and dynamic nature of the interaction between person and context.

Finally the capabilities approach reminds us of the need to consider objective as well as subjective elements of wellbeing although it is difficult to reconcile contradictions in objective and subjective elements of wellbeing (for instance, poor people being happy despite deprivation in say a slum) although some theorising around levels of inequality are beginning to help understanding of such issues (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010).

Overall the work in the different disciplines has been extremely helpful, particularly in recent years with the political impetus to conceptualise the construct of wellbeing in a more sophisticated way. However, as is also clear, the pockets of work in different fields means our understanding is patchy as it is difficult to synthesise ideas to reach a more nuanced understanding and many fundamental questions about the construct of wellbeing remain unanswered. Coupled with this is the fact that much of the work has focused on adults and we cannot assume that what is important for adults is also important for children and young people in terms of wellbeing. I therefore now consider what we know specifically about the wellbeing of children and young people.

What Is Known About Children and Young People's Wellbeing?

Although in the past it might have been assumed that children and young people are just 'adults in the making', this view has now generally been disregarded as youngsters are now seen as a group in their own right (see James et al. 1998). This has implications for assessing children and young people's wellbeing as they need to be consulted (Ben-Arieh 2005), and whilst policymakers are increasingly interested in assessing young people's wellbeing and have noted the importance of consultation, in practice this is difficult to realise, particularly at the level of international comparison when definitions of wellbeing and approaches to data collection differ in different national contexts (Ben-Arieh 2008). Nevertheless there has been some empirical work to assess children and young people's wellbeing at both international and national levels.

Perhaps the most influential international work is the UNICEF *Index of Children's Wellbeing* (based around the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* and carried out in 21 industrialised countries) (see United Nations Children's Fund 2007). This recorded each country's score across six domains: material wellbeing, educational wellbeing, health and safety, family and peer relationships, behaviours and risks and subjective wellbeing. However this work was criticised amongst other things due to limitations of the data at its disposal (Statham and Chase 2010). Furthermore, in a follow-up study in 2009 across all OECD countries (OECD 2009), the domains included were altered to have an influence on policy to include housing, environment and quality of school life, but subjective wellbeing was removed. Although objective indicators of wellbeing are included that might be linked back to the capabilities approach outlined earlier, the removal of subjective wellbeing means that this approach does not provide a comprehensive picture of young people's perceptions of their wellbeing. From the UK perspective, however, the 2007 survey was important in putting the spotlight on the plight of children and young people in our country as it revealed that the UK was bottom of 21 industrialised societies, with children recording particularly low scores on the 'family and peer relationships', 'behaviours and risks' and 'subjective wellbeing' domains.

Another large-scale international survey is the *Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children*, carried out for the World Health Organisation. However this employed global measures of wellbeing such as 'life satisfaction' (part of subjective wellbeing) and attempted to relate this to other general perceptions such as 'liking of school' (Currie et al. 2008), and whilst as educators it is important to know how wellbeing relates to or is influenced by the school context, I would argue that the partial measures of wellbeing deployed clearly do not capture the complexity of the construct and therefore understanding of this issue is necessarily limited.

In the UK, the Social Policy Research Unit at the University of York, funded by The Children's Society (and in the past by the charity Save the Children), has developed an overall 'index of children's subjective wellbeing in England' through consulting young people (see Rees et al. 2010). The index measures wellbeing across a range of domains identified as important to happiness with life as a whole, and these were reported in rank order in the Good Childhood Report, namely, family, choice, health, time use, friends, appearance, the future, money and possessions, home and school (Rees et al. 2012). The development of this index is a major step forward in understanding children and young people's wellbeing as it clearly identifies the domains that are important to them and as such is not only a comprehensive index of subjective wellbeing but includes sociological elements of context; however it does not capture eudaimonic aspects of wellbeing.

The findings emerging from the work of this group have been illuminating. Of the 30,000 children aged 8–16 years interviewed, only 1 in 11 was unhappy with their lives as a whole (Rees et al. 2012), painting a somewhat more positive picture than the earlier UNICEF study. However what was more interesting were the differences between different groups in the study. For instance, low wellbeing was found to dramatically increase with age (the percentages doubling between the ages of 10 and 15), and that children in families who had recently experienced a drop in income were more likely to report low wellbeing.

Furthermore in considering wellbeing in the school domain specifically, there was much more variation in young people's responses to this aspect of their lives than the other domains of importance. Almost half (49%) said there were aspects of school they did not like, and over a quarter would prefer not to go to school at all. But despite these negative feelings, many children were also committed to learning, with 80% indicating that good marks were very important. The overall wellbeing of the 3% who said marks were unimportant was significantly lower than that of other children. Another area of concern is that 25% of children said they had been unfairly treated by teachers on more than one occasion and had felt unhappy at school. Relative to other domains, children's wellbeing in school declined more rapidly with age, with scores on 'relationships with teachers' and 'feeling they are listened to' reducing the most (whilst relationships with peers showed less of a decline). Boys also reported lower wellbeing in school in relation to school work and relationships with teachers than girls.

A few studies have also investigated the contribution school makes to general wellbeing, and these were reviewed in another project Maurice Galton was involved in for the Nuffield Foundation's 'Changing Adolescence Programme' (Gray et al. 2011). Most studies have looked at mental health rather than wellbeing, but research in Belgium suggested that between 5% and 11% of the variation in wellbeing, depending on measure of wellbeing considered, was attributable to the school the student attends (Opdenakker and Van Damme 2000), whilst the only English study suggested that the figure was as low as 3% (Gutman and Feinstein 2008). This indicates that individual differences in wellbeing are more significant than school effects and that children and young people may experience the same situation in school differently due to their individual differences, and this has the potential to manifest in different behaviour in terms of, for instance, their interactions with teachers and peers (Gutman and Feinstein 2008).

Overall, therefore, significant steps have been taken to understand and assess children and young people's wellbeing. There has been interest in the international community but there are significant difficulties in developing instruments that can be implemented in a standardised format that is interpreted in the same ways in different national contexts. At a national level in the UK, the Social Policy Research Unit at the University of York has made major inroads to developing a valid instrument capturing subjective wellbeing, and insights from the empirical work have suggested that there are students in UK schools that we need to be significantly concerned about. However their measure does not capture the eudaimonic element of wellbeing, which I would argue is also needed to provide a more comprehensive picture of wellbeing. Research is also beginning to accumulate to suggest that the school a student attends is not that influential on their overall wellbeing, but nevertheless there is significant variation in wellbeing in school, and this does seem to decline with age so this is an issue that warrants further investigation. This overall picture provides the backdrop to the work Maurice and I have done, which forms the focus of the final section.

The Contribution of Galton and McLellan to the Wellbeing Field

At this point I can only comment on the first project Maurice and I undertook in this area, as this is now complete. This focused on the impact of creative initiatives on wellbeing and involved 40 schools in England (half were participating in the Creative Partnerships Programme and an equal number of primary and secondary schools). In the first phase of the research, a survey was conducted, with students in Years 3, 6, 8 and 10. They completed a questionnaire, which was developed specifically for the study and drew on the literature reviewed above to assess aspects of subjective wellbeing and eudaimonic wellbeing (i.e. feelings and functioning) in relation to the individual and the social context and in the school and outside of school context. As the literature on creativity indicates that intrinsic motivation is a prerequisite for creativity (Amabile 1996) and, as has already been discussed, theories of intrinsic motivation have been recast as theories of eudaimonic wellbeing (Csikszentmihalyi 2002; Deci and Ryan 2008a), it was particularly important for our study that both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of wellbeing were captured, as this link suggests that creativity might be more associated with eudaimonic than hedonic elements of wellbeing. In the second phase, nine schools (five primary and four secondary) that appeared interesting from initial analysis formed case studies. Interviews were conducted with a range of students and teachers involved in relevant initiatives, activities (including ordinary lessons, work with creative practitioners and other initiatives) were observed and relevant documents were collected.

In terms of the survey data, we found some interesting interactions between age, gender and type of school attended (Creative Partnerships or not), and full details of this and the questionnaire we developed can be found in McLellan and Steward (2014). In general older children reported experiencing wellbeing less frequently than younger children, whilst boys were more positive than girls about their perceived competence (experienced more frequently) and negative emotion (experienced less frequently). Declines in wellbeing with age have been documented in other studies (Gutman et al. 2010; Tomyn and Cummins 2011), and although some studies have shown that girls report higher levels of wellbeing in school (Gutman et al. 2010), the decline in girls' wellbeing during adolescence has been demonstrated in other studies (Tomyn and Cummins 2011). Overall then, the findings of our study were broadly in line with the literature, but probably the biggest contribution of the work, as noted by one of the paper reviewers, was the development of an instrument to capture children and young people's wellbeing.

Somewhat disappointingly, there was no overall effect for the type of school attended on wellbeing in the survey data suggesting overall that Creative Partnerships did not have an overall effect on wellbeing; however there was evidence that the wellbeing of the youngest children was more positive in Creative Partnerships schools than in the other schools in the study. The qualitative data, which is discussed in detail in Galton and Page (2014), suggested that Year 6 children in all primary schools were being taught in a relatively didactic fashion as teachers felt compelled to prepare children for the SATS examinations (compulsory government tests) and such an approach was perceived as controlling, which accordingly to self-determination theory undermines intrinsic motivation and hence wellbeing (Deci and Ryan 1985). The secondary case studies revealed the difficulties in implementing a whole school creative approach in large institutions who are under extreme pressures in a performativity culture (Ball 1993). However, there was a different emphasis of approach in the primary Creative Partnerships schools, which on the whole (except during preparation for SATS) took a holistic approach where creative work permeated the curriculum and consequently promoted not only feeling well but also functioning effectively. In contrast the other schools tended to put a range of wellbeing strategies in place to make children feel better about themselves, but this did not relate to functioning. Thus our study has provided some evidence to suggest the mechanism through which creative initiatives impact on wellbeing is through intrinsic motivation and eudaimonic aspects of wellbeing.

This study raises further questions about the different facets of young people's wellbeing and the mechanisms through which creative initiatives enhance wellbeing. We are beginning to explore some of these issues in our current project which is examining changes in wellbeing over transition from primary to secondary school, where we are deploying the tool we developed to measure children and young people's wellbeing but also talking to young people and their teachers and observing what is happening inside the classroom. There is still much to learn about children and young people's wellbeing both in terms of how best to conceptualise it, and hence assess it, and also in considering how it may be enhanced in the school context. Maurice and I believe we will not further our understanding unless we continue to focus on life in the classroom and will continue our journey in that respect.

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