Addressing Wellbeing In Schools

An Educator's Practical Guide to Improving Wellbeing

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Introduction

The Purpose of This Resource

Educators have always focused on improving wellbeing. Increasingly, educators are recognizing the importance of prioritizing wellbeing as an outcome worthy of our intentional and collective efforts. We care deeply about our students, other educators, and our school communities, and want to do all we can to help people thrive now and in the future. Part of the challenge we face as educators is that we have a lot of training and ongoing support in improving teaching, academic learning, and classroom management, but very little formal training and support in fostering wellbeing. While improved academic learning and wellbeing are not mutually exclusive (they can actually be mutually reinforcing), we may feel that we do not necessarily have the time and expertise to intentionally impact and assess wellbeing without support. As a result, we as educators often double down on improving and assessing academic learning hoping that by doing so, wellbeing will take care of itself. When that strategy proves insufficient, we may go to Google, online journals, professional friends, or other sources to find interventions and resources that might help improve wellbeing. We are then confronted with sifting through endless resources of varying quality, trying to identify anything that might be useful to us in our context. Most of us as busy educators do not have the time and expertise to thoroughly review the countless resources available. As a result, we may end up choosing interventions based on curb appeal, a great review from a colleague, a low price, or simply because it sounds promising.

Our Objective

In providing this resource, we hope to do some of that legwork for you. While not comprehensive, this resource along with its companion resource [Assessing Wellbeing in Schools](#), are designed to provide practicing educators with a brief review of valid and reliable assessments and interventions that may be of use to you in your context. Each of the interventions outlined in this book is evidence-based, free (or requires only the cost of simple materials), and easy to implement on a classroom or whole-school level with different age groups. If you are looking for a more comprehensive wellbeing or social emotional learning program, visit the Comprehensive Wellbeing Program chapter of this book for some suggestions on finding an evidence-based program to meet your school's needs.

The activities in this resource are not meant to be a "cure-all" for mental health concerns. They should support, but not replace, intervention by psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and school counselors. It will be necessary for teachers and school leaders to continue to work with mental health professionals for the care of their students and staff in some cases. This resource aims to support you as you encourage the members of your school community to flourish and thrive.

Book Organization

This book is divided into two primary sections, one with a focus on wellbeing and postive education interventions for students and the other on interventions for school leaders, teachers and staff. Each intervention begins with a brief introduction followed by an "intervention guide" that provides recommended age/grade-level, materials, duration and

steps for implementation. The final section includes information on peer-reviewed research studies that have been completed for the intervention. The student focused interventions are organized around Dr. Martin Seligman's PERMAH model for wellbeing, which stands for Postive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment, and Health(SOURCE). The employee wellbeing section is organized around whole-school interventions, usually directed by school leadership for all employees, and individual interventions that teachers and staff can complete on their own or in small groups as desired. As you read, you will notice a set of symbols at the top of each intervention page. These symbols, included with a description below, will help you quickly identify if the intervention is intended for youth or adults (or both) and if it requires an additional cost.

This symbol indicates the intervention is intended for use with children and adolescents.

This symbol indicates the intervention is intended for use with adults.

This symbol indicates the intervention can be used with BOTH youth and adults.

This symbol indicates the intervention requires little to no additional cost.

This symbol indicates the intervention will likely require an additional cost for materials, trainings, memberships, etc.

Collaborate With Us

We intend to continually update this resource as more research becomes available. Please share with us additional research, wellbeing interventions, feedback, or other considerations that you feel would be important to this work. Please send all information, feedback, or requests to David Boren at david_boren@byu.edu.

Wellbeing and Its Importance in Schools

In order to improve the mental, emotional, and social wellbeing of children and adults, understanding what makes us happy and successful has become an important focus of recent psychological research. Wellbeing science has emerged in the past few decades, providing us with empirical evidence about the conditions needed to flourish and thrive in the face of adversity (Seligman, 2011). Wellbeing has been defined as "the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively"(Huppert & So, 2011, p. 838). Martin Seligman, the father of modern positive psychology, found that those who flourish have lives rich with Positive Emotion, Engagement, Positive Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment, or PERMA (Seligman, 2011). The PERMA model has been updated to PERMAH, including a section on Health/Vitality (Kern, 2022). Many interventions have been developed to improve wellbeing in each of these categories and will be expounded upon hereafter in this resource. However, while traditional psychotherapy interventions focus primarily on relieving suffering, positive psychology interventions take it one step further. The field of positive psychology seeks not only to help those who flounder to function better, but also to help those who flounder and function to flourish and thrive.
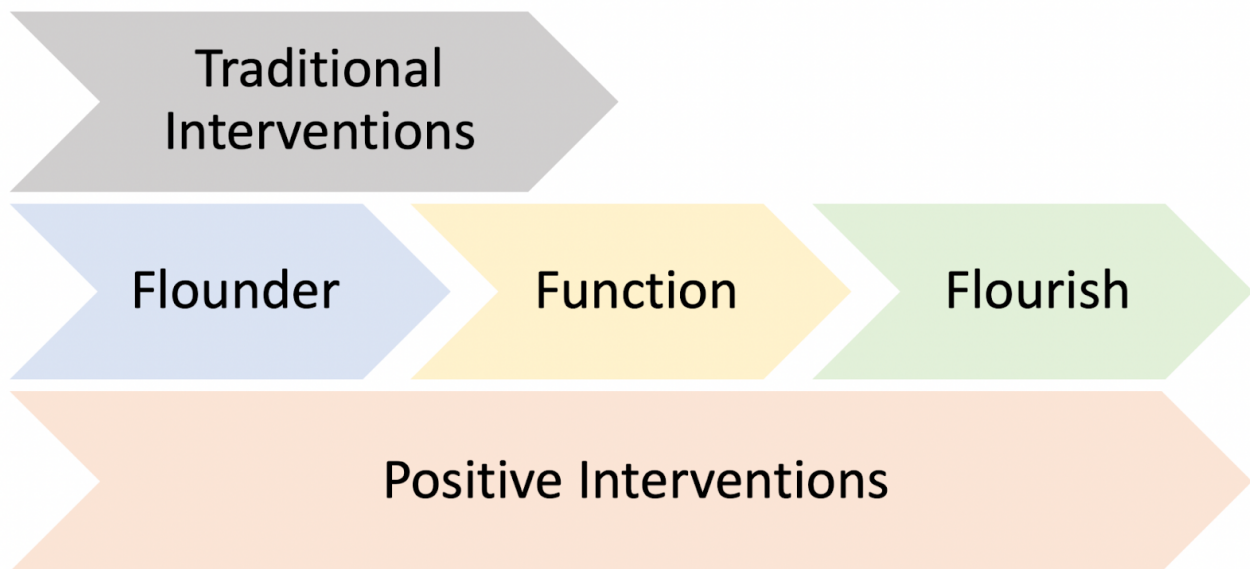
Benefits for Students

With anxiety and depression levels on the rise in our schools among both students and staff, it is important to incorporate the principles of positive psychology in our classrooms to provide our schools with opportunities to improve their psychological and social wellbeing (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention[CDC], n.d.). While some may argue that wellbeing interventions take away from valuable teaching time, the implementation of school wellbeing programs actually improve standardized test scores and academic performance (Adler, 2016). Additional studies have found that higher wellbeing is linked to higher attendance rates, higher grades, and better self control (Suldo, Thalji & Ferron, 2011; Howell, 2009).

Benefits for Teachers

Wellbeing interventions are equally important for teachers and other staff members. Teaching has developed globally as one of the most high stress professions, with high levels of burnout and teacher attrition (Learning Policy Institute, 2017; Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). Some studies have found that as many as 50% of teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching (Ingersoll, Merrill & Stuckey, 2014). Poor work-life balance, emotional exhaustion, little administrative support, and lack of autonomy, among other factors, contribute to lower wellbeing and enjoyment at work (Falecki & Mann, 2021; Seldon, 2018). Additionally, teacher wellbeing is directly linked to student wellbeing (Roffrey, 2012; Klusmann et al., 2016; McCallum & Price, 2010). If our teachers are unhappy, this will have a trickle-down effect to our students (Roffrey, 2012). Luckily, many studies of positive psychology-based interventions have been shown to improve teacher wellbeing, thereby improving teacher job satisfaction, stress levels and effectiveness (Falecki & Mann, 2021; Cameron, 2012; Dutton, 2003; Buckingham & Clifton, 2001).

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What frameworks exist to promote school wellbeing?

This resource centers around Martin Seligman's PERMAH framework because it has been frequently studied and used in positive education curricula, but it is not the only framework available. Some school curricula, particularly in the United States, include SEL, or social emotional learning, as a way to promote wellbeing and student development. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, or CASEL (n.d.), SEL is "the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions" (para. 1). Similar to Seligman's model, CASEL's model for social and emotional learning includes five core components: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships skills, and responsible decision-making.

The Positive Education Schools Association (2020), states that while positive education should not be confused with SEL curriculums and programs, it "encapsulates" many of the key components and goals of SEL (p. 15). Many of the interventions you will find under the PERMAH framework in this resource will also help support your efforts to improve SEL in your schools. Many other frameworks have been researched and developed to define wellbeing, particularly within the scope of education. If you find neither the PERMAH nor SEL frameworks to be the best fit for your school, please visit the Other Resources section for information about other researched-based frameworks.

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What is the best approach for my school/district?

Along with its companion resource ([Assessing Wellbeing in Schools](#)), this resource has been designed to help educators in their efforts to improve wellbeing through the five steps below. These five steps correlate closely with the five D's of the Appreciative Inquiry model, which has proven effective in promoting positive, strength-based change in many organizations.

Appreciative Inquiry helps members of an organization connect to the best in each other and build on their individual strengths (Cooperrider, 2015). Appreciative Inquiry is particularly effective because ALL staff members are encouraged to be involved in the inquiry process and "are empowered to be active members in the change process" (Waters & White, 2015, p.22). When staff actively participate in the Appreciative Inquiry process, they have a greater level of buy-in, ownership, and commitment to the proposed change (Temkin Benchmark Study, 2017 cited in Cooperrider, 2015). This process is not to be done by a few administrators cloistered in their office. Rather, the five steps presented below should be carried out with an array of stakeholders who can both give detailed, honest feedback, and whose energy, ownership, and momentum will be needed to carry out agreed-upon plans and interventions. This often includes school leaders, teachers leaders, faculty, staff, parents, students, community leaders, and district/state educational leaders.

This resource focuses primarily on steps 2-4, while the companion resource focuses primarily on steps 1 and 5 (Assessing Wellbeing in Schools).

1. **Diagnose** the current wellbeing of students, teachers, and the school community by choosing and using valid and reliable wellbeing assessment tools. Examine what has worked and is working. See our companion resource Assessing Wellbeing in Schools for diagnostic tools.

2. **Dream** with relevant stakeholders about the reality we are hoping to create by exploring what could and should be in place.

3. **Design** and choose appropriate and well-matched interventions based on the findings of the diagnosis. Determine timelines, resources, personnel, and other aspects critical to implementing the intervention(s).

4. **Do** what you planned, monitoring and adjusting along the way as needed.

5. **Determine** the impact of the implemented interventions using valid and reliable wellbeing assessment tools. Adjust as needed. Again, our companion resource Assessing Wellbeing in Schools may be helpful in determining how to best evaluate your school's wellbeing efforts.

It might be helpful for your school team to think about this process in the following way.

1. **Diagnose:** What is currently in place?

2. **Dream:** What could be in place?

3. **Design:** What should be in place?

4. **Do:** What will be in place & how will we do it?

5. **Determine:** How is the new reality going?

Is	Could Be	Should Be	Will Be	New Is
Diagnose	Dream	Design	Do	Determine
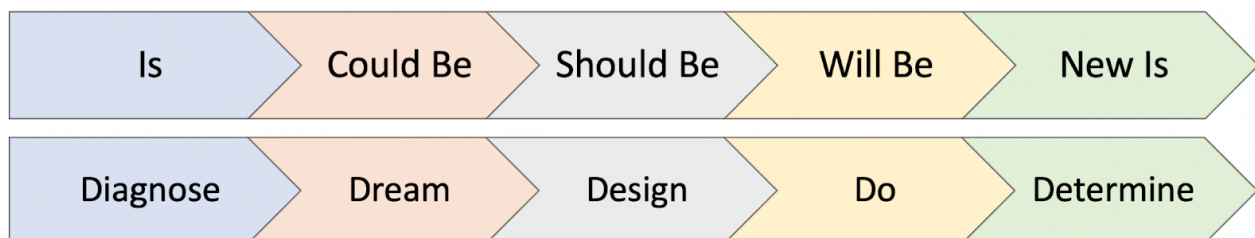
Let's examine each of these steps in a bit more depth.

Step 1: Diagnose: Where are we?

If staff want to know if the school is achieving its purpose and how to continually improve all aspects of the school, multiple measures--gathered from varying points of view--must be used. Education for the Future

Conducting a comprehensive diagnosis of current wellbeing is one of the first steps in improving wellbeing for individuals and schools, because schools and their "leaders seldom rise above the quality of the information available to them" (Maxwell, 1973, p. 68). An unfounded, knee-jerk, or "inaccurate diagnosis can lead to the wrong selection of strategies for improvement that at best will do little harm and at worst could distract the school from a direction of travel that would be more productive" (Leithwood, 2013, p. 256). Schools are often simultaneously and ironically "awash in data" (Fisher and Frey, 2015, p. 80) while lacking valid and reliable data on factors that directly and indirectly impact student and teacher wellbeing. Because "our current data-driven decision making is to a great degree standardized-test-data-driven decision making" (Schmoker, 2008, p. 70), schools often have little valid and reliable information about student, teacher, and organizational wellbeing. While we care deeply about student learning data we get from district, state, and national tests of academic achievement, those data alone are not enough to give us a full picture of wellbeing. "Using multiple measures can really improve decision making" (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2012, p. 103), so we advocate identifying and using several triangulated measures that can provide a more holistic, complete, and relevant view of wellbeing in your current context. You may find our companion resource, [Assessing Wellbeing in Schools](#) helpful in your process of selecting different tools that can provide a more holistic view and diagnosis of the current state of wellbeing for your students, educators, and overall school.

An important part of this phase is purposefully identifying and emphasizing the "bright spots" (Heath & Heath, 2010), or "positive deviants" (Cameron, 2012) within the school. What is working? Why is it working? How do we build on that success? Surely "Providing feedback on weaknesses and deficiencies is also important, of course, but a focus on weaknesses or deficiencies will lead only to the development of competence (Clifton & Harter, 2003), whereas a focus on strengths can lead to excellence and positively deviant performance" (Cameron 2012, p. 75). With this clear view of

where you are as a school and what is working well for you, you are ready to move on to the next phase, dreaming of positive possibilities.

Step 2. Dream: What could be?

We need [people] who can dream of things that never were. John F. Kennedy

Once your school has an accurate view for your current reality, and in particular, your strengths, it then becomes time to start envisioning the many bright possibilities for the future. This phase encourages your team to explore a wide range of possibilities for your school. David Cooperrider recommends using this phase to allow stakeholders to share their success stories and experiences from the Diagnostic phase. One way this can be accomplished is by facilitating "dream dialogue" by asking stakeholders questions about their hopes and wishes for the future of your school and wellbeing efforts (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 28). This should help your school identify and dream about interventions that are successfully being used by some in your school and could be scaled up to the entire school. In addition to identifying the successful interventions already happening at your school, it can be powerful to identify successful interventions used by other schools and organizations. This resource is uniquely designed to help your school identify successful interventions used by other schools and organizations that could be adopted in your school. Here are some guiding questions that might help with this phase:

- What are some untapped opportunities for our school's wellbeing efforts?
- What are the bright spots within our school and how could we scale those up?
- Where have other schools and organizations found success?
- What are some of the interventions that we could potentially try?
- Wouldn't it be amazing if...

Step 3. Design: What should be and will be?

Diagnose — Where are we?

Dream — What could be?

Wellbeing

Design — What should be & will be?

Do — Let's get to work!

Determine — How's it going?

If you chase two rabbits, you will not catch either one. Old Russian Proverb

While there are certainly a lot of fantastic, evidence-based interventions described in this resource, not all will be a good fit for your current context. We advise schools to take a measured approach in identifying the most essential and impactful interventions, and implement those with full fidelity. It is up to your school leadership team, faculty, and other stakeholders to carefully consider your mission, vision, values, contexts, and circumstances when identifying which interventions should be implemented in your context. Here are a few guiding questions to consider in choosing which interventions to implement in your wellbeing improvement plan:

- Based on our school's current context, which of the untapped opportunities and interventions are the best fit for us both short and long term?
- Which interventions are of highest priority to our aspirations and in what order should interventions be implemented?
- What time, materials, and space will this require?
- What type of training and ongoing support will this require?
- Are we confident that this is the intervention that deserves these limited resources?
- Can we fully commit to pursuing this path?

Step 4. Do: Let's get to work!

Diagnose
Where are we?

Dream
What could be?

Wellbeing

Determine
How's it going?

Design
*What should be
& will be?*

Do
*Let's get to
work!*

Leading wellbeing efforts at a school "is not a solo act" (Buffum, Mattos, and Weber, 2012, p. 20), but requires the best collective ideas and efforts of the school community.

School leaders cannot do this alone; having a "single visionary leader is an outdated presupposition in an increasingly complicated world" (Reason, 2014, p. 17). Ed Catmull noted, "Successful leaders embrace the reality that their models may be wrong or incomplete. Only when we admit what we don't know can we ever hope to learn" (2014, p. xvi). We would do well to "assume leadership exists in all corners and levels of all organizations" (Schein & Schein, 2018, p. xi) and rely heavily on others, knowing that "people support what they help to create" (deFlaminis, Abdul-Jabbar, & Yoak, 2016, p. 35). As such, schools serious about improving wellbeing ensure that this work is ongoing and of highest priority among all stakeholders and teams (eg. school leadership teams, parent teams, student leadership teams, teacher teams, community councils, etc.). Here are some ideas that might help your school successfully implement your wellbeing improvement plans together.

Clarify the Compelling Why

Amidst the hustle and bustle of schools, we can easily get caught in the whirlwind, feverishly bouncing from one urgent issue to the next, forgetting why we do what we do. We must help ourselves and others remember the very deep, noble, and personal reasons we became educators. Among other things, these reasons usually include building and blessing students' wellbeing. Let's tap into educators' deep desire to bless lives by tastefully sharing students' authentic experiences about how their wellbeing has been transformed at school. Truthfully, "if school leaders cannot provide a compelling why, the staff will not care about the what" (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2012, p. 21). Transforming student wellbeing is our noble and compelling why.

Create Safe Conditions

Murphy and Seashore-Lewis remind us that "The role of leadership is to create positive environments in which human beings can thrive" (2018, p. 1). Just as gardeners cannot force seeds to grow, we cannot micromanage or force wellbeing interventions to flourish at our schools. We can intentionally work toward creating the conditions and climates needed for our collective efforts to blossom. Amy Edmonson describes such conditions: "If leaders want to unleash individual and collective talent, they must foster a psychologically safe climate where employees feel free to contribute ideas, share information, and report mistakes" (Edmondson, 2019, p. xvi). The relationships and cultures in our schools among the adults must be such that each adult feels safe and encouraged to take risks, make mistakes, ask questions, tactfully disagree, and make course corrections. As Fullan and Kirtman explain: "Students cannot be empowered by unempowered teachers, and principals cannot empower teachers without being empowered themselves" (2019, p. 69). We empower others and ourselves by conveying humility, vulnerability, candor, connection, equality, curiosity, and no-blame continuous improvement. Efforts to ensure these attributes are practiced engenders trust and builds relationships. Leithwood reminds us that "Effective leaders know that people are not their best asset; they are their only asset, so the need to nurture, develop, and strengthen relationships is at the very core of what good leaders do" (Leithwood et. al, 2013, p. 261). With these types of conditions our wellbeing intervention efforts will have rich soil, plenty of water and sun, and will be free of entangling weeds that would otherwise hamper growth.

Build Capacity

While many educators have the desire to improve wellbeing, few have received specific training about how to actually improve wellbeing. Linda Darling-Hammond (2017) and others propose some great strategies for helping build the skills and capacities of educators looking to implement new interventions:

- Learn together – Read articles, watch video clips, and attend trainings, conferences, and classes together. Truly, "People grow at lightning speed with the right kind of developmental investment" (Frei & Morriss, 2020, p. 109).
- Study positive examples – Visit other schools and teams that are bright spots in supporting wellbeing. "If we study what is average, we will remain merely average" (Achor, 2010, p. 10).
- Focus and simplify – Focus improvement efforts on those areas most important to your school. Break mastery into small, meaningful goals, and implement incrementally. "A major failure of education reform has been its exhaustive and exhausting call for doing 'more,' without identifying what to do less of" (Wagner & Dintersmith, 2015, p. 260).
- Adjust time, schedules, budgets, and spaces –Get creative with time, space, and funds to clear the path for implementation. As Heath and Heath explain, "Tweaking the environment is about making the right behavior a little bit easier and the wrong behaviors a little bit harder" (2010, p. 183).
- Ongoing modeling, coaching, feedback, and reflection – Ensure that each educator has access to successful models, dollops of feedback, constructive coaching, and ample time for reflection. Jim Knight observes: "I seem to learn best when someone shows me how to do it, watches me, and then gives me feedback" (2007, p. 110).
- Experiment & take risks - Ensure there is a safe culture of productive risk taking, responding to failure, and making gradual improvements. "Giving people the space to mess up and learn from their mistakes can have an extraordinary impact on organizations" (Frei & Morris, 2020, p. 123).

Run a Pilot

We rarely get things completely right the first time around. Large corporations would never dream of rolling out a new product without running at least one pilot. Most organizations run a beta trial followed by version 1.0, then version 2.0, and so on. Pilot programs allow schools to work out the inevitable bugs of solid interventions, and to identify weaker interventions that should not be scaled up schoolwide. Sometimes piloting interventions allows schools a safe way to "get started, then get better" (Eaker & Keating, 2009, p. 51). Schools can then make needed adjustments, to "shift course based on what [they] are learning" (Fullan, 2019, p. 72) before scaling an intervention up to a larger group.

Give it Time & Adapt

Sometimes schools enthusiastically implement new interventions, only to abandon them prematurely. Jim Knight warns: "During the 'attempt, attack, abandon cycle,' someone introduces a new practice into a school, and teachers make a half-hearted attempt to implement it. Then, before the program has been implemented effectively, individuals in the school or district begin to attack the program. As a result, many of the teachers implementing the program now begin to lose their will to stick with it. Inevitably, even though the practice was never implemented well, leaders in the district reject it as unsuccessful, and abandon it, only to propose another program that is sure to be pulled into the same vicious cycle, to eventually be attacked and abandoned for another program, and on and on" (Knight, 2007, p. 200). We should expect that the old way of doing things will be easier for a time; feeling uncomfortable or stressed about new ways of doing things is very normal. Let's ensure we give these new interventions a fair chance at having their intended impact.

In contrast, as we jump into improving student wellbeing and try different interventions, the goal is not necessarily to get it perfect right up front, but to monitor, adjust, and nimbly adapt as needed. One of the co-creators of Pixar, Ed Catmull, mused: "How do we go about creating the unmade future? I believe that all we can do is foster the optimal conditions in which it --whatever 'it' is--can emerge and flourish. This is where real confidence comes in. Not the confidence that we know exactly what to do at all times but the confidence that, together, we will figure it out (Catmull & Wallace, 2014, p. 224). Fullan and Kirtman further observe, "Our guess is that at the beginning you may not know how to proceed. In fact, we suggest that you not be too sure of yourself about strategy. Instead, you need to convey that the strategy will be worked out jointly with members of the organization that you have some ideas about how to approach the situation but will need other ideas" (Fullan & Kirtman, 2019, p. 100). While these principles may seem oxymoronic, we need to both give interventions time to run their course, while adapting them as needed to our unique circumstances (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009).

As we start implementing our plans and interventions, these five recommendations should help your school move forward effectively:

- Clarify the Compelling Why
- Create Safe Conditions
- Build Capacity
- Run a Pilot
- Give it Time & Adapt

Step 5. Determine: How's it going?

Every time a new initiative is put into place, a plan for measuring its effectiveness should accompany its implementation. Anne Conzemius, 2012, p. 25

A popular notion suggests that people in unfamiliar terrain often walk in circles. In a study designed to better understand this claim, scientists at the Max Planck Institute confirmed that without a visible landmark, people really do walk in circles, cross their own paths, and despair at their lack of progress. Because identifying a clear, stable, undisputed landmark or goal is one of the challenges in wellbeing work, sometimes we tend to walk in circles. School improvement guru Victoria Bernhardt warns: "Too often, schools in this country conduct their education programs with little formal analysis of how well those programs work. Teachers and administrators rely instead on 'gut feelings' about what's working and what isn't" (Bernhardt, 2000, p. 33).

A key component of developing an effective wellbeing program is pre-, post-, and ongoing assessment and evaluation. Waters and White remind, "If you treasure it, you must measure it" (2015, p.27). A baseline measure of your school's wellbeing will be an instrumental landmark in assessing the effectiveness of the interventions you choose to implement. It is imperative that these measures are evidence-based and reliable. Some may shy away from assessing or measuring wellbeing in schools due the perceived imprecision of wellbeing measures, choosing instead to pursue more traditional goals and measures that are seemingly easier to measure or more precise. This reminds us of the man who was looking for his keys under the lamppost because the light was better there, even though he had dropped his keys several feet away from the lamppost. While no wellbeing measure (or any measure for that matter) is perfectly precise, there are many solid wellbeing assessments, with more coming available. Truly "it is much better to be approximately right in these measures than precisely wrong" (Constanza et al., 2013, p. 7). The companion book to this current work, Assessing wellbeing in schools: An educator's practical guide for measuring wellbeing, provides an in-depth review of many research-based measures of wellbeing for students and teachers. We encourage you to study this

and other wellbeing assessments that may be a good fit for your school. As you start assessing wellbeing, you may want to consistently ask the following questions (see Conzemius, 2012):

1. Who is the intervention intended to serve?
2. Who is actually being served? Who is not being served?
3. Is the intervention being implemented with fidelity?
4. How is implementation being monitored? Should it be monitored differently?
5. What are the results?
6. Is it having the level of impact that makes it worthy of our investment?
7. What adjustments could/should be made?
8. What are our best next steps?

We offer a few reminders that should better support our measurement efforts. First, use your results to actually drive improvement. As Thomas Many and colleagues point out, "Regular measurement alone does nothing to improve results; it is only the action educators take through results analysis that truly leads to improved achievement" (2018, p. 30). Fisher and Frey similarly warn, "Schools are awash in data, and teachers are being asked to gather data in a myriad of high-tech and low-tech ways. But gathering is not analyzing, and without analysis there's little reason to gather the data in the first place. It's like picking apples off the tree, only to let them rot rather than consume them" (Fisher and Frey, 2015, p. 80). Our second reminder is to never forget that the data collected from these assessments are directly linked to individuals. "It is an exercise of futility indeed to assemble massive arrays of facts or statistics unless we understand the flesh and blood world they represent...it is the worth of souls that is great--not statistics" (Maxwell, 1973, p. 30).

Taking frequent, and consistent measurement within a set timeframe (monthly, bimonthly, annually) will provide your team with the information necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of wellbeing interventions. Taking a measurement and analyzing the information received should inspire your team into further inquiry, allowing you to repeat the diagnose, dream, design, do, and determine cycle for continuous upward improvement.

Select the five steps of the implementation process included in this chapter.

- [ ] Design
- [ ] Diagnose
- [ ] Dream
- [ ] Do
- [ ] Discover
- [ ] Determine

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Valuable Tools and Consideration

As you work with your school leadership team to design your wellbeing program there are many important facets of implementing effective wellbeing interventions that must be considered. This section will address many of those and help guide your team's efforts in creating a program unique to your school's needs.

Activity Constraints

While all the interventions included in this resource have been found to increase wellbeing, they likely will not increase wellbeing evenly across all participants. Lyubomirsky's Positive-Activity Model shown below illustrates several factors that influence a wellbeing intervention's effectiveness. It is important to consider the features of each wellbeing activity such as "dosage, variety, sequence, and built-in social support" (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013, p.58). Research has thus far been inconclusive about the optimal dosage and sequence of interventions to improve wellbeing. Therefore, it is important to know each of your students and their unique needs. When considering which interventions to implement, you must consider how the interventions fit with school and classroom goals, strengths and culture. Choose activities that your students and staff will be most interested in, as motivation is a key component of the effectiveness of wellbeing interventions, and provide necessary support(Lyubomirsky et al., 2011; Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013). Providing a variety of interventions can also help you meet the diverse needs of your students and staff. The following model, created by Lyubomirsky and Layous (2013), outlines additional considerations to help you find the best fitting interventions for your school or classroom.
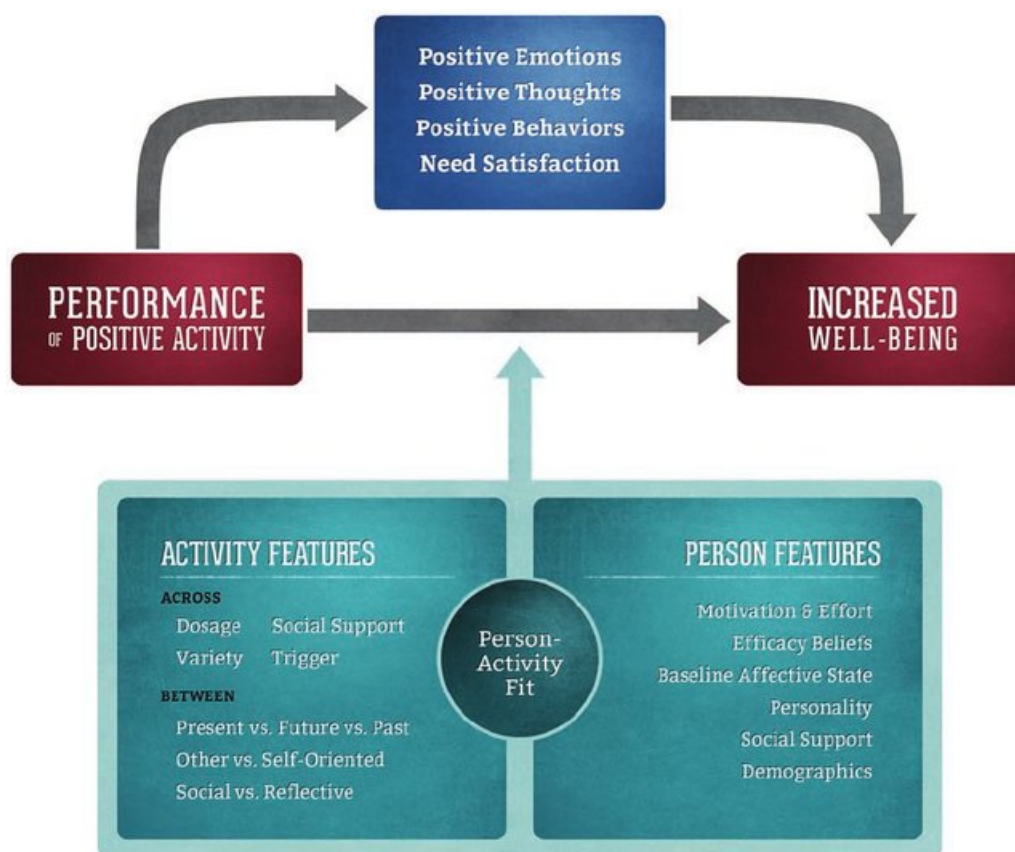
According to CASEL, effective wellbeing interventions must be SAFE: sequenced, active, focused and explicit (https://casel.org/approaches/). Sequenced activities must be "connected and coordinated" (https://casel.org/approaches/). Breaking down the learning of new wellbeing concepts and skills into small sequential steps is necessary to help participants fully understand and develop these skills. (Durlak, Weissberg & Pachan, 2010). For example, before starting a mindfulness intervention, it may be important to have a prior activity where students learn what mindfulness is and how it can help them improve wellbeing. You might also follow up a mindfulness activity with a reflection activity on how students feel the activity impacted their wellbeing. Activities that are active do not necessarily require participants to be up and moving, but they must be engaged in the activity for it to have maximum effectiveness. Hands-on activities, such as role-playing and other rehearsal strategies, writing assignments, and frequent practice of the activity encourage participants to act on the material they are learning(Durlak, Weissberg & Pachan, 2010). A focused activity means that the time and attention dedicated to the activity is committed to the development of wellbeing. An activity must also be explicit in that it has clear and specific learning objectives, with an emphasis on working towards a specific aspect or skill of wellbeing(Durlak, Weissberg & Pachan, 2010). As you will see, this book organizes the activities into different aspects of the PERMAH framework. Rather than just choosing activities you find interesting, plan your activities around the wellbeing needs under the PERMAH framework that would best fit your school's needs.

Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusion

Individual characteristics such as motivations and beliefs, personalities, perceived support, and demographic variables all can impact the effectiveness of an intervention (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013). For example, an extrovert may gain more positive emotion from a social activity, whereas an introvert may benefit more from a self-reflection exercise (Lyubomirsky, Tkach, & Sheldon, 2004). It is also important to consider cultural differences present in the school and design interventions and activities in a way that benefits each student. Many countries have different definitions about what it means to be happy or well. One study found that Eastern countries focus more on group happiness and

wellbeing, whereas Western cultures tend to focus on the individual (Uchida, Norasakkunkit & Kitayama, 2004)."Definitional differences that exist between cultures can have overarching effects on design, and success, of particular positive interventions" (Pedrotti, 2014, p.406). Layous and colleagues(2013) found that students in the United States significantly benefited from a gratitude activity, whereas a gratitude intervention actually decreased wellbeing in students in South Korea. Because of cultural differences, doing an acts of kindness intervention was more beneficial to wellbeing in South Korean students than doing a gratitude activity, yet the reverse was true among students in the United States (Layous et al., 2013). Having a group discussion with your class or staff members regarding happiness and wellbeing may help you better understand the differing perspectives of the group towards the subject.

Dr. Stefanie K. Johnson, who has extensively researched organizational diversity and inclusion, in a recent interview, provided a few actionable steps leaders can take to promote diversity within their organization (Williams, 2021). First, she recommends embracing the fact that we are going to make mistakes, but not letting that stop us from continually working to improve inclusivity within our workplaces. Second, to promote diversity, we must recognize differences and see those differences as value that can be added. One way to do this is to make recognizing different perspectives the goal of staff meetings. Specifically, Johnson recommends sending out questions to be discussed in the meeting in advance, and then compiling various staff responses to be shared in the meeting, placing a particular emphasis on different opinions and unique responses. By doing this, leaders can create more equality in meetings between the participation of men and women, new and experienced employees, and introverts and extroverts (Williams, 2021). As you discover the cultural and belief differences your school may have towards wellbeing, this will help you decide what activities will be most beneficial as you move forward.

Wellbeing Literacy

As DuFour and colleagues explain, "Terms travel easily...but the meaning of the underlying concept does not...It is difficult enough to bring these concepts to life in a school or district when there is shared understanding of their meaning. It is impossible when there is no common understanding and the terms mean very different things to different people within the same organization" (2016, p. 19). We encourage you to use the language of wellbeing in your interactions with students, staff, parents, and other community members to improve wellbeing literacy. Lindsay Oades, a leader in wellbeing literacy research, states that wellbeing literacy is "mindful language use for and about wellbeing" and includes "the vocabulary, knowledge and skills that may be intentionally used to maintain or improve the wellbeing of oneself or others" (Oades et al., 2021, p.696; Oades et al., 2017, p.171). The goal of wellbeing literacy is to make language about wellbeing understandable and familiar. Oades shares that to achieve wellbeing literacy one must have the ability to: 1) understand key vocabulary and terms of wellbeing, 2) comprehend and articulate how wellbeing is achieved and why it is important, 3) adapt their knowledge of wellbeing to different contexts and situations, 4) frequently and intentionally use wellbeing vocabulary and knowledge to improve the wellbeing of self and other (Oades et al., 2021, p. 699. See Table 2). To increase wellbeing literacy in your school and community, consider implementing these tools:

- Not only including positive psychology interventions in the classroom, but explaining to students why wellbeing matters and how these activities can benefit them.
- Providing a pamphlet or newsletter to parents defining wellbeing, outlining the importance of addressing student wellbeing, and how it will be addressed in your school
- Holding staff meetings dedicated to understanding wellbeing and its many facets.
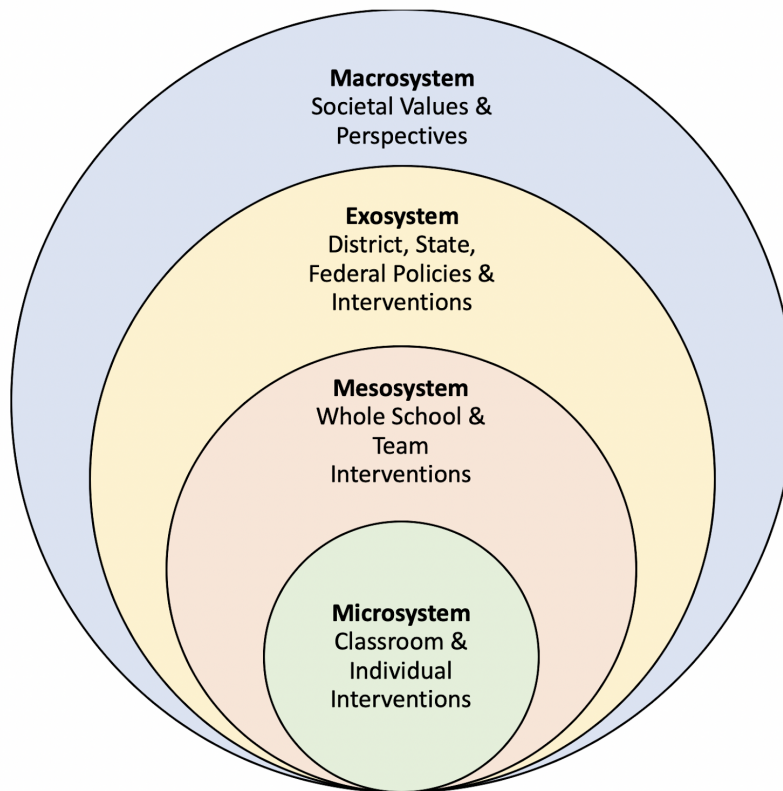
As you educate yourself and your school community about wellbeing, the effectiveness of the wellbeing interventions implemented in your school will be enhanced (Oades et al., 2021).
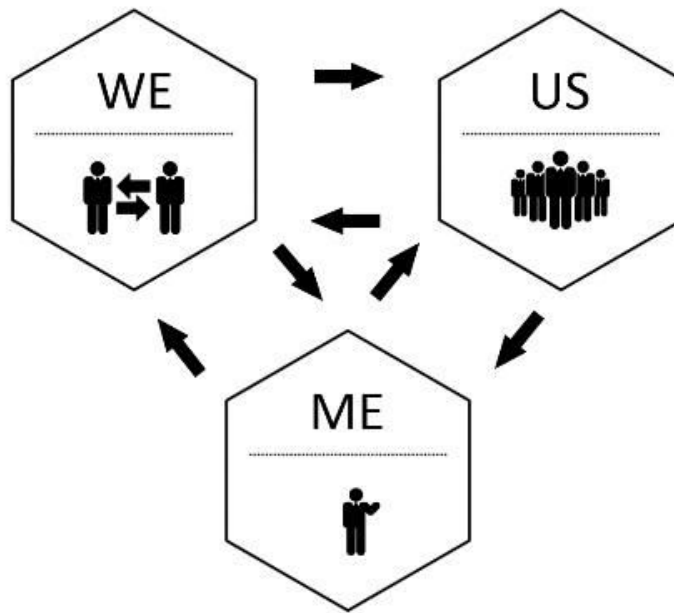
Systems- Informed Planning

While improving wellbeing can certainly be pursued by individual teachers and teams, it will be much more effective if thoughtfully and intentionally done by an entire school or district system. We're not shooting for a few pockets of wellbeing greatness in our systems. Every student and teacher deserves to experience high levels of wellbeing at school, so we must ensure teams, schools, and districts coherently support the people, programs, processes, and structures that enhance wellbeing. "If you want to move something that's difficult to move, everyone needs to be pushing in the same direction, otherwise very good people can build very effective silos" (Knudson, 2013, p. 10 as cited in Lyle Kirtman & Michael Fullan, 2016 Leadership: Key Competencies for Whole-System Change, p. 82).

Systems-informed planning requires thinking about the bigger picture and considering the context of a proposed intervention. According to Peggy Kern(2019), the developer of systems-informed positive psychology, or SIPP, a systems approach allows for different perspectives and looks at unintended consequences of proposed interventions. It also recognizes that "no single discrete element within a school exists in isolation from the others" (Aguilar, 2013, p. 53), so wellbeing is the responsibility of the system, not just the individual (McQuaid, 2017). An example of this was illustrated in a study conducted in a hospital where nurses were not treated well by the doctors and their superiors. The nurses in turn ended up treating their patients with the same coldness, criticism, and impatience with which they were being treated (White, Slemp & Murray, 2017, p. x). While the nurses' superiors may have not directly interacted with patients, their mistreatment of the nurses indirectly led to the mistreatment of patients. Similarly, if the culture of a school is not supportive of wellbeing, implementing different interventions to improve wellbeing may not be as effective.Tackling school wellbeing from a top-down approach is just as important as targeting it from the bottom-up.

Urie Bronfenbrenner(1972), an American psychologist, created a systems-based ecological model to address the factors and systems that influence child development. As illustrated in the model below, he argued that these systems range from the wider context of societal values, laws and social services(the macro and exosystems), to interpersonal relationships with family, school teachers, and peers(meso and microsystems). McCallum and Price (2015) adapted this model to address the systems affecting educator and school wellbeing. The macrosystem and exosystem usually involve factors that are beyond a single teacher or school leader's control, such as societal perspectives and values regarding wellbeing and education, as well as district, state and federal policies involving teacher pay, scheduling, curriculum, etc. However, educators and school leaders may need to work closely with these greater systems to lobby for additional funding, permission, and resources in order to implement a wellbeing program or intervention. School wellbeing should "not solely [be] the responsibility of individuals, but rather a collaborative concern shared across schooling sectors, universities, employing authorities, and professional associations" (Price & McCallum, 2015, p.197).

Macrosystem
Societal Values &
Perspectives

Exosystem
District, State,
Federal Policies &
Interventions

Mesosystem
Whole School &
Team
Interventions

Microsystem
Classroom &
Individual
Interventions

In order to promote the efficacy and longevity of wellbeing interventions, we must consider the relationships between different systems within our schools, particularly the meso and microsystems, involving interactions between school leaders, teachers, students and their peers, and parents. Dr. Aaron Jarden (2016) recommends that within schools we should address three particular systems: me (individual), we(teams) and us(whole school community).Most wellbeing interventions are activities that can be done individually, such as using strengths and mindfulness. Dr. Jarden suggests that it is important to include interventions that initiate cooperation and teamwork and involve the school community as a whole, rather than just individual students and teachers. Examples of "us" interventions could include holding a wellbeing training for parents and community members or creating a wellbeing policy for your school (Jarden & Jarden, 2016).

If your system is not yet aligned and coherent in its approach to enhanced wellbeing, we join Fullan and Gallagher in their invitation to do what you can where you are, and start working to change the system. "See yourself as a system player. If your system is not supporting you yet in these changes, all the more reason for you to engage with the system to bring it inside. You are just as much a part of the system as the president or whomever…If there ever was a time to be a system player, it is now" (2020, p. 77).

Which of the following tools are you most likely to use with your school or district?

☐ Person-Activity Fit

☐ Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusion

☐ Wellbeing Literacy

☐ Systems Informed Planning

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Your Call to Action

Now more than ever, students and educators need our intentional and concerted efforts to improve wellbeing. Our students and staff do not live in a vacuum. As such, when we implement a school wellbeing program we should aim to teach skills that will not only help our students and staff thrive in the school environment, but outside of our schools and classrooms as well. We hope that by teaching social, emotional, mental, and physical wellbeing skills at school, students will thrive at home, in the community, with their peers, and long into adolescence and adulthood. While starting this journey can be a little scary, let's take Teddy Roosevelt's advice to, "Do what you can, with what you've got, where you are!" Thanks for your passion and desire to improve wellbeing in schools through positive interventions.

Student Wellbeing Interventions

In this section you will find a variety of interventions that have been shown to support student wellbeing. These activities have been organized in such a way as to be assigned to which PERMAH characteristic they have been shown to be most correlated with. It is important to note that "these elements [of PERMAH] are mutually supportive and interconnected" (Kern, 2022, p. 19) It is likely that while striving to increase positive relationships, your positive emotions and meaning will increase. Many of these activities will in fact improve multiple areas of the PERMAH framework. Though we have included a separate section with interventions for teacher and staff wellbeing later on in this book, you may find that some of these activities listed in the student section may also help support your own wellbeing.

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Positive Emotion
Three Good Things
Counting Blessings
Envisioning Your Best Possible Self
Understanding Humor
Three Funny Things
Outdoor Learning
Bringing the Outside In
Bibliotherapy
Engagement
Recognizing and Utilizing Personal Strengths
ARCS Model of Curiosity
Carousel Brainstorming
Genius Hour

Perspective Taking and Role-Play
Arts Integration
Drawing and Coloring Therapy
Culturally-Enriching and Arts-Based Field Trips
Culturally Responsive Practices
Social Belonging Intervention
Emotional Self-Regulation: RULER method
Modeling Emotional Self-Regulation Skills
Teacher Praise
Relationships
Modeling Love, Kindness and Forgiveness
Active Constructive Responding
Dialogue Journals
Secret Strengths Spotting
Peer Praise Notes
Acts of Kindness
Volunteering
Fast Friends
Buddy Bench
Meaning
Educating Students about Benefit Appraisals
Gratitude Letters
Savoring Strategies
Taking in the Good (HEAL)
Mental Time Travel
Brief Mindfulness Activities
Mindful Bell
Mindful Breathing
Body Scan Relaxation

Positive Emotion

Experiencing positive emotions such as happiness, cheerfulness, optimism, and hope are essential to one's wellbeing (Seligman et al., 2009). Positive emotions boost learning, attention, and can help change one's mindset (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Chesney et al., 2005; Bolte et al., 2003). Experiencing positive emotions in early adolescence can prolong one's life expectancy by an average of 9 years (Danner et al., 2001). Positive emotions can boost productivity and creativity, strengthen resilience, and promote healthy relationships and social support (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Dr. Peggy Kern has said, "emotions provide feedback as to what is working and what is not working; by tuning into our emotions, we can better navigate the opportunities and challenges that life brings" (Kern, 2022, p. 6). Understanding our emotions is the first step in improving our wellbeing, providing us with the ability to "anticipate, initiate, prolong and build positive emotional experiences and accept and develop healthy responses to negative emotions" (Norrish et al., 2013, p.152). The activities in this section are designed to provide your students with the opportunity to recognize positive emotions with ease, cope with negative emotions, and to have more positive experiences.

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Three Good Things

Counting Blessings
Envisioning Your Best Possible Self
Understanding Humor
Three Funny Things
Outdoor Learning
Bringing the Outside In
Bibliotherapy

Three Good Things

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

The Three Good Things activity gets students thinking positively by reflecting on good things that happen to them. For this activity, are encouraged to write down three positive things that have happened to them every day for a week. These can be simple things like "my mom packed my favorite lunch" or more impactful positive events such as, "I got a great grade on my test!" After writing down their list of three good things, students are asked to reflect on why those things happened and how they can replicate more happy events in the future. Inviting students to share their positive things with their peers can also help them savor and strengthen the positive emotions they feel (Gable et al., 2018). As students do this activity, not only will they learn to recognize the good around them, but they will become more optimistic and happy (Carter et al., 2016).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Paper, writing utensil
Duration:	3-5 minutes daily, for one week. Repeat as needed.
Implementation:	1.Decide what time of day you will set aside for the activity each day. If you decide to do the activity at the beginning of the day, consider having students reflect on the previous day.
	2.Introduce students to the idea of 3 good things and provide examples perhaps by sharing your own 3 good things.
	3.Give students a few questions to get them reflecting on their positive things.
	Examples: "Why did this good thing happen? What does this mean to you? How can you increase the likelihood of this event happening in the future?" (Seligman et al., 2009, p.301)
	4.Provide students a few minutes to write down and reflect upon good things.

5. Invite students to share their good things with a peer or the whole class.

Does it work?

Much research has been done by Martin Seligman on this activity and its impact on wellbeing with its use as part of the Penn Resiliency Program, which has gained great acclaim for its effectiveness in improving wellbeing of students at the Geelong Grammar School (Seligman et al., 2009). Recent research has studied how to implement this activity with children and its impact on youth wellbeing. In one 2016 study, 606 children ages 9-11 were given a booklet to record 3 good things and a brief explanation each day over 1 week. At the conclusion of the activity, researchers found that the children reported an increase in happiness, decrease in depressive symptoms (Carter et al., 2016).

Two studies done in Anglesey, North Wales with nearly 700 elementary students from ages 8-11 found that when students recorded 3 positive events in a diary every day for a week it "resulted in significant increases in self-reported happiness and decreases in depressive symptoms" and increases in life satisfaction (Wingate, Suldo, & Peterson, 2018, p. 114). These positive effects remained at the three-month follow-up and the larger sample study found that this intervention was most helpful for the unhappiest of children. However, it is important to note that in the larger study "the happiest group of children displayed significantly reduced levels of happiness and higher levels of depression following the intervention" (Wingate, Suldo, & Peterson, 2018, p. 118). It is hypothesized that this small effect was because these children hit an emotional ceiling and did not engage in wellbeing practices after the completion of the study. The slight variance of results supports the idea that positive psychology interventions are not "universally applicable and that interventions tailored to the wellbeing needs of specific children will be more effective" (Wingate, Suldo, & Peterson, 2018, p. 119).

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Counting Blessings

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

One way to increase your students' optimistic outlook is by having them "count their blessings." This gratitude based activity has students list 5 things they are grateful for, on a daily or weekly basis. This simple activity only takes a few minutes and can be flexibly fit into a daily schedule. As with the three good things activity, sharing their blessings list with others can deepen the positive emotions students experience by counting their blessings (Gable et al., 2018). Having students reflect on things they are grateful for will help them combat negative emotions with positive ones and have greater enjoyment at school (Emmons & McCullough, 2003).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Paper, writing utensil
Duration:	3-5 minutes daily or weekly. Repeat as needed.
Implementation:	1.Decide what time of day you will set aside for the activity each day. If you decide to do the activity at the beginning of the day, consider having students reflect on the previous day.
	2.Introduce students to the idea of counting blessings, or things they are grateful for and instruct them to write up to 5 each day.
	3.Provide students a few minutes to write down and reflect upon blessings.
	4. Invite students to share their list of blessings with a peer or the whole class.
	5.Repeat activity as needed, though it is recommended to continue the activity for at least 2 weeks.

Does it work?

One study of 221 early-adolescents performed the counting blessings activity each day for 2 weeks with a 3 week follow-up. Students were asked to list up to 5 things they were grateful for each day. Students who participated in the counting blessings intervention reported greater satisfaction with school, increased optimism, and decreased emotional distress (Froh, Sefick & Emmons, 2008). In a similar study, 201 undergraduate students (147 women, 54 men) were asked to list 5 blessings they were grateful for from the past week. After 9 weeks, the gratitude group "felt better about their lives as a whole, and were more optimistic regarding their expectations for the upcoming week" (Emmons & McCullough, 2003, p. 381). The researchers repeated this study two more times, with slight variations, and concluded that "people led to focus on their blessings were also more likely to report having helped someone with a personal problem or offered emotional support to another," and reported that the activity resulted in increased positive emotions, a more optimistic life perspective, and decreased negative emotions (Emmons & McCullough, 2003, p. 386).

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Envisioning Your Best Possible Self

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

The "best possible self" intervention invites students to imagine themselves at a time in the future, when 'they have achieved everything desired, after working hard towards it" (Carrillo et al., 2019, p.2). Students are encouraged to write all they can about this future self and what they hope to have achieved to become that person. Sheldon and Lyuobirmsky (2006) share that "writing about one's possible selves. . .allows an opportunity to learn about oneself, to illuminate and restructure one's priorities, and to gain better insight into one's motives and emotions" (p. 175). The original creator of the activity encouraged participants to write about their best possible self for 20 minutes, for four consecutive days, but recent studies have shortened that amount, or even introduced it as a drawing activity for younger children, with similar results (Sheldon & Lyuobirmsky, 2006; Owens & Patterson, 2013).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Paper, writing or coloring utensils
Duration:	10-15 minutes, single session. Repeat as needed.
Implementation:	1. Decide what time of day you will set aside for the activity each day.
	2. Introduce students to the idea of imagining the future and the possibilities of who they can become. Have them imagine who they would like to be in the future and what they hope to have accomplished.
	3. Provide students 10-15 minutes to write about or draw a representation themselves at their best, enjoying a future activity.

Does it work?

A study done at the University of Missouri asked 67 students to either focus on expressing gratitude for blessings in their life, focus on optimism by envisioning their best possible selves, or pay attention to the details of their lives (Sheldon &Lyubomirsky, 2006). After completing an initial writing assignment about their topic and several weeks of independent practices, researchers found that all three exercises immediately reduced negative emotions. Those in the "Best Possible Selves" (BPS) condition experienced the most increased positive emotions with the gratitude condition coming second. The BPS condition "prompted the highest degree of self-concordant motivation; that is, participants indicated greater identification with and interest in continuing to do the BPS exercise, relative to the others" (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006, p. 80). This study supports the importance of both gratitude for life events and optimism when envisioning future life events. Additional studies suggest that writing about our best possible selves can result in immediate increases in positive emotion with limited long-term benefits (Bean, 2019, p. 250).

For younger students, you might consider having them draw their best self, rather than write about it. One study has tested this process to see if it has the same effect as the writing intervention. Of the 62 children ages 5-11 in after-school care/day camp programs that were studied, 23 students were asked to draw a picture of themselves in a future condition at their best (participating in something they enjoy), 22 students were told to draw something they were grateful for, and the control group was asked to draw about something that happened during the week (Owens & Patterson, 2013). Not only did this study reflect similar results to those of other best self interventions, the students' self esteem was significantly improved in the best possible selves intervention, with no change in the gratitude or control groups(Owens & Patterson, 2013).

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Understanding Humor

Intervention Overview

As educators, it can be helpful to understand humor and its benefits to maximize its effect in our lives. The Benign Violation Theory categorizes humor as something that is simultaneously harmless, but a violation of our beliefs or expectations. This 'sweet spot' is different for all of us depending on how we perceive the situation (Humor Research Team, 2015, n.p.). To become better at humor, Andrew Tarvin (2017), a comedian and consultant, suggests that we start by sharing our point of view. Understanding that humor is a skill, helps us see that the more we attend to it and learn from our mistakes, the better we can become. Specifically in the classroom, Elias (2015) suggests that teachers can set up a joke Friday, laugh at themselves more often, and share memes and jokes.

For humor to be most effective and appreciated by students, teachers are encouraged to use humor that is appropriate and/or relates to the content or point of the lesson (Edwards and Gibboney, 1992, 22-23). There are four main types of humor that are considered appropriate:

- Related humor: jokes, stories, school life stereotypes, teacher performance and role-playing activities related to the course content
- Unrelated humor: Humor using the same categories listed above, but not related to class material
- Self-disparaging humor: embarrassing stories, making fun of self, making fun of silly mistakes made in class
- Unintentional or unplanned humor (Jonas, 2010, p. 5)

Humor is important to learning because it reduces students' anxiety levels and helps them feel more comfortable in the classroom. Not only does humor reduce symptoms of emotional distress, but it also promotes positive emotions. Studies have found that the use of humor in the classroom increases self-esteem, alertness and creativity (Lujan & DiCarlo, 2016; Savage et al., 2017).

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Three Funny Things

Middle School High school Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

This activity is based on the "Three Good Things" activity, but instead targets students' sense of humor. This intervention exemplifies the well-known phrase "laughter is the best medicine." Instead of writing about three positive things that happened during the day, students write about three funny or amusing things that happened. After completing this activity, students will have a significant boost in happiness and cheerfulness, and may even smile more often (Gander et al., 2012).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Paper, pencil
Duration:	3-5 minutes daily, for one week. Repeat as needed.
Implementation:	1.Decide what time of day you will set aside for the activity each day. If you decide to do the activity at the beginning of the day, consider having students reflect on the previous day.
	2. Introduce students to the idea of 3 funny things and provide examples perhaps by sharing your own 3 funny things
	3.Provide students a few minutes to write down and reflect upon their list.

Does it work?

Building upon the idea of three good things, one group of researchers wanted to test the power of humor and see if the intervention would work just as well with funny things (Gander et al., 2012). Participants were asked to write down three funny things that happen each day and why they were funny, for one week. After completing the study, participants reported an immediate and stronger experience of positive emotion, marked by increased cheerfulness, laughter and smiling (Gander et al., 2012). A more recent study comparing both the three good things activity and the three funny things activity (with a control group) found that daily reflection on three funny things may be more effective at reducing depressive symptoms (Gander et al., 2020). Both activities were shown to both increase the intensity of positive emotions that the participants felt, but also increase the variety of positive emotions experienced. The three funny things intervention in particular was shown to increase feelings of amusement(Gander et al., 2020). It has also been found that the three funny things intervention may be more effective at increasing happiness among extroverted participants as compared to introverted participants(Wellenzohn et al., 2018). It is important to note that even if students do not have a naturally strong sense of humor, this activity can still benefit their wellbeing (Wellenzohn et al., 2018).

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Outdoor Learning

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

One argument for the decline in mental, emotional, and social wellbeing among children and adolescents is reduced time spent outdoors. One study found that, in the UK, 37% of children spent fewer than 30 minutes playing outside, and 43% spent more than two hours on electronic devices daily (Wen et al., 2009 cited in Harvey et al., 2020). One possible solution is to increase students' contact with nature through outdoor learning. Outdoor learning provides students with the opportunity to learn through hands-on contact with nature. Some examples of outdoor learning involve studying biodiversity through discovering and monitoring various animal species that live on or around school grounds, building habitats and food sources, and cultivating a school garden (Harvey et al., 2020; Maller, 2009).

This can be incredibly beneficial for science classes in providing opportunities for field work and experiential learning. Field work fosters students' love of learning as it is based in questions and investigation, and helps students build processing, communication and geographical skills (Kho & Parker, 2010, p. 30). Outdoor learning can also be used to foster learning in other subjects as well, such as math and geography. For example, teachers can encourage students to use outdoor materials, such as rocks, sticks and pinecones, to create and solve math problems, or create maps (Gustafsson et al., 2012). The implementation of outdoor learning activities has been linked not only to greater enjoyment of learning and connection to nature, but also to improved mood and mental wellbeing (Harvey et al., 2020).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Outdoor materials (sticks, pinecones, rocks, etc), paper, pencil, measurement tools
Duration:	One hour per week
Implementation:	Use outdoor materials to teach core subjects such as math and geography OR have students study outdoor habitats, animals, etc. for science and research learning techniques.

Does it work?

In one school, an outdoor learning intervention was implemented for 6 months. Students were taught out-of-doors for at least 1 hour per day on average. Teachers used outdoor materials to teach different subjects- such as using branches, stones and cones to teach geometrical shapes or to create maps to teach geography. This study did report some improvements in mental health of male students who participated in outdoor learning activities (Gustafsson et al., 2017). Researchers suggest that this intervention may be particularly beneficial for urban schools, where students have fewer opportunities to interact with nature outside of school (Gustafsson et al., 2017).

A larger study of 549 students, ages 8-11 across the UK, found similar results. Students in the intervention group had lessons outside the classroom, on school grounds, for one hour each week (Harvey et al., 2020). The students participated in hands-on activities studying different species- birds, amphibians, insects, etc. Activities centered around monitoring species and building new habitats and food sources, such as bird houses. Students in the intervention group had significantly increased short-term mood and long-term wellbeing scores over the course of the study as compared to students in the control group (Harvey et al., 2020).

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Bringing the Outside In

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Setting up houseplants in your classroom can improve students' sense of comfort and safety.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Houseplants, pots, potting soil
Duration:	Set-up and care time
Implementation:	Set up a few houseplants around your classroom. Your students can even help care for them!

Does it work?

In a review of three studies it was found that increasing students' exposure to nature, even without going outside, can greatly improve students' sense of wellbeing at school and in the classroom(Han, 2009). One of the studies reviewed an 8th grade class and the impact of having plants at the back of the classroom. Surprisingly, students in the classroom not only reported a greater sense of comfort and friendliness, but after two months, students were also sick less often and had fewer behavioral issues (Han,2009). The other two studies found that students who lived near greenspaces, or had greater exposure to nature in their surroundings, had higher levels of self-worth and self-discipline (Han, 2009).

Similar research on nature and classroom design has been done in high schools and universities. It has also been found that having indoor plants in a classroom can improve the air quality and relative humidity of a classroom, contributing to a safe, healthy and comfortable environment for students (Bogerd et al., 2020). The addition of flowers and houseplants were both found to improve student wellbeing, tiredness, and attention. Flowers were considered less practical, as they have to be replaced more often than houseplants. It was also found that simply painting a wall of the classroom green improved positive emotions connected with nature and greenspace exposure (Bogerd et al., 2020).

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Bibliotherapy

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Bibliotherapy helps students to develop positive emotions, a sense of belonging, and resilience by relating their story to that of characters who are going through similar challenges. Students can see how the characters overcome difficult situations and cope with negative emotions in a positive way. Bibliotherapy is "getting the right book to the right child at the right time" (Sisk, 1982, p. 224). Among other things, bibliotherapy can help students become more positive, empathetic, and accepting of others. Bibliotherapy is not restricted only to books, but other forms of media such as poetry, film and storytelling can also be used (McCulliss & Chamberlain, 2013).

Bibliotherapy can be used to help individual students or the entire class flourish and thrive. There are a few important tools that can help teachers plan a successful bibliotherapy intervention. First, you must have a specific emotional issue or goal in mind (Maich & Kean, 2004). For example, you may wish to improve your students' empathy or optimism. You will also need an appropriate story to address your goal (Maich & Kean, 2004). A list of potential stories for different grade levels is listed below. Having a reinforcement activity is important to guide students in their understanding of the story and its application to their individual lives (Maich & Kean, 2004). For example, after selecting a title that interests the students while providing an opportunity to discuss moral principles, the teacher can guide them in a group discussion. The group discussion can, but do not need to, include activities such as celebrity interviews, you speak/ I speak, and I can only yes/no you (Sisk, 1982, p. 226).

Sample Bibliotherapy Questions:

- Are you like any of the story's characters?
- Do any of the characters remind you of someone?
- Who would you like to be in the story?
- Is there anything you would like to change about the story?
- How would you change the characters, what happened, or how the story ended?
- What is your favorite part of the story?
- Did anything in the story ever happen to you?
- What do you think will happen to the characters in this story tomorrow, in a few weeks, or a year from now? (McCulliss & Chamberlain, 2013).

Book Guides

[Grades Pre-K through 6th](#)

[Grades K-8+](#)

Most public libraries have a list of recommended books for bibliotherapy on a variety of topics such as bullying, LGBTQ+ belonging, anxiety and depression disorders, grief, physical disabilities, etc

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Book of choice, paper, pencil
Duration:	A few weeks, as needed.
Implementation:	1. Identify the student/reader's concerns.
	2. Select a book and pre-read it to meet reader's needs.
	3. Present the book to the student(s) and provide a guided reading plan.
	4. Follow up on what the reader gained from the book. (Pardeck & Pardeck, 2013)

Does it work?

Tijms et al. (2018) assessed the effects of a bibliotherapeutic book club on the promotion of literacy and social-emotional skills in public secondary schools with a low socio-economic status. These researchers observed seven small groups of about six students assigned to the intervention book club, with 50 additional students acting as a control group. All of the students in each group read the same book and participated in 8-10 sessions to discuss the book and relate the story to their own life experiences. Each session was facilitated by an entry-level psychologist. At the end of the book club, students from the intervention group reported greater self-confidence in their social skills and ability to do well in school (Tijms et al., 2018).

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Engagement

At a basic level, engagement is becoming "immersed in an activity that is intrinsically motivating" or experiencing a state of "flow"(Falecki et al., 2018, p.106). Flow, a term coined by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990), describes a state of being in which one becomes so engaged in an activity that they seem to lose track of time, such as a musician completely losing themself within the music. Engagement is associated with character strengths of curiosity, zest, bravery, love of learning and leadership (Wagner, 2019). According to Dr. Peggy Kern (2022), there are three types of engagement that can be focused on to improve student wellbeing: behavioral, emotional/psychological, and cognitive engagement.

1. **Behavioral engagement** includes school attendance, coming prepared to class, following classroom rules, and active participation in learning.
2. **Emotional/psychological engagement** includes enjoyment of learning, a sense of belonging, and a feeling of safety. For students to be engaged their fundamental needs of autonomy, relatedness/belonging, and competence must be met (Fredericks et al., 2004).
3. **Cognitive engagement** includes paying full attention, a willingness to exert effort, and the use of different learning strategies. Cognitive engagement also includes providing students with challenging activities and limiting classroom distractions. Dr. Kern says, "Flow is more likely to occur for intrinsically motivating activities, when the challenge of a situation meets the individual's skill and ability to meet the challenge, and attention is completely focused" (Kern, 2022, p.7).

The interventions in this section will focus primarily on improving these three areas of student engagement. These activities will encourage your students to "become immersed in worthwhile pursuits" and to use and develop their own individual strengths (Falecki et al., 2018, p.104).

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Recognizing and Utilizing Personal Strengths
ARCS Model of Curiosity
Carousel Brainstorming
Genius Hour
Perspective Taking and Role-Play
Arts Integration
Drawing and Coloring Therapy
Culturally-Enriching and Arts-Based Field Trips
Culturally Responsive Practices
Social Belonging Intervention
Emotional Self-Regulation: RULER method
Modeling Emotional Self-Regulation Skills
Teacher Praise

Recognizing and Utilizing Personal Strengths

Middle School   High school

Intervention Overview

Dr. Martin Seligman and one of his colleagues Dr. Peterson (2004) discovered that there are 24 positive personality traits that each person can possess, which they called character strengths. These strengths include traits such as kindness, bravery, leadership, creativity, curiosity and many others. Each person has a few character strengths that are particularly dominant in their personalities. According to research compiled by the Values in Action (VIA) Institute on Character (2021), when students learn their core strengths and apply them to their daily lives, they are more engaged, have greater motivation, and develop better relationships with their peers. For this activity, we encourage you to have your students take a character strengths test, such as the short, free test offered by the VIA Institute. Teach your students to identify their strengths and use them in new ways to reach individual goals. After identifying individual strengths, students can then learn to use them in a new way or apply them to a new situation. Several studies have found identifying personal signature strengths and using them in a new way each day for a week can increase happiness (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005, pp. 416, 419).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	Upper Elementary- 12th
Materials:	VIA Character Strengths test
Duration:	Varies, as needed.
Implementation:	1. Have students take a character strengths, such as the one provided for free at viacharacter.org 2. Once students have completed the test, have them review the explanations of their top five character strengths. 3. Have students write examples of how or when they use those character strengths in daily life. 4. Encourage students set goals to develop additional strengths or use their top strengths more frequently

Does it work?

Several different studies have evaluated interventions that encourage students to identify their strengths and utilize them more often. An intervention for 23 boys (10-11 years old) in Australia helped these children identify their strengths through eight, 45 minute long face-to-face coaching sessions with a teacher-coach over 6 months. These sessions focused on helping students identify their strengths, identify their personal resources and "utilise these in working toward individual goals", and coaching them through a self-regulation cycle of setting goals (Madden, Green, & Grant, 2011, p. 75). This intervention led to increased self-reported measures of engagements and several qualitative benefits reported as increased positive relationship with students, created a useful dialogue, positive feedback from parents, positive classroom climate, and increased goal setting skills among students.

A similar study enrolled high school freshmen in an strengths-development program which led to increased positive academic behavior, engagement, feelings of academic self-efficacy and attendance (Austin, 2006). Dr. Seligman and his team tested a strengths curriculum that targeted identifying and using strengths over multiple 80 minute sessions and found similar positive results relating to engagement, achievement, and social skills among students (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich & Linkins, 2009). Similarly, 6 weekly sessions of a strengths programs for elementary students, which covered the topics: recognizing strengths, learning about activity and character strengths, the importance of strengths, and how to use them, improved students' wellbeing engagement, class cohesions, and sense of autonomy (Quinlan, Swain, Cameron & Vella-Brodrick , 2014).

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ARCS Model of Curiosity

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

One way to increase your students' motivation to learn and love of learning is to use the ARCS curiosity model developed by John Keller(2010). The ARCS model defines curiosity as a product of attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. The ARCS curiosity model can be implemented into any curriculum. Hattie and Zierer (2018) argue that it is the role of the teacher "to set the tone in the class and to motivate students, not vice versa" and that this can be accomplished using strategies from the ARCS model (p. 50).
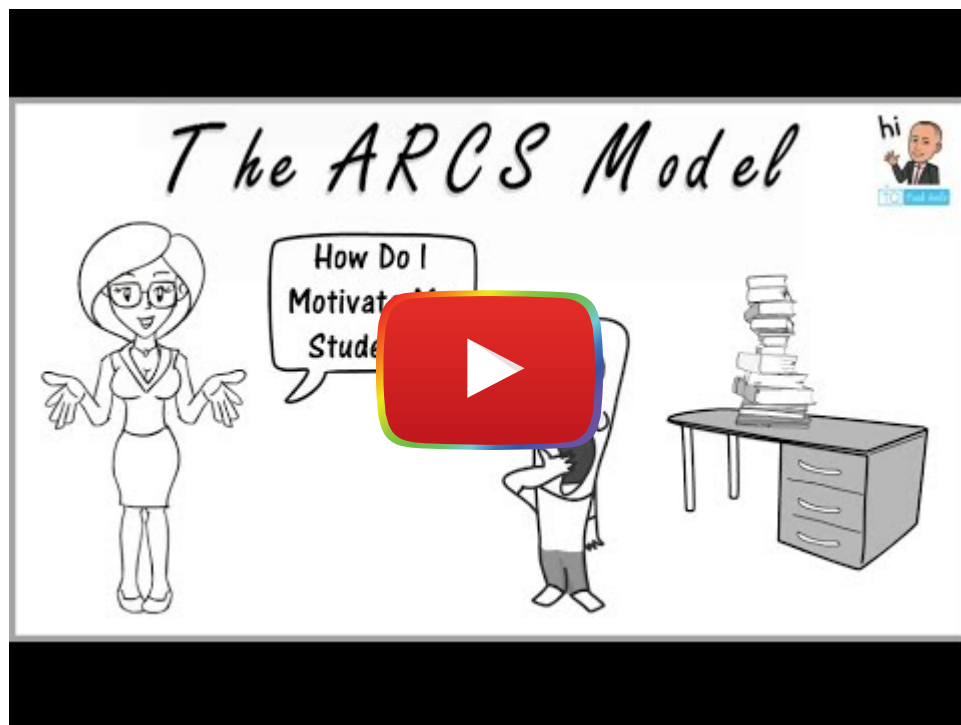
A lesson that stimulates **ATTENTION** harnesses students' curiosity and interest. A **RELEVANT** lesson is driven by relating to students' diverse needs and experiences. A lesson that builds **CONFIDENCE** involves scaffolding meaningful tasks and a lesson that prompts **SATISFACTION** builds students' sense of achievement. Each factor is a prerequisite for the others. Without sustained attention, students won't be able to understand the relevance of a subject to their lives. Relevance builds confidence which in turn leads to greater satisfaction.

We can increase attention by introducing the subject and presenting the material in an engaging way. We can increase relevance by giving students choice, helping them understand how this knowledge is applicable in their lives, or by "introducing a curiosity-arousing situation which has at least some familiarity to the learner (that is, the learner already has some knowledge about it)" (Arnone & Small, 1995, p. 9). We can increase students' confidence by selecting appropriate challenges and building positive expectations. Lastly, we can increase students' satisfaction by helping them recognize the feelings of accomplishment and pleasure that come from learning new things. A list of additional ways to practice the ARCS model in your classroom is included below. Guided questions taken from Keller (2010,2016). Learning strategies adapted from Keller (2010) and LearningTheories(2022).

Intervention Guide

	Guiding Questions for Educators	Learning Strategies
Attention	• "Am I excited about this learning experience and how I can make it interesting?" • "Are the learners going to be interested? What tactics will stimulate their curiosity and interest?"	Activities that involve novelty, inquiry and variety such as: humor, puzzles, games, roleplay, problem-solving, brainstorming, mind-mapping, audiovisual content, varying presentation, discussion, storytelling.

Relevance	• "Do I believe that this learning experience will be valuable for my learners?" • "Will learners believe it is valuable? What can I do to help them believe it is important?"	Activities that align with students' goals, needs and experiences such as: modeling, building on prior skills, providing examples that students will recognize, having students give examples from personal experiences, have students ask themselves "How will the subject matter help me today?...tomorrow?", student choice, guest speakers.
Confidence	• "Am I confident in my ability to lead this learning experience effectively and interestingly?" • "Will the learners feel confident about their ability to learn this? What do I need to do to help them be confident?"	Activities that involve goal-oriented scaffolding such as: allowing students to choose goals, providing small and manageable steps for goal achievement, consistent feedback and praise, student choice in assessment of learning.
Satisfaction	• "Do I expect to have positive feelings about this learning experience?" • "What can I do to help the learners feel good about their experience and desire to continue learning?"	Activities that foster intrinsic and extrinsic motivation such as: providing some external rewards but avoid over-rewarding, providing frequent constructive feedback, giving students certificates for skill mastery, and having prior students share their learning experiences. Praise and feedback should be equitable. Praise should be effort focused, rather than ability focused.

Does it work?

Feng and Tuan (2005) assessed the effectiveness of integrating the ARCS model into chemistry lessons on high school students' motivation and engagement in the lessons. Fifty-one 11th grade students participated, half assigned to the lessons using the ARCS model and the other half to a control group with traditional lecture-style lessons. Students in the ARCS model classroom reported higher levels of learning motivation following the intervention. Students had a greater sense of self-efficacy and confidence, more frequent use of active learning strategies, and a deeper understanding of the value of science learning. Also, students reported an improved ability to pay attention and be engaged for the duration of the class period (Feng & Tuan, 2005). A meta-analysis of 38 controlled experiment studies of ARCs model use in classroom instruction, with a total effect size of over 8000 students from grades K-12 and higher education, also found that the ARCS model has a positive effect on both student motivation and academic achievement (Gosku & Islam Bolat, 2021).

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Carousel Brainstorming

Middle School   High school

Intervention Overview

Carousel Brainstorming is a cooperative learning strategy in which students work together in small groups to brainstorm and assess their knowledge about various topics related to a class lesson. For this activity, the teacher will post different topics or prompts around the classroom on large posters, in various "stations." Each small group of students will rotate around the classroom to each of the stations, spending a few minutes at each to discuss the prompt and then write their response on the poster. Students will build upon the ideas that previous groups have already listed on the poster. One study recommended that students be assigned roles of writer, timer and presenter, so each student actively participates in the brainstorming activity. The writer is tasked with writing the group's ideas on the poster, the timer with determining when it is time to rotate to the next poster, and the presenter is given the task of presenting the group's ideas to the class following the activity (Hunter et al., 2017).

This activity can be used to help students review what they have learned, to introduce a new topic to assess students current knowledge or preconceptions about the topic, or to encourage critical thinking and teamwork. Carousel brainstorming has been shown to increase student engagement and participation, as well as reduce speaking anxiety (Hunter et al., 2017; Ahmadifar, Shangarfamm & Marashi, 2019).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	Upper Elementary - 12th
Materials:	Large poster paper, markers, timer or stopwatch
Duration:	30-60 minutes, as desired.

Implementation:	1. Write a topic or discussion prompt on the top of 4-5 pieces of poster paper and post them on the wall around the classroom
	2. Divide students into groups of 2 of 3. If desired, assign roles (writer, timer and presenter) and describe the responsibilities of each role to encourage all students to actively participate.
	3. Instruct students on how the rotation will work and how long they will spend at each station. Have students rotate to each of the posters around the room.
	4. After students have rotated through all sessions, encourage students to share their group's ideas in a class discussion.

Does it work?

Eight 2nd and 3rd graders in a summer enrichment program in the Southern, U.S. were studied for the effectiveness of a carousel brainstorming activity on literacy and engagement (Hunter et al., 2017). Students were divided into small groups of 2 or 3 and given specific roles (writer, presenter, monitor) and rotated between 3 stations where they discussed story-related prompts. Each student spent about 3 minutes at each station. At the end of the activity, students had higher literacy scores, improved participation and reported higher engagement with the lesson(Hunter et al., 2017).

An additional study assessed the impact of a carousel brainstorming activity on the speaking ability and anxiety of 60 english language learners (Ahmadifar et al., 2019). The carousel brainstorming activity was compared to another cooperative learning activity, the fishbowl strategy (similar to the Socratic method of class conversation). The carousel brainstorming group outperformed the fishbowl strategy group on speaking ability following the activity. The carousel brainstorming activity also reported reduced speaking anxiety, possibly due to the fact that the carousel brainstorming encourages building relationships with peers (Ahmadifar et al., 2019).

References:

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Genius Hour

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Based on a Google initiative to promote employee engagement and productivity, "Genius Hour", or 20% time, allows students the opportunity to dedicate part of the school day to work on research-based projects that are of interest to them. In these student-initiated inquiries, students develop and answer questions to deepen their understanding of a topic of interest and use this discovery to create a final project. Ginsberg and Coke (2019) provide three classroom approaches for "Genius Hour" projects:

1. **Independent, Student-Selected Inquiry**: In this approach the student selects a topic they are passionate about. Ginsberg and Coke (2019) share that this could be a social impact project such as researching and creating a project to promote LGBTQ equality and belonging or less serious topics such as the variety of flavor options for Ramen noodles.
2. **Small-Group of Whole-Class Designed Inquiry:** As an individual project may be overwhelming for some students, a group or whole-class approach may be more effective. One classroom was studying globalization and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Students were divided into groups based on their interest in a specific global goal and participated in research projects regarding that goal. Similarly, a teacher can present a topic to the whole-class and encourage them to spend class time researching the topic and discussing the research they find as a class.
3. **Curricular Project, or Book-Based Inquiry:** Students are encouraged to relate their project to class themes and topics and to use popular books in their research. An example given by Ginsberg and Coke(2019) was of a student who wanted to focus her project on experiences faced by immigrants and their assimilation to a new culture and she based her project on the experiences she read in novels or podcasts.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	Upper Elementary- 12th
Materials:	Paper, pencil, additional materials as needed for project
Duration:	20% of class time or about 10-15 minutes per class period of 60 minutes

Implementation:	1. Provide students with examples of student projects or other children who have made an impact with their ideas in the community.
	2. Walk your students through various brainstorming activities to start thinking about possible topics.
	3. Provide students with a set of questions such as: "What do you do when no one is telling you what to do?", "What are you good at?", "What do you wonder?", and "How would you better yourself?" to help them discover their passions until they come up with four. (Ginsberg & Coke, 2019, p.18).
	4. Students work to combine these passions into a topic and plan for their project. They then create a project pitch- including their motivations for doing the activity, a timeline and goals for the project.
	5. Have a conference with each student to check in on the planning and progress of their project.
	6. Students should be encouraged not only to present their passion project to the class after completion, but to a broader audience. Some ways to do this could be a class blog, social media page, or YouTube channel (Juliani, 2021).

Does it work?

Genius hour, or 20% time, has been integrated into businesses like Google with amazing results (Pink, 2009). When students are given a portion of time to pursue their creative interests, they learn cross-disciplinary skills in an authentic context. For example, a kindergarten classroom implemented Genius Hour as part of their literacy instruction. Students practiced reading information texts, gathering information from valid sources, synthesizing information, and presenting materials (West & Roberts, 2016). These kindergartners learned how to make their big ideas, such as "building rocket shoes," a reality through researching and developing their projects (West & Roberts, 2016, p.1). Though much research on the effects of a Genius hour intervention in the classroom is mostly anecdotal at this point, the implementation of Genius hour has been reported to increase students' enjoyment and motivation in school (Juliani, 2014).

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Perspective Taking and Role-Play

Middle School   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

One way to help students be more creative is through an activity known as perspective taking, which fosters divergent thinking (Doron, 2016). Divergent thinking is the "ability to generate a wide variety of ideas and associations to a given problem" and is frequently used as a measure of creativity (Guilford, 1967 cited in Doron, 2016, p.372). Perspective taking allows students to view the world from another person's viewpoint, develop empathy, and question their own perspectives. Perspective taking has been shown to help individuals develop useful and novel ideas (Grant & Barry, 2011). This activity will train your students in both of these skills by giving them opportunities to analyze a variety of situations and perspectives using media and personal experience. The perspective taking intervention has been shown to increase student engagement, sense of flow, and creativity (Doron, 2016). This activity can also help students recognize emotions in self and others and develop greater empathy (Upright, 2002). Examples of this activity, found in Doron (2016) and Upright (2002), can assist you in implementing this intervention in your own classrooms and schools.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	4th-8th
Materials:	Art supplies, video clips
Duration:	One 90 minute lesson per week, for 10 weeks. (Can be condensed to a shorter time frame)

Implementation:	1. Begin with having students analyze objects and scenes from different perspectives, either by drawing or taking pictures from an object from different sides.
	2. Then, show students zoomed in pictures of familiar places around their school and neighborhood and have them guess where the photo was taken. Instruct students to play closer attention to their surroundings and new details over the next week.
	3. Choose an appropriate story, movie or cartoon clip that students can use to analyze the perspectives and choices of key characters. See Upright (2002) for examples.
	4. Encourage students to recognize key emotions in the characters and have them role play these emotions to have their peers guess what they are feeling.
	5. Put students in small groups and give them a scenario involving one of the story's characters. Have them discuss and role play how the character would act in the given situation.
	6. Finally, each group of students chooses a problem they are currently facing and reflect on how a popular character from a book, movie, or TV show would handle the situation.

Instructions adapted from Doron (2016) and Upright (2002).

Does it work?

Two sister studies used principles of perspective taking and everyday creativity to increase children's creativity and ability to reach a state of flow. As flow is a measure of engagement, a key factor in the Seligman's PERMA model, there is reason to believe that creativity can help improve wellbeing. These two studies, involving elementary and middle school children from Israel, took place over 10 weeks with one 90 minutes session each week. The first study had three stages. During the first stage, researchers "invited the [children] to become a proactive and curious observer, to rediscover his or her immediate surrounding, and to interact with the multiple points of view in day to day experience," using cameras, pictures, and TV characters (Doron, 2016, p.373). During the second stage, children focused on learning different perspective taking skills through charades and movie clips. The third stage challenged children to use their acquired skills and explore their surroundings through TV exercises, skits, and drawing real world solutions from characters. Participants reported higher levels of creativity, flow, and unique ideas than the control group (Doron, 2016).

The second study took place in two stages. The first stage, similar to the previous study's second stage, worked to develop children's abilities to decipher other's expressions, gestures, emotions, nuances, and reactions through interacting with media narratives. For specific details on the techniques and practices, read section 5.4.1 (Doron, 2017). The second stage invited children to explore their surroundings, using the perspective taking skills learned from the first section, through re-inventing TV scenes, extracting lessons from characters to use in their own lives, and participating in group discussions about character's moral actions. After every class, children were given the homework assignment of watching an hour of TV and practicing the activities from class. Children reported enjoying the assignment, higher instances of flow, and more unique ideas over time.

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Arts Integration

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Arts Integration has been defined as an "arts-based approach to teaching and learning" (LaJevic, 2013, p. 2). Arts Integration gives students an opportunity to learn and practice content through meaningful and creative projects, such as acting out the concept, creating posters, or sketching examples of vocabulary terms (McCartney et al., 2017). According to Peppler and Davis (2010), the arts provide students with new opportunities to consider different perspectives and approaches to learning outcomes. Specifically with STEM concepts, arts integration can help increase students' zest towards learning(McCartney et al., 2017).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Art supplies (paper, posters, markers, paint, etc.)
Duration:	Varies
Implementation:	This is an example of the implementation of arts integration in a science classroom for one unit, which can help provide some guidelines as you develop arts integration for your own classroom (McCartney et al., 2017). 1. Have students act out predictions of what will be in the book or chapter they will be studying. 2. Create a flipbook glossary with sketches and collages to show what the words mean. 3. Create posters to illustrate main ideas. 4. Have students express their view of the material with pop-up cards displaying their emotion or opinion of the topic. 5. Have students create a final art product to represent what they have learned.

Does it work?

In a study done by McCartney et al. (2017), educators integrated science with arts activities such as acting out their prediction and creating a collage, poster, and pop-up card. As a result of arts integration, the second and third graders learned the science just as well as they would in the control condition, while the fifth graders learned and retained the information better in the experimental condition (McCartney et al., 2017, p. 88). Arts integration also helped students stay engaged and spend more time on task (McCartney et al., 2017, p. 95).

Another study interviewed adolescent students following a whole-school arts integration intervention to understand how the intervention improved their learning and engagement (Anderson et al., 2019). Arts were integrated into every subject in the two middle schools observed. In an English Language Arts class, students create tableau vivants, or "living pictures," to represent key scenes in a novel they were reading. In a science class, students create models of different molecules and elements making up human anatomy. Students in a math class learned about math anxiety and created geometric, three dimensional, "math anxiety monsters." A few students described that these arts activities allowed them to experience a flow state of heightened engagement. Over a quarter of the participants responded that arts integration increased their motivation and enjoyment in their classes. It was found that arts integration improved students' sense of individuality, expression, autonomy and creativity (Anderson et al., 2019).

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Drawing and Coloring Therapy

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Allowing students time to free draw or color mandalas has been shown to reduce anxiety and frustration, and improve focus, particularly before a test. Mandalas are circular designs made up of symmetrical shapes (Carsley & Heath, 2018). Coloring mandalas has been associated with improving engagement and focus, and creating a state of mindfulness (Carsley, Heath & Fajnerova, 2015). For some students, a free drawing activity has been proven more effective at reducing test anxiety (Carsley, Heath & Fajnerova, 2015). We recommend giving students both options as part of this intervention.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Mandala coloring pages, blank paper, colored pencils or crayons
Duration:	5-10 minutes, as needed.
Implementation:	1. Provide students with a piece of paper or mandala drawing before a test or other stressful event such as an oral presentation. Give students the option to choose which they would like. 2. Provide students with drawing materials. 3. Give students a few minutes to draw or color. You may play light music in the background while students draw/color.

Does it work?

In one study of an afterschool activity group, students colored mandala art while listening to soft music or conversing with school counselors. This was found effective in reducing school anxiety among teenagers(Kostyunina & Drozdikova- Zaripova, 2016) . With a classroom focus, an additional study researched 150 students in grades 4-6 in Canada (Carsley et al., 2015). Students in this study were assigned to either a mindfulness-based coloring activity (mandala) or free drawing (control) before a spelling test to evaluate the intervention's effectiveness on reducing test anxiety. Both activities were shown to reduce test anxiety(Carsley et al., 2015). Additionally, a coloring activity has proven effective in helping students regulate their emotions. In a study of 100 children ages 6-12, participants were asked to think of a time when they experienced disappointment(Drake & Winner, 2013). Students were then randomly assigned to a "distract" or "vent" condition. The "distract" group was told to draw a picture of a house and the "vent" group was told to draw the experience they reflected on. Following the activity, the "distract" group experienced higher levels of positive emotion and greater enjoyment in the activity(Drake & Winner, 2013).

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Culturally-Enriching and Arts-Based Field Trips

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

In recent years, there has been a dramatic decline in the amount of students attending enrichment field trips to museums, zoos, historical sites, and arts venues (McCord and Ellerson, 2009 as cited in Watson et al., 2019). Some argue that this decline is occurring because organizing and funding these trips can be burdensome for teachers and school leaders and take from in-classroom learning time (Greene et al., 2014). Additionally, some of these learning-based field trips have been exchanged for more "fun", rewards-based trips for students, such as attending sporting events, amusement parks, and movie theaters (Greene et al., 2014). However, recent research suggests that there are many benefits to student learning and wellbeing that come through visiting museums and attending live theater and musical performances. Watson and colleagues (2019) argue that these culturally enriching field trips increase students' tolerance, social perspective taking, critical thinking and historical empathy. In addition, arts-based field trips can improve classroom engagement and behavior (Erickson et al., 2019).

As you plan a cultural field trip for your classroom or school, we encourage you to reach out to local museums, universities, and arts venues to determine the fees that may be associated with your visit. Many of these organizations may offer free or discounted experiences for students. In a review of arts museums throughout the United States, Randi Korn and associates (2018) found that 51 percent of museums never charge a fee for school groups, and only 14 percent always require a fee. Some museums are also willing to help cover transportation costs (Randi Korn and Associates, 2018).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Potential admission and transportation costs
Duration:	Half day- Full day (varies depending on length of tour or performance and transportation time)

Implementation:	1. Reach out to local museums or performing groups to determine if they hold school tours or events and to determine potential admission, transportation, and lunch costs
	2. Determine what day you plan to attend and seek administrative approval for the trip
	3. Arrange for supervisors and volunteers to attend, and plan transportation
	4. Send out student permission slips
	5. Before the trip, discuss with students the objectives for the trip, and what you hope they will learn or understand
	6. Follow up with students following the trip about what stood out to them, what they enjoyed, etc.

Does it work?

A few recent studies have assessed the social, emotional and cognitive benefits of culturally-enriching and arts-based field trips. In 2014, Greene and colleagues measured the effects of a local art museum tour on students' critical thinking skills, historical empathy, and tolerance. Surveys were administered to over 10,000 students at 123 schools in Northwest Arkansas who had participated in a free school tour at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Students were also asked to complete a short essay about a work of art they had learned about on the tour. Students who attended the tour displayed higher level critical thinking skills, as evidenced by the observations and details included in their essays, as compared to the control group. Additionally, students who attended the tour reported higher levels of tolerance and historical empathy than those who did not attend. The increase in tolerance and historical empathy was most significant among students from rural and underprivileged areas of the state, and among students from minority populations (Greene et al., 2014).

Watson and colleagues (2019) also evaluated the impact of arts-based field trips on critical thinking, tolerance and social perspective taking, but instead included a live theater performance and symphony performance in addition to an art museum field trip. Social perspective taking was defined as the ability to understand that "people view the world in different ways" (Watson et al., 2019, p. 5.). For this study, fourth and fifth grade students in an urban area were randomly assigned to attend three arts-based field trips (art museum, live theater, symphony performance) or a control group which did not attend any of the field trips. Students' answers to post-intervention surveys indicate some improvements in the tolerance and social perspective taking of students who attended all three field trips. In addition, the level of conscientiousness of female students was increased, as evidenced by more careful and thoughtful responses to survey questions (Watson et al., 2019). In a separate report of the same study, Erickson and colleagues (2019) assessed the impact of arts-based field trips on student engagement in school. Engagement was assessed by a reduction in behavioral infractions, and a survey, in which students reported their response to the statement "School is boring" from "disagree a lot" to "agree a lot" (Erickson et al., 2019, p. 15). It was found that students who attended the field trips reported more enjoyment of school and had fewer behavioral infractions following the field trips (Erickson et al., 2019).

References:

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Culturally Responsive Practices

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Students of color are at an increased risk of psychological distress, suicide, problem behavior, and decreased academic success as compared to their peers (Aud et al., 2011; Blake et al., 2011; Cholewa et al., 2014). Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) in education has developed as a way to improve the belonging, engagement, and academic achievement of students with diverse cultural backgrounds (Cholewa et al., 2014; Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011). According to Cholewa et al. (2014), CRP in the classroom involves using language that is respectful of diverse cultures, building on existing knowledge and familiar communication styles, and integrating music and dance.

Educators' use of CRP can help students feel more excitement towards the curriculum. One teacher, Mrs. Morris, drew from her students' unique backgrounds to enhance her curriculum and pedagogy in a predominantly African-American school (Cholewa et al., 2014). She incorporated African-American values, such as communalism, and music and dance styles popular among African-American students. She also used a call and response communication style to engage her students in answering questions. The energy and vitality she created through CRP promoted zest and engagement in her classroom (Cholewa et al., 2014).

Similarly, one social studies teacher incorporated his students' cultural backgrounds into his history lessons (Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011). Students particularly enjoyed his lessons on the history of the origin and evolution of the usage of the "N word", his rap version of the Declaration of Independence, and field trips to the African American Research Library and a Tortilla Factory. Many students reported that these activities were engaging, fun, and helped them feel valued and understood (Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Varies
Duration	This practice is intended to be embedded into daily teaching.

Implementation:	As you evaluate your use of CRP, it is important to know your students and adapt your lessons accordingly. The Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley recommends considering the what, who, why and how of your teaching and asking yourself questions such as:

- *"Are there stereotypes or prejudices that this lesson or practice may implicitly promote?"*

- *"How is this lesson or practice relevant to all of my students?"*

- *"How might my beliefs about this topic, lesson, and/or practice differ from my students' and their families' beliefs? Does this practice privilege my values over theirs in any way?"*

References:

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Social Belonging Intervention

Middle School   High school

Intervention Overview

One of the fundamental needs upon which engagement rests is belonging or relatedness (Fredericks et al., 2004). The social belonging intervention has been studied primarily with high school and college freshmen to help these transitioning students frame their fears and adversity as common and temporary. For the intervention, students will read letters or watch video clips of former students explaining their own adversity during their time at school. This activity has also proven effective at helping minority students find a sense of belonging within the school (Williams et al., 2020).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	6th-12th. Could be adapted to younger grade levels.
Materials:	Paper, writing utensils, letters or video clips from former students
Duration:	20-30 minutes. Additional time as needed.
Implementation:	1. This activity will require some preparation. You will need to collect letters or interviews of older students about their middle or high school experience. For high school seniors, collecting letters from college students would also be appropriate. 2. Show video clips or have students read a few letters. Williams et al. (2020) recommend showing a few videos or letters of minority students to include students of all backgrounds. 3. Have students complete a "saying-is-believing" exercise, such as writing a letter to another incoming student using the messages from the videos or letters and their own experiences.

Does it work?

Though much of the research has previously been done on the social belonging intervention's effectiveness with college students, recent research has begun to focus on K-12 students. Williams et al. (2020) assessed the impact of this program on incoming ninth graders, particularly for minoritized and female students. During an optional summer orientation, 75 students were shown a seven minute clip put together by minoritized and non-minoritized students who shared their high school transition experience and how they were able to overcome challenges. In order to further calm their fears about high school and to cement what they learned from the video, participants in the intervention wrote letters to incoming ninth graders sharing the messages from the video. In follow-up surveys, the participants, especially the minoritized students, reported a greater sense of school connectedness, improved academic achievement, and better school attendance (Williams et al., 2020).

A similar study was also completed by Borman et al. (2019) with a group of sixth grade students entering middle school. In students' homeroom and English classes, participants read compiled materials from the previous year's sixth graders addressing their experiences, how they overcame challenges and the support they received from teachers and other students during their transition. After reading these letters and survey answers from past students, participants then were asked to write a short reflection about what they read and how they would manage their own difficulties with the transition to middle school. In follow-up analyses of student engagement and belonging, it was found that students in the intervention group had improved academic and behavioral outcomes related to engagement and reported greater trust in the school and teachers (Borman et al., 2019).

References:

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Williams, C. L., Hirschi, Q., Sublett, K. V., Hulleman, C. S., & Wilson, T. D. (2020). A brief social belonging intervention improves academic outcomes for minoritized high school students. Motivation Science, 6(4), 423–437. https://doi.org/10.1037/mot0000175

Emotional Self-Regulation: RULER method

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

[Emotional self-regulation](#) includes controlling our reactions, emotions, and desires. In a literature review of various studies regarding the positive effects of emotional self-regulation, Daniel and colleagues (2020) found that emotional regulation promotes wellbeing through the reduction of mental and behavioral disorders, as well as decreased school-related anxiety. Emotional regulation skills are also linked to improvements in resilience and positive emotion. Emotional regulation also serves as a protective mechanism against negative risk factors for the development of mental, emotional and behavioral disorders, such as adverse childhood experiences, trauma, and living in a high stress environment (Daniel et al., 2020).

To assist students in self-regulating emotions effectively and learning social and emotional skills, Brackett and Rivers (2014) developed the RULER method. RULER stands for: **recognize** emotion in self and others, **understand** an emotion's cause and potential consequences, **label** emotions with accurate vocabulary, **express** emotions in constructive ways, and learn to r**egulate** emotions in positive ways (Nathanson et al., 2016). As part of the RULER method, teachers are encouraged to assist students in recognizing emotions using a mood meter. This helps younger students begin to identify emotions by color zones (red, yellow, green and blue) representing different categories of emotion such as anger, sadness, calm, and happiness (Tominey et al., 2017). An example of the mood meter is included below(Tominey et al., 2017, p. 8).
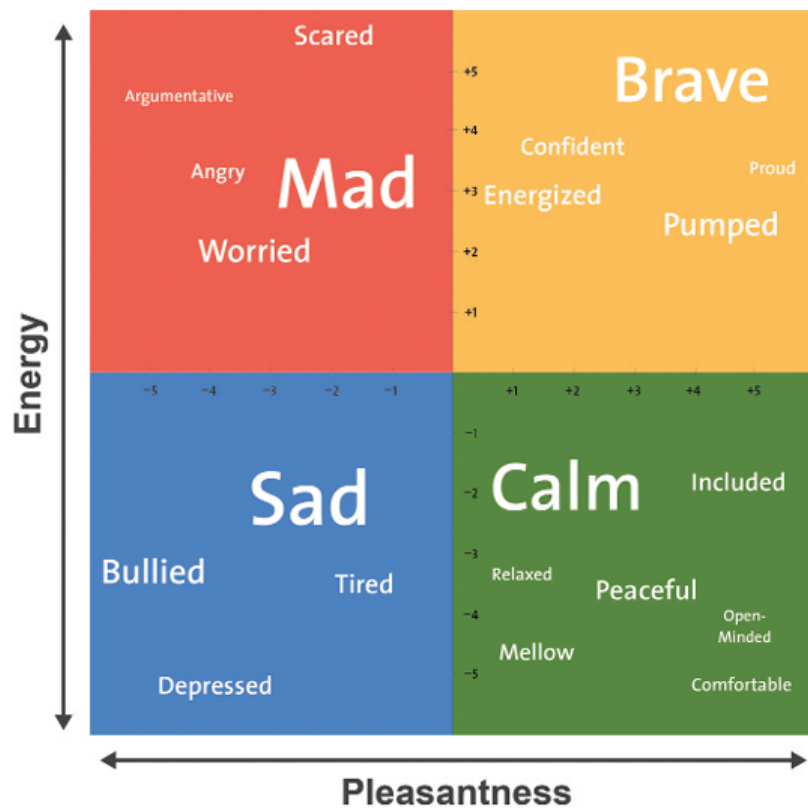
Though you do not have to use this same mood meter, it is important to establish some common vocabulary regarding emotions with your students. Brackett developed the RULER method into a comprehensive social emotional learning program through the Yale Center of Emotional Intelligence. This program includes the RULER emotional regulation method, mood meter, and additional social emotional learning tools(Nathanson et al., 2016). In order to implement a formal RULER program school-wide, school leaders and educators are encouraged to first participate in a RULER training found here. Though this program is not free, it includes curriculum guides for all grade levels, virtual coaching and training sessions for educators and school leaders, and webinars.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Mood meter (or other emotion- identification tools), visual diagram of the RULER method, formal training and curriculum resources for whole-school implementation found here.
Duration:	10 or so minutes daily, or as needed.

Implementation:	1. Determine if RULER is the right fit for your school and fits any budget and time constraints.
	2. Choose a few staff members to participate in the implementation training program.
	3. Encourage teachers to establish an emotion vocabulary in their classrooms and to assist students in identifying emotions.
	4. When students experience challenges in the classroom, walk them through the RULER method to help them identify, process and regulate emotions effectively.

Does it work?

A randomized-control trial assessing the RULER approach on school climate and student wellbeing was completed across 62 elementary schools, with nearly 4,000 fifth and sixth grade students(Rivers et al., 2013). For this study, participating classrooms were randomly assigned to either use the RULER curriculum during English Language Arts (ELA) classes, or to use the standard ELA curriculum. Teachers participating in the RULER program were given a day and a half long training on the program before implementation. Each of the 12 RULER units on different social and emotional competencies were taught for about two weeks throughout the school year, for about 15-20 minutes daily. Indicators and surveys assessed prior to and following the study showed that classrooms participating in RULER had a more positive classroom climate, greater student participation and student-driven learning, encouraged more cooperative learning, and more positive student-teacher and peer interactions as compared to the control group (Rivers et al., 2013).

A similar smaller study of about 250 fifth and sixth grade students in 15 classrooms assessed the impact of RULER on social and emotional learning, as well as academic performance and motivation (Brackett et al., 2012). The classrooms within the grade level not assigned to the RULER program acted as a comparison group. Students in RULER classrooms were observed over the course of the school year. Following the program, students in the RULER group were shown to have higher academic performance in English Language Arts, stronger work habits and motivation, as well as improved social and emotional skills (Brackett et al., 2012).

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Modeling Emotional Self-Regulation Skills

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

According to Timm (1993), teacher modeling of healthy mental and emotional skills has a greater impact on student learning than any other tool or instructional method. Teachers can model self-regulation skills by explicitly naming their emotions and describing how they handle them. For example, a teacher might say, "When people start talking about other things while I'm still giving directions, it feels frustrating to me, and I have to take a breath, catch myself, and say, 'It's okay, I'm going to try again'" (edutopia, 2019, 1:12). Think alouds and role-playing are great ways to model self-regulation (Parrish, 2018). By modeling how to label and respond to emotions in appropriate ways, students are given vocabulary to self-regulate their own emotions. Students need time to "practice new behavior in a low-stakes way that breaks the desirable behavior in achievable steps" (Parrish, 2018, pp. 13). Teachers must recognize that while modeling is an important tool in helping students learn to regulate emotions and behavior, students may also need other learning tools and scaffolding to practice and apply these self-regulation skills.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	None
Duration:	Daily, as needed.
Implementation:	1. Create an emotion word bank for you and students to draw from when describing feelings (anger, frustration, joy, excitement, etc.) 2. Frequently describe your emotions and thought processes to your students to teach them how to regulate emotions effectively. 3. Role-play with your students effective emotional regulation skills, such as how to react when we feel angry or hurt (take a deep breath, count to ten, etc.).

Does it work?

One study evaluated 11 teachers in 3 elementary schools to better understand the underlying factors that lead to strong student-teacher relationships, particularly with disruptive students (McGrath & Van Bergen, 2019). The teachers with positive teacher-student relationships showed evidence of self-regulating and reflecting on their own emotions. They consciously reflected on how students' behaviors caused them to feel and regulated their emotions in constructive ways. Additionally, teachers used perspective taking to perceive students' reactions and empathize with them. This led to more caregiving behaviors. Teachers spoke more calmly to their students and regulated "the intensity of their own emotional displays" (McGrath & Van Bergen, 2019, pp. 346-347). Teachers more accurately identified their students' emotions which allowed them to administer consequences and teach behavior skills in more appropriate ways Teacher emotional competence and regulation was associated with a more positive classroom climate (McGrath & Van Bergent, 2019). A study of 26 teachers in Kentucky, USA found that teachers with a high level of emotional intelligence and consistent modeling of emotional regulation skills often had fewer class disruptions and behavioral referrals (Walker, 2001).

References:

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Teacher Praise

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Giving effective praise to students can have a significant impact on student-teacher relationships, engagement, motivation, and student behavior. Dr. Paul Caldarella and colleagues (2020) found that when teachers praise students more often than reprimanding them, on-task behavior significantly improves. Teachers can write individual praise notes to students, in addition to verbal praise. A teacher praise note intervention has been shown to reduce disciplinary referrals, encourage prosocial behaviors and create a more positive classroom and school climate (Peterson et al., 2009). However, it is important to note that praising intelligence and innate traits is less effective at improving motivation and performance than praising behavior and effort. Drs. Mueller and Dweck (1998) found that students who are praised for performance have less task persistence(motivation) and enjoyment than those praised for effort. In order for teacher praise to be most effective at boosting student wellbeing, it should be centered on student effort and improvement.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Paper, pencil as needed.
Duration:	Varies.
Implementation:	1. Make an effort to praise students more often than reprimanding them. A suggested guideline is three or four comments of praise to every reprimand. 2. Praise students for behavior and effort, rather than only academic performance or skill. 3. In addition to verbal praise, write "praise notes" for a few students on a daily or weekly basis.

Does it work?

One middle school (with about 70 teachers and 2,000 students) was assessed for the impact of teacher praise notes on office discipline referrals, as part of a positive behavioral support intervention(Nelson et al., 2009). Teachers were instructed in how to give behavior-specific praise, and by the end of the study wrote an average of about 6 notes per 100 students per day. As the amount of praise notes increased, a decline was measured in the amount of disciplinary referrals, which indicates that writing praise notes for students may reduce their disruptive behaviors, encourage prosocial behaviors and create a more positive school environment(Nelson et al., 2009).

Though it has been suggested that a 3:1 or 4:1 praise-reprimand ratio (PRR), meaning that teachers give three or four comments of praise to every reprimand, improves student behavior in the classroom, there has been little research done to support this. Recently, Paul Caldarella and colleagues (2020) evaluated these praise-reprimand ratios for their effectiveness at improving on-task behavior in the classroom. For this study, data was collected over a three year period from 19 different elementary schools and 151 classrooms. Though they found no significant difference between a 3:1 or 4:1 PRR, it was found that generally as teacher praise increased, student on-task behavior improved linearly. Though teachers may not always reach a 3:1 or 4:1 PRR daily, striving to praise more and reprimand less will likely improve student behavior and classroom engagement (Caldarella et al., 2020).

References:

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Relationships

This relationship aspect of the PERMA framework involves recognizing that "other people matter" and building character strengths of teamwork, love and kindness (Seligman, 2011, p.20; Wagner et al., 2019). Having positive relationships can be a significant factor in improving wellbeing. In one study addressing the impact of school relationships on wellbeing, students from all grade levels shared that positive peer friendships played a significant role in their wellbeing (Graham et al., 2016). Students participating in the study felt that positive peer and teacher relationships provided them a sense of safety and trust, as well as contributed to feelings of happiness. However, negative relationships, such as peer conflict and bullying negatively contributed to their wellbeing. Most students shared that what is most important to them in relationships with peers and teachers is feeling cared for, respected and valued(Graham et al., 2016). The interventions in this section are intended to promote positive relationships by helping students develop social skills that will allow them to "better connect and share with others" (Falecki et al., 2018, p.104).

References:

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Modeling Love, Kindness and Forgiveness
Active Constructive Responding
Dialogue Journals
Secret Strengths Spotting
Peer Praise Notes
Acts of Kindness
Volunteering
Fast Friends

Buddy Bench

Modeling Love, Kindness and Forgiveness

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Love is more than an emotion. As a character strength, love is the ability to create close, caring relationships with others. "Where kindness can be a behavioral pattern applied in any relationship, love as a character strength really refers to the way you approach your closest and warmest relationships" (VIA, n.d., pp.1) A study of sixteen educators found common ways that teachers and students commonly express love, kindness, and forgiveness(Haslip et al., 2019). Teachers showed love and kindness to children through "hugging, patting, high fives, and hand-holding" (Haslip et al., 2019, p. 537). Teachers expressed love through smiling, listening, providing activities and verbal affirmations. Teachers demonstrated forgiveness by letting go, giving children another chance, speaking positively, being understanding of circumstances, focusing on the positive, and not retaliating. Teacher kindness was often expressed either to a particular child or to the whole group(Haslip et al., 2019). As educators, recognizing the way we show love, kindness, and forgiveness to our students can help us be more intentional about how we support our students' and our personal wellbeing. It can help us identify these strengths in ourselves and practice calling upon them when a negative situation arises.

This study also found that children often had to forgive peers and teachers for accidental and intentional incidents. The children forgave by accepting apologies and then "accepting the situation and moving on" (Haslip et al., 2019, p. 540). They also found that "child love and teacher love closely mirrored one another" (Haslip et al., 2019, p. 542). As such, one way we can develop these strengths in our students is by explicitly modeling and teaching them.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	None
Duration:	Varies
Implementation:	Possible suggestions include:

1. Greet students by name when entering the room and with a high-five, handshake or hug as appropriate.
2. Verbally express forgiveness and understanding to students when they make mistakes.
3. Use a positive and warm tone of voice in the classroom and smile often.
4. Express love and compassion to individuals or groups of students through verbal praise and affirmations.
5. Encourage students to use warm, kind language with their peers in and out of the classroom.
6. Provide opportunities for students to show kindness to each other in the classroom.

Does it work?

In the study mentioned above, it was found that when teachers model loving behaviors with their students, teacher-student relationships improve(Haslip et al., 2019). Demonstrating love, kindness and forgiveness in the classroom assists students in developing empathy and other prosocial behaviors, such as forgiveness (Haslip et al., 2019). A focus group study with 17 adolescents analyzed teacher behaviors that can either promote or detract from student wellbeing and positive student-teacher relationships(Krane et al., 2016). This study found that although student-teacher relationships are a mutual responsibility, students feel more comfortable and safe with teachers who demonstrate a kind demeanor, who are fair, respectful and trustworthy, and who handle conflict in a constructive way(Krane et al., 2016). Teachers can demonstrate kindness and positivity by simply smiling and welcoming students to class. One student shared "I think it is important that the teacher smiles when he enters the classroom. He must greet the students and ask us how we are doing, and then the class can begin" (Krane et al., 2016, p.383). Many of the students shared that this helped them feel more positive and in a "better mood" at school(Krane et al., 2016, p.383).

An additional study of 675 high school students found that students who feel that their teachers care about them also have higher self-esteem, school engagement and a general sense of wellbeing (Lavy & Naama-Ghanayim, 2020). In order to measure teacher caring, students completed an eight-item Caring Questionnaire which had students rate their homeroom teachers on how often they expressed empathy, care, concern and respect towards students. The results of this survey were then matched with additional surveys assessing students wellbeing, self-esteem and life satisfaction. The level of reported teacher caring was found to be significantly associated with self-esteem and wellbeing regardless of age or gender of the participants in the study(Lavy & Naama-Ghanayim, 2020). The researchers also shared that caring behavior is likely a precursor to quality student-teacher relationships(Lavy & Naama-Ghanayim, 2020).

References:

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Active Constructive Responding

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Active constructive responding encourages students to listen and respond to the successes of others in a positive way. Researchers have found there are four ways one can respond to the good news and positive events of others: active and passive destructive and active and passive constructive. Consider the model below regarding the four different ways you might respond to a student who just told you they earned a spot in the school play (adapted from Shankland & Rosset, 2017).
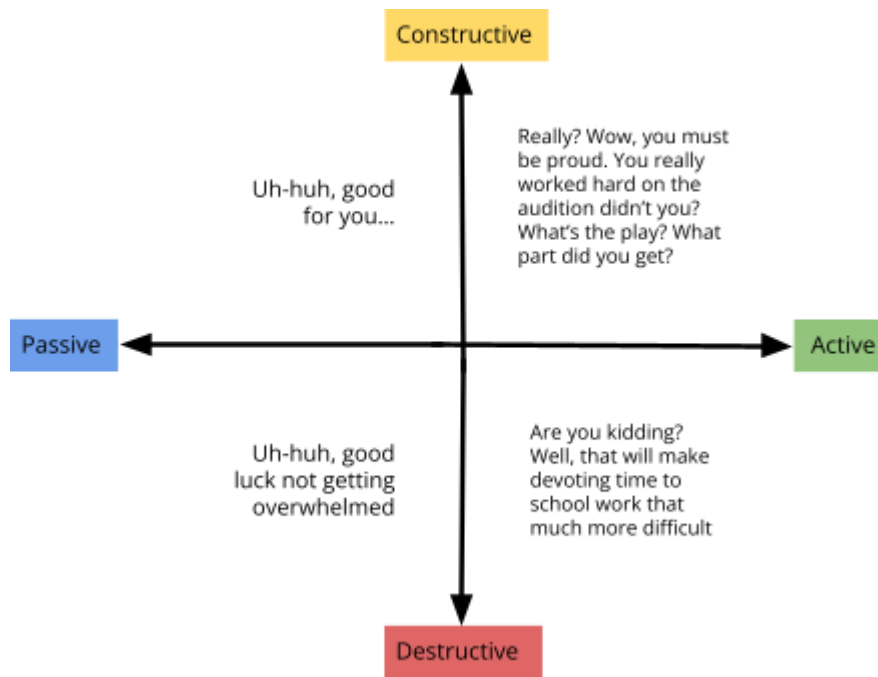
One way to help students practice active constructive responding (ACR) is to have what Peterson (2013) called "but-free days." Rather than pointing out the downsides of someone's good news by using the word "but," you and your students

could have an entire day devoted to avoiding this response and enjoying each other's positive experiences. Encouraging your students to practice ACR will help them experience increased positive emotion, decreased loneliness, and improved feelings of trust, commitment, closeness and stability in peer relationships (Gable et al, 2004).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	None
Duration:	20-30 minute introduction, practice time as needed
Implementation:	1. Introduce to the class the four types of responses they could use to react to "good news" someone has shared (active and passive destructive, passive and active constructive). See examples in the model below. 2. Share examples of each of the responses either via video clips or role play. 3. For younger students, it may be best to introduce only active constructive and what happens when we include "but" in our responses to point out the downsides of someone's good news. 4. Have the students practice active constructive responding with their peers. 5. Throughout the school year, have dedicated "but-free" days where students are encouraged to practice active constructive responding throughout the day.

Does it work?

Though significant research has not been done on the impact of active constructive responding with children and adolescents, it has been used with the Geelong Grammar School's positive education model and has been shown to improve student wellbeing and relationships (Norrish et al., 2013; Seligman et al., 2009). Gable and colleagues (2004) assessed the impact of active constructive responding on the interpersonal relationships of dating and married couples. Couples who felt their partner responded to their positive events in an active constructive way also experienced greater levels of commitment, trust, satisfaction and intimacy. All other response patterns (passive constructive, active destructive and passive destructive) were associated with negative trends in these measures. Active constructive responding was also associated with a reduction in relationship conflict. (Gable et al., 2004).

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Dialogue Journals

Dialogue   Middle School   High school

Intervention Overview

One way to improve teacher-student relationships is to have students write in a daily or weekly journal and then have teachers respond to their questions and responses on a consistent basis. Writing a response to every student on a daily basis may be possible for a teacher with a small class, but as a whole this would be far too time consuming with all the other responsibilities teachers have to accomplish. It is recommended that teachers respond to students once a week if possible or switch between small groups of students every 3 or so weeks. Additionally the Greater Good Science Center (n.d.) provides some recommendations of how to respond to students here.

Because the nature of dialogue journaling may encourage students to share more personal concerns with you, it is important to seek appropriate help for serious student concerns. One teacher shared that if a student wrote about something that required the additional help of a school counselor, she would first talk to the student to make sure she understood the situation correctly and then let them know she needed to approach a counselor about the situation. She also offered to go with the student to visit the school counselor (Gonzalez, 2016). While it is important to remind students of the confidentiality of their journals within the classroom to allow them to be more open and comfortable with the activity, be wise in responding to student concerns and seeking appropriate help when necessary.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	Upper Elementary - 12th
Materials:	Notebook, writing utensil
Duration:	3-5 minutes daily or weekly

Implementation:	1. Keep journals in a designated spot in the classroom.
	2. Decide what topic or question you would like students to address and write in on the board at the front of the classroom.
	3. Have students grab their journal when they walk in and write for 3-4 minutes.
	4. At the end of the class, students return journals to designated spot.
	5. Let students know how often you plan to respond, especially if you cannot respond to each student on a daily or weekly basis.
	6. Write short responses to students with feedback or follow up questions.

Does it work?

Dialogue journals can be an effective tool to improve behavior and relationships of disruptive students. In a small study, the students in a behavioral intervention class were instructed to journal daily, however the teacher specifically responded to two particularly difficult students in the class over the course of the semester. These students improved classroom behavior and social skills, had more positive interactions with the teacher and improved student-teacher relationships (Anderson et al., 2011). A larger study of sixth grade students found that, in students with behavioral concerns, communication and social skills were improved, along with classroom participation (Regan et al., 2005).

Dialogue journals also are beneficial in allowing introverted or ESL students to communicate with the teacher in a manner they are more comfortable with. Jones(1991) shares the story of an advanced ESL student from Mexico who felt that writing was an easier way for her to communicate with her teacher, because she sometimes felt nervous and unsure of herself when speaking. Dialogue journals also allow quiet students to share concerns with the teacher they may not express otherwise (Gonzalez, 2016). While teachers may not establish a close friendship with all students, Jones(1991) asserts that they "rarely fail. . .to expand and deepen communication. . .[and] enable both parties to view each other with new understanding and respect" (p.104).

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Secret Strengths Spotting

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

After learning about the VIA (Values in Action) Character Strengths(See [Recognizing and Utilizing Personal Strengths](#)), students are encouraged to look for those strengths in their peers. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to "spot" the strengths in their students and model this activity on a daily basis. This activity will improve peer-to-peer relationships as well as student-teacher relationships.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	Upper Elementary- 12th
Materials:	Notebook, writing utensil
Duration:	20-30 minutes weekly, as needed.
Implementation:	1. At the beginning of each week randomly assign students to observe another student. This can be done by drawing names. 2. Instruct students to observe and record the character strengths the other student uses and perceived positive outcomes of using them (students should already be familiar with the VIA character strengths). 3. Provide students a few minutes in class each day to record their observations. 4. At the end of the week give students the opportunity to share their observations with the student that was observed. 5. Afterwards, have students reflect on their experience (could be done through writing or sharing in a class discussion.

Does it work?

Govindji and Linley (2008) evaluated the impact of a strengths spotting exercise in schools. They found that recognizing strengths in others improved students' self-confidence, relationships with the teacher, and school climate. In a six session strengths-based intervention called "Awesome Us," researchers assessed the effects of strengths-based activities on the social skills of upper elementary students (Quinlan, 2013). At a follow up three months following the intervention's completion students reported higher levels of positive emotion, relatedness and strengths use. The strengths spotting activity was specifically linked to improving students' awareness of their strengths and in building relatedness among peers (Quinlan, 2013).

References:

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Peer Praise Notes

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

A sense of peer acceptance is a key component of developing positive peer relationships in children and adolescents (Nelson et al., 2008). Youth who feel accepted by their peers also exhibit more prosocial behaviors and interactions (Nelson et al., 2008). In a study of nearly 14,000 middle school students, Buchanan and Brown (2008) discovered that having a high level of peer support improves students' psychological wellbeing, especially boosting self-esteem and happiness. One way to increase a sense of peer acceptance and support within the school environment is through a peer praise note intervention. For this activity, teachers or school leaders will instruct students to write short, positive notes to their peers. This peer praise activity has been shown to improve peer relationships and trust, increase prosocial behaviors among socially withdrawn students, and boost self-confidence (Nelson et al., 2008).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Paper, writing utensil, envelopes
Duration:	3-5 minutes daily
Implementation:	1. Introduce the activity and model an effective praise note. 2. Instruct students to spend a few minutes writing a positive note to one of their peers (if you are concerned some students may be left out, assign students to specific peers). 3. Peer praise notes can be anonymous if preferred. 4. Collect the notes, review them for appropriate content, and redistribute them to the students they are intended for. 5. Repeat this activity a few times weekly, or as desired, and invite students to write to a different peer each time. 6. You could also provide students envelopes to collect the notes they receive.

Does it work?

The peer praise note activity was first studied by Nelson and colleagues (2008), with a few small classes of adolescent students. Three students in particular were observed for changes in their socially withdrawn behavior, as well as their involvement with the class and their peers. Each day all students were instructed to write a note of praise to a fellow student, while being encouraged to write about a different student in the class each time. The notes were briefly reviewed for content and then given to each student prior to peer activity time each day. This exercise continued for three weeks. Each of the three socially withdrawn students observed in this study demonstrated significant increases in prosocial behavior and positive interactions with their peers both during and following the peer praise note intervention. The teacher reported that the activity appeared to improve students self-confidence and gave all students in the class a safe and comfortable way to share their thoughts and feelings about their peers (Nelson et al., 2008, p.11).

In an alternate version of the peer-praise note (PPN) intervention, elementary school students were assigned to serve as "peer-praisers" on the playground during recess times at a suburban, Title I elementary school in the Western US(Teerlink et al., 2017). These peer-praisers were assigned to hand out notes, called "puma paws" for the school mascot, to students who exhibited behavior that was responsible, respectful, and safe during recess (Teerlink et al., 2017, p.117). Students who received peer praise notes were then publicly recognized by their classroom teachers and school administrators throughout the week and had the opportunity to be entered into a school-wide drawing for prizes. Researchers then measured the impact of this intervention of student behavior as well as students' approval and acceptance of the activity. It was found that during the implementation of the PPN intervention, office disciplinary referrals decreased, particularly during recess time. Student surveys following the intervention indicated that students enjoyed the activity and that it helped improve peer relationships(Teerlink et al., 2017).

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Acts of Kindness

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

There are several ways in which educators can support kindness between students. While there are many variations of acts of kindness activities, Shankland & Rosset (2017) suggest two classroom kindness interventions to support wellbeing. First, educators can provide students with sticky notes to write kind things about another person. Then, students are tasked with secretly delivering or posting the note so the intended person receives it. Second, in the spirit of secret santas, students are secretly assigned a peer to serve for a month. When students develop kindness, they are more inclusive and well-liked by their peers and bullying decreases (Layous et al., 2012).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Paper, writing utensil, other materials as needed.
Duration:	Encourage students to perform a few acts of kindness each day for a week. Repeat for a few weeks, as desired.
Implementation:	1. Create a recipient bank: Help students determine a list of family members, friends, or organizations they would live to help. You can also assign students to serve one of their peers.
	2. Plan acts of kindness: Help students develop a plan of what acts of kindness they want to perform during the week
	3. Verify student plans: Make sure students' plans are appropriate, feasible, and safe.
	4. Create a timeline and complete the acts.
	5. Have students reflect upon acts of kindness experience.

Does it work?

In a four week kindness intervention for children ages 9-11, Layous and colleagues (2012) discovered that students who performed three acts of kindness each week were happier and reported greater life satisfaction. Additionally, these students were found to be more accepted by their peers and exhibited more inclusive behaviors (Layous et al., 2012). Lyubormirsky and colleagues (2005) discovered that acts of kindness were more effective at improving wellbeing and prosocial behavior when performed within the same day, rather than over the course of a week or month. They argue that having students complete the activities within a small timeframe will help them better recognize the impact and importance of kindness.

A recent study in the Netherlands assessed the impact of a four-week acts of kindness intervention on the mental and social wellbeing of university students (Wieners et al., 2021). Given that acts of kindness performed in the same day are more effective at improving wellbeing (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005), the university students were asked to pick one day a week to perform five acts of kindness. This study found that performing acts of kindness for close friends and family members led to significant improvement in wellbeing, whereas performing acts of kindness for strangers was linked to improvements in emotional and psychological wellbeing (Wieners et al., 2021).

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Volunteering

Middle School   High school

Intervention Overview

Volunteering benefits psychological wellbeing in two ways: by improving psychological resources, such as self esteem and self-efficacy, and by improving social resources and skills(Musick & Wilson, 2003). Volunteering will also benefit adolescents as they take on new social roles and combat emotional challenges(Kim & Morgul, 2017). It may also improve their civic engagement(Kim & Morgul, 2017). Youth who participate in frequent voluntary service report lower levels of depression and may be more likely to volunteer as adults. The social skills gained through volunteering can help students succeed in educational and occupational pursuits (Kim and Morgul, 2017).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	6th - 12th
Materials:	List of volunteer opportunities for students, if you decide to do a whole-class volunteering activity some costs may be involved for transportation, supplies, lunch, etc.
Duration:	Varies
Implementation:	1. Provide students a list of information about potential volunteer opportunities and organizations. 2. Invite and encourage students to volunteer throughout the school year or term. 3. Help students overcome barriers for volunteering, such as transportation, scheduling, contacting the organization, etc. 4. Help students find an opportunity that fits their skills and interests.

Does it work?

A study involving one hundred 10th graders from an urban public high school in Canada analyzed the effects of volunteering on cardiovascular disease. All participants completed assessments about their cardiovascular health and psychosocial wellbeing prior to volunteering and after 10 weeks. For this study, students volunteered in an after school program at a nearby elementary school for at least one hour a week. Activities included, "homework club, sports programs, science, cooking, cards and games, and arts and crafts" (Schreier, Schonert-Reichl & Chen, 2013, p.328). Results of this study indicate that, in addition to reducing negative emotions, volunteering can, "change risk markers for cardiovascular disease" (Schreier, Schonert-Reichl & Chen, 2013, p.330). The greater a participant's reported increase in empathy and altruistic behavior, the greater reported cardiovascular benefits.

Hamilton and Fenzel (1988) studied 84 adolescents (ages 11-17) who participated in different volunteer projects through community service organizations and afterschool programs. Following the completion of the program, participants expressed more positive attitudes regarding social responsibility and the desire to help those in need. Students also shared that the volunteer experiences allowed them to learn more about others in their communities. Nearly all participants reported that they enjoyed the activities and would volunteer again in the future (Hamilton & Fenzel, 1988).

References:

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Fast Friends

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Teaching students to have quality conversations with their peers can help them build strong, healthy relationships and increase their sense of belonging. For the fast-friend activity, students will be assigned a partner to befriend over the course of a month (Echols & Ivanich, 2021). During your fast-friend activity, provide students with a list of questions to guide them in their conversations with their peers. Here are a few sample questions used in the "fast-friend" activity that you may consider using with your students. Additional questions can be found by visiting the articles under the reference section below.

1. What is your favorite subject in school?
2. What is your favorite dessert or flavor of ice cream?
3. What is/was your favorite pet? (If you've never had a pet, what pet would you choose if you could?)
4. What's your favorite thing to do during summer vacation?
5. What is your favorite TV show or movie?
6. Do you like to get up early or sleep in on the weekends?
7. What foreign country would you most like to visit and why?
8. If you could have one superpower, what would it be?
9. Describe your worst haircut ever.
10. Describe your best friend (without saying his/her name).
11. If you had to move from your school, what would you miss the most?
12. If your house was on fire and you had time to safely grab one thing before running out, what would it be?
13. If you could be famous for something, what would it be?
14. Describe one quality you wish you had.
15. What would a perfect day at school be like?
16. What would you like to change about your life if you could?
17. Name one thing that would make your parents/family proud of you and one thing that would make them disappointed in you.
18. Name one thing you and I appear to have in common.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	List of questions to promote conversation and relationship building. See recommended list above.
Duration:	30 minutes per month, or as needed.
Implementation:	1. Assign students to a partner in the class. 2. Once a month, for 30 mins, have students practice asking and answering questions with their partner. This activity could also be practiced more frequently. 3. Change partners every few months.

Does it work?

Developing friendships with peers is a key part of improving student wellbeing, as it helps them have a greater sense of belonging. One study tested an intervention called "fast-friends" where students were given conversation skills training and assigned to become friends with an assigned partner in the class(Echols & Ivanich, 2021). The study observed 301 seventh and eighth grade students in a Midwestern middle school. Students were randomly assigned a same-gender partner, who they reported to have not known well. Students were also assigned a control partner. For 30 min., once a month, over the course of 3 months, students participated in relationship building activities with their fast-friends partners. The first two sessions, students took turns asking each other questions that became increasingly personal. In the last session, they participated in a team block tower activity, competing against other "fast-friend" partnerships. At the end of the sessions students reported that they knew their "fast-friends" better and considered them friends(Echols & Ivanich, 2021).

References:

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Buddy Bench

Elementary Education

Interview Overview

The "buddy bench" or "friendship bench" has become a popular intervention in primary schools to reduce social isolation and encourage friendship-building in young students, particularly during recess activity time. This simple intervention involves adding a bench (or a few benches) around school playgrounds, designated for students to find a friend to play with. These benches are often decorated in bright colors and labeled as a "buddy bench." Students who need a friend to play with can sit on the bench during recess and other students are encouraged to invite those they see sitting on the bench to play with them.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	K - 6th
Materials:	A sturdy bench, paint to decorate if desired
Duration:	Only requires set up time. Teachers may wish to take additional time to instruct/ role–play with students on how to use the bench.
Implementation:	1. Purchase or build a small bench to be the designated buddy bench. You may decorate it or assist students in doing so. 2. Introduce the concept of the buddy bench to the whole school, and send a newsletter to parents explaining the intervention. 3. Have teachers explain buddy bench rules to students and post a list of rules in the classroom. Possible list of rules explained below. 4. Have teachers role-play with students on how to use the bench.

Does it work?

Though the buddy bench has gained popularity in elementary schools globally, there has been limited research completed assessing its effectiveness at improving student relationships and belonging. Recently, a study was completed involving students in grades 1-6 at a Title I school in central Utah, United States (Griffin et al., 2017). Two separate playgrounds were observed (one for students grades 1-3, another for students grades 4-6). "Buddy benches" were put in prominent places on the school playgrounds so students could easily recognize and find them. The following rules were posted near each bench and in each classroom: "If you are alone: 1.Sit at the buddy bench.2. If someone invites you to play with them, say 'yes' or 'no, thank you.' If you see someone who is alone at the bench: 1. Join them and invite them to play, talk or walk with you. 2. If they say 'no,' say 'okay, maybe next time,' and walk away" (Griffin et al., 2017, p.29). It was found that the bench was more frequently used by younger students, but there were more play invitations accepted among the older group. With the buddy bench intervention, solitary behavior among students decreased by 19-24% compared to baseline levels. When the buddy bench was removed, solitary behavior returned to near-baseline levels, but immediately was reduced when the bench was again added to the playgrounds. A few concerns presented were that some students reported feeling uncomfortable having to use the bench themselves, and some teachers felt that rules weren't followed appropriately (Griffin et al., 2017).

Another study evaluated students' perceptions of the buddy bench activity and its impact on their perceptions of self, others, and play during recess (Clarke, 2008, p. 11). This qualitative case study was completed at an elementary school in the Western US with 500 students. Student perceptions of the buddy bench were acquired by having them create two drawings- one of the playground with the buddy bench, and one of the playground without the bench. Students were then asked to describe their drawings. This was based on research done by child psychologist Richard Coles that children often express their views of the world through art (Clarke, 2008, p. 11). Data was also collected through interviews with parents and school staff. For many students, the buddy bench represented solidarity, worthiness, empowerment, and an improvement in playground climate. Students also reported that with the buddy bench intervention they developed a greater understanding that everyone feels lonely at times (Clarke, 2018).

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Meaning

Dr. Seligman (2011) described meaning as having a connection to something bigger than oneself. Character strengths associated with greater meaning in life include spirituality, gratitude, and appreciation of beauty (Wagner et al., 2019). Lin and Shek (2019) found that a sense of meaning in life fosters positive adolescent development, particularly by improving feelings of happiness and contentment and by reducing their engagement in risky behaviors. In the field of positive education, educators can help students develop greater meaning by encouraging them to "reflect and plan for ways to act with purpose, to think beyond themselves and contribute to higher pursuits" (Falecki et al, 2018, p.104). This involves teaching students to value "the benefits of serving a greater cause and engaging in activities to support that"(Norrish et al., 2013,p.152).   The activities in this section have been proven to improve children and adolescents' sense of meaning and purpose.

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Educating Students about Benefit Appraisals
Gratitude Letters
Savoring Strategies
Taking in the Good (HEAL)
Mental Time Travel
Brief Mindfulness Activities

	Mindful Bell
	Mindful Breathing
	Body Scan Relaxation
	Mindful Walking/Movement
	Five Senses Mindfulness
Mindful Photography	
Mindful Self-Compassion	

Educating Students about Benefit Appraisals

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Educating students about benefit appraisals (costs vs. benefits) encourages them to notice the helpful intentions of others, the benefits of gifts they have been given, and the sacrifices made by others. Froh et al. (2014) recommends that students be taught about benefit appraisals using a five lesson curriculum. The outline of the curriculum includes an introduction and brief overview of benefit appraisals (Lesson 1), understanding one's motivation for helping another (Lesson 2), understanding the cost involved in helping another (Lesson 3), understanding the benefits of receiving a gift or service from another person (Lesson 4), and a review session of all topics covered (Froh et al., 2014). It may be possible to combine or simplify the lessons for different grade levels and time constraints. Lessons should include writing assignments and role-playing activities (Froh et al., 2014). The Greater Good Science Center at the University of California-Berkeley suggests a few additional activities during a benefit appraisal lesson. One activity is to have students keep a gratitude journal to list costs to someone who has done something nice for them, as well as the benefits they receive because of this sacrifice (GGSC, n.d.). Additionally, as part of the lesson, students could read the short story "The Gift of the Magi" and analyze the costs and benefits to the characters in the story for their acts of kindness (GGSC, n.d.). Examples of benefit appraisal lessons can be found by visiting the articles in the references section below.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	Upper elementary-12th
Materials:	Varies, student journals for note-taking and writing activities recommended
Duration:	At least one 30-50 minute lesson, additional lessons recommended for greater effectiveness
Implementation:	1. Using the curriculum guides below, teach a short lesson, or a series of lessons about benefit appraisals to your students 2. Encourage students to keep a journal to write down the costs and benefits of gifts and services they receive from others

Does it work?

In one study of 4th graders, students "received instruction on the social-cognitive perceptions that elicit gratitude (i.e., benefit appraisals)" every day for one week (Froh et al., 2014, p. 135). These lessons helped teach children to recognize the helpful intentions of others, the sacrifices others made to serve them, and recognize the benefit of the gifts bestowed by others to them. After noticing increases in participants' measures of gratitude and grateful behavior, the researchers repeated the study. This time they spread out the curriculum so that lessons were taught once a week for 5 weeks. As a result of these studies, researchers concluded, "The treatment condition was effective in altering appraisals of perceived intention, cost, and value of interpersonal benefits . . . .[the treatment] condition exhibited growth in benefit appraisals (i.e., grateful thinking) over time "(Froh et al., 2014, p. 145). Both interventions also increased participants' sense of gratitude and appreciation for others, as well as positive emotion (Froh et al., 2014).

A more recent study assessed a benefit appraisal intervention for its effectiveness at improving gratitude, hope and prosocial behaviors among young adults(Baumsteiger et al., 2019). The benefit appraisal lesson was also combined with a gratitude letter and three good things activity. Among 16-18 year old participants, the intervention improved their ability to appreciate the blessings they have that may have previously been taken for granted. Most of the participants were also more likely to feel gratitude towards others and express their gratitude more often following the intervention. Finally, some participants also reported an improvement in life satisfaction (Baumsteiger et al., 2019).

References:

Baumsteiger,R., Mangan,S., Bronk, K.C. & Bono,G. (2019). An integrative intervention for cultivating gratitude among adolescents and young adults. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 14*(6), 807-819. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2019.157935

Froh, J.J., Bono,G.,Fan,J., Emmons,R.A., Henderson,K., Harris, C., Leggio,H. & Wood. A.M. (2014). Nice thinking! An educational intervention that teaches children to think gratefully, *School Psychology Review, 43*(2), 132-152. https://doi.org/10.1080/02796015.2014.12087440

G.G.S.C (n.d.) *Thanks! A strengths-based gratitude curriculum for teens and tweens.* Greater Good Science Center. https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/GGSC_Gratitude_Curriculum_MS_HS.pdf

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https://edtechbooks.org/addressing_wellbeing/educating_students_a.

Gratitude Letters

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

For this activity, students will write a gratitude letter to someone who has made an impact in their life, such as a parent, teacher, coach or friend. After writing a letter and reflecting on why they are grateful for this person, students are then encouraged to visit this person and share their letter with them. Dr. Martin Selgiman and colleagues (2005) assessed the impact of this intervention on adult wellbeing and found that it significantly increased participants' happiness and decreased depressive symptoms significantly for up to a month following the intervention. Since this initial study, researchers have begun testing the effectiveness of gratitude interventions, such as the gratitude letter and visit in schools. Students who participated in these studies reported increased levels of positive emotions, greater life satisfaction, and greater motivation (Froh et al., 2009; Armenta et al., 2020). You may wish to repeat this activity throughout the school year for it to have maximum effectiveness.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	Upper elementary - 12th
Materials:	Paper, writing utensil
Duration:	10-15 minutes per day, for 2 weeks. Repeat as desired.
Implementation:	1. Have students think of someone who has made an impact in their life and who they would like to thank. Students need to choose someone they are able to visit or call. 2. Spend a few minutes each day, for up to two weeks, having students compose a gratitude letter to their chosen person. 3. Have students plan a visit or a phone call with their chosen person for the last day of the exercise. 4. Students will visit or call their chosen person outside of class to deliver the letter and are encouraged to read it out loud to them.

Does it work?

One gratitude intervention completed at a parochial school asked 89 students (8-19 years old) to "Choose one person you could meet individually for a face-to-face meeting in the next week. Your task is to write a gratitude letter (a letter of thanks) to this individual and deliver it in person" (Froh, Kashdan, Ozimkowski & Miller, 2009, p. 414). Students worked on their letters for two weeks during 10-15 minutes of class time each day and delivered them before the last Friday of the study. As a result of this intervention, children and adolescents with low positive emotions reported more gratitude and positive emotion for up to two months following the intervention(Froh, Kashdan, Ozimkowski & Miller, 2009, p. 417).

In a recent study, Armenta and colleagues (2020) ninth and tenth grade students participated in a month-long gratitude intervention and spent 10 minutes each week writing letters to people they appreciated. Students completed surveys each week and at a 3-month follow-up to assess the impact of the gratitude intervention on life satisfaction, motivation, connectedness, humility, indebtedness, and elevation (an uplifting feeling of positive emotions). Most students reported that the activity increased their positive emotions and feelings of connectedness, both during the intervention and continuing to the 3-month follow up (Armenta et al., 2020).

References:

Armenta, C. N., Fritz, M. M., Walsh, L. C., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2020). Satisfied yet striving: Gratitude fosters life satisfaction and improvement motivation in youth. *Emotion.* Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1037/emo0000896

Froh, J. J., Kashdan, T. B., Ozimkowski, K. M., & Miller, N. (2009). Who benefits the most from a gratitude intervention in children and adolescents? Examining positive affect as a moderator. *The Journal of Positive Psychology,* 4(5), 408-422. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760902992464

Seligman, M. E. P., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive Psychology Progress: Empirical Validation of Interventions. *American Psychologist, 60*(5), 410–421. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.60.5.410

Savoring Strategies

Savoring is the capacity to "attend to, appreciate, and enhance the positive experiences in [our] lives" (Bryant & Veroff, 2007, p. 2). According to Morrish and colleagues (2018), this can be accomplished by "anticipating future enjoyment, attending to current enjoyment, or recalling past enjoyment", with the intention of improving positive emotions and meaning (p. 1546). Though it is similar to mindfulness in that savoring encourages one to be present, savoring emphasizes the positive, such as how one might want to savor a particularly delicious meal. Savoring encourages one to fully enjoy and immerse themselves in a positive moment. The strategies in this section will assist you and your students in developing savoring skills to improve their sense of meaning and happiness.

References:

Bryant, F.B. & Veroff, J. (2007). *Savoring: A new model of positive experience.* Psychology Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315088426

Morrish, L., Rickard, N., Chin, T.C. & Vella-Brodrick, D.A. (2018). Emotion regulation in adolescent wellbeing and positive education. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 19,* 1543-1564. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-017-9881-y

Taking in the Good (HEAL)
Mental Time Travel

Taking in the Good (HEAL)

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Rick Hanson (2013) found that by focusing on and taking in our good experiences, even just for about twelve seconds, rather than ignoring them, we can train our brains to be more positive. In other words, when we use the amplifying strategy of savoring, we can improve our positive emotions and outlook on life. Hanson shares a four step acronym, HEAL, that can help remind us to pause and enjoy good experiences and "heal" from negative ones. The steps are as follows:

H — Have a positive experience!

E — Enrich it!

A — Absorb it!

L — Link a positive memory to a negative memory and allow the positive to overcome the negative!
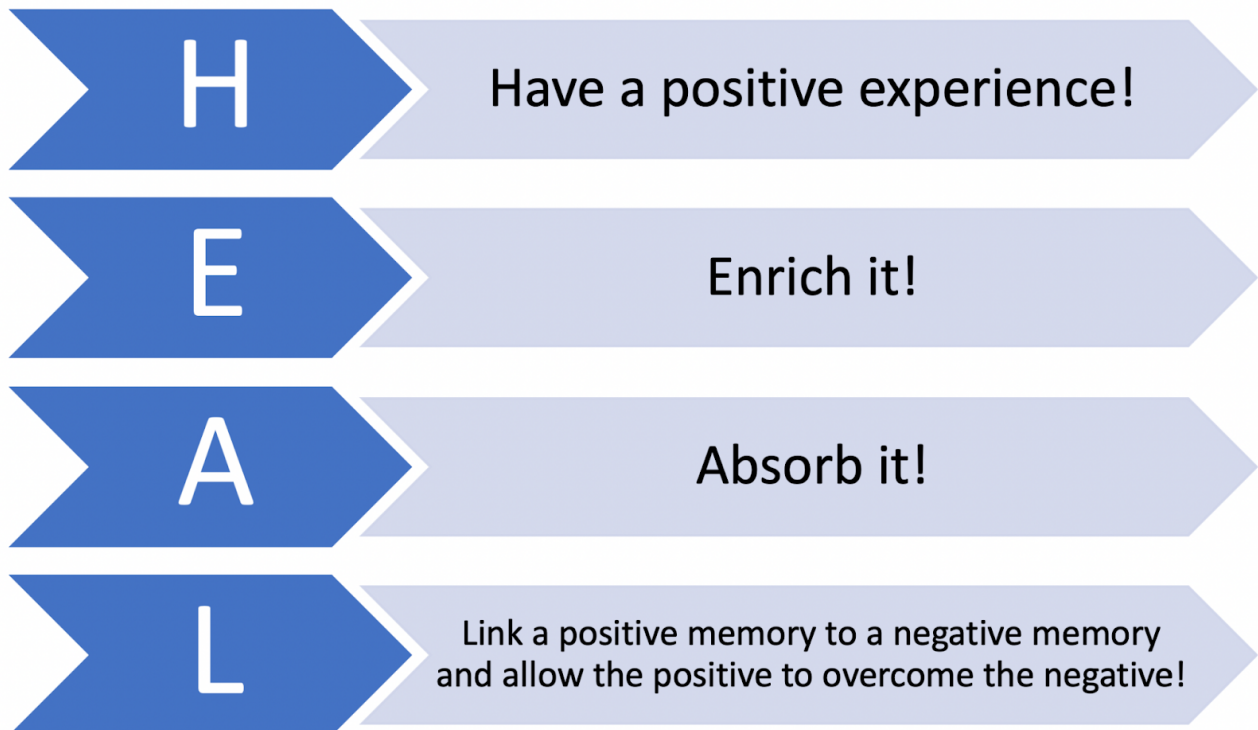
This practice requires consistent, long term practice to be effective (Hanson, 2013). As you teach these steps to your students, consider having a HEAL moment daily or weekly in your classroom as well as encouraging students to continue practicing this savoring strategy outside of class.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	None
Duration:	3-5 minutes daily, or as needed.
Implementation:	1. Have students think about a positive experience they have had recently, or reflect on someone who cares about them.
	2. Have students focus upon that memory for a few seconds and draw their attention to what it makes them feel.
	3. Encourage students to absorb those positive feelings and continue reflecting upon the positive experience.
	4. Finally, have students use those positive feelings to reflect upon a negative experience and to let the positive experience soothe some of the remaining hurt or negative feelings they may have.

Does it work?

Jacob and de Guzman (2016) assessed the impact of the "taking in the good," or "HEAL," process developed by Rick Hanson on the depression levels of adolescent female students in the Philippines. Over the course of 6 weeks, 30 female students ages 13 to 16 participated in 90-minute lessons discussing principles of the "taking in the good" exercise in conjunction with bibliotherapy. Not only did depression levels fall among students participating in the intervention, but the students also reported improved self-esteem and a better ability to overcome feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness (Jacob & de Guzman, 2016).

References:

Hanson, R. (2013) *Hardwiring happiness: The new brain science of contentment, calm and confidence.* Harmony Books.

Jacob, J. & de Guzman, R. G. (2016). Effectiveness of taking in the good based- bibliotherapy intervention program among depressed Filipino female adolescents. *Asian Journal of Psychiatry, 23,* 99-107. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajp.2016.07.011

Mental Time Travel

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Mental time travel involves both positive reminiscence about past events, as well as positive imagination about future events. Just as with the [HEAL](#) process, practicing mental time travel motivates students to focus on and absorb the positive experiences in their lives. Encourage students to share their excitement about an upcoming vacation, birthday, or other positive event. You can also have students bring to mind a favorite memory and picture all the details of that positive event. Though this can be done in a single session, research suggests that practicing daily mental time travel, for at least two weeks, contributes to the most significant improvements in wellbeing (Quoidbach et al., 2009).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	None
Duration:	5-10 minutes, repeat as needed.
Implementation:	1. Have students imagine one or more positive events that could take place in the future, or four positive memories.
	2. Encourage them to picture as many details of the event as possible in their minds, including any emotions they might experience (or already experienced if reflecting on memories).
	3. Have a few students share their examples with the class, or have them write down what they imagined.

Does it work?

In one study on mental time travel, a group of 210 university students were asked to imagine four positive events that could happen the following day(Quoidbach et al., 2009). Some of the examples students shared were receiving a text message from a significant other, eating at their favorite restaurant, or getting the job they interviewed for. Participants reported a significant increase in happiness and decrease in anxiety by thinking about positive future events, as opposed to negative or neutral ones (Qoidbach et al., 2009). Quoidbach and colleagues (2010) completed an additional study the following year with 282 university students and employees in Belgian. They found that positive mental time travel, both reminiscing about the past and imagining the future, were linked to improvements in positive emotion and life satisfaction (Quoidbach et al., 2010).

References:

Quoidbach J., Berry E., & Hansenne M., & Mikolajczak M. (2010). Positive emotion regulation and well-being: Comparing the impact of eight savoring and dampening strategies. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *49*(5),368-373. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2010.03.048.

Quoidbach, J., Wood, A.M. & Hansenne, M. (2009). Back to the future: the effect of daily practice of mental time travel into the future on happiness and anxiety. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 4*(5), 349-355. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760902992365

Brief Mindfulness Activities

What is mindfulness?

The practice of mindfulness has been defined as "mental activities which share in common a focus on training the self-regulation of attention and awareness" (Lomas et al., 2017, p. 134). Mindfulness has been shown to improve student wellbeing in multiple ways. Britton and colleagues (2014) and Cresswell (2017) found that even 5-10 minutes of mindfulness daily can decrease negative emotions and impulse behavior in children and youth. Mindfulness has also been an effective tool in helping children and adolescents regulate difficult emotions, such as grief and anger (Wisner, 2014, p. 632; PBS NewsHour 2017 cited in Armstrong, 2019, p. 14). Among adolescents, mindfulness has been shown to improve positive emotions, reduce anxiety, improve sleep, and lead to more prosocial behaviors (Miners, 2008).

Interventions

Shankland and Rosset (2017) collected a series of brief mindfulness interventions that teachers can integrate into their classroom curriculum. First, teachers can introduce a mindful bell which, when rung, indicates to the students to direct their attention to the sound of the bell for as long as possible. Not only can this be used as an attention getting device, but it can help teach students how to pay purposeful attention. Teachers can introduce mindfulness to their students through a brief body scan. In a body scan, students are instructed to direct their attention to selected parts of their body, one at a time. For example, students sitting in a chair can focus on the feeling in their toes, then feet, ankles, knees, legs and back.The breath is crucial to many mindfulness practices. Teachers can lead breath centered meditations by inviting students to silently breath in on seven counts and breath out on eleven counts. Similarly, teachers can invite students to focus their attention on wishing themselves and fellow classmates happiness through a loving kindness meditation (Shankland & Rosset, 2017).

Considerations for Educators

There are some important considerations teachers and school leaders must take into account when planning a mindfulness activity. Mindfulness activities can be more effective for students when teachers model mindfulness and share their own experiences (Armstrong, 2019, p. 41-42; Etty-Leal, 2019). Mindfulness activities should also include good preparation (introduce students to the concept of mindfulness and how it can improve wellbeing) as well as good reflection (encourage students to write down or discuss experiences following mindful practices) (Armstrong, 2019; McGee, 2019). In order to keep students engaged, you may consider having students lead mindfulness activities, incorporating videos and other technological resources, as well as mixing up active movement mindfulness activities

with more sedentary practices (Armstrong, 2019; McGee, 2019). The links below will take you to a few different brief mindfulness practices you may consider implementing in your classroom.

[Mindful Bell](#)

[Body Scan Relaxation Technique](#)

[Mindful Breathing](#)

[Five Senses Mindfulness](#)

[Mindful Walking/Movement](#)

Does it work?

Felver and colleagues (2015) completed a review of existing research regarding the implementation of mindfulness-based interventions with children and adolescents in the classroom. Though research on mindfulness in schools is still somewhat limited, the results of existing studies are promising. For this review, 28 studies were analyzed, 10 being randomized-control trials. The total number of students who participated across all studies was a little over 3,000, with an average sample size of about 120 students per study ranging from ages 5 to 17. Many of the studies reported improvements in participant mental health, with 6 reporting significant reductions in behavioral concerns, 4 to 5 showing a reduction in depressive symptoms and anxiety, and one study even reporting a reduction in suicidal ideation. Most of the studies also reported improvements in prosocial behaviors, such as emotional regulation, social skills, positive affect and optimism with the implementation of mindfulness-based interventions in the classroom (Felver et al., 2015).

It is also important to consider students' perspectives regarding mindfulness practice in the classroom. One study found that youth who participated in an arts-based mindfulness program reported improvements in self-efficacy, empathy, compassion, and even a greater appreciation of "the beauty of [their] inner being" (Coholic, 2011, p.????). More recently, Researchers Ager, Albrecht and Cohen (2015) evaluated the mindfulness journals of 38 elementary students following their participation in an eight-week classroom mindfulness intervention to better understand their perceptions of mindfulness. All students shared that mindfulness helped them be more aware of happy thoughts and feelings, as well as a sense of inner calmness and peace (Ager et al., 2015). Among these elementary school-aged participants, many reported mindful breathing and mindful walking to be among their favorite activities. Mindfulness practice better enabled them to respond to stress, conflict and difficult emotions in themselves, as well as to help others experiencing these challenges (Ager et al., 2015).

References:

Ager, K., Albrecht, N. & Cohen, P. (2015). Mindfulness in schools research project: Exploring students' perspectives of mindfulness—What are students' perspectives of learning mindfulness practices at school?. *Psychology, 6,* 896-914. https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2015.67088

Armstrong, T. (2019). *Mindfulness in the classroom: Strategies for promoting concentration, compassion and calm.* Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Britton, W.B., Lepp, N.E., Niles, H.F., Rocha, T., Fisher, N. & Gold, J. (2014). A randomized controlled pilot trial of classroom-based mindfulness meditation compared to an active control condition in 6th grade children. *Journal of School Psychology, 52*(3), 263-278.

Coholic, D.A. (2011). Exploring the feasibility and benefits of arts-based mindfulness-based practices with young people in need: Aiming to improve aspects of self-awareness and resilience. *Child Youth Care Forum, 40*, 303–317. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-010-9139-x

Creswell, J.D. (2017). Mindfulness interventions. *Annual Review of Psychology, 68,* 491-516.

Felver, J.C., Celis de Hoyos, C.E., Tezanos, K. & Singh, N.N. (2015). A systematic review of mindfulness-based interventions for youth in school settings. *Mindfulness, 7*, 34-45. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-015-0389-4

McGee, R. (Host). (2019, November 12). Mindfulness in education with Janet Etty-Leal (No. 4) [Audio podcast episode]. In *The positive education podcast.* The Institute of Positive Education.

Miners, R. (2008). Collected and connected: Mindfulness and the early adolescent. *Dissertations Abstracts International: Section B. The Sciences and Engineering, 68*,9.

Shankland, R., & Rosset, E. (2017) Review of brief school-based positive psychological intervention: a taster for teachers and educators. *Educational Psychology Review, 29*, 363-392. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-016-9357-3

Wisner, B.L. (2014). An exploratory study of mindfulness meditation for alternative school students: Perceived benefits for improving school climate and student functioning. *Mindfulness, 5*(6), 632-638*.*

| Mindful Bell |
| Mindful Breathing |
| Body Scan Relaxation |
| Mindful Walking/Movement |
| Five Senses Mindfulness |

Mindful Bell

Intervention Overview

The mindfulness bell activity helps students practice mindful listening and attention training by directing their focus to the sound of a ringing bell(Shankland & Rosset, 2017). John Kabat-Zinn(2013), one of the leading researchers in modern mindfulness practice, found that in schools the mindfulness bell activity was effective at quieting classrooms and improving student focus within one week. The following video by Fablefy(2018) introduces what this practice could look like in the classroom, but you can also find additional implementation ideas by visiting the references below.

Watch on YouTube

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	A handbell or tuning fork.
Duration:	A few minutes daily or as needed.
Implementation:	1. Draw students' attention to the bell or tuning fork and instruct them to direct their attention on the sound of the bell or tuning fork as long as possible while it is ringing. Consider having them raise their hands once they no longer hear the sound. 2. Ring the bell or tuning fork. 3. Redirect student attention as needed.

References:

Fablefy. (2018, August 14). *3 minutes silent meditation to the sound of the bell* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nJYJ-QcABs

Heart Mind Kids. (2016, March 1). *Mindfulness for kids: 5 ways to practice mindful listening with a bell.* https://heartmindkids.com/mindful-listening-with-a-bell/

Jostock, C. (2016). *Using the mindfulness bell to help students focus.* Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Oakland University. https://oakland.edu/Assets/Oakland/cetl/files-and-documents/TeachingTips/2016/MindfulnessBellTT.pdf

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2013, March 27). *Mindfulness and its role in education*. The Mindfulness in Schools Project Annual Conference. London, UK. Keynote Address.

Shankland, R., & Rosset, E. (2017) Review of brief school-based positive psychological intervention: a taster for teachers and educators. *Educational Psychology Review, 29*, 363-392. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-016-9357-3

Mindful Breathing

Intervention Overview

Mindful breathing is a simple mindfulness activity that encourages students to focus on the sensations of their breathing. There are multiple variations of this activity that can be adapted to many grade levels. As part of the .b Mindfulness in Schools project, students are encouraged to practice 7/11 breathing, in which they count to seven while inhaling and to eleven while exhaling (TEDx Talks, 2013). For young students, Kira Willey recommends having them imagine they are a bear during hibernation, taking long, deep breaths in and out through their nose (TEDx Talks, 2018). The Greater Good Science Center, at the University of California-Berkeley, recommends having students trace their fingers while breathing, inhaling while tracing UP each finger, and exhaling as they trace DOWN it (Greater Good in Education, n.d.). The videos below, created by Headspace and Sesame Street include a few additional suggestions and guided mindful breathing exercises.

[Watch on YouTube](#)

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	A handbell or tuning fork.
Duration:	A few minutes daily or as needed.
Implementation:	1. Draw students' attention to the bell or tuning fork and instruct them to direct their attention on the sound of the bell or tuning fork as long as possible while it is ringing. Consider asking them to raise their hands once they no longer hear the sound. 2. Ring the bell or tuning fork. 3. Redirect student attention as needed.

References:

Greater Good in Education. (n.d.). *Finger tracing: Mindful breathing for students.* Greater Good Science Center: University of California- Berkeley. https://ggie.berkeley.edu/practice/finger-tracing-mindful-breathing-for-students/#tab__2

TEDx Talks. (2013, February 14). Mindfulness in schools: Richard Burnett at TEDxWhitechapel [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mlk6xD_xAQ

TEDx Talks. (2018, January 10). Bite-sized mindfulness: An easy way for kids to be happy and healthy - Kira Willey TEDxLehighRiver [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOlIdmMK_zM

Body Scan Relaxation

Intervention Overview

The body scan mindfulness activity focuses student attention on their bodies and any tension or other sensations they feel. This activity is traditionally done sitting or lying down. Through a guided meditation recording, or teacher prompting, students focus on each part of the body (such as feet, legs, torso, heart, arms, hands, etc.) while taking note of what they feel and releasing any tension. The Mental Health Teacher (2022) has put together the following guided video to help young students with the body scan meditation practice, or you may use the additional guided meditations linked in the materials section below.

Watch on YouTube

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	None needed, but you may consider using a body scan meditation recording such as the one found here.
Duration:	5 minutes daily or as needed
Implementation:	If you decide not to use a recording, prompt your students with the following instructions:

1. Have students find a comfortable seated position and encourage them to close their eyes if they feel comfortable doing so.
2. Invite students to notice the feel of the chair they are sitting on while taking slow, deep breaths.
3. As students breathe, invite them to focus on relaxing while they exhale.
4. Bring students' attention to the sensation of their feet on the floor, followed by their legs. Have them recognize any tension and focus on releasing it.
5. Repeat this exercise with the back, stomach, arms, hands, neck/throat, and head.
6. Have students notice the sensations of their whole body and their sense of relaxation and freedom from tension.
7. When students are ready, have students open their eyes and return their attention to the class.

References:

Greater Good Science Center. (n.d.). *Body scan meditation.* https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/body_scan_meditation

Shankland, R., & Rosset, E. (2017) Review of brief school-based positive psychological intervention: a taster for teachers and educators. *Educational Psychology Review, 29*, 363-392. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-016-9357-3

The Mental Health Teacher. (2022, February 27). *The body scanner! Mindfulness for children* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLoK5rOl8Qk&t=208s

Mindful Walking/Movement

Intervention Overview

Mindful walking is one of the interventions used as part of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction(MBSR), developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn (2017). The mindful walking activity encourages students to bring awareness to the sensations involved in walking. For this activity, walking is done very slowly, with attention focused on the feeling of the feet touching the ground with each step, the rolling forward of the foot from heel to toe, the shifting of one's body weight and the feeling of the arms swinging at one's sides (Kabat-Zinn, 2017; Sutton, 2020). Mindful walking not only encourages students to be mindful, but also to engage in physical activity, another key component of wellbeing. An example of this meditation is shown in the Headspace video below.

[Watch on YouTube](#)

Intervention Guide:

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	None
Duration:	10 minutes daily or as needed.
Implementation:	1. Find a location inside or outside the school to teach students the practice of mindful walking.
	2. Have students walk about 10-15 normal steps, take a deep breath. Have students walk back the opposite direction and take another breath.
	3. Instruct students to focus on the sensations of the walking process in their next steps such as where the weight is placed on each foot, the rotation from the heel to the toes with each step, and the shifting of weight from the legs to the feet.
	4. Have students take slow small steps, but remind them that the steps should still feel natural, and not exaggerated or uncomfortable.
	5. Have students continue focusing and redirecting their attention to their steps while walking for 5-10 minutes.

References:

Greater Good in Action. (n.d.) *Walking meditation.* Greater Good Science Center: University of California-Berkeley. https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/walking_meditation

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2017). Walking meditations. *Mindfulness, 8*, 249–250. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-016-0638-1

Sutton, J. (2020, July 15). *What is mindful walking meditation and how can it impact your life?.* PositivePsychology.com. https://positivepsychology.com/mindful-walking/

Five Senses Mindfulness

Intervention Overview

For this activity, students use each of their five senses to focus their attention on their surroundings. The following video, created by Sesame Street and the mental health platform Headspace, is a great introduction to the Five Senses mindfulness meditation practice. You may wish to use this video to introduce the activity to young students.

[Watch on YouTube](#)

Watch on YouTube

Intervention Guide:

Grade Level: All

Materials:	None
Duration:	5 minutes daily or as needed.
Implementation:	1. Have students notice 5 things they can SEE.
	2. Then, have them notice 4 things they can FEEL.
	3. Have students draw their attention to 3 things they can HEAR.
	4. Have them notice 2 things they can SMELL.
	5. Have students draw their attention to 1 thing they can TASTE.

References:

PositivePsychology.com (n.d.). *The five senses worksheet*. https://positivepsychology.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Five-Senses-Worksheet.pdf

Sesame Street. (2020, April 15). *Sesame street monster meditation #1: I-sense with Cookie Monster and Headspace* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9nE4RE8uiQ

Mindful Photography

Middle School   High school

Intervention Overview

As part of the mindful photography intervention, students are encouraged to take pictures of things that are meaningful to them throughout the week. By reflecting on these photographs either through a writing activity, or by sharing them with their peers, students will find greater appreciation for the world around them and enhance their sense of meaning and purpose (Steger et al., 2013; Kurtz,2015). In addition to reviewing the activity information below, please visit the resource section for additional curriculum guides to assist you in implementing a mindful photography intervention (Kurtz & Lyubomirsky, 2013).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	6th-12th
Materials:	Each student needs a cellphone or digital camera (this activity may be most successful in secondary education classes)
Duration:	One week, one 30-45 minute class session to share photos and additional out of class time
Implementation:	1. Introduce the activity and instruct students to take up to 5 photos throughout the week of things that are meaningful to them.
	2. You may also ask students to share some of these pictures with friends and family or share them on social media.
	3. Have students reflect on the activity either through a writing exercise or through sharing and presenting to the class.

Does it work?

Most studies on mindful photography have involved college students, but could easily be adapted to middle and high schools students. In a 2015 study, 38 college students participated in a four session mindful photography intervention (Kurtz). Students were asked each session to spend 15 minutes a day to take three photos of different subjects such as campus, their friends, the natural environment, and what they found most meaningful to them on campus, respectively. They were also asked to participate in a counting blessings activity. Kurtz (2015) reports that students found the mindful photography activity more enjoyable, engaging and thought-provoking than a traditional counting blessings intervention. It was also found that mindful photography boosted students' mood, appreciation, and motivation (Kurtz, 2015). In a similar study, 86 university students, asked to take 9-12 photos of "things that make [their] life meaningful" (Steger et al., 2013, p.28). After 1 week, the students shared and described their photos with the class. It was found that this mindful photography intervention increased life meaning, satisfaction and positive affect among participants (Steger et al., 2013).

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Mindful Self-Compassion

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Self-compassion is often defined as "treating yourself the way you would treat a good friend" (McGee, 2019, 5:30). Higher levels of self-compassion are linked to reduced anxiety, depression and stress, as well as greater life satisfaction, optimism and sense of belonging (McGee, 2019). While some may argue that self-compassion undermines motivation for self-improvement, it has actually been correlated with improved motivation and determination (McGee, 2019). For adolescents, practicing mindful self-compassion can lead to reduced stress and increased resilience, life satisfaction, social connectedness and gratitude(Bluth et al., 2016; Bluth & Eisenlohr–Moul, 2017; Yang et al., 2021). There are many ways to practice self-compassion, such as repeating kind and positive phrases to oneself, listening to a guided self-compassion meditation, self-soothing touch through hugging oneself, putting hands over the heart, or patting oneself on the back (McGee, 2019). Taking a mindful self-compassion break in the classroom and practicing some of these activities can help students develop key components of wellbeing(Bluth et al., 2016; Bluth & Eisenlohr– Moul, 2017; Yang et al., 2021).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	None. Some example self-compassion meditations and other activities can be found here.
Duration:	A few minutes daily, repeat as needed.

Implementation:	1. In order to help students feel more comfortable practicing self-compassion, Karen Bluth(McGee, 2019) recommends that teachers first explain to students why self-compassion is important and its benefits to wellbeing. Explain that with practice, self-compassion will become more comfortable.
	2. Model self-compassion with your students. Be careful to express kindness to yourself for your own mistakes in front of your students.
	3. Listen to a guided self-kindness meditation as a class, or create your own script using the examples above.
	4. After students complete a difficult task, encourage them to pat themselves on the back.
	5. Take a dedicated self-compassion break with students for a few minutes daily, and have them either repeat kind phrases to themselves, write a short compassionate note to themselves, give themselves a soothing touch, or listen to a short self-compassion meditation.

Does it work?

In the pilot study of the mindful self-compassion program "Making Friends with Yourself" developed by Bluth and colleagues (2016), practicing self-compassion was associated with improvements in anxiety, depression, mindfulness, and life satisfaction. 34 students, ages 14-17 participated in this study, with half participating in the intervention and half being assigned to a waitlist control group. This was a six-week course, with a 90-minute weekly lesson where students learned about self-compassion, participated in role-plays, listened to self-compassion mindfulness meditations, practiced soothing touch, among other self-compassion based activities. Following the program, those in the self-compassion intervention group reported significantly lower depression and anxiety levels as compared to the waitlist group, as well as improved levels of self-compassion and life satisfaction. Some students shared that practicing self-compassion was particularly helpful during stressful times, such as preparing for advanced placement (AP) exams (Bluth et al., 2016). A follow up study completed by Bluth and colleagues in 2017, also found that practicing self-compassion improved emotional wellbeing, gratitude and curiosity, while reducing stress.

A three year study was recently completed with adolescents in China measuring the impact of self-compassion on prosocial behaviors and gratitude, important aspects of psychological wellbeing (Yang et al., 2021). About 1500 7th grade students were recruited for this study, with about 1000 completing the entire three year study. Students completed a variety of surveys over the three years, measuring perceived levels of self-compassion, gratitude, and interactions with others. It was found that higher levels of self-compassion were associated with the development of prosocial behaviors, such as empathy, altruism, and compassion for others. Self-compassion in adolescents was also associated with higher levels of gratitude and appreciation for life (Yang et al., 2021).

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Accomplishment

The Accomplishment pillar of the PERMA framework "focuses on developing confidence and competence through striving for and achieving meaningful outcomes" (Norrish et al., 2013, p.153). Not only does accomplishment mean experiencing positive outcomes and successes, but encouraging students to manage setbacks and persevere through challenges. Accomplishing goals can help students experience a sense of achievement and competence (Kern, 2022). Character strengths that can be taught to improve the accomplishment domain include zest, persistence and perspective (Wagner et al., 2019). Among students, a sense of accomplishment is linked to improvements in life satisfaction, hope, a growth mindset, and vitality (Kern et al., 2015).

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Future Thinking & When/Where Plans
Hope Map
G-POWER Goal Setting
Embedded Self-Regulation Strategies
Growth Mindset
Grit and Deliberate Practice
Developing Students' Resilience and Coping Skills

Future Thinking & When/Where Plans

Middle School   High school

Intervention Overview

Shane Lopez (2013) found "when students see a direct connection between the future they want and their attitudes and behaviors today, their commitment and effort soar(n.p.)." Thinking about the future is a large part of creating hope and energy in our students. However, future thinking becomes wishful thinking when it is not connected to goals and action. As educators, we need to find out the future our students are envisioning and help them chase their personal goals. For example, we can personally relate our instruction to their future goals to help them see the value of literacy and mathematics. One way to help students reach their goals is by using a when/where plan. Once a student has set a goal, a when/where plan gives them a clear idea of the time and place they will work on it (Lopez, 2013). For a student who wants to write their own book, their when/where plan could include them writing 500 words after their after school snack in their bedroom. As the student moves forward, the when/where plan can be adjusted depending on what helps them be the most successful.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	6th-12th
Materials:	Paper, pencil, additional materials as needed.
Duration:	Varies
Implementation:	1. Have students reflect on what they envision for their future and what needs to be accomplished to achieve that future (college attendance, work experience, development of certain skills, etc.). 2. Have them choose a goal they can work towards now to help them reach some of those steps. 3. Help them create a when/where plan to achieve their goal. 4. Follow up with students on the success of their plans and goals.

Does it work?

Peter Gollwitzer and Veronika Brandstatter (1997) assessed the impact of where/when plans, or what they called implementation intentions, on the ability of university students to complete projects over Christmas break. Participants were asked two set two goals, one easy and one hard, that they wanted to accomplish over the break, such as writing a paper, exercising, etc. While most students in the group were able to accomplish their easier goals without a when/where plan, only 25% were able to accomplish their harder goals without a when/where plan. This study also assessed a group of students that were all given the same project to complete over Christmas vacation, but participants were randomly assigned to either create a where/when plan or complete the assignment without the plan. Of the group that created a where/when plan for the project, 75% completed the assignment on time. However, only 33% of participants in the group that did not create a where/when plan completed the assignment(Gollwitzer & Brandstatter., 1997).

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Hope Map

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Hope is essential to students' academic progress and has been linked with a 12% bump in student achievement (Lope
2013). The Hope Map is an intervention developed by Dr. Shane Lopez that helps students plan out how to achieve
goals and overcome obstacles to success (Lopez, 2013; McQuaid, n.d.). In this activity students begin with writing do
a goal they want to achieve, what they need to do to accomplish the goal, as well as any potential obstacles that need
be overcome. This activity is similar to the WOOP goal setting method created by Dr. Gabriele Oettingen(2014), which
stands for wish, outcome, obstacle, and plan. These goal setting methods have been shown to strengthen motivation
and resilience in overcoming setbacks in the pursuit of accomplishing one's goals (Oettingen & Reininger, 2016).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	Upper elementary- 12th
Materials:	Paper, writing utensil
Duration:	20-30 minutes, repeat as needed
Implementation:	1. Give each student a piece of paper and have them fold the paper into three vertical sections.
	2. Instruct them to write down a goal they want to achieve (this week, month, year, etc. on the far-right third of the page.
	3. Then, have them write pathways they could take to achieve that goal on the far-left side. Pathways include tasks that must be done to achieve the goal.
	4. Finally, have the students write down obstacles that must be overcome to each pathway in the center section.

5. Have students reflect on how to overcome those obstacles and discuss what might be holding them back.

Does it work?

Researchers in Portugal implemented a 5 week hope intervention program with 367 5th graders (Marques S., J. Lopez S., & Pais-Ribeiro J., 2011). The intervention group met for 60 minutes once a week for five weeks. During this time, researchers intended to help students: set goals, identify pathways to their goals, build the required emotional capacity to be successful, and reframe outcropping challenges within their locus of control through a strengths based approach to goal setting. Students were introduced to the hope theory which states that "hope is defined as a cognitive set that is based on a reciprocally derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed determination) and (b) pathways (planning of ways to meet goals)" (Snyder et al., 1991, pp. 570-571). Thus, Snyder's hope theory views hope as a cognitive thinking process rather than an emotional experience (although positive emotions have been known to be associated with hopeful thinking). After discussing and applying this theory to their lives and goals, students self-reported significant increases in hope, life satisfaction, and self-worth (Marques S., J. Lopez S., & Pais-Ribeiro J., 2011).

Another intervention used Snyder's hope theory in conjunction with life coaching and principles of cognitive hardiness to improve the wellbeing of 56 female high school seniors in Australia. Cognitive hardiness is an "individual's commitment to their life goals, a sense of control or belief that they can control life events, and a perception of change as a challenge" (Green, Grant, & Rynsaardt, 2007, p.25, emphasis in original). Each session invited the students to choose 1 personal and 1 school-related issue they wished to be coached on. The remaining weeks were spent setting goals, identifying personal resources that could help them reach their goal, developing action steps, and evaluating their progress. Consequently, students self-reported significant increases in hope , cognitive hardiness, and significant decreases in depression levels (Green, Grant, & Rynsaardt, 2007).

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G-POWER Goal Setting

Intervention Overview

A variation of the Hope Map intervention was used by Pedrotti and colleagues (2000) as part of the *Making Hope Happen* program for children and adolescents, called "G-POWER." G-POWER is an acronym that will help students develop, plan and accomplish goals. G stands for **G**oals, followed by **P**athways, **O**bstacles, **W**illpower, **E**valuate the process, and **R**ethink and try again (Pedrotti et al., 2008,p.103). As students use this process in goal-setting, they will be more capable at achieving their goals and will experience increased hope in their ability to achieve said goals (Lopez et al., 2004).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	Upper elementary- 12th
Materials:	Paper, writing utensil, short story about goal setting
Duration:	One class session, repeat as desired.
Implementation:	1. Begin by introducing each aspect of the G-POWER acronym to your students.
	2. Share with them a short story of a character who sets and accomplishes a goal.
	3. As students read the story, have them consider and discuss the following questions:
	• What is the character's **G**oal?
	• Which **P**athways does the character identify to use to move toward his or her stated goal?
	• What **O**bstacles lay in the character 's pathway?
	• What source of **W**illpower is keeping the character energized in this process?
	• **E**valuate the character's process. Which pathway did the character elect to follow?
	• **R**ethink the process—would you have made the same decisions and choices? (Lopez et al., 2004, p.396)

4. Once students have a better understanding of the G-POWER process, instruct them to write down their own goal plan using each letter and assist them with each step.

5. Follow up with your students to evaluate their plan and encourage the formation of new G-POWER goals as each goal is accomplished.

Does it work?

The G-POWER intervention was implemented by Pedrotti and colleagues in seventh grade classrooms, as part of the Making Hope Happen (MHH) program(Lopez et al., 2004). The MHH program involved five, weekly, 45-minute sessions with small groups of about eight to twelve students, led by a graduate research assistant. The G-POWER intervention was the focus of one of these sessions. Baseline hope measures were taken of both the program participants and control group prior to the start of the program using the Child's Hope Scale (CHS) (Lopez et al., 2004). At the completion of the program, CHS measures were taken again of all students in the program and control groups. It was discovered that students who had participated in the MHH program reported significant increases in hope following the intervention as compared to the control group. These higher levels of hope were maintained for up to at least six weeks following the intervention(Lopez et al., 2004).

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Embedded Self-Regulation Strategies

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Self regulation includes setting, monitoring, and reflecting on goals. Research has shown that when "self-regulation instruction occurs within reading instruction[or other disciplines]. . .students can improve both academic and behavior outcomes" (Roberts et al., 2019, p. 79). Self-regulation helps individuals reach their goals and overcome setbacks. Ladd, Birch and Buhs (1999) found that kindergarteners who exhibited poor self-regulation and increased negative emotions early in the school year developed negative relationships with peers and teachers, had lower academic achievement, and lower peer acceptance by the middle of the school as compared to students with high levels of self-regulation. Teaching self-regulation strategies has been found to be particularly helpful at improving student motivation and achievement in mathematics (Perels et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2019). Surprisingly, one study found that educators spend less than 10 percent of instructional time on teaching self-regulation skills and strategies (Hamman et al., 2000).

Self-regulation strategies traditionally involve three parts: goal-setting and planning, goal monitoring, and self-reflection(Roberts et al., 2019). Educators can identify broad content and behavior goals for the class, and then encourage students to set individualized goals beneath the broader classroom goals. Before each lesson, consider teaching and modeling some of these goals using explicit instruction. Once students understand their goals, they monitor their behaviors through observation and notation. Strategies to help students monitor their goals is to do randomized goal checks, use a timer, or give them a self monitoring form. Self monitoring forms can help students see their progress and reflect on their next steps(Roberts et al., 2019). A self-monitoring form can be as simple as having students check a box each day if they completed or made progress towards their goal. If progress is not being made, have students consider what is and is not working, reteach the goal, or help them decide on a more appropriate goal. Additionally, teachers can teach students self-regulation strategies such as how to self-motivate, plan, concentrate, and how to handle distractions and mistakes (Perels et al., 2009, p. 23). Altogether, these strategies have been found to be effective when implemented with academic subjects (Roberts et al., 2019).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level: Can be adapted to all grade levels.

Materials:	Self-monitoring forms. Examples can be found in the references below (Roberts et al., 2019, p.82). Notebooks or journals can also be used for student self-monitoring and reflection.
Duration:	A few minutes daily, integrated with classroom instruction.
Implementation:	1. Develop broad classroom goals, and assist students in developing individualized, explicit goals such as "*I will. . .read all the directions before starting my work*" (Roberts et al., 2019, p.80).
	2. You may wish to model some goal setting examples to help students with the previous step.
	3. Create self-monitoring forms for students to track their progress on achieving their goals.
	4. Check-in with each student on their self-monitoring reports or have them complete peer check-ins.
	5. After a period of time working on goals (such as a week, a month, a semester, etc.) have students reflect on their progress and make adjustments as needed.

Does it work?

Integrated self-regulation strategies were assessed within a mathematics class, with 53 sixth grade students participating in the study(Perels et al., 2009). One class, with half of the participating students, acted as a control group being taught a traditional math curriculum and the intervention group was taught mathematics with integrated self-regulation strategies for three weeks. The same teacher taught both classes. Self-regulation strategies taught over the course of the intervention included learner goal setting, self-motivation and monitoring using daily journals, problem-solving, coping with distractions, and handling mistakes effectively. Students in the intervention group were found to have more significant improvements in mathematic achievement by the end of the study as compared to their peers in the control classroom. They also showed greater understanding of self-regulation strategies and claimed to apply these strategies more frequently following the study (Perels et al., 2009).

A similar study was completed more recently to determine whether integrating self-regulation strategies into a lesson could help third grade students struggling with mathematics(Wang et al., 2019). The intervention was designed to help students develop a growth mindset and self-motivation through goal setting and self-monitoring while completing challenging tasks. Participants included students struggling with mathematics from 19 different third grade classrooms, who were taught self-regulation strategies in pairs with a tutor. 103 students participated in this intervention, with three weekly sessions for 13 weeks. The students who participated in the intervention outperformed the students who did not receive the intervention on their understanding of fractions, which was the mathematics content focus during the study. The results indicate that embedded self-regulation learning may improve student achievement, as well as their ability to persevere through learning challenges (Wang et al., 2019).

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Growth Mindset

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Researcher Carol Dweck discovered that students can have two mindsets regarding learning and intelligence. Students with a fixed mindset believe that their intelligence and abilities are fixed and cannot be changed or improved. These students refuse to be challenged for fear of appearing unintelligent to others. Other students have a growth mindset and believe that intelligence and ability are malleable and. Those with a growth mindset understand that intelligence "can be developed. . .through effort,good strategies, and input from others" and seek out ways to challenge themselves and improve their abilities(Dweck, 2019, p. 21). According to Dweck, students with a growth mindset learn more and face setbacks with greater resilience (Stanford University, 2015). Three ways that teachers can promote a growth mindset in the classroom by: 1) Providing feedback about a student's process and effort, rather than their ability or a successful outcome. 2)Directly teaching students about the difference between a growth and fixed mindset. 3) Teaching students about brain development and its malleability(neuroplasticity) (Hwang & Nam, 2021). We have included a few resources below that can assist you in teaching students these key principles of having a growth mindset. Creating a classroom or school centered on fostering a growth mindset will boost your students' learning and academic achievement, while also reducing negative emotions, improving self-esteem, and fostering resilience (Yeager et al., 2016; Miu & Yeager, 2015; Paunesku et al., 2015).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Possible materials include growth mindset videos, modules, and activities provided FREE through Khan Academy and the Stanford Project for Education Research that Scales (PERTS) program.
Duration:	Varies

Implementation:
1. Creating a culture of growth mindset in your classroom begins with first educating yourself and your students about what it means to have a growth mindset. For older students, consider reading with them portions of Carol Dweck's book *Mindset:The New Psychology of Success.*You may also use the instructional videos provided by Khan Academy.
2. Help your students practice a growth mindset by praising them for their effort and potential, rather than abilities. Consider providing additional chances for students to revise work before submitting it for a final grade.
3. Consider using the age-appropriate activities and teaching tools provided by Khan Academy and the PERTS program frequently throughout the year to continue teaching your students about the principles of a growth mindset.

Does it work?

Carol Dweck and other researchers at Stanford University, as part of the Project for Education Research that Scales(PERTS), developed an online growth mindset intervention for students that has been assessed in various studies throughout the world (Dweck, 2019). Over 1,000 students across the United States participated in a study to assess the effectiveness of this growth mindset intervention on improving student achievement (Paunesku et al., 2015). Particularly among underperforming students at risk of dropping out, this intervention significantly improved students' overall grade point average (GPA) and achievement in core classes (Paunesku et al., 2015). A study of this same intervention, but focused specifically on ninth grade students, found that 7% of students who were "off track" or behind in their classes began passing their courses after participating in the intervention(Yeager et al, 2016). The World Bank administered the materials for this growth mindset intervention to a group of students in Peru and found that students' test scores were improved in several subject areas following the intervention (World Bank, 2017). Blackwell, Tresniewski, and Dweck (2007) found that with the implementation of a growth mindset intervention at the beginning of junior high school, adolescents' math scores significantly improved over their time in junior high school, as compared to the control group which showed little improvement.

Another group of researchers found that an intervention that teaches adolescents about the power of growth mindsets and neuroplasticity, particularly during their transition to high school, can decrease depressive symptoms. They performed 3 studies with almost 600 students entering high school in which each student self-administered the 30 minute intervention on paper or a computer. The treatment group were taught that " (a) if you are excluded or victimized, it is not due to a fixed, personal deficiency on your part; and (b) people who exclude or victimize you are not fixed, bad people but, instead, have complicated motivations that are subject to change" (Miu & Yeager, 2015, p.731). They were introduced to the idea that "behaviors are controlled by 'thoughts and feelings in their brains' and that such pathways in the brain can be changed" (Miu & Yeager, 2015, p.731). Then the students read letters written by upperclassmen endorsing what they learned about brain plasticity and wrote their own supportive narratives to future participants. This practice, asking participants to try to convince someone else of what they learned, is a common practice in adolescent interventions. As a result, those in the treatment condition had less self-reported depressive symptoms, increased self-esteem, and a more positive mood compared to the control condition at the 9-month follow-up. A similar study also found that such an intervention can also lead to perceived control and quicker stress recovery as linked with growth personality mindsets (Schleider & Weisz, 2016).

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Grit and Deliberate Practice

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

"Grit is the quality that enables individuals to work hard and stick to their long-term passions and goals" (Bashant, 2014, p. 14). Grit has been studied by Angela Duckworth for its impact on the completion of goals and the ability to persevere through challenging tasks. Duckworth and Seligman(2005) found that grit, perseverance and self-discipline are better predictors of academic success than standardized tests or IQ. They found that adolescents who were highly disciplined outperformed their more impulsive peers academically, both in improving grades, higher standardized test scores, attendance and admission to competitive programs(Duckworth & Seligman, 2005). Angela Duckworth also found that grit was a significant predictor of cadets' ability to complete basic training at West Point Academy (Berger, 2019).

Though much research has been done assessing the importance of grit on academic success, few interventions have been thoroughly researched on how to help students develop grit. Some suggestions of interventions you may include, but that have not been significantly researched, are having students write about past failures and help them reframe problems, reading books and having conversations about grit, modeling "grittiness", and helping students develop good habits (Bashant, 2014; Davis, 2015). Some research has been done on the implementation of deliberate practice to improve grit and academic performance. "Deliberate practice entails engaging in a focused, typically planned training activity designed to improve some aspect of performance" and usually involves four key steps: 1) a well-defined goal for improving some aspect of performance, 2) an added challenge to the students' current skill level, 3) immediate feedback, and 4) continual practice to improve errors (Duckworth et al, 2011, p. 174; Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2016, p.729). Examples of deliberate practice in the classroom could include: pre-class reading quizzes, in-class clicker questions, and other activities designed to promote individual practice, identify weaknesses and provide feedback(Deslauriers, Schelew, & Wieman, 2011).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Varies
Duration:	Throughout the school year, as needed.

| Implementation: | 1. Some researchers recommend first instructing students about what deliberate practice is and how it can improve academic performance is an essential first step in encouraging students to engage in the practice more(Eskreis-Winkler et al.,2016).
2. Include deliberate practice activities in your daily lesson plans.
3. Provide students with immediate feedback on where to improve and engage in more practice. |

Does it work?

Angela Duckworth and colleagues (2010) found that spelling bee participants who engaged in more deliberate, solitary practice of spelling words performed better in spelling bees and demonstrated higher levels of grit, as compared to participants who only practiced with a parent or coach, or engaged in leisurely practice activities such as reading. In another study, undergraduate physics students were randomly assigned to one class with an emphasis on using deliberate practice activities in learning about electromagnetism or the control group with a traditional lecture(Deslauriers, Schelew, & Wieman, 2011). Those who were assigned to the deliberate practice group participated in pre-class reading quizzes, clicker questions in class, and other deliberate practice activities. Those in the deliberate practice class scored higher on a follow-up assessment as compared to their peers in the control group (Deslauriers, Schelew, & Wieman, 2011).

Eskreis-Winkler and colleagues(2016) completed five, randomized control trials assessing the impact of deliberate practice on middle school and college performance, as well as to see if teaching students about the benefits of deliberate practice could motivate them to engage in this practice more effort. In the first study assessing the impact of deliberate practice on middle school grades, about 1000 sixth and seventh grade students engaged in a 45 minute online math practice activity. Students received immediate feedback for each question, and as students answered questions right, the questions became more difficult. The students who completed the activity and engaged in more consistent deliberate practice received higher grades. In the other studies, middle school and college students were instructed about the benefits of deliberate practice and motivation on academic achievement prior to participating in a deliberate practice activity. The control groups were just instructed about various study skills. Participants in the deliberate practice group engaged in more deliberate practice up to a month following the intervention, and also had higher end of course grades compared to the control group(Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2016).

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Developing Students' Resilience and Coping Skills

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Resilience is the ability to face and adapt to challenging experiences and circumstances(APA,n.d.). According to Cassidy (2015), resilience is "an asset or strength, a desirable and advantageous quality, characteristic or process that is likely to impact positively on aspects of an individual's performance, achievement, health and wellbeing" (p.2). There are many ways that educators and school leaders can foster resilience in their students. Ungar and colleagues (2014) share that teachers can promote resilience by making themselves accessible to students and actively listening to their concerns. Additionally, students can have empathy with students' difficult challenges and circumstances and provide them with coping skills and strategies to positively deal with those challenges(Ungar et al., 2014). Gardner and Stephens-Pisecco(2019) share that educators can promote resilience by creating a safe environment, building relationships, teaching students how to regulate their emotions, promoting students' healthy self perceptions, and by helping them build cognitive skills, coping strategies, fortitude, and positive personal qualities. We encourage teachers to use some or all of these strategies to help build student resilience. Additionally, the Resilience and Coping intervention will help students face and overcome adversity by allowing them to share their personal challenges and work together to develop coping strategies and solutions.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All. Lessons should be adapted to students' needs and abilities.
Materials:	Paper, pencil. See the Resilience and Coping Intervention Guide for additional materials needed. This resource is also provided in Spanish.
Duration:	At least three, 45-minute sessions.
Implementation:	1. Introduce the concept of resilience to your students and set group rules for the discussion about topics that can be addressed and appropriate, respectful behavior. 2. Give students a few minutes to share previous challenges and coping strategies. 3. Assist the students in identifying a problem they can discuss as a group. 4. Have students discuss aspects of the problem:

- Describe specific examples of the problem and when/why it occurred.
- Describe thoughts and feelings regarding the problem.
- Consider possible ways to change the problem.
- Consider the consequences and outcomes of each of those possible solutions.
- Help students create an action plan of how they can cope with or change the problem using the solutions discussed.
- Have a follow-up session to assess student progress and participation with the action plan, and repeat this process with additional problems as needed.

Does it work?

The Resilience and Coping intervention(RCI) was initially tested by Allen and colleagues (2016), as part of an after-school program for children and adolescents living in at-risk neighborhoods. The study sample included 74 students between ages 5 and 19, all of whom were African-American students. These students were divided into a few groups according to their age, and each group of students received five sessions (administered weekly) as part of the intervention. Each session was led by a facilitator who assisted students in their discussion. After learning about resilience, children and adolescents were encouraged to share challenges they have faced, coping strategies they have used in the past, and brainstorm other coping strategies they could use in the future. They also selected a topic as a group to discuss and then create an action plan to overcome that particular issue. Some of the topics addressed were bullying, conflict with peers, teachers and family members, anger, and death of loved ones. Though it is difficult to determine causality without a control group, surveys administered prior to and following the intervention indicate that this intervention contributed to an improvement in participants' coping strategies, as well as a sense of hope in the future. Parents of participants also reported that following the intervention, their children seemed to get into less trouble at school and had an improved ability to express emotions and walk away from difficult situations (Allen et al., 2016). This study was replicated a year later, however, as a randomized control trial with undergraduate college students ages 18 to 23(Houston et al., 2017). 64 students were assigned to the intervention and received three, 45-minute RCI sessions. RCI participants reported significantly lower levels of stress and depression, and higher levels of hope following the intervention as compared to the control group which did not participate in the intervention.

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Health and Vitality

The positive health domain of wellbeing not only includes the absence of illness, but also a person's perception of their health, feeling physically healthy, having a subjective sense of physical vitality, and having sufficient strength and energy for their daily activities" (Seligman, 2011; Kern, 2022, p.10). According to Piko and Bak(2006), children recognize these different aspects of health, that it is not only the absence of illness, but involves exercise, eating healthy, cleanliness, and a feeling of strength. In the same study, children also recognized the impact of physical health on their mental, emotional, and social wellbeing. A few children shared that being healthy brings them happiness and joy, while others shared that being healthy allows them to spend time with friends (Piko & Bak, 2006). One child shared that "Health is the most important thing to maintain your life" (Piko & Bak, 2006, p. 647). Though children and adolescents may recognize the importance of health, it is still important to help them develop skills and habits that will contribute to a healthy lifestyle. The interventions in this section are intended to guide teachers and school leaders in promoting student health and vitality.

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Healthy Sleep Habits
Classroom Physical Activity
Yoga
Creative Playground Equipment
Healthy Body Image Intervention
Student-Led Health Program

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Healthy Sleep Habits

Middle School High school

Intervention Overview

Poor sleep affects many school-aged children and adolescents. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020) report that between 60-70% of middle and high school students do not get the recommended amount of sleep each night. Among younger children, resistance to bedtimes and frequent night waking contribute to most sleep problems (Quach et al.,2011). Adolescents whose sleep/wake times are not always as easily monitored by parents, and are often affected by electronic device use and caffeine consumption. Poor sleep not only affects students' academic performance and engagement, but it also increases the rates of drowsy driving accidents among teenagers, and obesity risk (Owens et al., 2015). Conversely, it has been found that good sleep habits are associated with higher levels of hope and happiness, and fewer emotional regulation problems in children and teens(Lau et al., 2021). Sleep education interventions have been shown to improve students' perceptions regarding the importance of sleep (Moseley & Gradisar, 2009). This intervention could be incorporated into a physical education class, psychology class, or as a school-wide intervention.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	6th-12th (can be adapted to younger levels)
Materials:	Worksheets, informative booklets on sleep hygiene
Duration:	Several 30-50 minute sessions, repeat as needed.
Implementation:	1. Collect worksheets and informational handouts regarding sleep benefits and practices.
	2. Have a discussion with your students regarding different sleep themes, such as:
	a. Symptoms and consequences of poor sleep habits
	b. Positive sleep habits: consistent sleep/wake schedule, eliminating distractions, etc.
	c. Cognitive and Behavioral strategies to improve sleep, such as relaxation/mindfulness exercises

3. Have students create a sleep management plan.

4. Follow-up with students on successes and limitations they face as they attempt to change their sleep habits.

Does it work?

Several studies have found that sleep interventions can help improve overall wellbeing in children and adolescents. One study educated adolescents from 2 schools in southern Australia on how to promote and maintain healthy lifestyles in a cognitive behavioral framework (Moseley & Gradisar, 2009). Each adolescent was selected for the intervention because they woke up at significantly different times on weekdays versus weekends and got insufficient sleep on weekdays: both symptoms of poor sleep hygiene. Across several 50 minute classes, with one class each week for 4 weeks, adolescents learned about, " (i) adolescent sleep needs and practices; (ii) consequences of poor sleep practices; (iii) good sleep hygiene practices; (iv) regularization of sleep/wake schedule and early morning bright light exposure; (v) stimulus control therapy instructions; and (vi) sleep-compatible cognitive and behavioral strategies" within the context of general wellbeing (Moseley & Gradisar, 2009, p.335). More details about each lesson plan can be found in the Appendix I (Moseley & Gradisar, 2009, p.340). As a result of this intervention, adolescents reported increased sleep knowledge and actions towards increasing general wellbeing. However, the study concluded the future interventions should focus on motivating simple behavior changes and integrating more hands-on exercises.

Another study with elementary students used several consultations about behavioral sleep strategies to help improve participants' wellbeing (Quah et al., 2011). Participants were children with moderate to severe sleep problems across 22 government primary schools in Melbourne Australia. Consultations covered sleep norms for each child's age, provided information on behavioral strategies specific to sleep problems, and resulted in a sleep management plan (Quah et al., 2011, p. 694). As a result of these consultations, participants' sleep problems resolved more quickly than the control groups'. Participants reported more prosocial behaviors and better sleep-habits, while caregivers reported decreased symptoms of anxiety(Quah et al., 2011).

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Classroom Physical Activity

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

To help students reach the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2019) advocate for integrated classroom physical activity, in addition to daily recess and physical education classes. Classroom physical activity includes taking short, dedicated physical activity/movement breaks. Teachers can also incorporate physical activity into academic instruction, whether as part of a lesson activity or to teach a concept. Not only does classroom physical activity increase student motivation and academic achievement, it encourages students to be more physically active. Regular physical activity benefits strength and endurance, healthy bone and muscle development, and weight control. The CDC (2018) have provided some tools that school leaders and teachers can use to integrate physical activity in their classrooms. One recommended step is providing teachers with professional development on physical activity integration. A physical education teacher may also model to other teachers how to safely and correctly do a list of simple stretches and physical activities, such as jumping jacks, squats, etc.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	None required. The CDC includes some additional resources that may be helpful for different activities and programs.
Duration:	At least 3-5 minutes daily, per class period. It is recommended that elementary classrooms take frequent activity breaks throughout the day.

Implementation:	• Take a dedicated 3-5 minute movement/dance break. Play music and guide students in a set of exercises/dance moves.
	• Have students perform simple activities near their desk such as: jumping jacks, chair squats, arm circles, neck/head rotations, shoulder shrugs/rolls, etc.
	• Encourage students to be physically active (in a safe manner) as they move between activities and classrooms.
	• Visit the CDC resources listed below for additional ideas for classroom physical activity.

Does it work?

One study found that with the implementation of daily 10-minute physical activity breaks in the classroom, students were 75% more likely to meet the recommended amount of 30 minutes of physical activity during the school day (Carlson et al., 2015). In another study, it was recommended to incorporate physical activity with learning (Donnelly & Lambourne, 2011). Suggested activities for elementary school classrooms include having a floor mat with alphabet letters written on it and encouraging students to hop on the right letters during a spelling lesson. It was found that integrated classroom activity led to reduced BMI over a three year period, improved physical activity, and increased academic achievement (Donnelly & Lambourne, 2011).

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Yoga

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Yoga is defined by the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) as a "meditative-movement practice," an exercise of both the mind and body, which originated in Indian philosophy (Butzer et al., 2015, p.2). Yoga involves four elements: physical postures and stretches, breathing exercises, relaxation techniques, and meditation practices (Butzer et al., 2015). Yoga is beginning to gain popularity in school programs, for the many benefits it has on wellbeing. Hagan and Nayar (2014) identified seven possible benefits of yoga for youth. With school and parental support, yoga practices can lead to improvements in: 1)concentration and memory, 2)respect for self and others, 3)self-regulation, 4)self confidence, 5)general sense of wellbeing, 6) emotional regulation and balance and 7) physical fitness for children and youth (Hagan & Nayar, 2014, Figure 1). In a recent literature review of yoga interventions for high school students, Caldarella and Lulla (2022) found that yoga interventions improve various aspects of adolescent wellbeing, including physical and mental health, social relationships, and academic performance. It has also been shown to reduce stress, anxiety (including test anxiety), depression, substance use, and school dropout rates (Caldarella & Lulla, 2022). Currently, most school-based yoga programs either include short, classroom yoga breaks, or full yoga programs incorporated into physical education classes or after-school activities (Butzer et al., 2015). Brief classroom yoga breaks can be a great way to increase classroom physical activity.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Yoga mats or blankets, yoga training for PE teachers (optional but recommended)
Duration:	10 minute daily yoga break in classroom; 30-50 minute PE class a few days weekly

Implementation: 1. Take a brief yoga break with your students during class.
    1. As the teacher, participate in a brief yoga training, or use guided videos with your students such as the ones found [here](). Sesame Street has also created a series of brief yoga pose videos found [here]() that you may wish to try with young students.
    2. For additional yoga break ideas with step-by-step instructions, consider purchasing Louise Goldberg's book *Classroom Yoga Breaks: Brief exercises to create calm* [here]().
2. Implement yoga into physical education classes or as an extracurricular activity
    1. Have physical education teachers participate in a yoga training program OR hire a trained yoga teacher.
    2. Determine how often to include yoga in regular physical education classes, or if you have the resources to create a separate yoga class during or after-school hours.
    3. Recruit students to the class or extracurricular activity
    4. Classes should be held a few days a week, for 30-50 minutes, and include all four basic elements of yoga: physical postures, breathing exercises, relaxation techniques, and meditation practices.

Does it work?

One study evaluated a yoga program with about 400 7th grade students enrolled in physical education (PE) classes (Butzer et al., 2017). Students were randomly assigned to the yoga class intervention or regular PE for a period of 6 months. Each yoga session was about 35 minutes long, 1-2 times per week. The sessions included centering/breathing exercises, warm-ups, yoga poses, a didactic/experiential activity (social/self-discovery games and activities such as students leading poses, holding poses longer than comfortable to build resilience), and relaxation. Students were interviewed following the completion of the intervention. Students reported that the intervention decreased stress, and improved sleep and relaxation. Some students reported that yoga informed their performance in other sports, particularly in flexibility and balance. Some students also shared that they believed the yoga intervention could have indirect positive effects on substance abuse, specifically by encouraging students to think before they act and be more mindful of their decisions. For some students, the yoga intervention was positively correlated to academic performance(Butzer et al., 2017).

A similar study was completed in a rural secondary school in Massachusetts, U.S. with 7 classes of 11-12th graders(Khalsa et al., 2012). Students randomly assigned to yoga class or normal PE. Students in the intervention group attended 2-3, 30 min yoga classes per week. Teachers were trained in the YogaEd program and had previously received 200-h of yoga teacher training. Classes included opening relaxation, warm-up, yoga poses, and closing relaxation. Each session had a talking point addressing yoga philosophy/methodology, mind-body awareness and other mental/emotional health themes (stress, positive self talk, etc.). Students were asked to take a variety of surveys measuring mental/emotional wellbeing before and after the intervention. Most outcome measures (stress, anger, coping skills, resilience) showed slight improvements in the yoga group (Khalsa et al., 2012).

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Creative Playground Equipment

Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

Recess is a popular time of day for elementary students to spend time outside and be physically active. One way to encourage students to be more physically active and creative during recess is to incorporate moveable play equipment, such as hoola hoops, jump ropes, tires, pool noodles, buckets and crates (Hyndman et al., 2018). Researchers at multiple universities in Australia have been studying the use of unconventional recess materials on physical and social activity as part of the Sydney Playground Project (n.d.). The use of moveable playground equipment and everyday materials allows children to adapt their play to meet their needs. Traditional, fixed playground equipment can often be overcrowded and provide limited play options (Hyndman et al., 2018). Changing up the materials on a daily or weekly basis can also encourage student creativity(Hyndman et al., 2018). Additional examples of materials to use and how to implement this activity at your school can be found by visiting the references below.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	Pre-K - 6th
Materials:	Moveable playground equipment such as hoola hoops, jump ropes, cardboard boxes, crates, milk jugs, pool noodles, etc.
Duration:	Varies

Implementation:

1. Collect ecyclable or moveable materials to use on your playground such as hoola hoops, PVC pipes, car tires, crates, buckets, cardboard boxes, pool noodles, assorted balls, etc. You may request community donations to help with the cost.
2. Set student rules for using the equipment (make sure it is put away in a designated spot after recess, share with other students, don't damage the materials, etc.)
3. Place some of the materials in an open field or gym during recess for students to use for free play.
4. Have recess supervisors and teachers encourage students to use the materials.
5. Have students and recess supervisors clean up the materials following recess time.
6. Rotate different materials throughout the week to build student creativity.

Does it work?

In a study of two elementary schools, Hyndman & Mahony (2018) found that providing students with moveable playground equipment increased students' creativity during recess. The moveable equipment challenged students to repurpose, redesign, and plan for their play needs. Students' interactions and communications became more sophisticated during play. The equipment fostered alternative forms of movement, which helped students' physical development and physical activity levels (Hyndman & Mahony, 2018).

Bundy and colleagues (2017) assessed the impact of unconventional playground materials on students' level of play, creativity and physical activity. Twelve schools were randomly assigned to either include recyclable, non-conventional materials such as milk jugs, pool noodles and car tires on the playground during recess, or to act as a control group with traditional recess equipment. Among children in the intervention schools, physical activity during school increased and sedentary time decreased, over the 13-week study. However, in control schools that did not participate in the intervention, physical activity actually decreased over the course of the study (Bundy et al., 2017).

References:

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Access it online or download it at
https://edtechbooks.org/addressing_wellbeing/creative_playground_.

Healthy Body Image Intervention

Middle School

Intervention Overview

Contrary to the belief that body image issues are only prevalent among teens, it has been found that body dissatisfaction begins in young children, with nearly 50% of children ages six to twelve reporting unhappiness with their appearance (Bird et al., 2013). It has also been found that nearly 60% of teens and pre-teens also struggle with body image concerns (Al Sabbah et al.,2009). Unhealthy thoughts and behaviors regarding body appearance put students at risk for eating disorders, unhealthy weight control, drug and alcohol use, and self harm (Diedrichs et al., 2015). Poor self image also negatively impacts students' mental health and self esteem (Bird et al., 2013). Luckily, there are now many resources promoting healthy self image education in schools. The popular beauty product company, Dove, has researched and developed the Confident Me program, complete with free worksheets, videos, and lesson plans for use in school settings. They also provide teacher training resources on how to teach students about healthy body image. These resources are available in multiple languages. We encourage you to visit their site in the reference section as you prepare a healthy body image intervention for your students. Most healthy body image interventions, including Dove's Confident Me program, are intended for students ages 11-14, but can be adapted to younger or older students.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	6th-9th (Can be adapted to other grade levels)
Materials:	Free worksheets, videos, lesson plans, etc. provided by DOVE Confident Me program (visit link in Reference section below)
Duration:	Varies, but likely several 50 minute sessions.

Implementation:	• Follow lesson plans provided by Dove for either a single 90-minute session, or five to six 50 minute lessons.
	• Include self-reflection and group discussion
	• Important lesson themes to address with your students include:
	○ Media Literacy, advertising, and appearance manipulation
	○ Cultural/historical ideals of body image
	○ Appropriate responses to appearance-based talk and teasing
	○ Body Comparison

Does it work?

A few studies have been completed to test the effectiveness of the Dove Confident Me body image intervention for both male and female early adolescents. A study of the single 90 minute session found that all students had reduced negative affect and eating disorder symptoms immediately following the intervention (Diedrichs et al, 2015). Particularly among female students, there was a reported decrease in eating restraint and improved perception of body image. All students showed improved engagement and less avoidance of extracurricular and social activities. It was also found that this intervention was most effective when led by a trusted teacher, rather than an outside clinician or researcher (Diedrichs et al., 2015). However, although the 90-minute session did report an immediate impact in students' self image and healthy behaviors, these improvements were not maintained long term. It is recommended to use multiple sessions, or include a follow up (Diedrichs et al., 2015). A study of the five session Confident Me intervention supports this conclusion, as improvements to the body image of both male and female students, as well as reduced appearance-based teasing, were maintained up to a year following the intervention (Diedrichs et al, 2021).

Similar healthy body image interventions, such as Happy Being Me, include similar themes to the Confident Me program, and report similar improvements in students' healthy perceptions of self (Richardson & Paxton, 2010). In a study of the Happy Being Me program (adapted for both boys and girls) three, 50 minute sessions were administered to pre-adolescent students addressing themes such as media literacy and digital appearance manipulation, appearance-based teasing or "fat talk," and body comparison(Bird et al., 2013). It was found that following the intervention, while no significant results were found regarding the self image of male participants, female students showed improvements in body satisfaction and eating habits (less restrained or emotional eating). For both boys and girls, improvements were made in appearance-related conversations and reduced internalization of body image ideals (Bird et al., 2013).

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Student-Led Health Program

Middle School   High school   Elementary Education

Intervention Overview

As you begin developing a health improvement program for your school, you might consider the creation of a student-led school health improvement team. Students can help model and promote healthy eating and physical activity habits among their peers. Students on the health improvement team can also assist teachers and school leaders in teaching health education courses. In one school, students led whole-school health and wellness activities, such as a skipping rope contest with fruit kabobs served as refreshments and a winter sledding activity(Gutuskey et al., 2014). Not only will intervention this benefit students on the team who will gain valuable leadership skills and better health habits, but a peer led health program is linked to better acceptance rates and habit development among all participating students (Gutuskey et al., 2014; Stock et al., 2007). Peer leader recruitment, involvement, and training all influence the effectiveness of the intervention, so it is important to carefully consider these variables when implementing this intervention (Christensen et al., 2021).

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Varies
Duration:	Whole school year; meetings and activities held as often as desired
Implementation:	1. Determine how students will be recruited (faculty-nomination, peer-nomination, volunteer, etc.) and how many students will participate on the leadership team.
	2. Determine how often the group will meet.
	3. Help students on the health improvement team lead after school programs, teach short lessons to health classes, create health promotion posters and school announcements, or any other activities that help promote your school's health and wellness goals.

Does it work?

A school in the United States implemented this intervention by recruiting nine third and fourth graders in a school health improvement team (Gutuskey et al., 2014). They investigated their school's physical wellness and organized school wide wellness activities with the help of adult mentors. As a result of this experience, students reported improved leadership skills, such as responsibility and public speaking, and physical health habits (Gutuskey et al., 2014). Additional studies have found that having students on a health leadership team act as peer mentors for younger students in the school is also effective at improving health outcomes and habits (Stock et al., 2007). One program developed in Canada called "Healthy Buddies" paired students in grades 4th-7th, with younger elementary school students. They were tasked with teaching their "buddy" short, weekly lessons focused on nutrition, physical activity, and healthy body image. Students also participated in combined physical education classes with their peer mentors twice a week. This peer-led health promotion program was successful at improving health knowledge and behaviors among all participants, including peer mentors(Stock et al., 2007).

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Interventions for School Employee Wellbeing

Wellbeing of School Employees Overview

Seldon (2018) explained that teacher workload, stress and turnover can be linked to five systematic problems. These include: social immobility, lack of progress or advancement in the education system, administrative control of teaching, large class sizes, and a lack of opportunities for individualization (p. 54). While it may not be possible to remove all these barriers for teachers and school staff, a focus on wellbeing may alleviate the daily stress and burnout teachers feel. Workplace wellbeing is the "balance point between an individual's resource pool (psychological, social or physical) and the challenges faced (psychological, social, or physical)" (Dodge et al., 2012, p. 230). While it may not be feasible to fix all of the problems faced by education professionals, this section aims to help teachers and school leaders increase the available psychological, social and physical resources for themselves and their teams in hope of improving wellbeing.

Grant and Spence (2010) developed the Wellbeing Engagement Matrix to illustrate the role that both wellbeing and engagement play in ensuring our school staff and leaders are both happy and healthy at work.
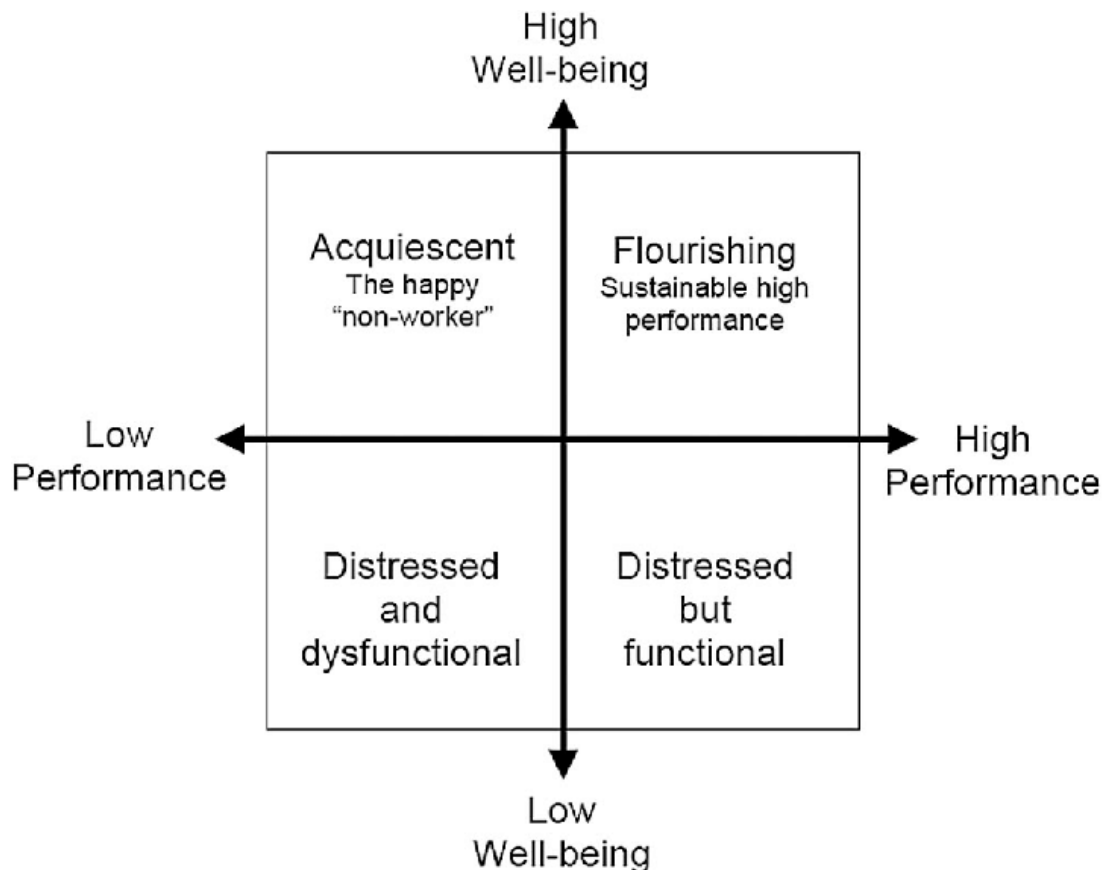
Our goal should be to help our school staff to flourish with a greater wellbeing, engagement and enjoyment at work. The interventions included in this section will help your school develop flourishing and happy educators, rather than languishing and distressed educators.

Factors that Influence School Employee Wellbeing

The wellbeing of our teachers, administrators, and school staff "is not solely the responsibility of individuals, but rather a collaborative concern shared across schooling sectors, universities, employing authorities, and professional associations" (Price and McCallum, 2015, p. 197) Price and McCallum (2015) applied Brofennbrenner's (1979) ecological framework to address the various systems that influence educator wellbeing.
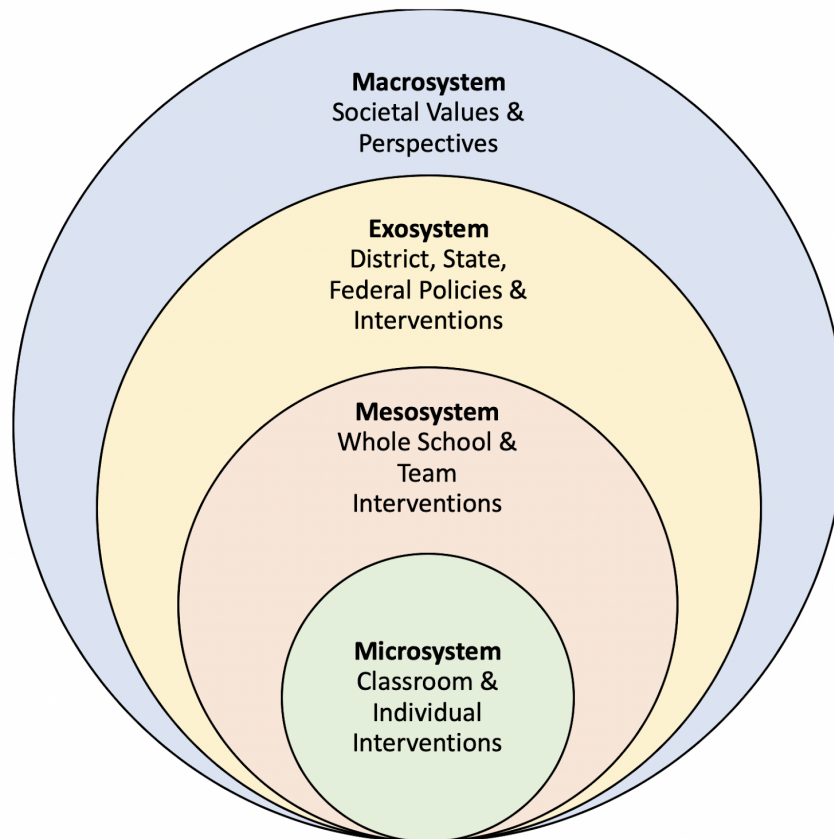
The macrosystem and exosystem consist of societal values and beliefs, legislative constraints, school organization, wages, hours, etc. Increasing teacher wages, reducing work hours, and shrinking class sizes would likely reduce some of the challenges teachers face, but these changes require large scale, and often legislative, change. While it is important to consider these variables in addressing educator wellbeing, **this resource will focus on how to improve the mesosystem and microsystem**- the whole school network and relationships and the individual capacities and working conditions of teachers and staff.

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Grant, A. M., & Spence, G. B. (2010). Using coaching and positive psychology to promote a flourishing workforce: A model of goal-striving and mental health. In P. A. Linley, S. Harrington, & N. Garcea (Eds.), Oxford handbook of positive psychology and work (pp. 175–188). Oxford University Press.

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School-Led Interventions for Teachers and Staff
School Leadership Teams
Professional Learning Communities
Peer Mentoring and Coaching
Supporting Teacher Autonomy
Mindfulness Training
Compassion Training
Humor Training
Incentivizing Physical Exercise
Individual Interventions for School Employees
Positive and Reflective Journaling
Self-Regulation and Coping Strategies
Self-Affirmation
Self Compassion Letter
Discovering and Utilizing Character Strengths
Job Crafting
Mindfulness

School-Led Interventions for Teachers and Staff

As stated previously, Price and McCallum (2015) discovered that the whole school network, including school environment and relationships with others, plays a significant role in determining the wellbeing of school. As school leaders, we not only want to create a school culture that supports the wellbeing of our students, but one that promotes the wellbeing of our school staff. As reported in the 2021 Teacher Wellbeing Index, a survey completed in the UK, 42% of respondents felt that their school's culture negatively impacted their wellbeing (Education Support). This first section will address ways that school leaders can create a whole school environment that will promote positive interactions between school staff and leaders, as well as motivate system-wide improvements in wellbeing.

References:

Education Support. (2021). Teacher wellbeing index. Teacher Wellbeing Index: mental health & wellbeing research. Retrieved from https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-organisations/research/teacher-wellbeing-index/

Price, D., & McCallum, F. (2015). Ecological influences on teachers' wellbeing and "fitness". Asia- Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 43(3), 195–209.

School Leadership Teams
Professional Learning Communities
Peer Mentoring and Coaching
Supporting Teacher Autonomy
Mindfulness Training
Compassion Training
Humor Training
Incentivizing Physical Exercise

School Leadership Teams

Intervention Overview

Principals cannot lead this wellbeing work alone. While most principals know that "improving an organization must take place within, and across, each level of the organization," they are also keenly aware of their inability to personally meet the needs of all students, teachers, and teams" alone (Scribner, et al., 2007, p. 96). Even the 1:25 principal-to-teacher ratio in small schools presents a daunting task, not to mention the 1:120 ratio in large schools. "It isn't humanly possible for one person to shoulder this responsibility" (Sweeney & Mausbach, 2018, p. 89.); principals don't have "unlimited supervisory capacity [nor] all the time in the world to change teachers one at a time" (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012, p. 46).

Leaders must realize that "no one person, no matter how competent, is capable of single handedly developing the right vision, communicating it to vast numbers of people, eliminating all of the key obstacles, generating short term wins, leading and managing dozens of change projects and anchoring new approaches deep in an organization's culture. Putting together the right coalition of people to lead a change initiative is critical to its success" (Kotter, 2010, p. 52). Unfortunately, "many schools may have teams, … [but] few may constitute what we think of as authentic leadership teams. Rather than being imbued with leadership capacity, many school teams simply perform delegated administrative tasks" from the principal (DeFlaminis, Abdul-Jabbar, & Yoak, 2016, p. 157). A hand-picked team composed of school leaders, teacher leaders, and other educators working to support student and educators will likely have a much greater impact than a few "harried supervisor[s], running frenetically from teacher to teacher, giving advice" and trying to support wellbeing (Schmoker, 2005, p. 125).

Some schools seek to foster wellbeing by creating a wellbeing team, dedicated solely to the promotion, assessment, and development of wellbeing in the school. While there are certainly benefits to having a wellbeing team, sometimes such speciality teams are viewed by faculty as tangential or secondary, and not garnering the full support of faculty. If we want wellbeing to be a primary focus for the school, it must be led by the front-and-center team of the school, the school leadership team. A supporting wellbeing team can certainly be put into place to provide needed logistical supports that align with the schoolwide wellbeing mission and vision.

Intervention Guide

Materials: Jensen, Boren, and Murphy (2019) wrote an article on leading effective leadership teams. It can be accessed here:

The Why and What of the School Leadership Team

Duration:	Two 30-60-minute sessions
Implementation:	**Before Session 1**

- Invite members of the current school leadership team to read the article listed above.
- Assign each member of the leadership team to specifically focus on one of the six "spokes" discussed in the article. Be sure each of the six spokes is assigned.

Session 1

- Come together as a team and allow members of the team to teach the rest of the team about their spoke.
- Invite examples and open discussion.
- Invite each member of the team to fill out the School Leadership Team Inventory on their own at the meeting. This inventory can be found at the end of the above article.
- Collect responses.

In Between Session 1 and Session 2

- Review and summarize responses.
- Find a clean and compelling way to share aggregate responses with the full team.

Session 2

- As a School Leadership Team, use a SOAR Analysis (Appreciative Inquiry) to review the results of the School Leadership Team Inventory.
  - Strengths: What is working for our SLT?
  - Opportunities: What are some untapped opportunities for our SLT?
  - Aspirations: What do we hope to become as a team?
  - Response: What are some of our best next steps? What resources or supports are needed?
  - Collaboratively develop plans for building on your strengths and improving the effectiveness of your school leadership team.
  - Revisit the School Leadership Inventory as needed and continue to make improvements.

Does it work?

Ken Leithwood and colleagues (2006) found that school leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when that leadership is distributed widely; schools with the highest student achievement partially attribute that success to the effective distribution of leadership throughout the school. The Wallace Foundation discovered that when principals share leadership with teachers, teachers' working relationships are stronger and student achievement is higher (2010). In addition to improving student learning, high functioning distributed leadership teams seem to bring a host of other desired outcomes. Supovitz and Riggan (2012) found overwhelming statistically significant differences in team outcomes between leadership teams that received ongoing training and support in distributed leadership and leadership teams that did not receive similar support. These enhanced outcomes included: higher sense of collective efficacy, higher leader efficacy, increased trust between team members, teacher satisfaction, and opportunities to learn. In addition, Boren and colleagues (2021) found that when principals effectively distributed leadership through a leadership team, their schools enjoyed higher levels of student, teacher, and administrator wellbeing. For a more comprehensive review and outline for effectively distributing leadership through a leadership team, please refer to Distributed Leadership in Schools by John DeFlaminis and colleagues.

References:

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Sweeney, D., & Mausbach, A. T. (2018). Leading student-centered coaching. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

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Professional Learning Communities

Intervention Overview

No educator, alone, can meet the demanding learning and wellbeing needs of every child and adult in a school. We must work together. Teachers have had significant training in their academic content area and in pedagogy, but most have had little to no training in team dynamics and strategic improvement processes. The professional learning community process is designed to help teachers come together to work in cycles of continuous improvement for both students and adults. While we hope that our classrooms are communities of learning for our students, Sergiovanni (1996) argues that this will not occur "unless schools also become learning communities for teachers" (p. 42). Professional learning communities, or PLCs, are typically small groups of teachers, school leaders or school staff who work together to co-plan, co-teach, and evaluate student learning and performance, as well as to build staff relationships and collaboration in cycles of continuous improvement. PLCs are grounded on the following three big ideas: 1) A focus on learning, 2) a collaborative culture, and 3) a results orientation (DuFour et al, 2016).

While the PLC process traditionally has targeted the improvement of student academic learning, several schools are starting to use the PLC process to pursue deep learning goals that seek the intentional and simultaneous development of students' knowledge, skills, dispositions, and wellbeing. PLC teams that seek to foster wellbeing through intentionally developing skills and dispositions often see higher academic gains. Richardson and colleagues studied several such schools and share: "The school leaders that we met held themselves to a higher standard because they were concerned with desired student outcomes that went far beyond attendance, graduation, and success on standardized assessments of low-level learning…Their students tend to do as well on those measures as students at traditional schools (and often better). Their students also tend to thrive in a whole host of other outcomes that most schools do not even consider" (2021, p. 114; see Adler, 2017). Linking professional learning communities (PLCs) with positive psychology principles can help create a positive and supportive school and work environment, strengthen staff relationships and contribute to staff "flourishing" (Owen, 2016). The following framework summarizes the essential components to the PLC process. Notice that the intentional development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions for wellbeing is at the center of this process.
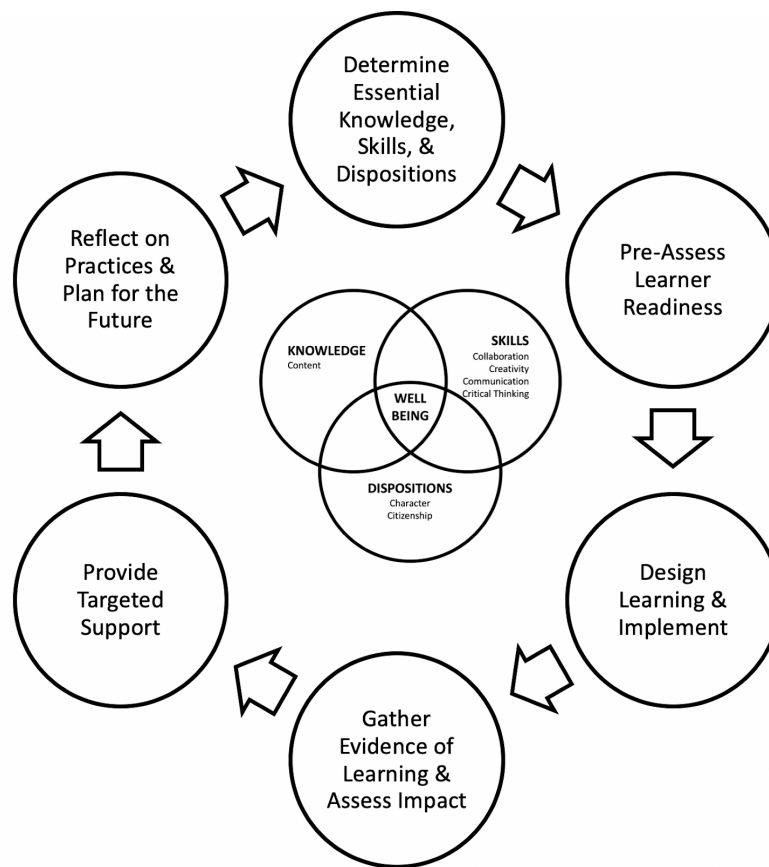
Intervention Guide

Materials:	Choose one of the instruments below depending on your team/school need.
	Buffum and colleagues (2018) have put together several helpful resources for teams, two of which are included below.
	• Stages of Team Development • The Trust on Our Team Survey
	DuFour and colleagues (2016) have also developed several tools for schools seeking to work together effectively as PLCs.
	• Critical Issues for Team Consideration • Questions the Guide the Work of Your PLC
	Rencher and Boren (2019) have created a simple tool for teams seeking to assess how well they embody the three big ideas of a PLC in a deep learning environment.
	• PLCS Popping at 180
Duration:	15-30 Minutes

Implementation:	1. Give each member of the team a copy of the chosen instrument (hard copy or electroni c copy) and have them fill it out individually. This can be done before the meeting or in the meeting itself.
	2. The team leader and/or coach review the feedback/results of the surveys, and look for themes, patterns, strengths, opportunities, etc. to share with the team during the next meeting.
	3. The team or coach reviews the results with the team, helping the team to highlight strengths and opportunities, discuss aspirations, and set some best next step goals.
	4. Determine a reasonable time to revisit the instrument in the future.

Does it work?

One study evaluated the characteristics of PLCS in three Australian public schools, and how they contribute to staff wellbeing and flourishing (Owen, 2016). Characteristics of these PLCs that were most linked to flourishing were positive collaboration, shared values, trusting relationships, accomplishment in co-planning and co-teaching, and supportive leadership. Many of these core characteristics are linked to improvements in relationships, engagement, meaning, accomplishment, and positive emotion. According to Owen (2016), the most effective PLCs (both at improving staff wellbeing and student learning) are those that place an emphasis on positive psychology principles. A recent study of wellbeing and PLCs (Liang, Song & Sun, 2022), surveying 844 educators in southeastern China, identified six PLC components that contribute to educators' sense of wellbeing and purpose. These six components include: collective values and vision, collective responsibility, collective decision-making, shared individual practice, supportive conditions and critical collaboration. All of these components were shown to have a positive relationship with teacher wellbeing, particularly in increasing teacher autonomy, self-efficacy and emotional self-regulation (Liang, Song & Sun, 2022).

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35(3), 405–422. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27784569

Peer Mentoring and Coaching

Intervention Overview

Often as educators we struggle to translate our best intentions into action. We may learn about wellbeing interventions at a conference, workshop, training, or in a resource like this book. We see the great potential an intervention has to bless individuals within our stewardship, and we resolve to do something. Unfortunately, when we return to our classroom or school, often our best intentions get swallowed up in the whirlwind of daily demands. At such times, we could all benefit from the consistent encouragement, support, and follow up of peer mentors or coaches. Lynn Barnes observes: "Quick fixes never last and teachers resent them; they resent going to inservices where someone is going to tell them what to do but not help them follow up. Teachers want someone that's going to be there, that's going to help them for the duration, not a fly-by-night program that's here today gone tomorrow" (as cited in Jim Knight, 2007, p. 1).

"Good coaching gets results—and it gets them fairly quickly." Fortunately, because of its vast potential to support improvement, coaching has become increasingly common in most schools and districts. Unfortunately, "'good coaching' is not the reality for many coaches who operate in systems that are not organized to create, develop, and sustain the conditions for instructional improvement" (Fullan & Knight, 2011, p. 50). Everyone in a school should be on the same page about the purposes, processes, and procedures of coaching. The table below provides some helpful distinctions about how schools should view coaching (adapted from Sweeney & Mausbach, 2018, p. 19).

Coaching Should Be	Coaching Shouldn't Be
A two-way partnership based on equality	A one sided relationship based on power & position
Focused on student & adult learning	Focused on making teachers do things
Driven by teacher and team goals	Driven by administrator or coach goals
Flexible and responsive	Fixed and inflexible

| Fun, interesting, helpful, motivating | Irrelevant, boring, scary, demotivating |

The coach's roles should be collaboratively defined by the administrative team, coach, and instructional leadership team, answering questions like:

- *What is the purpose of the coach?*
- *How should coaches spend their time?*
- *What activities are of the highest priority?*
- *Are there some activities that coaches should avoid?*

Intervention Guide

Materials:	Boren (2022) created a few simple tools for teams seeking to prioritize and plan their coaching efforts. Adjust these forms as needed for your context.
Duration:	30-60 Minutes
Implementation:	1. Give each person a copy of the "Coaching Priorities" form (hard copy or electronic copy) and have them fill it out individually. This can be done before the meeting or in the meeting itself.
	2. Collect the filled out forms and summarize the results.
	3. Talk about the results and come to some agreement. This is the most important step in the process. The goal of this collaborative conversation is to gain some collective clarity about the coach's roles and priorities in supporting the wellbeing work at your school.
	4. Collaboratively complete the "Coaching Plan" form together.
	5. Determine how the priorities and plan will be communicated with the entire faculty.
	6. Revisit as needed.

Does it work?

Coaching and mentoring done well are absolute gifts. "Coaching facilitates learning that sticks" and helps translate learning from larger-scale PD days, conferences, and book studies into daily classroom practices that last" (Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2018, p. 3; Killion & Harrison, 2006). Coaches are NOT program enforcers, people fixers, evaluators, or therapists. Coaches should be perceived as partners, peers and "critical friends, simultaneously providing support and empowering teachers to see areas where they can improve" and making it as "easy as possible for teachers to implement new practice" (Knight, 2007, p. 26, 32). Coaching and mentoring have often been limited to early career stages but can also be instrumental for experienced teachers and school leaders (Campbell et al., 2017 & Feiman-Nemser, 2012). Experienced teachers who no longer have the formal supports through induction can benefit from peer coaching and informal mentoring. School principals and leaders, likewise, value professional and institutional structures and supports in the form of mentoring and coaching aimed at leadership development (Hobson and Sharp, 2005; Searby and Armstrong, 2016). Many schools find that coaches better facilitate individual capacity by also building the capacity of the system by coaching teachers and leadership teams. This allows the coach to work with more teachers, and sets up the systems of support teachers need for sustained improvement (Many et al., 2018; Fullan & Knight, 2011). Indeed, "proponents of team coaching argue that coaching an individual without attempting to influence the immediate human systems in which they operate reduces the impact of the coaching intervention" (Clutterbuck, 2018, p. 280). Because coaches have traditionally focused on improving instruction for academic achievement, schools that decide to have the coach support wellbeing work must get crystal clear on the coach's purpose and roles and communicate those to the entire faculty.

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Supporting Teacher Autonomy

Intervention Overview

According to self determination theory, intrinsic motivation requires the fulfillment of three psychological needs: competence, autonomy and relatedness(Deci & Ryan, 2008). Intrinsic motivation plays a huge role in workplace wellbeing, job satisfaction and retention, as well as performance(Worth & Van den Brande, 2020, p.6). If we want our teachers and school staff to be successful and well at work, supporting autonomy is essential. Teacher autonomy is defined by how much influence teacher's feel they have over certain aspects of their work and how much voice they have in how school level decisions are made(Doherty, 2020). A recent report by the National Foundation for Educational Research found that teachers were 16 to 20 percent less likely than other professionals to report having 'a lot' of influence over how and when they complete job tasks and responsibilities(Worth & Van den Brande, 2020). Over thirty percent of teachers surveyed reported little to no influence over professional development goals (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020).

School leaders play a key role in promoting teacher and staff autonomy. Worth and Van den Brande(2020) recommend that school leaders "incorporate a teacher autonomy lens to regular reviews of teaching and learning policies" and expand ways for teachers and staff to be more involved in school decision-making and organizational development (p.4). School administrators can support teacher autonomy by giving teachers and staff opportunities to be creative and try new things without fear of failure or being penalized on administrative reports(Jones, 2015). Giving teachers the flexibility to change and adapt their teaching and classroom management methods is key to supporting autonomy (Jones, 2015). Providing teachers with autonomy over professional development goals has the most significant results at improving teacher motivation and job satisfaction (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020).

Intervention Guide

Materials:	Varies
Duration:	Varies
Implementation:	Suggestions include:

- Provide teachers with a list of potential professional development opportunities they can choose from during the school year.
- Involve teachers and staff in school decision-making and seek their input and feedback more frequently.
- Encourage teachers to try new things and different teaching methods without fear of penalization.
- While school-wide behavioral rules may be necessary in some cases, encourage and allow teachers to set some of their own classroom rules.
- Encourage, but do not mandate, collaboration(Smith, 2017).

There are many other ways to foster autonomy that may not be found on this list. In order to create a positive learning environment for both students and staff, it is important to set guidelines and also give staff many opportunities for choice and involvement in school and professional development (Smith, 2017).

Does it work?

In one study, 300 teachers in Florida were asked to complete the Teacher Autonomy scale, as well as additional surveys regarding job satisfaction, professionalism and empowerment (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). Teachers who reported a greater general sense of autonomy at work also reported higher levels of professionalism and empowerment in the workplace. Greater curriculum autonomy was associated with decreased job stress (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). These results were consistent among teachers in both primary and secondary schools (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005).

A more recent study analyzed multiple surveys and reports regarding autonomy and job satisfaction of teachers in the UK. It was found that teacher autonomy over classroom standards and rules was associated with greater job satisfaction (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020). While autonomy over classroom management was generally high among teachers, around 30 percent reported little to no autonomy of student assessment and feedback. Additionally, when school staff (teachers, admin, etc.) have autonomy over professional development goals, they show improvements in job satisfaction and motivation (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020). According to Worth and Van den Brande (2020), "increasing teachers' reported influence over their professional development (PD) goals from 'some' to 'a lot' is associated with a nine-percentage-point increase in intention to stay in teaching" (p.4).

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Mindfulness Training

Intervention Overview

One mindfulness intervention gaining popularity in the education sector is the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program developed by psychologist Jon Kabat-Zinn in 1979 (Santorelli et al., 2017). MBSR is an eight-week course, led by a certified MBSR trainer, that focuses on key aspects of mindfulness, such as attention regulation and meditation (Santorelli et al., 2017). The weekly training sessions consist of group discussion and practice of a variety of mindfulness activities such as mindful yoga, body and breathing awareness and mindful eating and walking (Frank et al., 2013). According to Santorelli and colleagues (2017), the MBSR course teaches participants to "practice, integrate, and apply mindfulness in their daily lives" in order to "relieve suffering and increase wellbeing for people facing a host of challenges." (p. 4).

Another mindfulness intervention that was designed specifically for teachers is the Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education program, or CARE (Jennings et al., 2019). CARE is traditionally a 30 hour program, with five six-hour sessions delivered over the course of the school year, however they have also added shorter workshops and retreats (Sharp & Jennings, 2016). Each session involves training in mindful listening, emotional regulation skills, and loving kindness meditation (Sharp & Jennings, 2016). CARE has also recently added a program specifically for school administrators. CARE and MBSR are not the only mindfulness training resources available for teachers and school leaders, but they have both been rigorously researched and shown to be effective at reducing emotional exhaustion, burnout, and stress among educators.

Mindfulness Training Resources

MindfulSchools training for educators: Four week online course, 2-3 hours per week.

MBSR- training and facilitator certification: Eight week online course (with live sessions), 2-3 hours per week.

MBSR-certified teacher directory: Includes a list of certified teachers/facilitators in U.S. states, as well as Canada, U.K. and Australia.

CARE programs: Traditionally offered in five or six sessions throughout the school year, but some shorter options and workshops are available.

Intervention Guide

Materials:	Training program and resources OR hire an MBSR- trained teacher (cost varies).
Duration:	Varies. Most programs are about 30-40 hours over the course of 6-8 weeks. Some programs are offered during the summer to better accommodate teaching schedules.
Implementation:	1. Determine what mindfulness training program is the best fit for your school, as well as if the training will be mandatory or optional for staff.
	2. Determine when the training will be held and seek additional funding as needed through the district, state or other grant programs.
	3. Decide whether to attend a structured training program or to hire an MBSR- certified teacher. You may also wish to certify your school counselors in MBSR to lead school trainings. Resources to assist you in this process are found above.
	4. Invite school staff to the training and follow up on staff wellbeing and mindfulness following the training.

Does it work?

Some studies of the use of MBSR for teacher well-being report reductions in teacher depression, anxiety, and stress. In one of the first studies testing the use of MBSR with school teachers, Gold et al. (2010) observed ten teachers in suburban elementary schools in the UK who participated in the eight-week course led by a trained MBSR teacher. The average scores on the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) of the participants significantly decreased following the intervention. In a more recent study, Todd et al. (2019) compared MBSR with another mindfulness-based program for its effects on teacher well-being. Though both programs improved participant stress levels, only the participants of the MBSR program showed improvement in levels of depression and anxiety (Todd et al., 2019).

Jennings et al. (2019) assessed the long-term effects of the CARE program over a two-year period, in a randomized controlled trial of 224 elementary school teachers in New York City. They found that teachers reported lower levels of negative emotions and improved emotional regulation long after the completion of the intervention. Schussler et al. (2015) noted that the CARE program helped teachers to become more aware of their physical and emotional health and the importance of self-care. Teachers reported that the skills learned in the CARE program helped them remain calm in interactions with students and parents (Sharp & Jennings, 2016). One participating teacher shared, "the thing that has changed me the most has been just learning about the whole emotional process and how everything works because now when my kids get upset I don't get upset" (Sharp & Jennings, 2016, p. 214). Schussler et al. (2015) report that higher levels of emotional regulation when dealing with students also improved teacher burnout.

References:

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Compassion Training

Intervention Overview

Compassion is defined by: "awareness of suffering" (in one's self or others), "caring and tender concern," a desire to see suffering relieved, and the motivation to take action to reduce suffering (Goldin & Jazaieri, 2017). Compassion has been shown to improve resilience, emotional regulation, mental health, and relationships (Seppala et al., 2017). Compassion expressed by colleagues and school leaders is positively linked with teacher engagement, job satisfaction and a reduction in burnout and stress (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016). Given the benefits of compassion on wellbeing, multiple compassion training programs have been developed in recent years.

The Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) program, developed at Stanford University, is an eight-week program (one 2-hour weekly lesson) that uses principles of positive psychology, mindfulness, and neuroscience to help trainees better understand and practice compassion daily (Goldin & Jazaieri, 2017). These trainings are available in a live virtual (online) format or can be led by a psychologist with compassion training experience. See the reference section below for information about scheduling these trainings and finding a CCT qualified psychologist near you.

Mindful Schools has developed a self-compassion training program for teachers with the leading scholars in self-compassion research. This is a six-week program, also held in a live virtual format. Unlike the CCT program, this program focuses solely on developing self-compassion and reducing self-criticism, but uses many similar mindfulness-based practices. If a compassion training program is not the most feasible option for your school or district, you could invite employees to participate in a single workshop or lesson on compassion led by a licensed psychologist. You could also incorporate compassion-focused activities or loving-kindness meditations into staff meetings.

Training Resources

he Center for Compassion Focused Therapy (n.d.). Mindful compassion resources. https://mindfulcompassion.com/meditations/

Mindful Schools. (n.d.). Self-compassion for educators. https://www.mindfulschools.org/training/self-compassion-for-educators/

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Compassion institute. (n.d.). Find a class. https://www.compassioninstitute.com/classes/

Intervention Overview

Materials:	Training programs (can be costly), compassion-focused meditation resources (such as the ones found here).
Duration:	Varies (typically training programs are between 6-8 weeks).
Implementation:	1. After completing an assessment of your staff's wellbeing, determine if a compassion training program would be beneficial and feasible for your school. 2. Visit the additional resources section below to learn about different compassion training programs. 3. Determine when the training will be held, how often, and invite staff to attend. 4. Sign up for virtual compassion training classes or workshops, or work with a licensed psychologist to set up an in-person training with staff. 5. Invite staff to engage in compassion-focused activities or meditations.

Does it work?

In one assessment of the CCT program, 100 adults were randomly assigned to the compassion training or a waitlist (Jazaieri et al., 2012). Participants in the compassion training attended eight weekly, 2-hour sessions. Participants were encouraged to engage in 15 minutes of compassion-focused practice daily, often by listening to a loving kindness guided meditation. All training classes were led by an experienced psychologist. Prior to and following the training, all participants (including those in the waitlist group) completed self-report measures of compassion for self and others. Participants who attended the trainings reported significant improvements in feeling compassion for others and self, as well as receiving compassion from others (Jazaieri et al., 2012).

Compassion-focused training has also been assessed for its impact on educator wellbeing. In one study, 155 public school teachers participated and were either assigned to the compassion training or a waitlist control group(Matos et al., 2022). The compassion training program used in this study is an eight-week program, similar to the CCT program, with weekly 2 hour sessions. Participants in the training group reported improvements in compassion for self and others, but also in positive affect and job satisfaction. Also, the training program was also associated with reductions in depression and anxiety, and stress and burnout (Matos et al., 2022).

References:

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https://edtechbooks.org/addressing_wellbeing/compassion_training.

Humor Training

Intervention Overview

Evans-Palmer(2010) discovered that educators who had developed a sense of humor had a stronger belief in their ability to succeed in teaching tasks and were more resilient in combating stress. It is recommended that schools involve humor training as part of professional development to help improve staff self-efficacy and resilience to adversity. You may choose to have your staff humor training led by a psychologist, acting coach, or stand-up comedian, or to use the 7 Humor Habits program outlined in Paul McGhee's (2010) book "Humor as Survival Training for a Stressed-Out World: The 7 Humor Habits Program." The training resources in McGhee's book are generally intended for individual use, but each chapter includes a section on leading and directing group training sessions based on the chapter's content.

The 7 Humor Habits program includes activities and tools to help you and your staff develop humor as a coping mechanism for stress. The 7 Humor Habits include: "surround yourself with humor; cultivate a playful attitude; laugh more often and more heartily; create your own verbal humor; look for humor in everyday life; take yourself lightly and laugh at yourself; find humor in the midst of stress" (McGhee, 2010, p.vii-x). Ruch and colleagues (2018) provide a list of activities to help support each of these seven habits. Such activities include spending more time in social laughter situations (comedy clubs and shows, sitcoms, etc.), laughing louder and more fully than you normally would (even if it feels forced at first), generating puns, and spending time intentionally doing things that you find fun.

Intervention Guide

Materials:	A professional to lead the humor training, such as a psychologist, acting coach or comedian. You may also consider using McGhee's (2010) 7 Humor Habits program found in the reference section.
Duration:	A single session lasting 3+ hours, or shorter weekly sessions.
Implementation:	1. Determine when you will hold the humor training(s). 2. Decide whether to invite a professional to lead the training, or to purchase an existing training program such as McGhee's (2010) 7 Humor Habits. 3. Hold the training(s) and follow up with staff on their humor development.

Does it work?

One recent study assessed the impact of humor training on the stress felt by nurses(Bartzik et al., 2021). The training program had a sample size of 104 nurses (majority female) who were randomly assigned to the 3 hour humor training or a control group. Participants in the humor training group received training on communication skills and emotion recognition, while also receiving training in clown and theater techniques and exercises. Nurses reported significant increases in positive emotion immediately after the training, and significant increases in work enjoyment and experiences of flow while at work (Bartzik et al., 2021).

In a study of McGhee's 7 Humor Habits program, a group of 110 adults were randomly assigned to the humor training or a control group (Ruch et al., 2018). After 8 weeks of completing the training program, participants in the humor training group reported higher levels of positive emotions, such as cheerfulness, and life satisfaction. It was also found that a sense of humor is indeed malleable and can be learned and developed (Ruch et al., 2018).

References:

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Incentivizing Physical Exercise

Intervention Overview

Given the busy schedules of educators and school staff, it can be difficult to find time to be physically active. However, physical activity has been shown to not only improve overall health and longevity, but to reduce stress, assist in emotional regulation and improvements in mood, and act as a protective barrier against depression and anxiety (Sharma et al., 2006). For school employees, improvements in health are associated with greater job satisfaction and increased productivity, as well as decreased absenteeism (NACDD, 2018). When school teachers and employees are more physically active, they can model healthy habits and behaviors for their students, which in turn improves student health and academic outcomes (NACDD, 2018). Because physical activity is so integral to wellbeing, many employers and school districts have begun implementing physical activity incentives. Some districts provide cash bonuses or other rewards such as health insurance discounts, for a certain level of physical activity reported (such as utilizing a fitness center multiple times a month or reaching a certain number of daily steps)(Davis School District, n.d.). These incentives have proven to be particularly beneficial at increasing physical activity especially among those you previously had low levels of physical activity(Crespin et al., 2015). If you are interested in improving or implementing an employee wellness program, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2020) has provided a wealth of resources and evidence-based tools to assist school leaders in developing an employee wellness program.

Intervention Guide

Materials:	Varies
Duration:	Ideally a few months to a full school year
Implementation:	1. Determine what level of physical activity you hope employees can achieve and how it will be measured (number of daily/monthly steps, visits to a fitness center, number of minutes daily, etc.) 2. Create a way for employees to report their physical activity (Google Form, spreadsheet, app, etc.) 3. Determine what incentive you will provide (cash bonus/voucher, gift cards, health insurance discounts, etc. 4. Introduce the activity to your school or district staff.

Does it work?

A study was completed at the University of Minnesota assessing the impact of a Fitness Rewards Program (FRP) on university employees' self-reported exercise(Crespin et al., 2015). For the rewards program, employees enrolled in the university's health insurance plan could receive a $20 credit each month if they utilized a fitness center at least eight times during the month. Employees who completed an annual Health Risk Assessment (HRA) were offered an additional $65. The sample included about 3,000 employees, of which about 35% enrolled in the FRP. Fitness levels improved somewhat across all participants, but it was found that the greatest improvement in fitness levels was among participants who had low levels of participation in fitness activity prior to enrolling in the program(Crespin et al., 2015).

References:

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Individual Interventions for School Employees

This section will focus on what individual school staff members, including school leaders, can do to improve their own wellbeing. The microsystem, as expressed by Price and McCallum (2015), involves educators' perceptions and individual capacities to overcome the challenges they face in their environment. The interventions in this section will allow school staff to assess and address their own wellbeing and improve their capacities and resilience in responding to daily stressors. As teachers develop individual psychological, social and physical resources, these resources will provide a "buffer" against the many job demands they face (McCallum, 2020, p.23).

References:

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Positive and Reflective Journaling
Self-Regulation and Coping Strategies
Self-Affirmation
Self Compassion Letter
Discovering and Utilizing Character Strengths
Job Crafting
Mindfulness

Positive and Reflective Journaling

Intervention Overview

One way that school staff can improve their individual wellbeing is through a positive and reflective journaling activity. Positive journaling involves writing about positive experiences that have occurred during the day or week. This allows one to reflect on what is going right, rather than just focusing on the struggles one is facing(Round et al., 2020). Some teachers have shared that this activity gives them time to focus on themselves, as the entire teaching day is often spent worrying about students' needs(Kelly et al., 2020). Additionally, self-reflection can also help affirm self-identity, which in turn can improve self esteem(Kelly et al., 2020).

Intervention Guide

Materials:	Notebook, writing utensil
Duration:	20 minutes daily
Implementation:	Spend 20 mins a day writing your thoughts and feelings about positive experiences that have either occurred recently or throughout your lifetime.

Does it work?

A recent randomized control trial of 66 participants (35 teachers and 31 non-teacher employees) discovered that writing about intensely positive experiences can contribute to a reduction in anxiety and improve job satisfaction(Round et al., 2020). Half of the participants were assigned to the intervention and were asked to write about their thoughts and feelings surrounding intensely positive experiences for 20 minutes a day for 3 days. The other half of participants were assigned to a control group and asked to write about neutral events such as daily plans. Participants in the positive writing condition reported a greater reduction in anxiety and some improvements in job satisfaction following the activity, as compared to the control group. There were no significant differences reported in the outcomes between teachers and non-teacher participants.

As part of a small case study, 15 teachers participated in a week-long writing exercise in reflective journaling (Kelly et al., 2020). 93% of teachers who participated in the intervention felt that the activity improved their wellbeing. Some teachers also felt that the writing activity encouraged self-reflection, which also contributed to an improved sense of self-identity and self-regulation. One teacher shared that the activity allowed them to process and record school challenges and worries, and another shared, "Generally, experiences within education are positive, however when faced with a negative/challenging experience, the diary did make me think about how I could have approached things differently or in fact reinforce my actions at the time" (Kelly et al., 2020, p. 271).

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Self-Regulation and Coping Strategies

Intervention Overview

According to the Mayo Clinic, there are four ways to cope with stress and unwanted emotions: Avoid, Alter, Accept and Adapt (Conway, 2021). Other studies have found that responses to stressors include using direct action coping strategies or palliative coping strategies. Direct coping strategies may include: planning, challenge master, self-monitoring and self-reflection. These strategies tend to focus on accepting a problem or challenge, and then altering and adapting to that challenge. Palliative coping strategies focus on avoidance of distress and include strategies such as procrastination, self-handicapping, and failure avoidance.

While palliative strategies can reduce distress in the short-term they are not often effective at improving wellbeing long-term. The 2021 Teacher Wellbeing Index, completed in the UK, found that teachers tend to avoid stressors and predominantly use the palliative coping mechanisms of alcohol consumption, physical exercise and eating. Among teachers, one study found direct coping strategies were more effective than palliative strategies generally at improving workplace engagement, job satisfaction and teachers' ability to bounce back from daily challenges(Parker & Martin, 2009). Teachers who engage in self-regulation and direct coping strategies also report lower levels of emotional exhaustion. However, Parker and Martin (2009) also address that not all direct coping strategies will equally improve wellbeing, nor will all palliative strategies be equally damaging to wellbeing. It is important that educators ensure that the strategies they use are directly linked to the improvements they hope to achieve. It has also been proposed that emotion-focused coping (changing the meaning of threats or challenges) is more effective at improving well-being than problem-focused coping (behaviors and tasks to overcome a problem) (Parker et al., 2012).

Intervention Guide

Materials:	Varies
Duration:	Varies
Implementation:	Possible self-regulation strategies include:

- Action Planning: set a goal and make a plan to achieve that goal before beginning a task or tackling a problem.
- Self Monitoring: Monitor and evaluate your performance in specific tasks.
- Performance Control: Focus on controlling and redirecting attention and motivation during tasks.
- Self-Reflection: Reflect on current performance and potential changes needed in the future. (Mattern & Bauer, 2014)

Does it work?

Mattern and Bauer (2014) assessed the impact of self-regulation skills on teacher wellbeing, evaluating secondary math teachers from 99 schools across Germany. Teachers were asked questions regarding four direct coping strategies: Action Planning ("Before I start working on a new task, I come up with a plan"), Self-Monitoring ("I recall the things I need to do several times a day"), Performance Control ("After getting interrupted, it is easy for me to get back to work"), and Self-Reflection ("From my successes and failures, I learn how to improve my working practices") (p.62). Teachers rated their self-regulation skills in each area of the model on a Likert scale. Results from well-being measures specifically targeting job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion were combined with the self-regulation study to see if teachers who had better self-regulation skills also had improved wellbeing. Teachers who reported the use of these self-regulation strategies also reported lower levels of emotional exhaustion than those who did not practice these strategies consistently. It was also identified that both male and female teachers benefit equally from the direct coping strategies evaluated in this study (Mattern & Bauer, 2014).

An additional study of 515 teachers compared palliative and direct coping strategies for their effectiveness at improving workplace engagement (Parker & Martin, 2009). It was found that direct coping strategies such as planning and mastery orientation were slightly more positively associated with workplace engagement and job satisfaction than palliative coping strategies such as procrastination and self-handicapping (Parker & Martin, 2009). A similar study with 430 Australian teachers also found that those who were focused on goal mastery as a coping mechanism, rather than avoidance of failure, experienced lower levels of stress and burnout (Parker et al., 2012). However, it is important to note that the results from these two studies were not completely consistent across all participants, indicating that not all direct coping strategies will improve wellbeing nor will all palliative strategies be damaging to wellbeing (Parker & Martin, 2009).

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Self-Affirmation

Intervention Overview

Self-affirmation theory suggests that when our self-image or self-esteem is threatened in some way, we can better tolerate these threats and ensuing distress by affirming other important aspects of our self-esteem(Sherman & Cohen, 2006). Self-affirmation has also been defined as any act that "demonstrates one's adequacy" (Cohen & Sherman, 2014, p.337). Self-affirmation strategies can include reaffirming one's most important values and creating if/then statements that encourage self-affirmation during times of stress and anxiety. Self-affirmation strategies have been shown to increase educator's positive emotions and emotional regulation (Morgan & Atkin, 2016).

Intervention Guide

Materials:	Paper, pencil
Duration:	As needed
Implementation:	1. Create *if/then* responses during or before stressful events to allow yourself to cope. Examples include: "If I feel threatened or anxious about teaching, *then I will. . . 1) think about the things I value about myself. 2)remember the things I have succeeded in. 3)think about what I stand for. 4) think about things that are important to me"* (Morgan & Atkin, 2016, p.3).
	2. Create a list of your most important values and rank them in order of importance. Then, write a brief reflection on your top value, addressing why it is important to you and a time when it played an important role in your life.
	Possible values list: (Greater Good Science Center,n.d)

- artistic skills/aesthetic appreciation
- sense of humor
- relations with friends/family
- spontaneity/living life in the moment
- social skills
- athletics
- musical ability/appreciation
- physical attractiveness
- creativity
- business/managerial skills
- romantic values

Does it work?

One study in the U.K. evaluated the impact of an implementation-intention style self-affirmation intervention on teacher wellbeing(Morgan & Atkin, 2016). 90 teachers participated, being randomly assigned to the implementation-intention intervention, involving creating a series of if/then statements to cope with potential mental and emotional threats, or a control group.Those in the intervention group were given implementation intention prompts related to teaching stress and asked to complete the action portion of the sentence with a specific set of responses related to self- affirmation. For example, "If I feel anxious, then I will. . .(remember the things I succeed in)." (p.3). Those in the control group had similar prompts but responses that were not self-affirming such as "If I feel stressed at work, then I will think about the best flavor of ice cream" (p.5). Participants in the self-affirming group reported decreased anxiety, higher positive emotions, and greater emotional regulation(Morgan & Atkin, 2016).

While the value affirmation activity has not been specifically evaluated with educators and school staff, it has been tested among other adults and employees in other high-stress fields. In a literature review of values affirmation interventions, Sherman (2013) found that affirming core values can help boost psychological resources to cope with stressors, expand one's perspective, and reduce the impact of threats and stressors on one's self-identity and self-esteem. In one study of the value affirmation intervention, 85 undergraduate students of mixed-races were randomly assigned to either the intervention or control group (Creswell et al., 2005). The intervention group was given a questionnaire and were asked to rank religion, social issues, politics, theory and aesthetics according to personal importance. Then, while undergoing a stressful activity, the students in the intervention group were asked to reflect on one of the values they had rated and answered questions related to their top value. The intervention group showed significantly lower cortisol responses to stress following the intervention than the control group(Creswell et al., 2005).

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Self Compassion Letter

Intervention Overview

Self compassion involves fully "embracing ourselves as we are: flaws and all" (TEDx Talks, 2013,6:45). As educators, too often we are self critical, which only undermines our motivation and job satisfaction, and increases our levels of stress and burnout. In a recent study assessing the impact of various characteristics on educator wellbeing, self-compassion was associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and student-teacher closeness(Hwang et al., 2019). Also, greater self-compassion was correlated with lower levels of relationship conflict, anxiety and emotional eating, as well as improved sleep quality. Compared to dispositional mindfulness, sleep and eating behaviors, and student-teacher relationships, self-compassion was the most significant predictor of lower stress levels among educators(Hwang et al., 2019).

Dr. Kristin Neff identified three key domains of practicing self compassion: self kindness, recognizing our common humanity, and mindfulness(Neff & Germer, 2017). Self kindness involves treating ourselves as we would a good friend and thinking positively about, rather than belittling, ourselves. The recognition of common humanity involves reinforcing the belief that "to be human means to be imperfect" (Tedx Talks, 2013, 8:03). We are not unique or alone in our suffering and imperfections. Mindful self compassion involves being present with and accepting of our suffering and extending compassion to ourselves in the moment(Neff & Germer, 2017). Dr. Neff suggests that to practice self compassion, we may participate in a self-compassion guided meditation, self-soothe by touching our heart, hugging ourselves, or clasping our hands, or by writing a self-compassionate letter to ourselves. While the intervention included in this resource focuses on the self-compassion letter, we encourage you to visit Neff's website here for additional self-compassion exercises that may help support your wellbeing.

Intervention Guide

Materials:	Paper, writing utensil
Duration:	15-20 minutes, as needed.

Implementation:	1. Identify something that is making you feel frustrated, uncomfortable, or insecure. This may be something about yourself, or a way you may have reacted in a situation with a student, colleague, etc.
	2. Write down this concern and describe how it makes you feel, being as honest as possible.
	3. Now, write a letter to yourself, perhaps as if from a trusted friend or loved one, expressing compassion, understanding and acceptance of yourself and what you're experiencing.

(Adapted from Greater Good Science Center, n.d.)

Does it work?

Shapira and Mongrain (2010) assessed the impact of self-compassionate and optimistic letter writing on depression and happiness. The self-compassion activity required participants to write a letter about a distressing event and to express compassion to themselves. For the optimism activity, participants visualized a desired future and wrote a letter to themselves about steps to achieve it. Both interventions were practiced daily for one week. The study involved about 1000 participants, with one third being assigned to each intervention, and the final third being assigned to a control group that wrote about an early memory. Both interventions were found to improve emotional wellbeing. Participants who practiced the self-compassion exercise reported lower levels of depression 3 months following the intervention and higher levels of happiness at the 6 month follow-up(Shapira & Mongrain, 2010).

Mantelou and Karakasidou(2017) completed a similar study, assessing the impact of a self-compassion intervention on life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. This study involved 42 university students, half of whom were randomly assigned to the intervention and half to a control group. The self-compassion intervention involved five meetings where participants learned about and practiced self-compassion, including writing a self compassion letter. Those who participated in the intervention reported significant improvements in life satisfaction and positive affect, with a decrease in negative affect, as compared to the control group (Mantelou & Karakasidou, 2017)

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Discovering and Utilizing Character Strengths

Intervention Overview

Dr. Martin Seligman and his colleague Chris Peterson (2004) identified 24 personality traits or "character strengths," that each person can possess in varying degrees. These character strengths include traits such as kindness, compassion, gratitude, hope and perseverance . Each character strength is grouped into one of six values: wisdom, temperance, humility, courage, justice and transcendence (VIA Institute on Character, n.d.). Identifying and utilizing one's core strengths in daily life and at work can promote a greater sense of engagement and flow (Seligman et al., 2005). For teachers, implementing core character strengths at work is associated with improvements in positive emotion and work satisfaction, as well as reduced stress and burnout (McCullough, 2015).

Intervention Guide

Materials:	Paper, pencil, free VIA character strengths test found here
Duration:	20-30 minutes, repeat as needed.
Implementation:	1. Identify your top five strengths through the VIA character strengths test. The basic version of the test is offered free of charge at viacharacter.org. 2. Review the definitions of each of your top five strengths. 3. Make a plan for how you can use one of those five strengths in a new way each day for one week. 4. Repeat activity as needed.

Does it work?

In a study of about 500 participants, Martin Seligman and colleagues (2005) assessed the impact of various positive psychology interventions, including a character strengths activity, on emotional wellbeing. For one of the activities, participants were instructed to use one of their core character strengths in a new way each day for a week. Participants in the activity reported increased happiness and decreased symptoms of depression up to six months following the intervention(Seligman et al., 2005). Mollie McCullough(2015) studied this same intervention, but with a small group of elementary school teachers. Teachers participated in four, hour-long sessions over the course of 2 weeks in which they worked together with researchers to discover their core character strengths and develop plans for implementing those strengths in new ways at work. Teacher participants experienced increased happiness, work satisfaction, and decreased stress and burnout at post-intervention and a month later, although the degree of these effects varied per teacher (McCullough, 2015).

Lavy and Littman-Ovadia (2017) surveyed 1,095 participants from various occupations, about a quarter of whom worked in education, to better understand the impact of strengths use at work on employee wellbeing. Participants completed multiple self-reported surveys evaluating their understanding and use of character strengths at work, job satisfaction, productivity, engagement, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). OCB involves contributions that go beyond job responsibilities in the workplace, such as helping coworkers, showing tolerance, and participating in organizational events(Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2017). Strengths use at work had a direct relationship to higher levels of work productivity, satisfaction and OCB. It was also suggested that gains in these domains by strengths use may also be mediated by levels of positive affect and engagement(Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2017).

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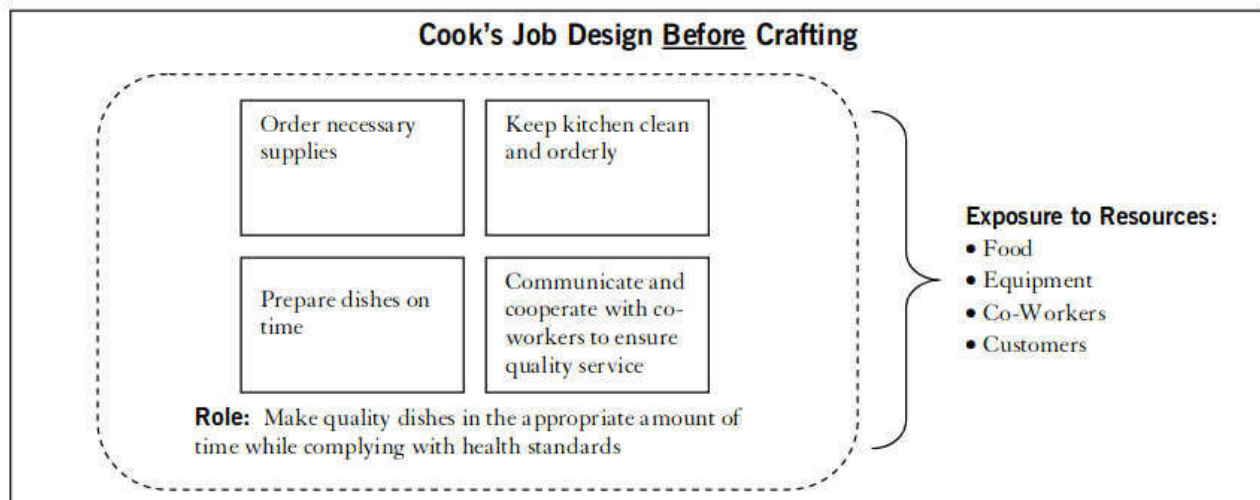Access it online or download it at
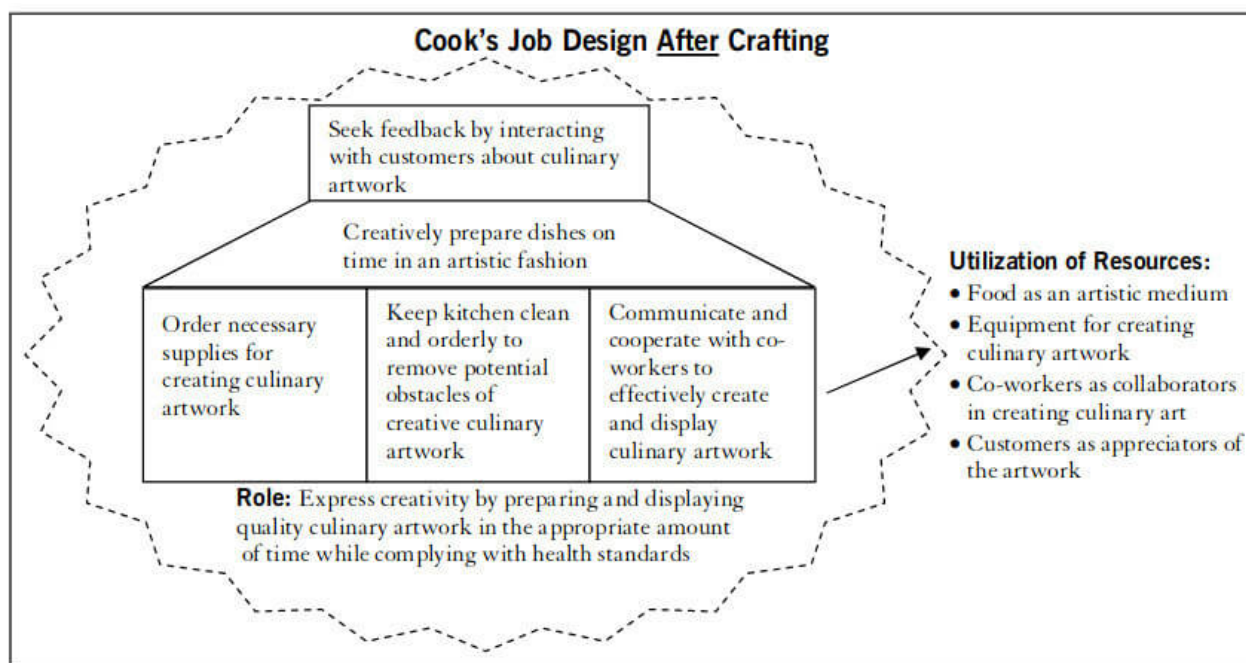https://edtechbooks.org/addressing_wellbeing/discovering_and_util.

Job Crafting

Intervention Overview

Job crafting theory states that employees have some autonomy in how they go about their tasks and job responsibilities and that shaping those work responsibilities to fit one's strengths and passions can improve employee well-being, engagement and meaning at work(Wrześniewski et al., 2013). There are three different types of job crafters: 1) alignment crafter: aligns work responsibilities with their desired work identity and resources 2) aspirational crafer: adjusts work responsibilities to work towards a goal of future work meaning and identity 3) accidental crafter: accidentally discovers new meaning in one of their work responsibilities (Wrześniewski et al., 2013). You can also job craft by altering a specific work task, by altering your relationship with others (students, co-workers, administrators, etc.), or by altering your perception of work to better align with your personal strengths and values(Berg et al., 2008). Berg and colleagues(2008) have provided an example of how the job crafting process may look for a cook(p.6). The cook's pre-crafting work model involves very formal, segmented tasks such as ordering supplies, preparing dishes, and cleaning the kitchen. Following a job crafting exercise, the cook's work model looks very different. Each of the tasks is organized according to how they help the cook achieve their primary goal and passion of creating and displaying their culinary artwork.

Cook's Job Design Before Crafting

| Order necessary supplies | Keep kitchen clean and orderly |

| Prepare dishes on time | Communicate and cooperate with co-workers to ensure quality service |

Exposure to Resources:
- Food
- Equipment
- Co-Workers
- Customers

Role: Make quality dishes in the appropriate amount of time while complying with health standards

Cook's Job Design <u>After</u> Crafting

Seek feedback by interacting with customers about culinary artwork

Creatively prepare dishes on time in an artistic fashion

| Order necessary supplies for creating culinary artwork | Keep kitchen clean and orderly to remove potential obstacles of creative culinary artwork | Communicate and cooperate with co-workers to effectively create and display culinary artwork |

Role: Express creativity by preparing and displaying quality culinary artwork in the appropriate amount of time while complying with health standards

Utilization of Resources:
- Food as an artistic medium
- Equipment for creating culinary artwork
- Co-workers as collaborators in creating culinary art
- Customers as appreciators of the artwork

As you review these examples, consider how you might reframe your work tasks and relationships to better align with your strengths, passions and personal values.

Intervention Guide

Materials:	Paper, pencil
Duration:	As needed
Implementation:	1. List the tasks you must complete daily or weekly.
	2. Reflect on your passions and prioritize your tasks according to those that most align with those passions or adjust those tasks to cope with challenges.
	3. Reflect on your relationships with students, coworkers and others. Identify ways you can build more meaningful relationships and set boundaries.
	4. Reframe your thoughts and perceptions about your job, adversity and tasks in a more positive, motivating light. Align your work purpose with your passions.

Does it work?

Van Wingerden and colleagues (2017) evaluated the impact of a job crafting intervention on educator wellbeing (assessed as basic need satisfaction) and work engagement. In this study, 71 teachers, predominantly female, were assigned either to the job crafting intervention or a control group. The teachers in the intervention group participated in three training sessions over a six-week period, where they reflected on personal strengths and values and then matched these characteristics with their work tasks. It was discovered that the job crafting intervention significantly increased educator basic need satisfaction and work engagement, as compared to the control group (Wingerden et al., 2017).

An additional study aimed to address the impact of job crafting behaviors on wellbeing among school principals (Toyama et al., 2021). 518 school principals responded to an online questionnaire to evaluate their participation in job crafting strategies and their levels of need satisfaction or frustration, engagement and burnout. Four job crafting strategies assessed included increasing structural job resources, increasing social resources, increasing job demands that are challenging and motivating, and reducing job demands that are hindering. The strategies of increasing structural resources and challenging tasks were significantly associated with an increase in need satisfaction and decrease in need frustration, as well as an increase in work engagement.

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Mindfulness

Intervention Overview

Mindfulness has been growing in popularity as a coping mechanism for stress and for its use in combating mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression. While mindfulness has its roots in meditative practices from Buddhism and other Eastern cultures and religions, the modern practice of mindfulness was first developed by psychologist Ellen Langer in the 1970s, when she discovered that mindful practice led to improved cognitive function in older adults (Cohen & Gonchar, 2017). Mindfulness has been defined as a practice that "enhances attention by bringing awareness to the object of attention whether it is the breath, other bodily sensations, external stimuli, thoughts, or emotions" (p. 183). Mindfulness involves "mental activities which share in common a focus on training the self-regulation of attention and awareness" (Lomas et al., 2017, p. 134). Below we have included a list of mindfulness activities you may consider practicing each day. Flook and colleagues (2013) state that just as physical health is improved through regular exercise, consistent mindfulness practice is essential for the benefits of mindfulness on psychological well-being to be fully recognized.

> ### Guided Meditation Resources
>
> UCLA Health (n.d.). Guided meditations. https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations#english
>
> CREATE for Education (n.d.). Mindfulness Practices. https://createforeducation.org/resources/mindfulness-practices-access/

Intervention Guide

Materials:	Varies
Duration:	A few minutes daily, as needed. Varies depending on activity.

Implementation:	• "Two Feet- One Breath:" Take 5 seconds to be mindful of the sensation of both your feet on the floor and take a deep, cleansing breath.
	• Plan to make one small activity each day more mindful (eating, commuting, drinking water, etc.). Commit to give this activity your full attention and savor the sensations you experience during this activity.
	• Listen to and follow along with a guided mindful meditation recording, like the ones provided here.
	• Print a few mandala drawings (or create your own) and practice mindful breathing while coloring in the mandala.

You may also consider purchasing Patricia Jennings (2015) book *Mindfulness for Teachers: Simple Skills for Peace and Productivity in the Classroom* for additional suggestions about practicing mindfulness in a school setting.

Does it work?

Cohen and Ganchar (2017) provide some tips for teachers on getting started with mindfulness, many of which, though researched for their effectiveness in adult well-being, have not been thoroughly studied in their effectiveness with teachers. One recommended breathing activity is called "two feet one breath" and involves taking five seconds to feel the sensation of one's feet on the floor and of taking one long breath (Cohen & Ganchar, 2017). This activity was found to significantly improve burnout among physicians and other care professionals (Chen cited by Cohen & Ganchar, 2017). Teachers can also make one activity each day, such as drinking water or eating lunch, more mindful. This can be as simple as focusing one's entire attention on the experience of one bite or taste, instead of performing other teaching tasks at the same time, similar to the mindful walking or eating activities included in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction(MBSR) (Cohen & Ganchar, 2017; Santorelli et al., 2017). Sharp and Jennings(2016) found that some of the most helpful mindfulness practices among teachers were mindful breathing, mindful walking, and a body scan relaxation exercise.

Another individual mindfulness-based intervention that has been researched recently is a mindful coloring exercise (Czerwinski et al., 2020). For this study, 45 teachers from a variety of primary and secondary schools in the UK were observed. Half of the participants were assigned to the intervention group and instructed to watch a video explaining mindful coloring, while coloring in a mandala drawing, once a day for five days (Czerwinski et al., 2020). Participants in the intervention group reported significantly lower levels of depression, anxiety and stress following the intervention using a number of self-reported surveys. The researchers concluded that mindful coloring could be a viable option for improving teacher well-being and burnout (Czerwinski et al., 2020). Though this is the only current study regarding the use of mindful coloring specifically for teachers, Mantzios and Giannou (2018) found that a mindful coloring activity successfully reduced anxiety among female undergraduate students.

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Additional Interventions to Consider

These interventions are in the early stages of research and evaluation. However, they are promising interventions you may wish to include as part of your efforts to support wellbeing in your classroom, school, or district.

| Dedicated Wellbeing Spaces |
| Individual Wellbeing Plans for School Employees |
| Comprehensive Wellbeing Programs |

Dedicated Wellbeing Spaces

Intervention Overview

A dedicated school wellbeing space can give students and staff a place to recharge and reset when experiencing difficult emotions or challenging circumstances. A wellbeing room or "wellbeing center" can be a great place to implement many of the wellbeing interventions for students included in this resource. Though wellbeing centers are gaining popularity in schools, evidence regarding their effectiveness and impact remains limited. However, some schools have begun reporting some positive outcomes. An elementary school in the Western U.S. found that within the first 90 days of having the wellbeing room, office referrals for disruptive behavior dropped by 40% (Fox13 News, 2021). Additionally, within those first 90 days, the wellbeing center had over 2,500 visits from students, indicating that it is a popular intervention among students (Fox13 News, 2021). These results are promising and we expect more comprehensive research to be forthcoming.

Wellbeing Center Resources

Community Education Channel Wellness Center Series: This is a three-part video series on the implementation of school wellness centers at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Videos include examples of wellness center set-up, activities, as well as student and staff anecdotes regarding wellness center use.

The following three resources include examples of various wellbeing and calming centers in place in schools, as well as suggestions for implementation:

MindPeace Rooms

Calming Spaces

High School Peace Rooms

Intervention Guide

Grade Level: All

Materials:	• Funding(estimates for some centers range from 10-20,000 US dollars, but this can vary depending on materials used).

Possible materials include:

- Sensory toys
- Playdoh or Theraputty
- Puzzles
- Sand timers
- Books
- Weighted blanket
- Drawing and coloring supplies
- Headphones and electronic devices to listen to calming music or guided meditations
- Comfortable furniture
- Large pillows or beanbag chairs

Duration:	Set up may require a few months. Students are intended to spend about 10 minutes at a time in the wellness center throughout the school year.
Implementation:	1. Determine where the wellbeing center will be in your school. 2. Clear out classroom furniture if applicable, and purchase more comfortable, welcoming furniture. The wellness center is intended to have a more home-like feel rather than be a classroom. 3. Purchase sensory tools and other supplies. Seek additional funding if necessary. 4. Hire someone to assist with setting up, as well as to supervise the center when completed. 5. Set center rules (how long students can be in the wellbeing center and how often, how many students per class can be in the wellness center at a time, etc.) 6. Once set-up is completed, train staff and faculty on how you intend the wellbeing center to be used. 7. Finish setting up the room and create classroom passes for wellbeing center use. 8. Hold a parent and student orientation meeting or open house to introduce the center. 9. Open the wellbeing center and track use during the school year.

Does it work?

Recently, Moya and colleagues (2022) published a research study on a high school wellness center in Utah, U.S.A serving 2,340 students. About a third of students and staff responded to surveys regarding their use of and perceptions of the wellness center. About 5% of student parents/guardians were also interviewed. A strong positive correlation was found between wellness center use and student success in school. Parents, staff and students all reported that students were more focused in class after visiting the center(Moya et al., 2022). Students and teachers also reported that use of the wellness center seemed to significantly improve students' mood. Students reported using the wellness center to reduce stress and anxiety, cope with depression, and experience calm and relaxation. The wellness center was also most frequented by students from traditionally marginalized groups, such as genderqueer students and students of color(Moya et al., 2022). This is important as many students from these groups tend to face increased stressors, such as an inferior sense of belonging, bullying and greater adjustment difficulties (Bottani et al., 2017; Tooney et al., 2012). One concern is that a significant number of students felt a degree of embarrassment over visiting the center(Moya et al., 2022). Creating a positive and welcoming culture and reducing stigma around wellness center use at your school may be necessary to successfully improve student wellbeing.

References:

Bottani, J. H., Bradshaw, C. P., & Mendelson, T. (2017). A multilevel examination of racial disparities in high school discipline: Black and white adolescents' perceived equity, school belonging, and adjustment problems. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 109*(4), 532–545. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000155.supp

CASEL. (2020). *TOOL: Create a high school peace room.* https://schoolguide.casel.org/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/2020.11.10_High-School-Peace-Rooms_FINAL.pdf

Fox13. (2021, August 17). *Utah school district puts more emphasis on student mental health with wellness room.* https://www.fox13now.com/news/local-news/utah-school-district-puts-more-emphasis-on-student-mental-health-with-wellness-room

MindPeace. (n.d.) *MindPeace rooms.* https://mindpeacecincinnati.com/mindpeace-rooms/

MindPeace. (n.d.) *Calming spaces.* http://mindpeacecincinnati.com/wp-content/uploads/General-Calming-Space-Info-3.pdf

Moya, M.S., Caldarella, P., Larsen, R.A.A., Warren, J.S., Bitton, J.R. & Feyereisen, P.M. (2022). Addressing adolescent stress in school: Perceptions of a high school wellness center. *Education and Treatment of Children, 45,* 277-291. https://doi.org/10.1007/s43494-022-00079-1

Toomey, R. B., McGuire, J. K., & Russell, S. T. (2012). Heteronormativity, school climates, and perceived safety for gender nonconforming peers. Journal of Adolescence, 35(1), 187–196. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.03.001

Wimmer, D. (2020, February 14). *Utah schools using innovative approach to improve student mental health.* KSL TV. https://ksltv.com/427242/utah-schools-using-innovative-approach-to-improve-student-mental-health/

Individual Wellbeing Plans for School Employees

Intervention Overview

Working together with teachers and school staff to create individual wellbeing plans can not only illustrate administrative support for staff mental health, but can also foster conversations about how to improve staff wellbeing in the school. Individual wellbeing plans are intended to be completed by individual staff members and an administrator or supervisor. As it may not be feasible for a single principal to create and follow through on all employee wellbeing plans, teachers could also create individual wellbeing plans with their professional learning communities to encourage peer support and accountability. However, it is important that whether these plans are shared with administrators or colleagues that they remain confidential. Individual wellbeing plans have employees write their answers to questions such as "Are there any situations at work that can trigger poor mental health for you?" , "How might experiencing poor mental health impact your work?" or "What can your manager [or administrator] do to proactively support you to stay mentally healthy at work?" (Mind, n.d., p.14-16). A few example individual wellbeing plans can be found below.

Individual Wellbeing Plan Examples

Kelly, H. (2021, January 23). What are the most effective steps schools can take to support teachers' and leaders' mental health and wellbeing?. The Positive Principal. https://drhelenkelly.com/2021/01/23/what-are-the-most-effective-steps-schools-can-take-to-support-teachers-and-leaders-mental-health-and-wellbeing/ (will need to request a free copy of the individual wellbeing plan for schools).

Mind. (n.d.). Guide for employees: Wellness action plans (WAPs). https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/5760/mind-guide-for-employees-wellness-action-plans_final.pdf

Mind. (n.d.). Wellness action plan: Guide for people working in a workplace. https://www.mind.org.uk/media/12145/mind-wellness-action-plan-workplace.pdf

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Little research has been done regarding the effectiveness of individual wellbeing plans at improving workplace wellbeing. However, many workplace wellbeing plans are adapted or simplified versions of the The Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) program developed by Mary Ellen Copeland (1997). WRAP is much more comprehensive than the individual wellbeing plans traditionally used in the workplace, but shares similarities in that it assists participants in

creating a self-management plan for their mental health and wellbeing by identifying factors contributing to stress, burnout and poor mental health, creating a plan for overcoming triggers and crisis situations, and seeking peer support(WRAP, n.d.). This program has been thoroughly researched and this research has shown that the creation of self-management plans for wellness and mental health are associated with a reduction in distressing mental health symptoms and an increase in hopefulness(Fukui et al., 2011).

Intervention Guide

Materials:	Wellbeing plan template, writing utensil
Duration:	20-30 minute interviews with staff, or a PLC session
Implementation:	1. Introduce the Individual Wellbeing Plans to staff. This could be a required or optional activity. 2. Determine whether you will hold meetings with each individual staff member or have staff do the activity in professional learning community groups. 3. Create a wellbeing plan for your school using the above examples and distribute copies. 4. Follow-up with staff on the wellbeing plans and any mental health concerns you should be aware of. 5. This activity could also be completed by school leaders and principals with other school and district administrators.

References:

Copeland, M. E. (1997). *Wellness recovery action plan.* Brattleboro VT: Peach Press.

Fukui, S., Starnino, V. R., Susana, M., Davidson, L. J., Cook, K., Rapp, C. A., & Gowdy, E. A. (2011). Effect of Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) participation on psychiatric symptoms, sense of hope, and recovery. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, 34*(3), 214–222. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.2975/34.3.2011.214.222

Mind. (n.d.). *Guide for employees: Wellness action plans (WAPs).* https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/5760/mind-guide-for-employees-wellness-action-plans_final.pdf

WRAP: Wellness Action Recovery Plan. (n.d.) *What is WRAP?* https://www.wellnessrecoveryactionplan.com/what-is-wrap/

Comprehensive Wellbeing Programs

This resource contains many affordable, targeted interventions for both students and school staff. However, you may find that it is best for your school to purchase or subscribe to an existing whole school wellbeing or social emotional learning (SEL) program. Though there are many positive education programs available, it is important that the program you choose has been thoroughly researched and shown to improve school wellbeing. There are so many existing programs that it can be difficult to sort through them all and find the right fit for your school or classroom. Here are a few steps that can guide you in choosing the best program to meet your school or classroom's unique needs:

1. Assess

Complete an assessment to determine your student and staff needs. Our companion resource Assessing Wellbeing in Schools provides multiple measures to assist you in this process.

2. Determine Focus

After completing your assessment, determine which aspects of wellbeing you will focus on. For example, Does your classroom need additional support in social connection and belonging? What about emotional regulation? Or, is increasing positive emotion your first priority? Identifying your wellbeing priorities will help you narrow down available wellbeing and SEL programs.

3. Desired Resources

Decide what resources you would like this program to include, such as lesson plans, media resources, teacher trainings, activities, etc.

4. Determine Budget

Decide on your budget for the program. Some wellbeing programs can be more costly or more affordable than others.

5. Begin Research

Begin your research into different programs. This can be done through a simple internet search or by visiting program guides and evaluations. The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has developed a resource that allows you to compare 86 different SEL and wellbeing programs based on your school's needs. These programs are rated on different levels based on how well they have been evaluated for effectiveness. The CASEL program guide can be found here. Additional program guides can be found in the resource list below. We also recommend consulting with other district and state educators and leaders about the programs they have found most useful and effective.

6. Evaluate Programs

Look for programs that are well-designed and have gone through program evaluations that demonstrate the program's effectiveness at improving wellbeing outcomes(Schwartz & Skoog-Hoffman, 2021). Well-designed wellbeing programs have the following characteristics, identified by the New South Wales Department of Education:

1. "Clearly identified aims and objectives."
2. "Clear links between the program and the needs of the students and school community."
3. "Universal program delivery which includes teacher training, support for parents, student intervention and resources."
4. "Clearly defined implementation procedures, including roles and responsibilities of staff, details about appropriate monitoring of student outcomes, and ongoing staff consultation following program implementation."

The New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education in Australia has developed a mental health and wellbeing program template, found here, that assists school teams in evaluating and choosing wellbeing and SEL programs. Jones and colleagues(2021) have also provided a series of worksheets that can help guide you in choosing and implementing a wellbeing program, which can be found here.

Wellbeing and SEL Program Guides

CASEL Program Guide: The CASEL program guide contains 86 SEL programs, rated for their evidence-based outcomes and program design. The program list can be filtered according to grade level, implementation supports, program characteristics, and school demographics.

NSW Department of Education Program List (List found at bottom of webpage): The Department of Education in New South Wales, Australia has developed a list of 26 evidence-based wellbeing programs, taken from a report by Monash University(Berger et al., 2020). Some of these programs are primarily offered in Australia, but many international programs are included on the list as well. This list includes program cost, duration, grade level, delivery mode and a research summary.

Harvard Graduate School of Education SEL Report: This list, developed by Jones and colleagues (2021), reviews 33 SEL programs with an early childhood and elementary level focus. This detailed report contains summaries of the program evaluations and compares each program by program outcomes, targeted skills, delivery method and various other program characteristics.

These program lists do not contain all available SEL, wellbeing and positive education programs, but they can be a great place to start! We recommend using the steps above in choosing and evaluating any other wellbeing programs you may wish to implement.

References:

Berger, E., Reupert, A.E. & Allen, K. (2020). *School-based prevention and early intervention for student mental health and wellbeing.* Monash University. https://research.monash.edu/en/publications/school-based-prevention-and-early-intervention-for-student-mental

Collaborative for Social, Emotional and Academic Learning (CASEL). (n.d.). *Program guide.* https://pg.casel.org/

Jones, S.M., Brush, K.E., Ramirez, T., Mao, Z.X., Marenus, M., Wettje, S., Finney, K., Raisch, N., Podoloff, N., Kahn, J., Barnes, S., Stickle, L., Brion-Meisels, G., McIntyre, J., Cuartas, J. & Bailey, R. (2021). *Navigating SEL from the inside out. Looking inside & across 33 leading SEL programs: A practical resource for schools and providers, expanded and revised second edition.* Harvard Graduate School of Education. https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/navigating-social-and-emotional-learning-from-the-inside-out.aspx

New South Wales Department of Education. (n.d.). *Evidence-based mental health and wellbeing programs for schools.* https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/counselling-and-psychology-services/mental-health-programs-and-partnerships/evidence-based-mental-health-wellbeing-programs-for-schools

Schwartz, H. & Skoog-Hoffman, A. (2021, October 5). *How to choose an SEL program for your school.* Edutopia. https://www.edutopia.org/article/how-choose-sel-program-your-school

Other Resources

Welcome to your new content! Start typing here to get started!

Additional Wellbeing Frameworks
PROSPER
ASPIRE
SEARCH
Five Ways to Wellbeing
Wellbeing Conceptual Framework (Huppert & So)
Flourish Model
Suggestions for Further Research
Websites and Networks
Books
Podcasts
Scholarly Articles

Additional Wellbeing Frameworks

Welcome to your new content! Start typing here to get started!

PROSPER
ASPIRE
SEARCH
Five Ways to Wellbeing
Wellbeing Conceptual Framework (Huppert & So)
Flourish Model

PROSPER

Researchers Toni Noble and Helen McGrath(2015) created the PROSPER framework for positive education. Though the model has similarities to the PERMA model, it places a stronger emphasis on the development of strengths and resilience. The components of the PROSPER model are as follows:

Positivity (positive emotions and mindset)

Relationships

Outcomes(mastery, accomplishment)

Strengths

Purpose

Engagement

Resilience

Noble and McGrath(2015) sought feedback from educators and school leaders regarding this model. Of a sample of 54 educators who participated in a student wellbeing workshop, 100% agreed that the PROSPER framework would help schools establish a common vocabulary around wellbeing. 90% said that it would make wellbeing components easier to remember. 96% of participants reported that the PROSPER framework would assist school staff reflect on their own practices for student wellbeing and 89% agreed it would be an effective tool to evaluate their school's current wellbeing efforts, as well as areas for improvement (Noble & McGrath, 2015). McGrath and Noble have also provided curriculum resources to support this model, through the BounceBack program(BounceBack, n.d.).

References:

BounceBack. (n.d.) *Resources.* https://www.bounceback-program.com/resources

Noble, T. & McGrath, H. (2015). PROSPER: A new framework for positive education. *Psychology of Wellbeing, 5*(2). https://psywb.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s13612-015-0030-2

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Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/addressing_wellbeing/prosper.

ASPIRE

Sue Roffey, researcher, psychologist, and director of Growing Great Schools Worldwide, developed the ASPIRE framework to ensure that all teachers and students feel safe participating in SEL and positive education programs and interventions (Roffey, n.d.). The ASPIRE framework consists of five principles, included in the model below:

This framework aims to foster belonging, diversity and empowerment in SEL, especially among students from diverse backgrounds and with diverse needs (Roffey, 2017). The ASPIRE framework has been evaluated globally in schools as part of Roffey's Circle Solutions program and has been shown to promote positive experiences and learning outcomes (Roffey, 2017; Roffey, n.d.). A few ideas for classroom implementation, summarized from Roffey's research have been included below, however you may wish to visit the resources below for more ideas on how to incorporate the ASPIRE framework into your school's SEL or wellbeing program.

Principle:	Description:	Classroom Implementation:
Agency	Give students a voice so they take more responsibility for their wellbeing and allow them to come to their own conclusions about material being learned (Brosnan, 2020, 10:53; Roffey, n.d.).	Provide appropriate media resources, role-plays and small group discussions to aid in student learning (Roffey, n.d.).
Safety	Students are more likely to engage when the classroom has a culture of physical, emotional and psychological safety.	Allow students to be silent or 'pass' during activities and class discussions. Provide more group and collaborative activities than individual ones. Use third person or inclusive language such as 'we' more often than 'my' or 'I' (Roffey, n.d.).
Positivity	Foster positive emotion such as kindness, gratitude, playfulness and laughter.	Present activities as games and encourage laughter. Focus on students strengths and encourage strengths-based language in the classroom (Roffey, n.d.).
Inclusion	Welcome all students, give everyone a role (everyone participates and is valued) and foster inclusive belonging.	Regularly mix up student groups during activities to encourage students to associate with those outside their social group (Roffey, n.d.).
Respect	Empower students and others by fostering active listening and encouragement.	Encourage students to listen to and encourage each other and avoid put-downs. Provide activities that foster empathy and kindness (Rofffey, n.d.).
Equity	Recognize that students have diverse needs and circumstances and help those who struggle with access.	Provide differentiation and choices with each activity to meet students' diverse needs.

References:

Brosnan, M. (Host). (2020, September 12). ASPIRE to wellbeing in school with Dr. Sue Roffey [Audio podcast episode]. In Pursuit of Everyday Wellbeing. https://pursuitwellbeing.com/aspire-to-wellbeing-in-school-with-dr-sue-roffey/

Growing Great Schools Worldwide. (n.d). *The ASPIRE principles.* https://growinggreatschoolsworldwide.com/how-we-work/the-aspire-principles/

Roffey, S. (n.d.). *ASPIRE to safe and effective social emotional learning.* Global Citizenship Foundation. https://www.globalcitizenshipfoundation.org/article/aspire-to-safe-and-effective-social-emotional-learning

Roffey, S. (2017). The ASPIRE principles and pedagogy for the implementation of social and emotional learning and the development of whole school well-being. *International Journal of Emotional Wellbeing, 9*(2), 59-71. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1162077.pdf

SEARCH

Rusk and Waters (2015) identified five pathways to positive psycho-social functioning (include definition). These five pathways include:

1. Attention & Awareness
2. Comprehension & Coping
3. Emotions
4. Goals & Habits
5. Virtues & Relationships

Following this initial study, Waters and Loton (2019) evaluated the five pathways in 10 schools to determine their validity in school settings. As a result of this study, adjustments were made to the initial five pathways to create the SEARCH positive education framework. School leaders and teachers participating in the study felt it necessary to separate the virtues and relationships pathway, in order to place a more clear focus on the development of each in schools. Student feedback found that the term "virtues" felt old-fashioned and some teachers felt the term also could carry religious undertones that would not fit their school context. As such, the virtues pathway was changed to "strengths." Comprehension and coping were combined to simplify the framework. This led to the creation of the SEARCH framework as follows:
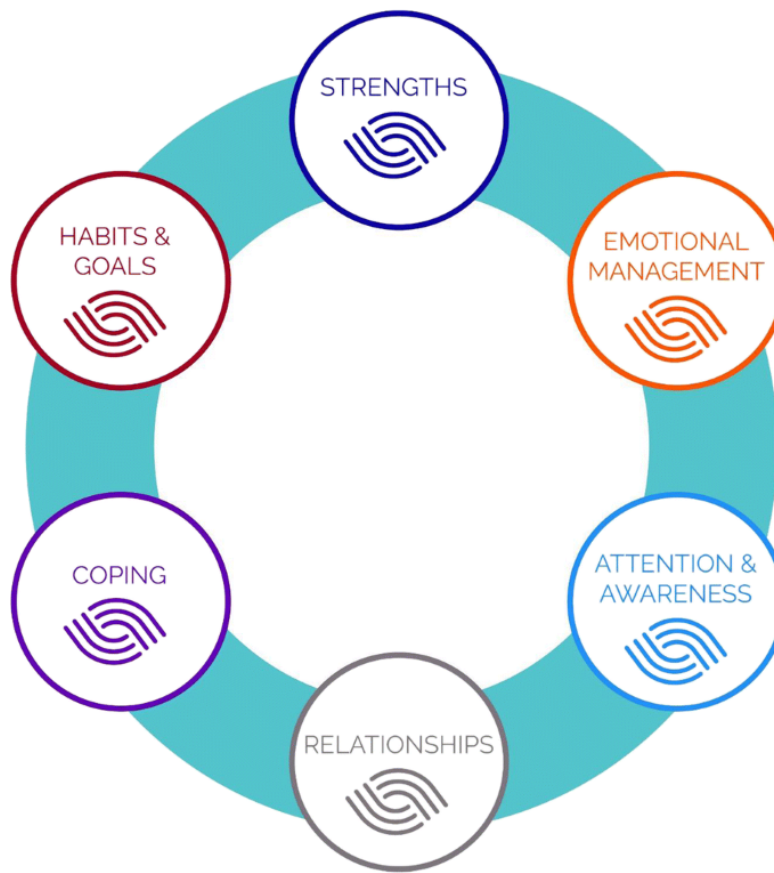
In a literature review of evidence-based positive psychology interventions for schools, Waters and Loton (2019) found 75 interventions that support this framework. Waters also found recently that students who learned SEARCH principles and schools prior to the COVID-19 pandemic reported greater resilience and growth in the face of challenges, as well as increased emotional processing, positive framing and strengths use during remote learning(Waters, 2020, 22:25). Learning SEARCH principles prior to COVID-19 also contributed to greater academic motivation (Waters, 2020). Waters (2020) encourages school leaders and teachers to use this framework in establishing a wellbeing program, organizing interventions, or evaluating the current wellbeing efforts.

References:

Rusk, R.R. & Waters, L. E. (2015). A psycho-social system approach to wellbeing: Empirically deriving the five domains of positive functioning. *International Journal of Positive Psychology, 10*(2), 141-152. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2014.920409

Waters, L. (2020, November 18). *Lea Waters IPEN keynote 2020: SEARCHing for wellbeing* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8I4HFtqIo0

Waters, L., & Loton, D. (2019). SEARCH: A meta-framework and review of the field of positive education. *International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology, 4*(1−2), 1−46. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41042-019-00017-4

Five Ways to Wellbeing

The New Economic Foundation, a think tank based out of London, UK, developed the "Five Ways to Wellbeing" model (Aked et al., 2008). The "Five Ways to Wellbeing" include:

1. **Connect**: Build connections with those around you (friends, family, coworkers, etc.) and your local community.
2. **Be Active**: Take time each day to be physically active. Choose something active that you enjoy such as exercising, taking a walk, dancing, playing a game, etc.
3. **Take Notice:** Savor and be mindful of life's moments. Be present and aware of the world around you.
4. **Keep Learning:** Learn something new or take up a new hobby or skill.
5. **Give:** Reach out and help those around you, volunteer in your community, show gratitude to others.

A more comprehensive explanation of each of these "Five Ways to Wellbeing" can be found by visiting the New Economic Foundation report.

To establish this framework, researchers at the New Economic Foundation reviewed over 400 scholarly papers and met with key leaders in the field of positive psychology to identify the key contributors to individual wellbeing(Aked et al., 2008; Stephens, 2020). The common themes they identified were social relationships, physical activity, awareness, learning new things, and serving or giving to others(Aked et al., 2008). These themes were then consolidated into the "Five Ways to Wellbeing" model. Each aspect of the model was chosen because it was found to be evidence-based, universal (applicable to many different populations and age groups) and targeted to the individual (Aked et al., 2008). Though this framework is not necessarily specific to positive education, the universal nature of its key components makes it applicable to schools, both for students and staff.

References:

Aked, J., Marks, N., Cordon, C. & Thompson, S. (2008, October 22). *Five ways to wellbeing: communicating the evidence.* New Economics Foundation. https://neweconomics.org/2008/10/five-ways-to-wellbeing

Stephens, S. (2020, March 30). *Five ways to wellbeing at a time of social distancing.* New Economics Foundation. https://neweconomics.org/2020/03/five-ways-to-wellbeing-at-a-time-of-social-distancing

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Wellbeing Conceptual Framework (Huppert & So)

Framework Overview

In order to establish a more comprehensive framework for wellbeing, Huppert and So identified ten central components of positive mental health and flourishing. They determined that wellbeing was not only the absence, but the opposite, of ill being or poor mental health (Huppert, 2014, p. 5). As such, each of these ten components was chosen by identifying the opposites of poor mental health symptoms using diagnostic criteria from the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) and the World Health Organization (Huppert & So, 2013). Each of the five PERMA principles are included within this framework, with five additional components, namely emotional stability, optimism, resilience, self- esteem and vitality. A complete list of the principles found in Huppert and So's (2013) framework are included below.

In order to evaluate the validity of this framework, Huppert and So (2013) evaluated data from the European Social Survey, a large survey of over 43,000 Europeans from 13 different countries. A supplementary wellbeing evaluation was added to the survey in 2006, allowing Huppert and So to evaluate their wellbeing framework and assess flourishing across Europe using their ten established components. They determined that for a person to be categorized as "flourishing" they had to have positive emotion, all but one of the positive characteristics in the framework (PERMA) and all but one of the positive functioning aspects of the framework(emotional stability, optimism, resilience, self-esteem

and vitality). The questions used in the survey for each of the ten components are listed below(Huppert & So, 2013, p. 843). You may wish to use these questions in assessing the wellbeing of your students and staff.

Wellbeing Framework Evaluation Tool

Wellbeing Component:	Indicator:
Competence	Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from what I do
Emotional Stability	(In the past week) I felt calm and peaceful
Engagement	I love learning new things
Meaning	I generally feel that what I do in my life is valuable and worthwhile
Optimism	I am always optimistic about my future
Positive Emotion	Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?
Positive Relationships	There are people in my life who really care about me
Resilience	When things go wrong in my life it generally takes me a long time to get back to normal (reverse score)
Self-Esteem	In general, I feel very positive about myself
Vitality	(In the past week) I had a lot of energy

References:

Huppert, F. A., & So, T. T. (2013). Flourishing Across Europe: Application of a New Conceptual Framework for Defining Well-Being. *Social indicators research*, *110*(3), 837–861. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-011-9966-7

Huppert, F. A. (2014). The state of well-being science: Concepts, measures, interventions, and policies. In F. A. Huppert & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Interventions and policies to enhance well-being.* Oxford, England: Wiley-Blackwell. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781118539415.wbwell036

Flourish Model

Recently, the Flourish Project, a non-profit community interest company (CIC), and researchers at Harvard created the Flourish Model for school wellbeing (Ellyat, 2022). The Flourish Model builds off of Barrett's Seven Levels of Consciousness model, Maslow's hierarchy of needs and systems science to describe flourishing "as a dynamic and highly interconnected process, between the self, others, and the natural world" (Ellyat, 2022, p.5). The Flourish Model's seven aspects of flourishing are depicted in the two following models (Ellyat, 2022, Figures 2 and 3).
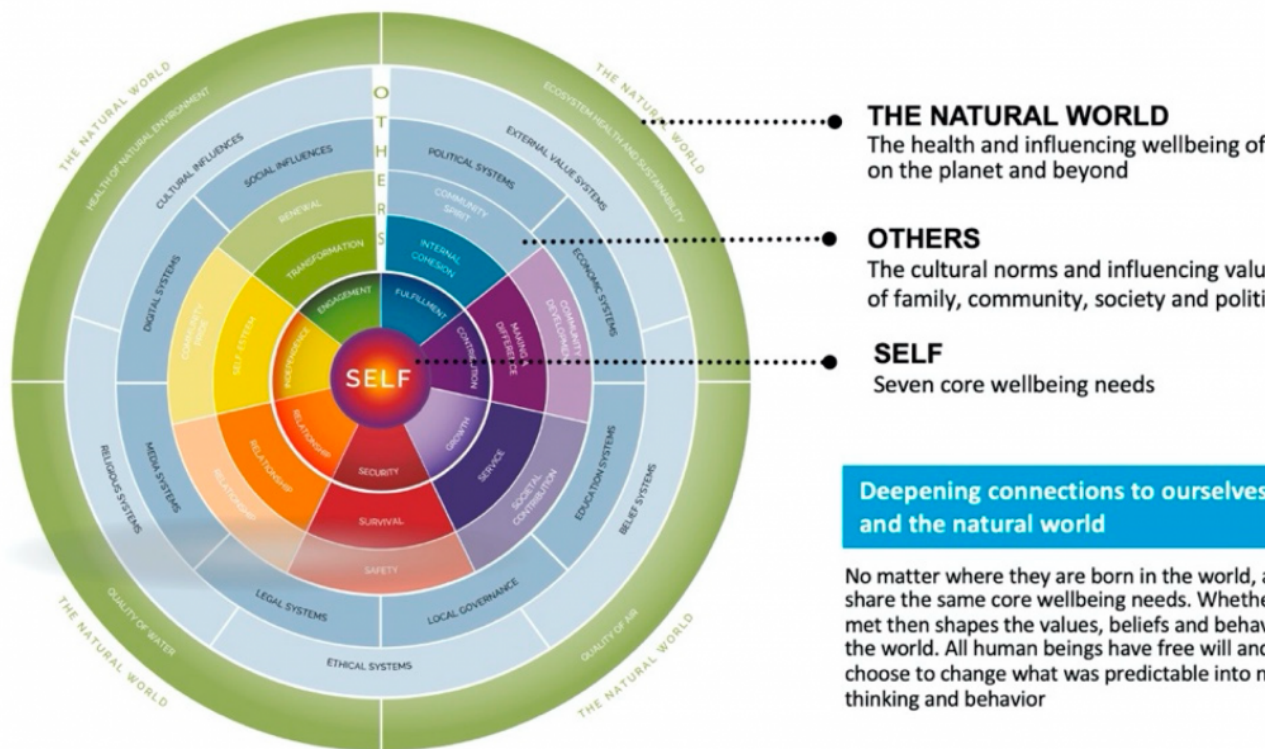
Flourishing consists of...

Human Needs and Motivations

Spiritual

No matter where they live in the world, human beings have the same core needs

Mental Emotional Physical

GROWTH	Expansion and vitality
CONTRIBUTION	Empathy and co-operation
FULFILMENT	Self-expression and achievement
ENGAGEMENT	Meaning-making and flow
INDEPENDENCE	Mastery and self-worth
RELATIONSHIP	Nurturing relationships
SECURITY	Nurturing environments

Spiritual

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The Flourish Project has also created a model that shows the interconnection between students, adults and the greater community, similar to Brofenbrenner's ecological framework introduced previously in this book (Ellyat, 2022, Figure 4).

The Ecological Self

THE NATURAL WORLD
The health and influencing wellbeing of on the planet and beyond

OTHERS
The cultural norms and influencing valu of family, community, society and politi

SELF
Seven core wellbeing needs

Deepening connections to ourselves and the natural world

No matter where they are born in the world, share the same core wellbeing needs. Whethe met then shapes the values, beliefs and behav the world. All human beings have free will and choose to change what was predictable into r thinking and behavior

Though this model is still in the early stages of research and evaluation, it is a promising new framework based on the ideas of prominent researchers in the field of positive education. If you are interested in learning more about this model and using it in your school, we recommend that you reach out to the Flourishing Project and visit their website linked HERE.

References:

Ellyat, W. (2022). Education for human flourishing- A new conceptual framework for promoting ecosystemic wellbeing in schools. *Challenges, 13*(2). https://doi.org/10.3390/challe13020058

Suggestions for Further Research

There are many scholarly resources, podcasts and websites referenced throughout this book. For more detailed information about specific interventions and applications of positive psychology in schools, we recommend visiting the references section at the end of each chapter. The resources listed here will provide a general overview of positive education and wellbeing in schools.

Websites and Networks
Books
Podcasts
Scholarly Articles

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https://edtechbooks.org/addressing_wellbeing/suggestions_for_furt.

Websites and Networks

Positive Education Schools Association (PESA)

Collaborative for Academic, Social and, Emotional Learning (CASEL)

International Positive Education Network (IPEN)

Institute of Positive Education (Geelong Grammar School)

International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA)

Books

Achor, S. (2011). *The happiness advantage: The seven principles of positive psychology that fuel success and performance at work.* Ebury Publishing.

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