University Library



A gateway to Melbourne's research publications

Minerva Access is the Institutional Repository of The University of Melbourne

Author/s:
Kern, ML;Wehmeyer, ML

Title:
Introduction and Overview

Date:
2021

Citation:
Kern, M. L. & Wehmeyer, M. L. (2021). Introduction and Overview. Scull, J (Ed.). Raban, B (Ed.). The Palgrave Handbook of Positive Education, Growing up Literate: Australian literacy research for practice, (1), pp.1-17. Springer International Publishing.

Persistent Link:
https://hdl.handle.net/11343/302333

License:
CC BY

1

Introduction and Overview

Margaret L. Kern and Michael L. Wehmeyer

In 2009, Professor Martin Seligman and his colleagues declared *positive education* as an entity in and of itself, defined as "education for both traditional skills and happiness" (p. 293). Like the establishment of the broader positive psychology discipline, the ideas of positive education were nothing new to education (Kristjánsson, 2012), but the declaration called for a reconsideration of the purposes of education. Most young people spend the majority of their waking hours as part of a school community. Parents expect schools to provide their children with the capabilities needed to be successful in life. Despite all of the societal shifts that have occurred through the early part of the twenty-first century, along with healthcare, schools remain one of the truly essential social institutions. But what is the purpose of those social institutions?

Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, and Linkins (2009) noted that most parents simply want their children to be happy. And yet many societies equate happiness with success. Within schools, that translates as an emphasis on academic achievement, often captured through grades, standardized examinations, and other relatively objective indicators. Pedagogies focus on developing specific pieces of knowledge, disconnected from the broader context

M. L. Kern (✉)
The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, VIC, Australia
e-mail: Peggy.Kern@unimelb.edu.au

M. L. Wehmeyer
University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, USA

© The Author(s) 2021

M. L. Kern and M. L. Wehmeyer (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Positive Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-64537-3_1

and purpose for learning those pieces. For some students, this works well—they fit within the standard expectations held by schools, have the resources and support they need, and are lauded for their successes. But others struggle. Reports speak of high levels of student disengagement, disconnection, and mental health issues (e.g., Kessler & Bromet, 2013; Lawrence et al., 2015). Teachers are leaving the profession at alarming rates (e.g., den Brok, Wubbels, & van Tartwijk 2017; Gallant & Riley, 2014). In Australia, principals report higher levels of stress, burnout, and lower wellbeing compared to general populations (Riley, 2019). What has gone so wrong?

The positive education movement called for a rebalancing of intentions and for placing academic development and wellbeing as equally valued core priorities. The earliest efforts arose from Geelong Grammar School, a private school in Victoria, Australia. A team of positive psychology experts spent time at the School, thinking about ways to incorporate positive psychology concepts, interventions, and practices within the explicit and implicit curriculum.

Over the past decade, the positive education movement has grown, with an increasing amount of research, curricula, programs, and approaches to supporting wellbeing. But what is meant by positive education? What does it look like? What opportunities does it bring? What are the limitations? This Handbook explores these questions.

What Is Positive Education?

Positive education has been defined in a number of ways, through various articles, chapters, blog posts, and more. For instance, definitions include:

- "education for both traditional skills and for happiness" (Seligman et al., 2009, p. 293).
- "applied positive psychology in education" (Green, Oades, & Robinson, 2011, p. 1).
- "the development of educational environments that enable the learner to engage in established curricula in addition to knowledge and skills to develop their own and others' wellbeing" (Oades, Robinson, Green, & Spence, 2011, p. 432).
- "bringing together the science of positive psychology with best-practice teaching to encourage and support schools and individuals within their communities to flourish" (Norrish, Williams, O'Connor, & Robinson, 2013, p. 148).

- "an umbrella term to describe empirically validated interventions and programs from positive psychology that have an impact on student well-being" (White, Slemp, & Murray, 2017, p. 1).

Consistent across these definitions is a focus on promoting wellbeing and other positive states and qualities, such as happiness, flourishing, strengths, and capabilities. The definition of and focus on wellbeing is anchored in positive psychology rather than other disciplinary perspectives and philosophies of how to define, assess, and build wellbeing. As such, it becomes important to understand the positive psychology perspective, how positive education emerged from this perspective, and the implications moving forward.

Positive Psychology as a Discipline and as a Perspective

A distinction can be made between positive psychology as a *perspective*—where research and practice align with the values and intentions of the positive psychology, regardless of identification with the field—and as a *discipline*—research and practice that purposely situate themselves within defined (albeit fluid) boundaries of a scientific field (Pawelski, 2016). As a perspective, positive psychology emphasizes the pursuit of what is good, virtuous, and possible, with less emphasis on escaping what is bad, immoral, and problematic. Focus is placed on strengths over weaknesses and thriving over (or in spite of) suffering.

As a discipline, positive psychology arose as a reaction against the overemphasis in psychological theory, research, and practice on pathology. As such, the initial underlying bias of the field was to emphasize the individual person and human agency, with only secondary focus on broader social and contextual aspects that impact upon human experience (Kern et al., 2020). The field aims to be scientific, epistemologically biased towards naturalism, such that identifying what wellbeing is and how to build it can be reduced to simple cause and effect relationships. Through this approach, numerous positive psychology interventions have been developed and supported in the literature, with varying levels of effectiveness in improving individual wellbeing (Bolier et al., 2013; Parks & Schueller, 2014; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009; White, Uttl, & Holder, 2019).

Positive psychology as a discipline has developed and evolved considerably over the past three decades, with implications for what is meant by the positive psychology perspective. Lomas, Waters, Williams, Oades, and

Kern (2020) described this evolution as three distinctive waves, energy pulses that rise up from the greater sea of theory, research, and practice. Rather than separate stages, each wave flows into one another, with prior waves creating the necessary conditions for the latter waves. The first wave arose from discontent over traditional psychology. The wave focused on the positive perspective described above. The proposition was popular, with the number of studies focused on positive phenomena expanding rapidly across the next two decades (Rusk & Waters, 2013), the establishment and growth of a variety of training and certification programs, the establishment of professional bodies, and a growing number of interventions, programs, and more being offered.

Still, discontent arose both within and beyond the field. Interventions primarily focused on hedonic happiness—strategies for building the temporary feeling of pleasure, rather than broader elements of the life well lived. The overemphasis on the positive seemed to negate negative human experiences. Studies found, for instance, that the meaningful life is not necessarily a happy one (Baumeister, Vohs, Aaker, & Garbinsky, 2013), and that some of the greatest experiences of joy arise from times of sorrow and pain (Kashdan & Biswas-Diener, 2014). Questions arose around what was meant by the word "positive" (Pawelski, 2016). As such, a second wave emerged, which critically considered the ideas of what is "positive" and "negative", the valuing of all of human experience, and a turn towards more eudaimonic dimensions of wellbeing.

As the positive psychology perspective has increasingly been applied across a growing number of contexts and populations and incorporated within other disciplines, additional challenges and questions have emerged. Schools have been a critical part of this evolution. Simple positive psychology interventions, well tested and supported through a variety of studies, often do not work within the complexity of the classroom setting. Some students and teachers will find an activity helpful; others will disconnect or even experience harmful or unintended consequences. Models of and understandings about wellbeing and other positive phenomena arise primarily from a relatively privileged Western perspective (Kern et al., 2020), with less clarity around what these phenomena look like for those with diverse backgrounds (Black & Kern, 2020). As such, Lomas et al. (2020) suggest that a third wave is emerging, which: "goes beyond the individual and embraces greater complexity" (p. 4), with a broadening of focus (beyond the individual), disciplines (moving to an interdisciplinary perspective more broadly captured as *well-being science*), populations (extending to diverse populations, including across

cultures, socioeconomic levels, and life stages), and methodologies (drawing on diverse ways of knowing and establishing understandings of truth).

The Emergence of Positive Education

The application of the positive psychology perspective within education similarly has undergone a series of evolutions, evident in the definitions above, with clarity around what positive education is and does and boundaries around what should and should not be included yet to be determined. The first wave of positive education is represented by the application of positive psychology as a discipline within schools. The focus was primarily on students, with teachers trained to deliver materials. Various frameworks, approaches, and curricula were developed that aimed to create happy, engaged learners.

This remains an appealing narrative. Indeed, the strongest rationale for positive education is the concern that has arisen worldwide over what has been called the mental health crisis. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, at least one in four young people reported symptoms of mental illness (World Health Organization, 2017). Over 50% of adolescent illnesses have a mental origin (Allen & McKenzie, 2015). Policymakers, communities, schools, and other organizations are increasingly identifying the need to prioritize mental health and wellbeing. Positive education has entered into this narrative, providing an inspiring image of happy, engaged learners, growing to their full potential within a supportive learning environment. Programs, curricula, and more have been developed, drawing on the science of positive psychology to train students how to feel and function well at school. Much of the early work occurred in private schools in Australia and abroad, as such schools had more flexibility with curricular design and more resources to draw upon. Schools have been generous, openly sharing lessons learned, resources, frameworks, and more to help broaden the positive education movement.

Still, unintended consequences and challenges arose. Some schools jumped on the idea of positive education, gaining training, adding mindfulness, gratitude, and other interventions to the classroom, including wellbeing classes in the timetable, etc. However, it has become clear that although focusing on student wellbeing and happiness can be beneficial, it is insufficient. Students are core business to schools; thus, it makes sense to focus on their wellbeing. But if teachers are struggling, how can they authentically teach wellbeing skills? Practices and approaches increasingly broadened beyond the students to include teachers, non-teaching staff, and school leaders. Further, there was

a growing recognition that the environment matters. Thus, the second wave of positive education emphasizes moving beyond specific programs developing specific skills to the creation of learning environments that support the wellbeing of everyone within the school community, through both the taught and caught curriculum (White & Kern, 2018).

Still, it remains unclear what positive education truly is. Is positive education simply a passing movement or something more? How does it fit with the many other approaches that already exist within schools, including social and emotional learning (SEL), positive behavioural interventions and supports (PBIS), character education, holistic education, etc.? Slemp et al. (2017) suggested that "positive education aims to build strengths, capabilities, wellbeing and resilience in educational communities… it is not a single approach, but rather provides an umbrella under which multiple theories, programs, frameworks, and approaches reside" (p. 103). On the one hand, this definition seems to add greater confusion than clarity. What are the boundaries of positive education? What are the intentions—is it about building wellbeing, skills, and capabilities, or something else? What does it look like across different cultures, populations, backgrounds, and interests? Who should be involved? And who should decide?

These are the questions of third wave positive education. From this perspective, there is no one right theory, model, approach, or perspective to positive education, but consensus can emerge through open dialogue and friendly debate about best practice approaches for defining, studying, and applying positive education. This wave emphasizes positive education as a perspective rather than as a discipline. Rather than positive psychology being applied to education, it highlights the need to embrace the positively oriented programs, structures, frameworks, etc. that already exist within schools, with continued refinements towards bringing out the best of what could be. It points to the need to emphasize not only content, but the pedagogy underlying that content. It calls for the need to situate understandings of and approaches to wellbeing within the context and community itself, requiring extensions to diverse populations, with approaches emerging from those populations themselves, rather than being imposed upon. And it calls us to recognize schools as complex human social systems.

Handbook Overview

This Handbook arises within the shifting landscape of the waves of positive education. Aligned with the valuing of open dialogue and diverse

perspectives, authors provide various definitions of, perspectives around, and approaches to positive education, with the various waves arising and integrated within and across chapters. A broad range of topics are incorporated, aiming for an inclusive understanding of positively oriented approaches within education, arranged across three sections.

Part 1: Perspectives of and Approaches to Positive Education

The Handbook begins by considering different perspectives of and approaches to positive education. This is not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather highlights a range of ways for thinking about, defining, and applying positive education. Green and colleagues (Chapter 2) overview various approaches to positive education, describing SEL, character education, growth mindset, resilience and mental toughness, and coaching as examples. Reflecting third wave positive education, they speak to practical recommendations for strategically implementing positive education within the complexity of different school environments.

Providing the helpful perspective of an educator, Arguís-Rey (Chapter 3) considers what positive education looks like in practice. The chapter speaks to the variability of practices that occur worldwide, with little clarity that different implementations are indeed having the effects that we desire, and calls for turning an eye towards the conditions that enable and hinder applications of research in practice. Accessibility to resources remains an issue, risking the potential that positive education is only available to those with resources, potentially fuelling greater inequities across the world. The chapter also provides implementation suggestions for practitioners.

Well before positive education was named as a sub-discipline, the emphasis on cultivating young person potential was already well-established within Positive Youth Development (PYD). Romer and Hansen (Chapter 4) point to the philosophical traditions underlying the PYD approach, which arise from Aristotle's emphasis on human virtue as critical to human happiness. Many of the existing PYD programs are grounded in developing the virtues of justice, prudence, courage, and temperance, with the intention of helping young people to develop to their full potential and become a thriving, contributing member of society.

Directly addressing the third wave perspective, Kern and Taylor (Chapter 5) introduce Systems Informed Positive Education (SIPE), which incorporates aspects of the systems sciences into positive education practice

and pedagogy to cultivate optimal learning environments that bring out the best in each individual and of the school community as a whole. The authors describe principles of the SIPE perspective that might enable wellbeing to be embedded at the heart of education. To bring this to life, they offer a number of examples of schools that are successfully cultivating thriving changemakers by incorporating positively oriented systems principles to help students to discover and bring about their full potential.

Chapters 6 and 7 further build upon the third wave perspective, focusing particularly on context and pedagogy. Waters (Chapter 6) suggests that positive education should be expanded by incorporating a greater focus on evidence-informed implicit approaches to wellbeing and a greater focus on the context for wellbeing. She suggests that this can be achieved through empowering teachers through positive education pedagogy, which places greater focus on how wellbeing concepts are taught than the content itself. The focus on pedagogy is further emphasized by White (Chapter 7), who introduces a strengths-based reflective practice model for teachers that allows critical self-reflection, improving effective practice. The model brings together the Values in Action (VIA) strengths classification with Brookfield's four lenses of reflective practice. Together, these chapters move away from positive psychology being applied to education (typical of wave 1 approaches), placing teacher practice lying at the heart of both explicit and implicit approaches to cultivating wellbeing within school communities.

Drawing further on the pedagogy of positive education, Brunzell (Chapter 8) illustrates approaches that need to be informed by and emerge from diverse communities, rather than being imposed upon by existing assumptions. The author reframes positive education from a trauma-informed perspective. For students impacted by trauma and systemic educational disadvantage, typical positive education approaches not only risk being ineffective, but can also be harmful. The chapter reviews trauma-aware pedagogy and recommends practical ways that teachers can practise wellbeing strategies from a trauma-informed perspective. Importantly, the chapter also points to the additional burden that secondary trauma creates, with the need for prioritizing support for teachers' own wellbeing.

As the pedagogy of positive education is returned to teachers, the question becomes what that pedagogy should focus on. Systems informed positive education (Chapter 5) points to the importance of responsibility in cultivating wellbeing—it is not only about teachers imparting skills in young people, but rather empowering young people to take responsibility for their own wellbeing, to the extent that the capability for wellbeing exists. Building upon this, Wehmeyer and colleagues (Chapter 9) describe the agentic aspect

of wellbeing, captured through self-determined behaviour, in which people act based on their own interests, values, and preferences. A large body of literature across diverse disciplines points to the importance of self-determination in enabling agentic human behaviour, with implications for wellbeing and functioning. Critical to this are pedagogical approaches that support students' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, promoting student agency and ownership over their own learning, and a sense of meaning and purpose in practice.

The need for supporting student agency and purpose for learning becomes even more important in the uncertainty and changes of the twenty-first century. Di Maggio and colleagues (Chapter 10) emphasize the complexity of the modern world, and the need to equip students with skills to effectively deal with that complexity. Focusing on career guidance and life design, the authors point to the need to re-envision career guidance to better align with the shifting shape of the working world. This includes vocational guidance that is inclusive and sustainable, and the need for approaches that are sensitive to the specific needs of vulnerable individuals, including marginalized groups, immigrants, the unemployed, and those with disabilities. The authors provide actions that guidance professionals can take to empower young people to embrace, sustain, and foster optimal, inclusive, and sustainable societies of the future.

As a whole, the chapters in Part 1 illustrate the diverse and emerging direction that positive education might evolve in the future, taking it from specific programs based on simple interventions to diverse approaches that empower young people in their learning, wellbeing, and development. They emphasize the importance of pedagogy, valuing the expertise that educators bring to the classroom. They point to the diversification across populations and perspectives. Throughout, authors point to practical tips and clear guidance, highlighting the value of continued integration of research and practice as positive education continues to define itself and establish what its contribution to education will be.

Part 2: Core Capabilities in Positive Education

With this foundation in mind, what should implicit and explicit pedagogies and approaches be focused upon? Wave 1 and 2 positive education placed the emphasis on happiness, wellbeing, and resilience as necessary complements to the traditional focus on academic performance and achievement. From that perspective, the core intention of positive education programs and

approaches is to increase how students feel and function. From a learning and development perspective, wave 3 positive education adds an intentional focus on capabilities for wellbeing—people's abilities and opportunities to be and do what they value (Alexander, 2008; Sen, 1993). Rather than being about the achievement of wellbeing, a capability perspective focuses on equipping people with clarity about their values, mindsets that arise from those values, and skills to live in alignment with these values. In addition, values, mindsets, and skills need to be complemented with conditions that provide opportunities for people to experience wellbeing.

Building upon this perspective, Part 2 begins by examining what is meant by wellbeing, flourishing, resilience, and other outcomes that are often emphasized in positive education research and practices, with the various waves appearing throughout the chapters. Chaves-Vélez (Chapter 11) unpacks different models of and approaches to defining wellbeing and flourishing, why these matters, and approaches that have been incorporated within developmental environments to cultivate wellbeing and flourishing. Attention is given to the efficacy of such interventions for preventing subsequent problems and the importance of political commitments towards supporting wellbeing as necessary for interventions to be sustainable. Assessment plays a critical role for wellbeing to be sustainably incorporated into policies, schools, and approaches. Jarden and colleagues (Chapter 12) describe the essence of and principles toward good assessment within schools. Bringing this to life, the authors describe examples of several tools, along with what these tools look like in practice. Through a series of questions, the chapter describes the content, processes, and systems that need to be considered as part of assessment approaches and illustrates how good assessment can be used to guide decision making and practice.

Directly drawing on a capability perspective, Oades and colleagues (Chapter 13) shift the focus from wellbeing to the concept of wellbeing literacy—having language for and about wellbeing that is applied in contextually sensitive and intentional ways. The authors suggest that wellbeing literacy helps to orient the focus of positive education towards wellbeing capabilities and processes, draws upon existing learning and teaching capacities and strengths, and is contextually sensitive to the systems in which individuals exist.

A capability perspective speaks in part to equipping young people with language and skills for and about wellbeing. But it also points to the importance of context and experience. The contextual nature of wellbeing becomes particularly relevant in the case of chronic stress and challenge. Chapters 14 and 15 focus on resilience and coping. Complementing a trauma-informed

perspective (Chapter 8), Ronan (Chapter 14) illustrates the crises and traumas that many young people experience, illustrating the effects that such experiences have on children and adolescents. There is a need to facilitate resilience at multiple levels, protecting young people from harm while empowering them to use their strengths, grow through struggle, and experience happiness. Frydenberg (Chapter 15) elaborates on the development of coping skills, with a particular focus on early childhood. The chapter describes productive and unhelpful strategies, offering a number of examples that illustrate effective approaches towards equipping young people, teachers, and parents with effective coping skills that can be subsequently drawn upon throughout development, helping young people to effectively navigate the ups and downs of life and promoting greater resilience.

Some of the most salient capabilities that have been emphasized across most applications of positive education are character strengths. Coppley and Niemix (Chapter 16) provide an overview of character strengths, with a particular focus on the VIA classification, which is the most common model used within schools, describing approaches to and impacts of strengths interventions. Again providing a third wave perspective, they point to the need for a systems approach for implementing strength-based intervention. Possibilities for simultaneously considering the content of the intervention and processes to include to create effective change are brought to life through practice-based examples.

Chapters 17, 18, and 19 turn to a variety of approaches that make the learning process enjoyable and engaging, providing clarity around what the capabilities are, why they matter, frameworks for understanding and applying the concepts, and examples of what they look like in practice for both teachers and staff. Tidmand (Chapter 17) illustrates how positive emotions and playfulness can successfully be incorporated into lesson preparation, pedagogical practice, and lesson evaluation, helping to support positive learning environments. Ledertoug and Paarup (Chapter 18) further build upon this, offering frameworks and approaches for making education engaging through the cultivation of active, involved, and motivated learning environments. Beghetto (Chapter 19) complements these approaches through a focus on creative learning, which emphasizes creative expression with the context of and approaches to academic learning.

The rest of Part 2 focuses on capabilities around, approaches towards, and considerations concerning connecting with ourselves, with others, and with the world. Buchanan and Grieg (Chapter 20) explore fixed and growth mindset theory in education, and then extend this to describe the benefit

mindset, which integrates personal transformation, social contribution, leadership, and recognition of our interdependence with the world. Allen and colleagues (Chapter 21) focus on connection with schools, unpacking research around school belonging, the importance of teachers in fostering a sense of connection, and the role that school leaderships play in fostering strong relationships. Steger and colleagues (Chapter 22) speak to our need and universal desire for our lives to be purposeful, coherent, and significant. They describe meaning in life research and point to tools and activities that can be integrated within and across positive education efforts to help students live and learn in purposeful ways.

Meaning arises, for many, from a connection with something beyond themselves, which can be fostered through various religious, spiritual, and contemplative practices. McCall (Chapter 23) describes positive spirituality, which acknowledges that personal spiritual growth can occur through a number of evidence-based approaches and techniques, including meditation, relaxation, and physical stillness to raise spiritual awareness and enable young people to connect with something or someone greater than themselves. Sheinman and Russo-Netzer (Chapter 24) further detail the application of mindfulness in education, overviewing what is known about mindfulness in education, summarizing various perspectives and practices, and the relevance of mindfulness for supporting holistic and integrative approaches to education.

Across the chapters, authors speak to the complexity of not only the capabilities themselves, but also the approaches necessary for application within schools. While various approaches, frameworks, and practices are mentioned, it is clear that application is neither simple nor straightforward. Context matters, pedagogy is critical, and appropriateness and impact are dynamic. As a whole, the chapters point to both the possibilities for and the challenges of supporting the holistic development of learners who are engaged with, passionate about, and active in pursuing their potential to contribute to the world in their own unique ways.

Part 3: Diversifying Positive Education

The incorporation of positive psychology within the educational context necessarily calls for diversification across cultures and populations. According to the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (2015), all children, without any form of discrimination have the right to education that is directed at "the

development of the child's personality, talents, and physical and mental abilities to their fullest potential" (Article 29a). If positive education aims to help young people to develop to their full potential, then it necessarily needs to be accessible to young people of *all* backgrounds. And yet the broader positive psychology discipline has only begun to extend across cultures, contexts, backgrounds, and perspectives. Prior chapters speak to and provide examples of growing diversification. Part 3 explicitly focuses on examples of and opportunities for the growing diversification of positive education.

Addressing the need for extension to diverse populations, Roffey and Quinlan (Chapter 25) focus on young people who have experienced adversity, pointing to the issues that these young people face, the outcomes that arise from the challenges faced, protective factors, and what schools can and are doing to address the needs of disadvantaged students. They provide a series of case studies at school, city, and community levels, highlighting how positive education can be appropriately used to positively impact young people's lives, in ways that can break negative intergenerational cycles that perpetuate disadvantage.

The next two chapters consider diversity across cultures. Joshanloo and colleagues (Chapter 26) explore ways in which culture shapes how people pursue personal and collective wellbeing, resulting in cultural-specific prescriptions and customs about what wellbeing entails and approaches to pursue it. Specifically, the authors identify four fundamental differences that occur in terms of how different cultures conceptualize mental wellbeing, based upon the centrality of hedonic experience, self-enhancement, autonomy, and the relevance of contextual factors. The authors point to the implications of these different conceptualizations for designing interventions and policies and approaches to evaluation. As an example, Kwok (Chapter 27) describes how positive education has been implemented within early years, primary, secondary, and higher education institutions in Hong Kong. The chapter points to factors that affected effectiveness, with suggestions and directions of applications of positive education within the Hong Kong context. Together, these chapters point to the necessity of taking care when extending positive education across cultures.

Much of the work and approaches within positive education primarily are focused on school-aged students. Yet there is a growing recognition of the importance of focusing on the wellbeing of teachers, staff, and leaders. McCallum (Chapter 28) points to the health of teaching professionals as essential to anything that is done within education. Yet many educators are struggling. The chapter provides strategies for supporting teacher wellbeing, underscoring the need for positive education to not only be about

student wellbeing, but supporting optimal development and performance for all members of the educational community.

Considerable research around supporting employee wellbeing has developed across the first two decades of the twenty-first century through Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS). Cameron (Chapter 29) describes the unique characteristics of POS, pointing to the importance of positive organizational dynamics for empowering high performance within organizations. The chapter describes core POS principles, illustrating the possibilities that can arise through the application of these principles. Case studies highlight how the approaches that two higher education institutions incorporated successfully contributed to achievement, wellbeing, and collective performance. The institutional-level focus of POS allows impact of effects to impact far beyond individual classrooms, impacting upon the school community as a whole.

We end the Handbook with final observations, opportunities, and our vision for the future. This Handbook was, fundamentally, an outgrowth of efforts within the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) to create a community within the expanding discipline of positive education. That effort resulted in the establishment of the IPPA Education Division (IPPAed) in 2016. Many of the authors in this Handbook have been involved with IPPAed in its formation and development. The Handbook was one means to begin to achieve the vision of IPPAed, which envisions a community of researchers, educators, students, and others who are dedicated to:

> bringing out the best in educational communities through the intersection of the science of positive psychology and best learning educational practice. IPPAed recognizes the plurality of theories, models, methods, and perspectives relevant to positive education. IPPAed aims to connect members from around the world, fostering open dialect and the sharing of knowledge and resources, to empower individuals and educational communities worldwide to create and shape environments that allow all members of the community and the communities to flourish. (IPPA, 2016)

The Handbook attempts to support this vision, giving light to the plurality of models and perspectives, and highlighting high-quality research and research-to-practice efforts. We have purposefully emphasized an international and multi-disciplinary approach. In the final chapter (Chapter 30), we revisit these topics, identifying ways in which the field can evolve to be more inclusive, more effective, and more impactful, as we all work together to create and shape educational environments that allow all members of our educational communities to thrive, both now and for future generations.

References

Alexander, J. M. (2008). *Capabilities and social justice: The political philosophy of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum*. Hampshire, UK: Ashgate Publishing.

Allen, K., & McKenzie, V. (2015). Mental health in an Australian context and future interventions from a school belonging perspective. *Special Issue on Mental Health in Australia for the International Journal of Mental Health, 44,* 80–93. https://doi.org/10.1080/00207411.2015.1009780.

Baumeister, R. F., Vohs, K. D., Aaker, J. L., & Garbinsky, E. N. (2013). Some key differences between a happy life and a meaningful life. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 8,* 505–516. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2013.830764.

Black, B., & Kern, M. L. (2020). A qualitative exploration of individual differences in wellbeing for highly sensitive individuals. *Palgrave Communications, 6,* 103. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-0482-8.

Bolier, L., Haverman, M., Westerhof, G. J., Riper, H., Smit, F., & Bohlmeijer, E. (2013). Positive psychology interventions: A meta-analysis of randomized controlled studies. *BMC Public Health, 13,* 119. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-119.

Den Brok, P., Wubbels, T., & van Tartwijk, J. (2017). Exploring beginning teachers' attrition in the Netherlands. *Teachers and Teaching, 23*(8), 881–895.

Gallant, A., & Riley, P. (2014). Early career teacher attrition: New thoughts on an intractable problem. *Teacher Development, 18*(4), 562–580.

Green, S. Oades, L. G., & Robinson, P. L. (2011, April). Positive education: Creating flourishing students, staff and schools. *InPsych.* www.psychology.org.au/publications/inpsych/2011/april/green.

IPPA. (2016). *IPPA education division charter*. http://www.ippanetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/IPPA-ed-board-charter-8Oct2016.pdf.

Kashdan, T., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2014). *The upside of your dark side: Why being your whole self—Not just your "good" self—Drives success and fulfillment*. New York, NY: Plume.

Kern, M. L., Williams, P., Spong, C., Colla, R., Sharma, K., Downie, A., Taylor, J. A., Sharp, S., Siokou, C., & Oades, L. G. (2020). Systems informed positive psychology. *Journal of Positive Psychology, 15*, 705–715. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2019.1639799.

Kessler, R. C., & Bromet, E. J. (2013). The epidemiology of depression across cultures. *Annual Review of Public Health, 34,* 119–138. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-031912-114409.

Kristjánsson, K. (2012). Positive psychology and positive education: Old wine in new bottles? *Educational Psychologist, 47,* 86–105.

Lawrence, D., Johnson, S., Hafekost, J., Boterhoven de Haan, K., Sawyer, M., Ainley, J., et al. (2015). *The mental health of children and adolescents: Report on the second Australian child and adolescent survey of mental health and well-being*. Canberra: Department of Health.

Lomas, T., Waters, L. E., Williams, P., Oades, L., & Kern, M. L. (2020). Third wave positive psychology: Broadening towards complexity. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2020.1805501.

Norrish, J. M., Williams, P., O'Connor, M., & Robinson, J. (2013). An applied framework for positive education. *International Journal of Wellbeing, 3,* 147–161.

Oades, L. G., Robinson, P., Green, S., & Spence, G. B. (2011). Towards a positive university. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 6,* 432–439.

Parks, A. C., & Schueller, S. M. (2014). *The Wiley Blackwell handbook of positive psychological interventions*. West Sussex, UK: Wiley.

Pawelski, J. O. (2016). Defining the 'positive' in positive psychology: Part I. A descriptive analysis. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 11,* 339–356. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2015.1137627.

Riley, P. (2019). *Australian principal occupational health, safety and wellbeing survey: 2018 data*. https://apo.org.au/node/222071.

Rusk, R. D., & Waters, L. E. (2013). Tracing the size, reach, impact, and breadth of positive psychology. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 8,* 207–221.

Seligman, M. E. P., Ernst, R. M., Gillham, J., Reivich, K., & Linkins, M. (2009). Positive education: Positive psychology and classroom interventions. *Oxford Review of Education, 35,* 293–311.

Sen, A. (1993). Capability and well-being. In M. Nussbaum & A. Sen (Eds.), *The quality of life* (pp. 30–53). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sin, N. L., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2009). Enhancing well-being and alleviating depressive symptoms with positive psychology interventions: A practice-friendly meta-analysis. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 65,* 467–487. https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20593.

Slemp, G. R., Chin, T. C., Kern, M. L., Siokou, C., Loton, D., Oades, L. G., et al. (2017). Positive education in Australia: Practice, measurement, and future directions. In E. Fryenberg, A. J. Martin, & R. J. Collie (Eds.), *Social and emotional learning in Australia and the Asia Pacific* (pp. 101–122). Singapore: Springer.

United Nations. (2015). *Convention on the rights of the child* (Article 29a). https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx.

White, C. A., Uttl, V., & Holder, M. D. (2019). Meta-analyses of positive psychology interventions: The effects are much smaller than previously repoted. *PLoS ONE, 14*(5), https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0216588.

White, M., & Kern, M. L. (2018). Positive education: Learning and teaching for wellbeing and academic mastery. *International Journal of Wellbeing, 8*(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v8i1.588.

White, M. A., Slemp, G. R., & Murray, A. S. (Eds.). (2017). *Future directions in well-being: Education, organizations and policy*. Switzerland: Springer Nature.

World Health Organization. (2017). *Depression and other common mental disorders: Global health estimates*. http://www.who.int/mental_health/management/depression/prevalence_global_health_estimates/en/.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

