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Wellbeing constructs

1960-1980
- Maximising one’s potential (Dunn 1961)

1980s
- Historical focus on health
- Economic wellbeing
- Women and wellbeing
- Children and wellbeing

1990s
- Balanced lifestyle (Lowden et al. 1995)
- Living and working in society (Corbin 1997)
Wellbeing Focus in 21st Century

21st Century Social Changes
- Employment patterns
- Consumerist society
- Digital technologies
- ‘New adulthood’
- New patterns of social division
- Increased cost of living

Holistic wellbeing (Stewart-Brown 2000)
- Positive emotions and psychosocial functioning
- Meaning in life, satisfaction of needs
- Multidimensional
- Sustainability
- Spiritual and cultural dimensions (Babington 2006)
- Social/Relational
- Ecological influences
Wellbeing defined

- ‘A state of complete physical, social and mental well-being’ (WHO 1947, p. 1).
- ‘Wellbeing is diverse and fluid respecting individual, family and community beliefs, values, experiences, culture, opportunities and contexts across time and change.

It encompasses intertwined individual, collective and environmental elements which continually interact across the lifespan.

Wellbeing is something we all aim for, underpinned by positive notions, yet is unique to each of us and provides us with a sense of who we are which needs to be respected.

Our role with wellbeing education is to provide the opportunity, access, choices, resources and capacities for individuals and communities to aspire to their unique sense of wellbeing, whilst contributing to a sense of community wellbeing.’ (McCallum & Price 2016, p.5)
Wellbeing and positive psychology

- 21\textsuperscript{st} Century - greater emphasis on wellbeing in education
  - e.g. policies, frameworks, curriculums and whole school approaches (Waters 2011).

- Shift towards positive psychology
  - Developing strengths as opposed to focussing on and fixing deficits
  - Two-pronged approach that minimises negative factors and develops positive factors is considered most successful means of addressing wellbeing (Keyes 2002)

- Growing with Gratitude programme is underpinned by the philosophies of positive psychology
Defining gratitude

Talk to the person next to you: what you understand by the term gratitude?

‘A sense of thankfulness and joy in response to receiving a gift, whether the gift be a tangible benefit from a specific other or a moment of peaceful bliss evoked by natural beauty’ (Peterson & Seligman 2004, p. 554)

Emmons and Mishra (2010) suggest that gratitude, as a virtue, is deliberately cultivated. It needs to be taught, modelled, practiced until it becomes a habit.

Think of three things that you are grateful for in your workplace and one thing that you wish for.

Why is it important to reflect on things that we are grateful for?

Why is it important to teach young people to be grateful?
Literature

Gratitude:

- helps to develop relationships, enhancing a sense of community (Baumgarten-Tramer 1938)
- helps create and maintain bonds between people (Algoe, Haidt & Gable 2008)
- is a moral feeling that binds people together (Simmel 1950)
- is related to increased quality of life and wellbeing (e.g. Bono Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Lyubomirsky, Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson 2005; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky 2006; Watkins, 2004; Wood, Froh & Geraghty, 2010).
- reduces depression, anxiety and behavioural problems while improving relationships, life success, physical health and academic achievement (Duhigg 2012; Seligman 2013, 2011).
- is linked to Life satisfaction, optimism and altruism (Bartlett & DeSteno 2006; Froh, Miller & Snyder 2007, 2008; Tsang 2006, 2007).

However, most of these studies have focussed on adults. Are similar effects are evident in children?
Children and Gratitude


- three groups: gratitude condition, hassles condition, & control
- gratitude group - 5 things they were grateful for
- hassle group - 5 things that irritated them
- gratitude group - increased optimism; life & school satisfaction; academic achievement
- effects increased over time
  - more prominent at the 3 week post-intervention
  - change requires effort & time to integrate

Froh, Kashdan, Ozimkowski & Miller (2009) used a ‘gratitude letter’ with grade 3, 8 & 12 students
- Students low in positive affect were more grateful
Gratitude and Development

- Children can understand, experience and express gratitude (Freitas, Silveira & Pieta 2009a,b).
  - Does not develop naturally
  - Needs modelling and interactions with others (Emmons & Shelton 2002).
- Does not develop until the age of 7 or 8 (Froh, Miller & Snyder 2007)
- Developmental stages (Baumgarten-Tranner 1938)
  - Pre-school: verbal gratitude, politeness
  - ~8 years: concrete gratitude where a child repays a good turn with something that is valuable to them (Freitas, Pieta & Tudge 2011)
  - ~11 years: Connective gratitude emerges
  - ~14 + years: ‘Finalistic’ stage - repaying a favour that assists in obtaining an object or desired situation
Growing with Gratitude programme

- Adapts initiatives from Froh, Sefick & Emmons (2008)

- Uses daily gratitude habit activities across school and home contexts

- Underpinned by the 5 habits of happiness:
  - An attitude of gratitude
  - Random acts of kindness
  - Positive reflection
  - Wellbeing warriors
  - Operation home services
Growing with Gratitude aims to:

- Foster habits based on gratitude, kindness, mindfulness, optimism and service
- Include students, teachers and families
- Provide simple daily activities to promote lifelong positive habits

The program includes:

- Year-level modules and daily activities based on gratitude, happiness, kindness, service, exercise, socialising, meditation and mindfulness.
- Home Grown Gratitude activities for families to complete at home and in the community as well as a gratitude diary, meditation CD, gratitude jar and kindness tracker
Implementation

- Whole school (R-6) in South Australia engaged in a 10 week program of brief daily gratitude activities.

- Two classes (year 2 and 6) in this school engaged in a four-week module featuring 4-5 lessons per week.

- Year 5 class in Hong Kong to engage in a 5 week program of brief daily gratitude activities.
Attitude of Gratitude

Key Concepts: Gratitude, Kindness, Happiness and Optimism

Gratitude is great: Record 3 things you are grateful for in your Gratitude Journal.

Drop it in the Jar: Write something you are grateful for on a piece of paper and drop it in the Gratitude Jar in your classroom.

Gratitude Tree: Write something you are grateful for on a paper leaf and stick it on the Gratitude Tree Poster
Random Acts of Kindness!

**Key Concepts:** Kindness, Mindfulness, Happiness

**Kind Kids:** Think of 1 random act of kindness you can complete and - once you’ve done it - record it in your Gratitude Journal

**Recognition Mission:** In pairs or as a group, discuss something positive you witnessed your classmate do during the day or the day before.

**Nomination Box:** On a slip of paper write a random act of kindness you have recently witnessed by a fellow student then place it in the box.
Positive reflection

Key Concepts: Happiness, Gratitude and Optimism

Jot in the Journal: Think about a positive experience from the day and take 2 minutes to record it in your Gratitude Journal.

Future Rewards: In your Gratitude Journal list 3 things you are looking forward to e.g. a birthday party, sporting match, a family holiday.

Social Butterflies: In small groups spend a few minutes talking to each other about something that has made you happy recently or what you are grateful for that day.
Well-being warrior

Key Concepts: Mindfulness, happiness, gratitude and optimism

Fitness Freaks: Choose a short activity to do together e.g. run around the oval, complete 50 star jumps, or have a hand-stand competition.

Rad Reader: Read 5 pages of a book.

Mindful Meditation: Listen to the Growing with Gratitude Mindfulness Meditation CD.
Operation home service

Key Concepts: Happiness, Gratitude and Optimism

Secret Meeting: Meet with your gratitude buddy and plan the week’s home service together. Record it in your Gratitude Journals.

Team Effort: Choose 5 home service suggestions from the class and vote on which one everyone will complete. Record it in your Gratitude Journal.

Report to The General: Briefly report to the class on your last Home Service task and how you felt completing it.
Growing with Gratitude: Exploring a school community’s gratitude approach and influence on student wellbeing and achievement


AIMS

- Explore the influence that explicit training of students’ gratitude habits has on happiness, optimism, coping, relationships and academic achievement
- Strengthen school community approaches to explicit gratitude training
- Add to existing body of knowledge of young people’s gratitude habits
Methodology

- The two case study sites conducted a ten-week Growing with Gratitude programme as part of the school curriculum.
- Two classes (year 2 and 6) at the South Australian site engaged in a four week module featuring lessons on gratitude.
- Students, teachers and parents have completed pre- and post-programme online surveys and will complete follow-up online surveys.
- Parental responses will help to determine whether any changes are transferred outside of school.
- Focus groups will be conducted for each participant group.
Initial outcomes/implications

- Whole-school community commitment
- Modelling teacher as action researcher
- Positive whole-school approach to wellbeing
- Endorsement and resourcing by site leadership
- Integrating existing site practice into research design (e.g. buddy systems/peer mentors for online survey participation)
- Professional development (staff meeting)
- Inviting staff/student/parent/caregiver input into gratitude activity design
## Survey responses (S.A. site)

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Favourite activities (student perspective)

**Fitness Freaks**
Exercise for at least 15 minutes each day, whether it’s star jumps, hand-stands, going for a walk or playing sport.

**Drop it in the Jar**
Write something you are grateful for on a piece of paper and drop it in the Gratitude Jar.

**Gratitude Tree**
Write something you are grateful for on a paper leaf and stick it on the Gratitude Tree Poster.
Most effective activities (teacher perspective)

**Gratitude is Great**
Record 3 things you are grateful for in your Gratitude Journal.

**Drop it in the Jar**
Write something you are grateful for on a piece of paper and drop it in the Gratitude Jar in your classroom.

**Gratitude Tree**
Write something you are grateful for on a paper leaf and stick it on the Gratitude Tree Poster.

**Mindful Meditation**
Listen to the Growing with Gratitude Mindfulness Meditation CD.
Student perspectives on Gratitude

I'm grateful for all my toys because I think I have over 100 because their all in this big box. (male, 6 years)

Even if someone gives something to you that you don't want don't say I don't want it and you just say thank you (female, 7 years)

[Gratitude means] Being happy when you do something or when someone does something to you (male, 9 years)

I am really grateful for my life even though some bad things happen, that's the way of life. (male 11 years)

I am grateful for having a safe life (female, 12 years)
Parent perspectives on Gratitude

She will say "thank you for that mummy" or "I feel really lucky to have....” (parent of Year 4 student)

When asked, he is grateful for many things - our family, our home, his school are the big ones (parent of Year 5 student)

She is unfortunately quite materialistic and really only verbals her gratitude when she receives something she wants … I am very interested to see if this project will enlighten her thinking (parent of Year 6 student)

He says thankyou and behaves in a happy positive manner (parent of Year 7 student)
Teacher perspectives on Gratitude

The program has definitely made me more aware of how I as a teacher can promote gratitude in my class.

Being grateful is one component of overall student wellbeing.

Allow the school to run this for a longer period so the real effects could be seen.

They LOVED meditation! They hadn't tried it before and were amazed at how they felt afterwards. The [gratitude] tree had the move factor for the first time but after that lost its glow a little.

They did enjoy using the 'spinner'. Recording through drawing. Sharing their ideas with peers.
Future plans

- Conduct focus groups with students, parents and teachers
- Conduct another online survey at the end of Term 4

This program has been implemented by others:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/lv6z2zdjjxs0ak7/Crows%20In%20Schools%202015-2016%20Habits%20of%20Happiness.mp4?dl=0
Thank you