

Understanding Wellbeing and Motivation to Learn in Key Stage 2 pupils

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Overview

- Academic Self-Concept and School
- Why Look at Wellbeing?
- Understanding Wellbeing
 - Positivity
 - Self Efficacy
 - Resilience
 - Motivation
- Improving Wellbeing at School



Academic Self-Concept and School

- Academic self-concept appears to decline as children progress through school (e.g. Marsh 1989, Lui & Wang 2005).
 - Particular issue for children moving from early pre-adolescence to middle adolescence
- Academic self-concept has direct and indirect effects on academic ability and grades over time (Marsh 1990).



Why Look at Wellbeing?

- A need to integrate the focus on academic performance with mental health in order to promote achievement (Allen et al. 2017).
- Children with poor wellbeing struggle to deal with school-related stressors (Scrimin et al 2016)
- Wellbeing has a reciprocal relationship with school belonging and positive development (Sun 2016).



Understanding Wellbeing

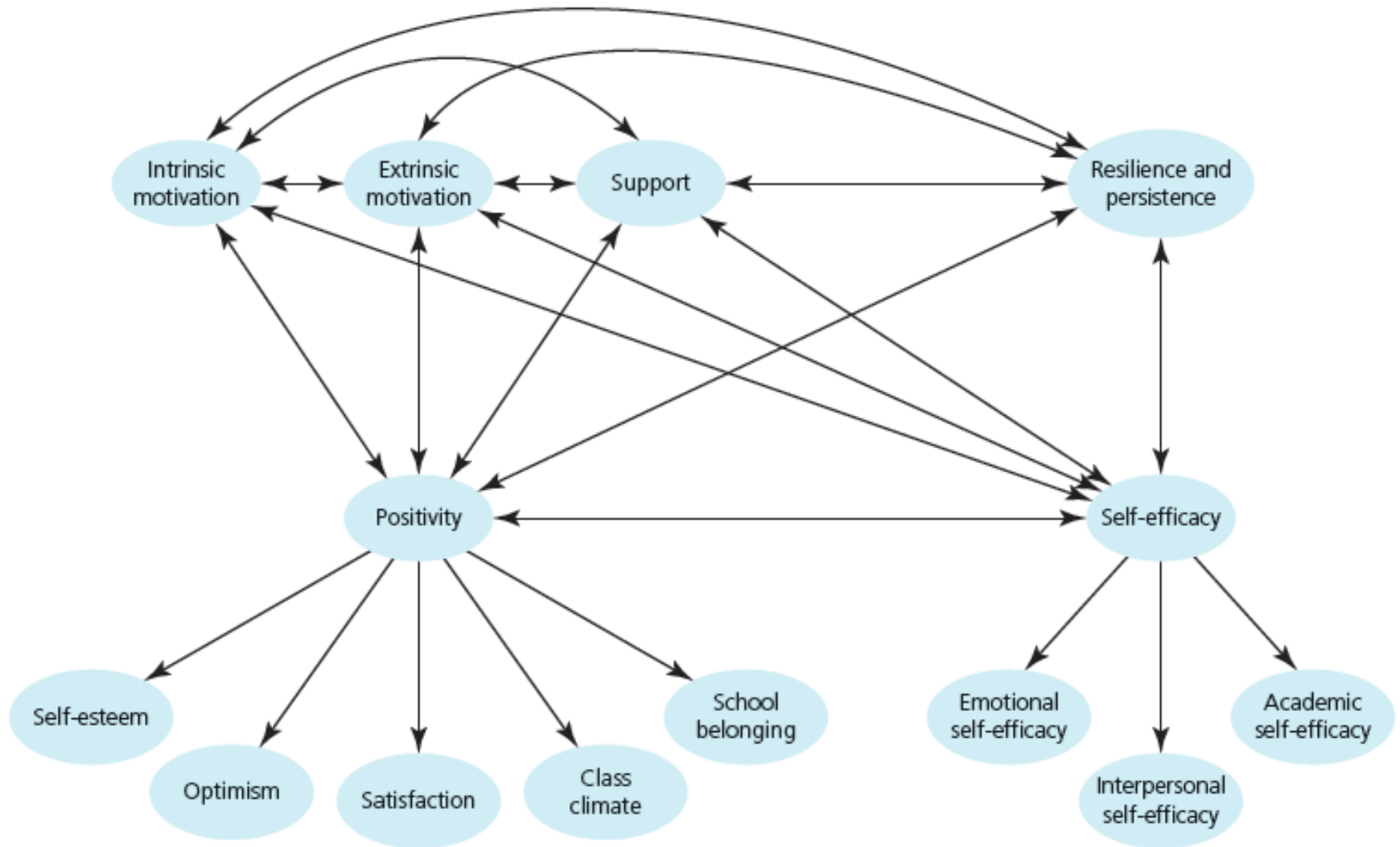
- Large scale review of published work to identify key components relevant to school-age children
- Development of a survey for Key Stage 2 children –
 - Initial pilot with 196 children to develop the item set and dimension
 - Large scale survey of 3,862 children from a nationally representative sample (48.1% female, 49.2% male).



The Dimensions of Wellbeing & Attitudes to Learning

Positivity	Self-esteem Optimism Satisfaction Class climate School belonging
Self-efficacy	Emotional self-efficacy Interpersonal self-efficacy Academic self-efficacy
Motivation	Intrinsic motivation Extrinsic motivation Support
Resilience and persistence	

Figure 1: Structure of the *Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning* dimensions



Positivity

- “An individual propensity to positively evaluate or to be positively orientated toward various life domains, including oneself, and one’s future and past experiences” (Caprara et al 2009, p277).
- A bright view of...
 - Self (self esteem)
 - Academic life (satisfaction with school environment)
 - Future academic life (optimism)
- Girls > Boys



Positivity and School

- Optimism
 - mediates the relationship between anxiety and learning strategies
 - Is associated with higher achievement and positive outcomes
- Satisfaction
 - Reciprocal relationship with achievement
 - Associated with adaptability and self-efficacy
- Self-Esteem
 - Associated with adaptability and school belonging
- Hope
 - Associated with mastery goals
 - Seen as critical for positive school functioning behaviour
- Life in School / Belonging / Class Climate
 - Linked to peer and emotional experiences
 - Related to motivation, engagement, resilience, lower aggression, moral identity and academic success

Self-Efficacy

- Children's beliefs about their capacity to manage challenging and difficult situations in order to pursue a goal.
 - Includes self-management of positive and negative emotional reactions to learning situations, and social relationships.
- Self-regulated learning and self efficacy have been linked to academic achievement in various educational domains, including science and mathematics.
- Girls > Boys

"Whether you think that you can or that you can't, you are usually right."



Resilience

- Resilience is the ability to recover from, or 'bounce back' from setbacks or difficulties, set problems behind them and move on.
- Resilience 'skills' include (DeBaca, n.d.)
 - Academic confidence
 - Sense of wellbeing
 - Motivation to succeed
 - Ability to set goals
 - Have strong connections with adults and peers
 - Can handle stress



Resilience

- Resilience is the ability to recover from, or 'bounce back' from setbacks or difficulties, set problems behind them and move on.
- Accordingly, resilient students are more likely to be successful in the face of situations and difficulties that are outside of their control, and can be seen as a protective factor in academic experience.
- Linked to school engagement and academic performance.
- Girls > Boys



Motivation

- Intrinsic motivation – learning for personal fulfilment
 - Girls>Boys
- Extrinsic motivation – learning for reward or to avoid punishment
- Support – the role of others (parents, peers teachers) in learning
 - Girls>Boys
- Motivation is linked to academic achievement, with the development of intrinsic motivation seen as ideal as more likely to be maintained over time / self-sustaining.





Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning Survey and Strategies



Simple Actions

- Gratitude Wall



Simple Actions

- Guide children to focus on appropriate learning goals rather than achievement goals
- Support adults (including parents) to engage in positive framing
 - Describe / show how to improve rather than flagging errors / failure
 - “Hold it like this” rather than “Don’t drop it!”
- Create more opportunities for pupil autonomy
- Review use of praise and reward
- Character strength activities
 - Children identify their best qualities, and learn see them in others

Useful Links

- Academic Self Concept and Academic Achievement
 - <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1348/000709910X503501>
- <https://www.risingstars-uk.com/subjects/assessment/wellbeing-and-attitudes-to-learning>
- Email: clare.wood@ntu.ac.uk
- Thank you!