
HANDBOOK OF
POSITIVE
PSYCHOLOGY
IN SCHOOLS

Edited by

RICH GILMAN

E. SCOTT HUEBNER • MICHAEL J. FURLONG

Handbook of Positive Psychology in Schools

National surveys consistently reveal that an inordinate number of students report high levels of boredom, anger, and stress in school, which often leads to their disengagement from critical learning and social development. If the ultimate goal of schools is to educate young people to become responsible and critically thinking citizens who can succeed in life, understanding factors that stimulate them to become active agents in their own learning is critical. A new field labeled “positive psychology” is one lens that can be used to investigate factors that facilitate a student’s sense of agency and active school engagement.

The purposes of this groundbreaking handbook are to 1) describe ways that positive emotions, traits, and institutions promote school achievement and healthy social/emotional development, 2) describe how specific positive-psychological constructs relate to students and schools and support the delivery of school-based services, and 3) describe the application of positive psychology to educational policy making. By doing so, the book provides a long-needed centerpiece around which the field can continue to grow in an organized and interdisciplinary manner. Key features include...

Comprehensive—This book is the first to provide a comprehensive review of what is known about positive psychological constructs and the school experiences of children and youth. Topical coverage ranges from conceptual foundations to assessment and intervention issues to service delivery models. Intrapersonal factors (e.g., hope, life satisfaction) and interpersonal factors (e.g., positive peer and family relationships) are examined as are classroom-and-school-level influences (e.g., student-teacher and school-community relations).

Interdisciplinary Focus—This volume brings together the divergent perspectives, methods, and findings of a broad, interdisciplinary community of scholars whose work often fails to reach those working in contiguous fields.

Chapter Structure—To ensure continuity across chapters, authors provide overviews and detailed research summary, illustrate relationships to student development, and provide examples of real-world applications.

Methodologies—Chapters feature longitudinal studies, person-centered approaches, experimental and quasi-experimental designs, and mixed methods.

Rich Gilman is Coordinator of the Psychology and Special Education Programs in the Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics at the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, and Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Cincinnati Medical School.

E. Scott Huebner is Professor and Former Director of the School Psychology Program at the University of South Carolina.

Michael J. Furlong is Professor and Chair of the Department of Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology at the University of California Santa Barbara.

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Rich Gilman

Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
University of Cincinnati Medical School

E. Scott Huebner

University of South Carolina

Michael J. Furlong

University of California Santa Barbara

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Dedication

RG: To Kathleen and Lois, for continually reminding me of the important things in life

ESH: To Beth, for her unwavering support and optimism

MJF: To Flora, Leiana, and Devin for showing me the many pathways of life

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Foreword

ED DIENER AND CAROL DIENER

Positive psychology is a relatively new term. It has gained immense popularity within many areas of the behavioral sciences, including applied psychology. Most of the interest in positive psychology, however, has been disproportionately focused on adults. For example, the workplace has received considerable attention by those working in the field of positive psychology. Adult strengths and subjective well-being are also heavily studied, and numerous books and articles have appeared on these topics. Prior to the present volume, the area of child development and the structures that support that development have received less attention within positive psychology.

It is surprising that positive psychologists have hitherto not focused more heavily on childhood and adolescence, because the attributes of interest to positive psychologists, for example optimism, creativity, self-efficacy, virtues of various types, and subjective well-being are likely to begin in childhood. Therefore, it would seem that childhood and those organizations that are most pertinent to the developing child—family, peers, and school—should be of high interest to positive psychologists. Fortunately, a small but important number of researchers and practitioners have been working in these important areas, and were doing so years before the positive psychology movement began. This book brings together a diverse group of researchers from various disciplines who focus on the concepts of positive psychology in children and adolescents, even when their work was not labeled positive psychology.

The specific focus of this book is on how positive psychology might be a useful lens through which to view schools and the educational process. As an institution, schools have immense influence on the development of youth. The primary focus of the school is on the acquisition of fundamental academic skills, and this volume nicely outlines how positive psychology can directly influence academic outcomes through the development of positive intrapersonal and interpersonal strengths. The book carefully elucidates how positive psychology constructs are consistent with and contribute to, the education of youth by tying school success to a variety of positive emotions and individual strengths. A discussion of policy issues in applying positive psychology to the school setting is another helpful aspect of the current volume.

As the field of positive psychology is embraced in various disciplines, it is important that it remains grounded in careful research. This book stresses the importance of careful definitions and sound empirical investigations of theory and applications of positive psychology in the school setting. It also serves as a bridge between well-established and well-researched areas of child development and education, drawing these strands of research together under the umbrella of positive psychology and illustrating the utility of a strength-based approach to schools.

Recent media attention on school violence and an increase in youth depression has heightened the public and professional awareness of the importance of early diagnosis and treatment of children

with mental health problems. The school is frequently the first responder. It has been suggested that all children should have a mental health checkup at periodic intervals as part of regular school activities. Although it is important for schools to be aware of these problems and to respond appropriately, eliminating these issues will not be sufficient to allow each individual child to reach his or her potential. To reach this latter goal will require a consistent effort to recognize and build on the strengths of each individual child. Placing the focus on building competence in children and adolescents rather than remediate their weaknesses, allows for innovative and creative approaches. With the emphasis on students experiencing success rather than failure, this volume provides a blueprint for increasing optimism, hope, self-efficacy, and health (among other constructs) in the schools. Importantly, the volume offers a cross disciplinary approach to strength development so that the whole child is the focus.

Although schools' primary objective is the academic education of our children, they also provide a community in which children and adolescents can develop a sense of civic pride, responsibility, and experiment with varying roles and activities. Just as neighborhoods can provide a sense of danger or well-being for adults, a school can provide a similar sense for youth. The importance of a strength-based community in which youth can learn and grow cannot be overemphasized.

This volume also highlights some after-school programs and the importance of creative expression and empowerment available in these programs. Although empirically validated after-school programs are not yet numerous, this book does explore the importance of these programs and highlights the need for continual research in this area.

Special populations are also discussed from a positive psychology viewpoint. While individuals with mental disabilities are generally labeled and viewed by what they do not have and what they cannot do, this approach allows for a more positive approach with the focus on the quality of life and happiness. A number of special populations are not the explicit focus of this volume. However, the ideas and suggestions contained here can easily be expanded to include juvenile delinquency, adolescent parents, and other school age populations that could profit from the positive approach.

The present volume makes a substantial contribution not only to school psychology, but to positive psychology itself. There is nothing more central to positive psychology than positive development, and schools are the major societal organization that guides this development. Thus, the chapters of this volume represent a major contribution to the field.

About the Editors

Rich Gilman, Ph.D., is the Coordinator of the Psychology and Special Education Programs in the Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, and he is Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Cincinnati Medical School. He received his Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina in 1999 and was an intern at Father Flanagan's Boys' Home (aka, Boy's Town). Previous faculty appointments were at Georgia State University and the University of Kentucky. He is a licensed psychologist and continues to provide school-based mental health services. Dr. Gilman is on the editorial board of *Journal of Clinical and Social Psychology*, *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *School Psychology Review*, and *Journal of Happiness Studies*, and he is past-Associate Editor of *Behaviour Change*. His current research focus is on well-being among the most disenfranchised students, and his publications have been recognized by the American Psychological Association (Division 16).

E. Scott Huebner, Ph.D., is a Professor and Former Director of the School Psychology Program in the Department of Psychology at the University of South Carolina. He received his Ph.D. from Indiana University in 1983. He is a Fellow in Division 16 of the American Psychological Association and the International Society for Quality of Life Studies and elected member of the Society for the Study of School Psychology. He has also been the recipient of the award for Outstanding Contributions to School Psychology from the South Carolina Association of School Psychologists and the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Indiana University College of Education. His scholarly interests focus on the conceptualization, measurement, and application of positive psychology constructs in children and youth, particularly psychological well-being, with an emphasis on school-based applications.

Michael J. Furlong, Ph.D., is Professor and Chair of the Department of Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology in the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education at the University of California Santa Barbara. Prior to his appointment at UCSB he worked for 10 years as a school psychologist in Hawaii and California. He is also the Director of the Center for School-Based Youth Development and Editor of the *Journal of School Violence*. He has served on the executive board of the Council of Director of School Psychology Programs, is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (Division 16, School Psychology) and a member of the Society for the Study of School Psychology. He co-edited the *Handbook of School Violence and Safety*.

List of Contributors

Abbott, Bree D.

Murdoch University

Anderman, Eric M.

The Ohio State University

Anderman, Lynley H.

The Ohio State University

Armstrong, Kathleen H.

University of South Florida

Baker, Jean A.

Michigan State University

Baker, Sandra

University of Maryland

Barber, Bonnie L.

Murdoch University

Bear, George G.

University of Delaware

Beghetto, Ronald A.

University Oregon

Benard, Bonnie

WestEd

Blomfield, Corey J.

Murdoch University

Boman, Peter

Queensland Institute of Technology

Bono, Giacomo

WestEd

Bracken, Bruce A.

College of William & Mary

Buckley, Maureen

California State University Sonoma

Champion, Allison

University of Nebraska

Christenson, Sandra L.

University of Minnesota

Close Conoley, Jane

University of California Santa Barbara

Conoley, Collie W.

University of California Santa Barbara

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly

Claremont Graduate College

Diener, Carol

University of Illinois

Diener, Ed

University of Illinois

Doll, Beth

University of Nebraska

Eccles, Jacquelynne S.

University of Michigan

Eisenberg, Nancy

Arizona State University

Friedrich, Allison, A.

University of South Florida

Frisby, Craig

University of Missouri

Froh, Jeffrey

Hofstra University

Furlong, Michael J.

University of California Santa Barbara

Gilman, Rich

Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center

Griffiths, Amy-Jane

University of California Santa Barbara

Haddock, C. Keith

University of Missouri – Kansas City

Henrich, Christopher C.

Georgia State University

Hojnoski, Robin L.

Lehigh University

Hortz, Brian V.

Denison College

Huebner, E. Scott

University of South Carolina

Hyder, Melissa L.

Kansas City University of Medicine &
Biosciences

Jimerson, Shane R.

University of California Santa Barbara

Jones, Camille

University of California Santa Barbara

Kaufman, James C.

California State University San Bernardino

Keyes, Corey L. M.

Emory University

Kia-Keating, Maryam

University of California Santa Barbara

Kim, Samuel

Georgia State University

Knotek, Steven

University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

Kurien, Sarah

University of Nebraska

LeClair, Courtney

University of Nebraska

Levesque, Roger J. R.

Indiana University

Lilles, Elena

University of California Santa Barbara

Lopez, Shane J.

The Gallup Organization

Marques, Susana C.

Porto University

Maupin, Angela N.

Michigan State University

Meyers, Barbara

Georgia State University

Meyers, Joel

Georgia State University

Miller, David N.

University of Albany

Missall, Kristen N.

University of Kentucky

Nickerson, Amanda B.

University of Albany

Osborn, Allison

University of Nebraska

Pais-Ribeiro, Jose

Porto University

Pajares, Frank

Emory University

Park, Nansook

University of Rhode Island

Peterson, Christopher

University of Michigan

Petosa, R. L.

The Ohio State University

Poston, W. S. Carlos

University of Missouri – Kansas City

Prout, H. Thompson

University of Kentucky

Pyle, Sara A.

Kansas City University of Medicine &
Biosciences

Reschly, Amy L.

University of Georgia

Robinson, Cecil
University of Alabama

Rose, Sage
Hofstra University

Russell, Shannon
University of Maryland

Saarni, Carolyn
California State University Sonoma

Shaffer, Emily I.
University of South Florida

Sharkey, Jill D.
University of California Santa Barbara

Shernoff, David J.
Northern Illinois University

Shochet, Ian
Queensland University of Technology

Slade, Sean
WestEd

Spies, Robert
University of Nebraska

Spinrad, Tracy L.
Arizona State University

Subotnik, Rena F.
American Psychological Association

Suldo, Shannon M.
University of South Florida

Tenebaum, Laura Subbiah
Georgia State University

Valois, Robert F.
University of South Carolina

Varjas, Kris
Georgia State University

Wentzel, Kathryn
University of Maryland

Zullig, Keith J.
West Virginia University

I

Conceptual Foundations

1

A Conceptual Model for Research in Positive Psychology in Children and Youth

E. SCOTT HUEBNER, RICH GILMAN, AND MICHAEL J. FURLONG

What is positive psychology? According to one of the leaders in the positive psychology movement, “positive psychology is the scientific study of what goes right in life, from birth to death and all stops in between ... and that takes seriously those things in life that make life most worth living” (Peterson, 2006, p. 4). Although inquiry into the nature and determinants of the “good life” has a long history in psychology, philosophy, religion, education, and so forth, interest in positive psychology has skyrocketed since the publication of the millennial issue of the *American Psychologist*, edited by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), which was devoted to the topic. Topics in the special issue ranged from happiness and optimism to wisdom, health, and decision making. Taken together, these efforts illustrated the many threads of research on *optimal* human functioning that extend beyond the more typical focus, particularly among applied psychologists, on “what goes wrong” in humans, including psychological, physical, and educational disabilities. Seligman and other leaders in the field have emphasized that basic research and applications of positive psychology are not meant to supplant the more traditional emphasis on problems (and their prevention and repair), but rather to complement such work by ensuring that equal attention is devoted to the recognition and promotion of positive aspects of individuals, groups, and their environments.

Although not exclusively, much of the work included in the *American Psychologist* focused on research with adults. Similar landmark compilations of positive psychology works (e.g., *Handbook of Positive Psychology* [Snyder & Lopez, 2002] and *A Primer in Positive Psychology* [Peterson, 2006]) have emphasized adult research over research with children and youth. Furthermore, other work with children, such as Positive Youth Development research has attended to positive development broadly in communities, rather than situating the work within the school context. The major purpose of this book was, thus, to provide a synthesis of positive psychology thinking, research, and applications, focusing on the context of schooling and school-related experiences.

In this regard, various authors have articulated the study of the good life for children, under such rubrics as primary prevention (Coie et al., 1993), health promotion (Perry, 1999), positive youth development (Larson, 2000), resilience (Glantz & Johnson, 1999), developmental assets (Scales & Leffert, 1999), subjective well-being (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999), and wellness (Cowen, 1991). For example, Emory Cowen and his colleagues have issued calls within the context of children and their schooling for a greater emphasis on wellness promotion, arguing for more efforts to build health, rather than exclusively treat disease in the context of schools (Cowen, 1991). As with adults,

definitions of wellness or “optimal” development remain controversial. In a broad conceptualization spanning both the eudaemonic and hedonistic traditions, Cowen (1991) offered two clusters of indicators of wellness. “The first consists of earthy indicators such as eating well, sleeping well, and doing one’s mandated life tasks well ... The second, somewhat more ethereal, includes having a sense of control over one’s fate, a feeling of purpose and belongingness, and a basic satisfaction with oneself and one’s existence ... such as life satisfaction or gratification in living” (p. 404).

The promotion of wellness is not inconsistent with a positive psychology orientation, although Cowen has articulated distinctions among primary prevention, wellness enhancement, and positive psychology (Cowen & Kilmer, 2002). Similarly, positive psychology is not inconsistent with a positive quality of life orientation (Schalock & Alonso, 2002). The quality of life orientation is also a particularly global perspective that serves as “a sensitizing notion and a social construct that can be used as an overarching framework to make a significant difference in people’s lives” (Schalock & Alonso, 2002, p. 22). All of these perspectives broaden conceptualizations of children’s functioning, revealing (a) the insufficiencies of a purely medical model of mental health, (b) a primary focus on positive outcomes, and (c) the fundamental notion that such positive outcomes may ultimately be the most effective means to prevent and reduce psychological problems (Cowen & Kilmer, 2002).

Conceptual Model

An individual’s quality of life can be conceptualized within an ecological perspective, which reflects the notion that individuals live in a number of interlocking systems that influence the development of their physical, social-emotional, and cognitive competencies. The following model is adapted from an integrative model of quality of life developed by Schalock and Alonso (2002). Based on the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979), four major systems levels are considered: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The microsystem consists of immediate settings, such as home, peer group, and school, which directly influence a person’s life. The mesosystem, and its extension, the exosystem, refer to more distal contextual factors, such as the neighborhood, community services, organizations, and interactions between micro-system variables (e.g., parent-school interactions). The macrosystem is comprised of the “overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture, such as the economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems, of which the microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem are concrete manifestations” (Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. 515) that indirectly affect one’s life. This notion that multiple, hierarchical contextual systems impact a person’s quality of life is reflected in Figure 1.1. These systems are portrayed across the top of the conceptual matrix. Belsky (1980) added an additional system, the ontogenic system, which includes intrapersonal variables (e.g., individual differences in self-esteem, physical activity, eating behavior).

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model illuminates the broad range of systemic factors that may be related to wellness facets and merit attention in comprehensive models of well-being. Both proximal and distal factors have been found to relate to various positive psychological constructs, reflecting the need to avoid simplistic individualistic explanations of optimal personal functioning. Children’s psychological well-being is likely multiply determined by a variety of systemic and individual factors. Also, children’s experiences likely differentially influence various environmental systems. For example, Brantley, Huebner, and Nagle (2002) found that compared to typically achieving youth, youth with mild mental disabilities showed equal levels of global life satisfaction, but lower levels of satisfaction with their peers and higher satisfaction with schooling. Furthermore, students with mental disabilities who were placed in full-time special education programs were more satisfied with their school experiences than students who were mainstreamed into regular classes. Such findings demonstrate the benefits of multidimensional conceptualizations of child and youth well-being.

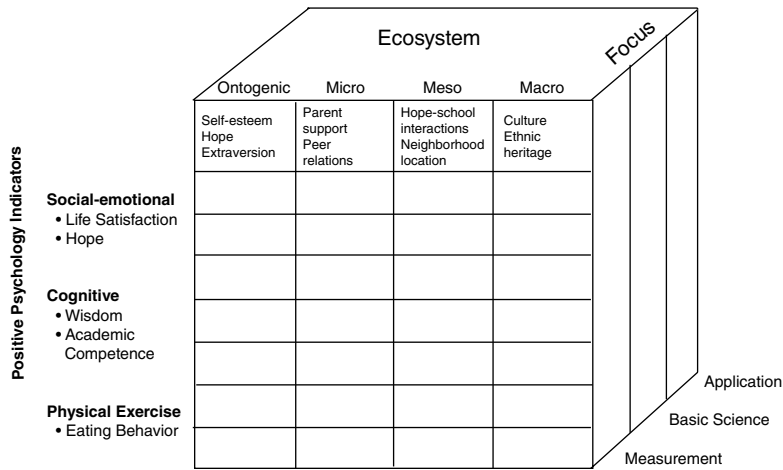


Figure 1.1 Positive psychology research matrix.

Positive psychology indicators, which involve individual personal strengths of interest (i.e., physical, cognitive, or social-emotional), are listed along the vertical axis; that is, down the left side of the matrix. The nature and most parsimonious number of positive psychology variables remain to be determined. For example, Cowen and Kilmer (2002) identified 61 positive psychology outcome variables in their selective review of the literature, thus underscoring the need to organize and focus the boundaries of positive psychology constructs. Thus, this dimension of the matrix must be left open-ended, providing researchers with the opportunity to delineate the most important, distinct well-being variables. Although the number of proposed positive psychology indicators is currently large and unwieldy, efforts to develop classification systems, such as that of Keyes (chapter 2, this volume) and Park and Peterson (chapter 6, this volume), should provide useful starting points to proceed further. As noted previously, whatever the outcomes of such research, conceptualizations of the optimal well-being of youth are likely to be multidimensional in nature, incorporating related, but distinct constructs.

Key determinants of individual differences in the positive psychology variables, which have been empirically evaluated, can be listed within each cell. In this manner, the extant literature can be summarized, potentially indicating areas that need further investigation. For example, a recent review of adolescents' school satisfaction revealed a predominance of research at the ontogenic and microsystem levels, with a paucity of research at the mesosystem and macrosystem levels. Similar listings might be developed for additional positive psychology constructs such as hope, optimism, school connectedness, healthy physical activity, and so forth.

The third dimension of the positive psychology matrix reflects three types of research in child-focused positive psychology: measurement, basic science, and applied research. The measurement domain includes research related to the development of psychometrically sound measures of positive psychology constructs for children and youth (e.g., developmentally appropriate measures of life satisfaction, hope, social self-efficacy). The basic research domain includes studies of the development, correlates, and consequences of positive psychological attributes of individuals. For example, this domain would incorporate studies of the determinants and consequences of individual differences in life satisfaction or hope. Finally, the applied research domain refers to studies of planned and unplanned interventions related to positive psychology constructs (e.g., intervention programs to promote positive attribution style (Seligman, 1995) or studies of the effects of residential treatment programs on life satisfaction of youth clients (Gilman & Handwerk, 2001). Taken together, this 4 (system) × 3 (social-emotional, cognitive, or physical) × 3 (type of research) matrix provides

a conceptual framework that may be useful in organizing, synthesizing, and communicating the results of positive psychology research with children in the context of schools. This framework provided the informal context for the organization of the book.

Although not reflected in the conceptual scheme in Figure 1.1, it is recognized that psychological wellness must consider developmental factors. The specific attributes and processes that define wellness may vary as a function of age group. As a simple example, same-gender peer relationships may be a critical indicator for pre-adolescents, whereas opposite-gender relationships may assume more prominence for adolescents (Gilligan & Huebner, 2007). Additionally, the nature of determinants and indicators may become more complex as children mature (Gonzales, Casas, & Coenders, 2006). The relative strength of the determinants may fluctuate across time as well. For example, Suldo and Huebner (2004) found that the strength of the relationship between parental emotional support and life satisfaction declined across adolescence. Thus, a comprehensive framework of wellness will have to incorporate developmental considerations to capture the changing nature and determinants of well-being in children and adolescents.

Finally, cultural considerations must be mentioned. Definitions of “wellness” and “strengths” appear to vary across cultures and time. The need for multiple matrices to reflect different conceptions of positive psychology (e.g., individualistic vs. collectivistic cultures, males vs. females) may be necessary. In studies of life satisfaction of youth, differences in key correlates have been found for students from different cultures. For example, Park and Huebner (2005) found that school satisfaction was a much stronger correlate of youths’ global life satisfaction for Korean students compared to American students. Thus, not only may the “indicators” of wellness differ across cultures, but so may the determinants, correlates, and consequences.

Conclusion

As will be seen in the chapters in this Handbook, the study of positive psychology is alive and well in children and youth. Although some have argued that a scientifically-based positive psychology is a relatively recent phenomenon, Cowen and Kilmer (2002) provide a compelling argument that methodologically sound studies of positive psychology in youth are neither new nor rare. Nevertheless, studies of positive psychology in children and youth remain in the early stages of development. Even a cursory review of the literature would reveal the need for greater attention to basic measurement work in the development of age appropriate, psychometrically sound measures of positive psychology constructs for children and youth with and without special needs (e.g., see Gilman & Huebner, 2000, for a review of life satisfaction measures). The benefits of such research should be manifold, however. America’s schools have been criticized for focusing disproportionately on identifying and remediating students’ weaknesses, while neglecting the identification and nurturing of their strengths (Gordon & Crabtree, 2006), resulting in the failure to maximize student potential. The ongoing development of measures of the key positive psychology strengths that should be included in the proposed matrix should help overcome such a negative bias, enabling the development of a rich array of measures to identify students’ strengths and focus greater attention on “what works” in the context of schools. Such information may be useful not only in terms of more nuanced evaluations of student and school outcomes (e.g., versus student has “special needs” or does not), but may also be useful in developing educational programs for students that nurture their strengths.

Also, much work remains to be done in terms of basic scientific studies of the development and consequences related to various positive psychology indicators. For example, Lopez, Rose, Robinson, Marques, and Pais-Ribeiro (chapter 4, this volume) provide recommendations for further research on the development of hope in children and youth. From the perspective of positive

psychology as a whole, Seligman (2005) suggest the need for basic research addressing questions such as, “How are positive characteristics distributed in the population of younger people?”, “How do various positive characteristics covary?”, and “Are there critical, or at least optimal periods for the cultivation of positive characteristics?” (p. 509).

Finally, applications of positive psychology research are sparse, particularly in terms of empirically-validated programs to facilitate healthy development. Although there are some noteworthy contributions (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004), some of which are discussed in this volume, many programs remain focused on preventing “pathology” rather than “building health” as proposed by Cowen (1991). Again, such conclusions may be apparent from various forms of data (e.g., listings of relevant studies) that could be inputted into the proposed matrix.

At this point, two notes of caution should be highlighted. First, the proposed matrix does not provide a dimension that allows for the distinction between determinants and consequences of individual differences in the particular positive psychology attribute. Although some relationships may be transactional in nature, some may not. For example, Martin, Huebner, and Valois (2008) found that individual differences in adolescents’ life satisfaction significantly predicted subsequent experiences of relational victimization by peers, whereas individual differences in relational victimization did not significantly predict subsequent levels of life satisfaction. These findings suggest that a low level of life satisfaction in adolescents is likely a causal factor, rather than a consequence of relational victimization experiences.

Second, this adapted matrix provides a possible model to organize and synthesize the developing body of positive psychology knowledge for children and youth in that it incorporates several key aspects of various positive psychology models: systems perspective, core positive psychology individual strengths, and research foci (measurement, basic science, applications). Nevertheless, a full picture of wellness in children will need to capture the interactions among the personal and environmental variables, taking into account gender, culture, and developmental considerations. This will not be an easy task, but efforts will likely be needed to model the trajectories of children’s development across time and settings. The development of a sophisticated science of “what works” for children and youth within the context of their schooling is underway, but much work remains to be completed.

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2

The Nature and Importance of Positive Mental Health in America's Adolescents

COREY L. M. KEYES

It is often said that our youth is this nation's future. If true, then there is too much mental illness to look forward to in the future. Depression is common in youth—about 10% will experience major depression before the age of 14 (Garrison, Schluchter, Schoenbach, & Kaplan, 1989). Between 10% and 20% of young people will have had some form of an anxiety or mood disorder, or some form of a disruptive or substance use disorder by the age of 18 (Lewinsohn, Hops, Roberts, & Seeley, 1993; Shaffer et al., 1996). Adolescence is a critical period of development. Developmental success during this period has implications throughout adulthood. As such, there is keen interest in the mental health status of this important subpopulation in the United States, because poor mental health can impede academic and social success during adolescence.

Mental disorders like depression are associated with decrements in quality of behavior, social relationships, and academic performance for youth. Depressed youth are more likely to: smoke cigarettes, report substance use and abuse, exhibit conduct disorders, experience academic problems, and to drop out of school (Angold & Costello, 1993; Berndt et al., 2000; Covey, Glassman, & Stetner, 1998; Nolen-Hoeksema, Girgus, & Seligman, 1992; Rohde, Lewinsohn, & Seeley, 1991).

On the other hand, at least 80% of youth in a typical year remain free of mental disorder, but this raises the question of whether this majority of youth are mentally healthy in the positive sense. It is true that being depression-free is better than having depression; however, there is a growing body of research suggesting that individuals free of mental illness are not necessarily mentally healthy (Keyes, 2002, 2005b, 2007). Until very recently, research equated the health and well-being of children, youth, and adults with the absence of disease, disorder, or disability. Measures of subjective well-being, which require youth to report for themselves the quality of their own lives, were developed to assess health and well-being in terms of the presence of assets, strengths, and positive attributes, and reflected the conception of health as not merely the absence of diseases but also the presence of "something positive" (Keyes, 2002).

The focus on positive mental health is consistent with the movement toward positive youth development. As Pittman (1992) noted, "Problem-free does not mean fully prepared" (p. 27). Pittman thus urged individuals (e.g., teachers) and institutions (e.g., schools) whose work affects young people to focus on the promotion of positive, desirable outcomes. Pittman highlighted four inclusive categories of developmental outcomes that can be influenced by teachers and schools: (a) *confidence* (e.g., self-worth or acceptance); (b) *character* (e.g., accountability, self-control,

compassion); (c) *connection* (e.g., integration and membership); and (d) *competence* (i.e., growth, social contribution, and mastery).

Subjective well-being is a leading candidate for the assessment of these categories, because the construct entails individuals' evaluations of the quality of their lives and life functioning (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002). Scientific research on the subjective well-being of adults (ages 18 or older)—begun over 50 years ago and steadily growing since—now includes children and youth (Bornstein, Davidson, Keyes, & Moore, 2003; see also Suldo, Huebner, Shaffer, and Gilman, chapter 3, this volume). Although subjective well-being tends to be equated solely with emotional quality of life, or “feeling good,” there is increasing recognition of the different theoretical streams of inquiry guiding this important domain (Keyes et al., 2002; Ryff, 1989; Waterman, 1993).

Subjective Well-Being

Feeling Good About, and Functioning Well in, Life

The study of subjective well-being has been divided into two streams of research, one that equates well-being with feeling good (Gurin, Veroff, & Feld, 1960) and the other equating well-being as an indicator of human potential that, when pursued and developed, results in positive functioning in life (Jahoda, 1958; Keyes, 1998; Ryff, 1989, Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Each stream grew from two distinct philosophical viewpoints on “happiness”—one reflecting the Epicurean view that believed happiness was about feeling positive emotions (i.e., the hedonic tradition), and another reflecting the traditional Aristotelean (and Socratic) view that happiness was about striving toward excellence and positive functioning (i.e., eudaimonia). More specifically, the hedonic tradition is focused on maximizing the amount or duration of positive, pleasant feelings while minimizing the amount or duration of negative, unpleasant feelings. Research based on this conceptualization is often labeled subjective *emotional* well-being (i.e., happiness, satisfaction, and affect balance). From this perspective, “happiness” consists of individuals' (a) perceptions of their avowed happiness, (b) satisfaction with their life, and (c) ability to balance their positive and negative affects. The eudaimonic tradition, on the other hand, focuses on how nascent abilities and capacities can be developed to become a more fully functioning person and citizen. Research reflecting this conceptualization is often labeled subjective *psychological* (Ryff, 1989) and *social* (Keyes, 1998) well-being. The quality of measures used to assess each tradition will be reviewed in the following section.

Hedonic Measures of Subjective Well-Being: Assessing “Feeling Good About Life”

Single-item measures of life satisfaction are adaptations of Cantril's (1965) Self-Anchoring Scale, which asks respondents to “rate their life overall these days” on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 meant the “worst possible life overall” and 10 meant “the best possible life overall.” Variants of Cantril's measure have been used extensively and have been applied to the measurement of avowed happiness with life (Andrews & Robinson, 1991; Andrews & Withey, 1976). Multi-item scales of life satisfaction and happiness also have been developed and used extensively (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976; Larsen, Diener, & Emmons, 1985). Most positive and negative affect measures tap the frequency with which a respondent reports experiencing the symptoms of these affects. For example, individuals often are asked to indicate how much of the time during the past 30 days they have felt six types of negative and six types of positive indicators of affect: “all,” “most,” “some,” “a little,” or “none of the time.” Symptoms of negative affect usually include feeling: (a) so sad nothing could cheer you up; (b) nervous, (c) restless or fidgety, (d) hopeless, (e) that everything was an effort, and (f) worthless. Symptoms of positive affect usually involve feeling (a) cheerful, (b) in good spirits, (c) extremely happy, (d) calm and peaceful, (e) satisfied, and (f) full of life (see Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998).

Eudaimonic Measures of Subjective Well-Being: Assessing "Functioning Well in Life"

In contrast to hedonic measures of subjective well-being, psychological well-being requires individuals to self-report about the quality with which they are functioning in their lives. Ryff and colleagues (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995) synthesized a variety of concepts from personality, developmental, and clinical psychology and believed that six dimensions of psychological well-being that were necessary for individuals to function fully and realize their unique talents. Each is briefly reviewed below.

Self-acceptance is characterized by a positive attitude toward the self by acknowledging and accepting multiple aspects of self, including unpleasant personal aspects. In addition, self-acceptance includes positive feelings about one's past life experiences. *Positive relations with others* is the possession of, or the ability to cultivate, warm, trusting, intimate relationships with others. A concern for the welfare of others, and the ability to empathize, to cooperate, and to compromise are all implied aspects of the ability to develop warm and trusting interpersonal relationships. *Autonomy* reflects the seeking of self-determination and personal authority or independence in a society that sometimes compels obedience and compliance. The abilities to resist social pressures to think or behave in certain ways, and to guide and evaluate behavior based on internalized standards and values, are crucial in this domain. *Environmental mastery* includes the ability to manage everyday affairs, to control a complex array of external activities, to make effective use of surrounding opportunities, and to choose or create contexts suitable to personal needs. A sense of mastery results when individuals recognize personal needs and desires, and they feel capable of, and permitted to, take an active role in getting what they need from their environments.

Purpose in life consists of one's aims and objectives for living, including the presence of life goals and a sense of directedness. Those with high purpose in life see their daily lives as fulfilling a direction and purpose and therefore view their present and past life as meaningful. Finally, *personal growth* reflects the continuous pursuit of existing skills, talents, and opportunities for personal development and for realizing one's potential. In addition, personal growth includes the capacity to remain open to experience and to identify challenges in a variety of circumstances.

Whereas psychological well-being is conceptualized as a primarily private phenomenon that is focused on the challenges encountered by individuals in their personal lives, social well-being represents a more public experience that is focused on the social tasks encountered by individuals in their social structures and communities. Social well-being consists of five elements that indicate whether and to what degree individuals are functioning well in their social world (e.g., as neighbors, as coworkers, and as citizens) (Keyes, 1998). Social well-being originates in the sociological interest in individuals' anomie and alienation in society, which were classic themes in the writings of Emile Durkheim and Karl Marx (see, e.g., Seeman, 1983). Drawing on these theoretical roots, Keyes (1998) developed multiple operational dimensions of social well-being that represent the challenges individuals face as members of society, groups, institutions, and communities.

Social integration is the evaluation of the quality of one's relationship to society and community. Integration is therefore the extent to which people feel they have something in common with others who constitute their social reality (e.g., their neighborhood), as well as the degree to which they feel that they belong to their communities and society. *Social contribution* is the evaluation of one's value to society. It includes the belief that one is a vital member of society, with something of value to give to the world. *Social coherence* is the perception of the quality, organization, and operation of the social world and it includes a concern for knowing about the world. Social coherence involves appraisals that society is discernable, sensible, and predictable. *Social actualization* is the evaluation of the potential and the trajectory of society. This is the belief in the evolution of society and the sense that society has potential that is being realized through its institutions and citizens. Finally, *social acceptance* is the construal of society through the character and qualities of other people as a generalized category. Individuals must function in a public arena that consists

primarily of strangers. Individuals who illustrate social acceptance trust others, think that others are capable of kindness, and believe that people can be industrious. Socially accepting people hold favorable views of human nature and feel comfortable with others.

In the eudaimonic stream of research, confirmatory factor analyses models have revealed strong support for the proposed six-factor theory of psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995) and the proposed five-factor theory of social well-being (Keyes, 1998) as the best-fitting model in representative samples of U.S. adults. Moreover, the constructs of social well-being and psychological well-being are empirically distinct, with the magnitude of the association around $r = .44$ (Keyes, 1996). Further, measures of emotional well-being are factorially distinct from the measures of psychological and social well-being (Keyes et al., 2002). Further support for the distinction between hedonic well-being and psychological well-being has been obtained by McGregor and Little (1998). Results of their factor analysis yielded two distinct factors that reflected an underlying emotional factor (including depression, positive affect, and life satisfaction) and an underlying psychological functioning factor (including four of the psychological well-being scales: personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, and autonomy).

Recent Analyses of Subjective Well-Being Dimensions Among Youth

The measurement of subjective well-being in adults suggests that the facets and dimensions of well-being in youth may be more complex than current research indicates (Keyes, 2005a). I investigated this research question by administering the shortened version of a comprehensive assessment of subjective well-being that has been used in studies examining well-being in adults (Keyes, 2005a). This short form, labeled as the “Mental Health Continuum-Short Form” for youth (©2008 Corey L. M. Keyes, All Rights Reserved), was included as part of the 2002 Child Development Supplement (CDS) of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID)—an ongoing national survey begun in 1968 that measures the economic (e.g., income) and social capital (e.g., educational attainment) within families, and includes assessment of community- and family-level variables to assess the causes of changes in the transfers of economic and social capital within families. The short-form, which is available to researchers free of charge, contains a single item that represents each dimension of psychological well-being and social well-being. In addition, three items represent emotional well-being, which includes satisfaction and happiness with life, as well as interest in life. The items (and domains) in the CDS study were:

- happy (emotional well-being);
- interested in life (emotional well-being);
- satisfied (emotional well-being);
- that you had something important to contribute to society (social contribution);
- that you belonged to a community (like a social group, your school, or your neighborhood) (social integration);
- that our society is becoming a better place (social growth/actualization);
- that people are basically good (social acceptance);
- that they way our society works made sense to you (social coherence);
- good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life (environmental mastery);
- that you have warm and trusting relationships with other kinds (positive relations with others);
- that you have experiences that challenged you to grow or become a better person (personal growth); and
- confident to think and express your own ideas and opinions (autonomy).

It is to be noted that the item measuring purpose in life (“that your life had a sense of direction or meaning to it”) and self-acceptance (“that you liked most parts of your personality”) were inadvertently omitted from the final draft of the CDS. Purpose in life and self-acceptance are now being included with the above 12 items in re-interviews of the CDS youth.

Children between the ages of 0 and 12-years-old were asked to complete the CDS. These children were obtained from families who participated in the PSID in 1997. Out of all CDS families first interviewed in 1997, a total of 94% of the children had parents who had remained active in the PSID as of 2001 ($n = 3,271$), and these children were re-interviewed during the fall of 2002 and spring of 2003, resulting in a sample of 2,907 children and youth ages 5 to 18. All youth ages 12 or older at that time were administered the CDS that contained items from the short-form.

The CDS was administered by audio-computer assisted self-interview. Youth read each question while listening to each question read to them through headphones. They responded directly into a computer laptop. Youth were asked when, in the past month, they had felt or experienced the following, either “never,” “once or twice,” “about once a week,” “two or three times a week,” “almost every day,” and “every day.”

With a sample size of just over 1,200 adolescents, confirmatory factor analyses were performed on the CDS subjective well-being items. Items measuring emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being reflected three distinct, but correlated, latent factors (Keyes, 2005b). This factor structure was considered the best fitting model to the data; superior to a two-factor model in which the items of psychological and social well-being were combined to form a single factor, which was separate from items measuring emotional well-being. Thus, the results empirically supported the concept that eudaimonic well-being consists of psychological and social forms of well-being. All correlations—both latent and observed—were modestly strong (i.e., none lower than $r = .57$) but not extremely high (i.e., none higher than $r = .71$), as would be expected from the confirmatory factor analysis results that supported the three-factor model. The internal reliabilities of the scales were .78 (psychological well-being), .80 (social well-being), and .84 (emotional well-being).

The CDS scales of subjective well-being exhibited good construct validity. All three scales of subjective well-being correlated most strongly and positively with the global self-concept scale by Marsh (1990). The global self-concept scale, which can be construed as a measure of what Pittman's calls “confidence,” correlated between $r = .44$ (with social well-being) to a high of $r = .54$ (with psychological well-being). Thus, youth who report greater levels of each component of positive mental health also tend to report more self-confidence. The scales of subjective well-being also correlated modestly with a multi-item measure of self-determination, which is a reflection of what Pittman called the positive developmental outcome of competence. To measure self-determination, the youth in the CDS indicated how much of the time—“never,” “rarely,” “sometimes,” “most of the time,” or “always”—the following described them: (a) “I stay with a task until I solve it,” (b) “Even when a task is difficult, I want to solve it anyway,” (c) “I keep my things orderly,” (d) “I try to do my best on all my work,” and (e) “When I start something, I follow it through to the end.” The scale of self-determination, which can be construed as an indicator of what Pittman (1992) calls “competence,” correlated between $r = .35$ (with social well-being) to a high of $r = .46$ (with psychological well-being). Thus, youth who report greater levels of each component of positive mental health also tend to report more competence in terms of more self-determination (i.e., efficacy).

The CDS measured perceived closeness to significant others and a sense of school integration, both of which are proxies for what Pittman (1992) called the positive outcome of connection. Youth were asked how close they felt toward six individuals—mother (or stepmother), father (or stepfather), sibling, friends, teacher, or other adults outside of school. Youth indicated whether they

felt “extremely,” “quite,” “fairly,” or “not very” close to each of the six individuals. A total score was constructed by measuring the number of individuals of the six toward which a youth felt either “quite close” or “extremely close.” Higher scores on this variable means that the youths felt closer to more significant others. We also measured school integration, asking youth to indicate how often (“never,” “once or twice in the last month,” “about once a week,” “two or three times a week,” “almost every day,” or “every day”) they felt (a) part of their school, (b) close to people at their school, (c) happy to be at their school, and (d) safe at their school. A higher score on the school integration scale means that youths felt more frequently happy, safe, connected to, and close to people at their school.

The measure of perceived closeness correlated $r = .29$ with emotional well-being, and $r = .31$ with both psychological well-being and social well-being. The scale measuring school integration correlated $r = .37$ with both emotional and psychological well-being and $r = .42$ with social well-being. Compared with the measure of perceived closeness, the scale measuring school integration correlated more strongly with the subjective well-being outcomes. However, as expected, youth who felt higher levels of the components of positive mental health also were more likely to report feeling closer to more significant others, and they were more likely to report higher levels of feeling integrated into their school.

The final category of positive outcomes, according to Pittman (1992), is character, which reflects the ability to engage in normative and prosocial behaviors and refrain from antisocial and non-normative behaviors. One measure of character is participation in conduct problems such as skipping school, being arrested, smoking cigarettes, smoking marijuana, drinking alcohol, or using inhalants. As reported in Keyes (2006), flourishing youth between the ages of 12 and 18 reported the lowest prevalence of any of the aforementioned conduct problems, followed by moderately mentally healthy youth, whereas languishing youth reported the highest prevalence on all indicators of conduct problems. Moreover, 25% of languishing youth engaged in at least three or more of the conduct problems compared with 13% of moderately mentally healthy youth, and only 6.5% of flourishing youth.

Another way to assess character is to assess how much youth care for others, or engage in prosocial behavior. Toward that end, in the CDS study, youth were also asked how frequently they helped and gave support to friends, family, and siblings in the past six month, using a scale from 1 (almost never) to 7 (every day). They were asked how often they helped friends and siblings with things such as homework or chores, and how often they helped parents with chores or running errands. Youth were also asked how often they provided emotional support to their friends (and siblings) by giving them advice on a problem or making them feel better when they were sad. In addition, they indicated how often they provide emotional support to their parents by making them feel better when they were sad. The average score across the six questions (i.e., help to friends, siblings and parents, support to friends, siblings and parents) correlated $r = .30$ ($p < .001$) with a continuous measure of overall positive mental health. As frequency of helping others increases, level of positive mental health also tends to increase. Using the Tukey honestly significant difference for pairwise contrast (and a p value of .05 or less), the flourishing youth provided more support ($M = 4.1$, $SD = 1.2$) than moderately mental healthy youth ($M = 3.5$, $SD = 1.1$), who in turn provided more help to others than languishing youth ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 1.2$). Based on the response scale for helping and supporting others, the findings suggest that the difference between languishing and flourishing youth is that the former helped others “1 to 3 times a month” on average, whereas flourishing youth helped others on average “about once a week.” Thus, while they exhibit the lowest level of conduct problems, flourishing youth also engage in more prosocial behavior, providing more help and emotional support to friends, siblings, and parents.

The Mental Health Continuum in Youth

Although each dimension of subjective well-being represents an important domain of study in itself, Keyes (2002, 2005b) has argued that these scales collectively measure the presence and absence of mental health. That is, mental health, like mental illness, is a syndrome of “symptoms” related to subjective well-being. The diagnostic taxonomy was modeled after the *DSM-IV-TR* (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, American Psychiatric Association, 2000) approach to the diagnosis of major depressive episode (MDE). To summarize, a diagnosis of depression is made when an individual’s report of symptoms meet a diagnostic threshold, i.e., in this case, 5 of 9 symptoms experienced all the time or most of the time for a period of at least two consecutive weeks, at least one symptom represents depressed affect (i.e., depressed mood or anhedonia) and the remaining represent malfunctioning. In the same fashion, a diagnosis of complete mental health (i.e., “flourishing” in life) is made when an individual exhibits a high level on at least one symptom of hedonia and just over half of the symptoms of eudaimonia, i.e., positive functioning in life. Individuals are diagnosed as “languishing” in life when they exhibit a low level on at least one symptom of hedonia and low levels on just over half of the symptoms of positive functioning. Individuals who are neither flourishing nor languishing in life are diagnosed as moderately mentally healthy.

Youth in the 2002 CDS study reported how frequently during the past month they experienced 3 symptoms of emotional well-being, 4 symptoms of psychological well-being, and 5 symptoms of social well-being. Youth were diagnosed as flourishing if they experienced at least one of the three symptoms of emotional well-being and at least five of the nine symptoms of positive functioning “almost every day” or “every day” during the past 30 days. Youth were diagnosed as languishing if they endorsed at least one of the three symptoms of emotional well-being and at least 5 of the 9 symptoms of positive functioning “once or twice” or “never” during the past 30 days. Youth who were neither languishing nor flourishing were diagnosed as moderately mentally healthy, meaning they experienced the symptoms of well-being “about once a week” or “two or three times a week” during the past 30 days.

Analyses revealed a small, negative correlation between age and the continuous assessment of mental health ($r = -.07$; $p < .02$), revealing that level of mental health declines slightly between the ages of 12 and 18. The categorical diagnosis revealed that 38% of youth between the ages of 12 and 18 are flourishing. Over half (about 56%) of adolescent are moderately mentally healthy, while 6% are languishing. Using the categorical diagnosis, and grouping youth into middle school (ages 12 to 14) and high school (ages 15 to 18) revealed a 9% drop in prevalence of flourishing between middle school and high school. Although the prevalence of languishing was the same in middle school and high school, the prevalence of flourishing declined from a high of 49% in middle school to 40% in high school.

Figure 2.1 provides insight into the specific dimensions of positive mental health, that is, where youth are succeeding and where they are falling short. As reported in Keyes (2005a), youths’ mean levels of overall emotional well-being were not different from their mean levels of psychological well-being. However, overall social well-being was lower than both overall emotional well-being and overall psychological well-being. Figure 2.1 reports how all five dimensions of social well-being were experienced less than two or three times a week. Further, youth experienced a sense of social integration (i.e., that they belong to a community like a social group or their school) and a sense of social contribution (i.e., that they had something to contribute to society) only about two or three times a week. Even worse, youth experienced a sense of social growth (i.e., that our society is becoming a better place), social-acceptance, (i.e., that people are basically good), and social-coherence (i.e., that they way society works makes sense to them) quite infrequently (about once a

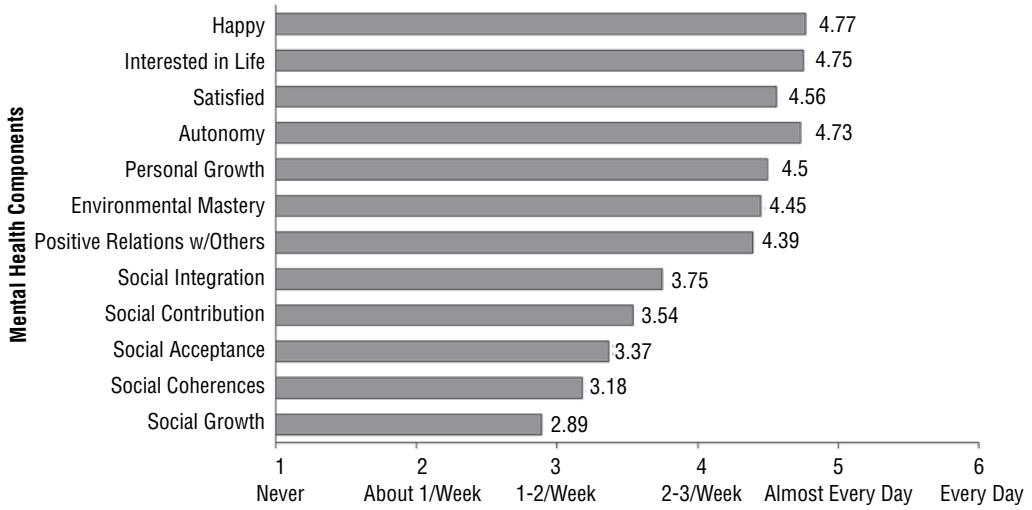


Figure 2.1 Mean frequency of each component of mental health in the past month, U.S. adolescents, ages 12 to 18, in 2002 data from the Child Development Supplement ($n = 1,260$).

week). In comparison, youth experience the dimensions of psychological and emotion well-being almost every day. In short, any attempts to improve the positive mental health of youth will clearly need to address the deficit of social well-being in the lives of U.S. adolescents.

Testing the Two-Continua Model in Youth

For this chapter, I present new analyses to investigate whether the measures of mental health in youth are correlated with, but distinct from, measures of mental illness. Put differently, and as found in a nationally representative sample of U.S. adults ages 25 to 74 (Keyes, 2005b), the two continua model argues that the absence of symptoms of mental illness does not mean the presence of symptoms of mental health. Empirical support for the two continua model implies that any national program aimed at increasing the mental *health* of youth must include the promotion of flourishing mental health, and not merely the treatment and prevention of mental illness.

To that end, different theories of the latent structure of the measures of mental health and mental illness were tested using confirmatory factor models. The three subscales of emotional, psychological, and social well-being derived from the CDS were used as indicators of mental health and the 10 items from the Child Depression Inventory (Kovacs, 1992) were used as indicators of mental illness.

Table 2.1 describes the fit statistics for each tested model. The starting independence model is considered as a baseline specifying that there are as many latent constructs as measures of mental health and illness (i.e., each measure reflects an independent latent factor). As is usually the case, the chi-square statistic and descriptive fit indices of this model were very large, indicating that the theory of independence was untenable. By comparison, a single-factor model posits that all measures are caused by a single, bipolar latent dimension. Support for this model would confirm the theory that the absence of mental illness is the presence of mental health. The chi-square statistic and descriptive fit indices were markedly improved for the single-factor model relative to the independence model. Moreover, the chi-square contrast of the independence and single-factor models revealed a highly statistically significant reduction of chi-square, suggesting that the single-factor model was a more tenable model than the independence model.

Table 2.1 Maximum likelihood estimation of confirmatory factor models of theories of the latent structure of mental health in the child development supplement youth^a

Latent Structure Model	χ^2	df	GFI/AGFI	CN	RMSEA	AIC	$\chi^2_{\text{difference}} \div \text{df}_{\text{difference}}$
1. Independence	4,532	78					
2. Single Axis	845	65	.89/.85	145	.11	1060	283.6 ₁₋₂ ***
3. Two Axes, Orthogonal	811	65	.92/.89	151	.09	775	34.0 ₂₋₃ ***
4. Two Axes, Oblique ^b	380	64	.95/.93	317	.06	456	431.0 ₃₋₄ ***

Note. N = 1,200. GFI = Goodness of fit Index, AGFI = Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index, CN = Critical N, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, and AIC = Akaike Information Criterion.

^a Mental illness measures included the 10 items from the Child Depression Inventory and the 3 subscales (emotional, psychological, and social well-being) from the Mental Health Continuum.

^b The correlation between latent factors is $r = -.68$.

*** $p < .001$.

However, the next model positing that the measures of mental health and mental illness reflect two distinct, but uncorrelated, unipolar factors had markedly improved fit indices over the single-factor model. The chi-square contrast of the single- and two-factor (orthogonal) model revealed a highly statistically significant reduction of chi-square. However, the RMSEA of the orthogonal two-factor models was .09, or only slightly below the recommended threshold of .10 (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). The other descriptive fit indices for the single- and two-factor orthogonal models were also poor.

The final model tested the “two-continua model,” i.e., whether the separate latent factors of mental illness and mental health are correlated. Although mental illness and health may not belong to a single continuum, it is plausible that any valid measure of mental health that is factorially distinct from a measure of psychopathology should at least correlate negatively and modestly with mental illness. The chi-square contrast of the orthogonal two-factor model and the correlated two-factor (i.e., oblique) model revealed a highly statistically significant reduction of the chi-square statistic, suggesting that the correlated two-factor model was the most tenable model to explain the relationship between mental health and mental illness. The correlation between the two latent factors was $r = -.68$. The fit indices for correlated two-factor model suggest that the two-continua model is an excellent fitting model to these data. The adjusted goodness-of-fit index was .96, the critical *N* was clearly over the recommended cut-point of 200, and the root mean square error of approximation and Akaike information criterion were small and below each recommended threshold, suggesting a very good fitting model to the data.

Complete Mental Health in Youth

It is to be noted that in the CDS study, the CDI was the only measure of mental illness. As a screening tool, the CDI provides a threshold above which youth are screened for clinical depression. The manual for the CDI recommends slightly different thresholds boys (a score of 7 or higher) than girls (a score of 6 or higher). For the purposes of this analysis, the lower of the threshold, a score of 6 or higher, was used to suggest that an adolescent would screen for depression. Using this criterion, only 4.9% of flourishing youth screen positive for depression compared with 17.3% of youth with moderate mental health. In sharp contrast, 51.5% of languishing youth screen positive for depression. Thus, and compared with flourishing youth, moderately mentally healthy youth are about 3.5 times more likely to screen for depression, whereas languishing youth are 10.5 times more likely to screen for depression. Furthermore, compared with moderately mental health youth, languishing youth are about 3 times more likely to screen for depression.

Given that the level of mental health status is hypothesized to differentiate the level of psychosocial functioning among individuals with and without a mental disorder, a series of one-way ANOVAs were used to test whether level of mental health (i.e., languishing, moderate mental health, or flourishing) exerts a main effect in addition to (or interactively with) mental illness (in this case, whether or not youth are above the threshold of a score of 6 or higher on the CDI scale). The outcomes investigated included global self-concept, self-determination, perceived closeness to others, and school integration, as well as measures of conduct problems and helping behaviors. There was a main effect of level of mental health on all outcomes (all F tests, $p < .001$). As level of mental health increased, level of conduct problems decreased, and the level of global self-concept, self-determination, perceived closeness to others, and school integration increased. There also was a main effect for the dichotomous variable of mental illness (i.e., whether or not youth had a score of 6 or high on CDI) for the outcomes of global self-concept ($F = 31.0, p < .001$), school integration ($F = 4.1, p < .05$), conduct problems ($F = 16.9, p < .001$), but not for following measures: self-determination, perceived closeness to others, and helping behaviour. There were no interaction effects between mental health and mental illness.

Figure 2.2 presents as one example the mean level of perceived integration into school by level of mental health and by mental illness. The main effect for level of mental health reveals that level of perceived integration into school increases as level of mental health increases for youth who would screen as “depression-free” as well as for youth who would screen for depression. Furthermore, the main effect for mental illness reveals that perceived integration into school is lower for youth who screen positive for depression than for youth who screen as being free of depression at each level (languishing, moderate, or flourishing) of mental health. In other words, level of mental health matters whether youth have, or do not have, a mental disorder like depression.

How many youth in America are truly mentally healthy, i.e., flourishing in life rather than merely free of mental illness? Admittedly, the CDS study was not designed for the purpose of psychiatric epidemiology of youth and any findings are in reference to a single screening measure of depression (although 14% of youth screened for depression in the CDS study, the estimate of overall mental illness would likely be higher if measures of anxiety and personality disorders were included). Yet, studies reviewed earlier that used more comprehensive assessments of mental disorders suggest the upper limit of mental illness in youth is about 20%. As such, the findings reported here (14%

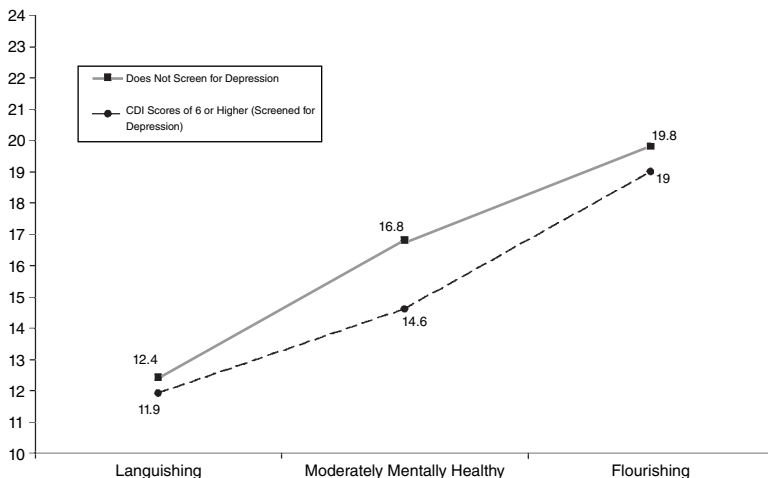


Figure 2.2 Mean level of perceived school integration by level of mental health and whether youth screen for depression ($n = 1,260$).

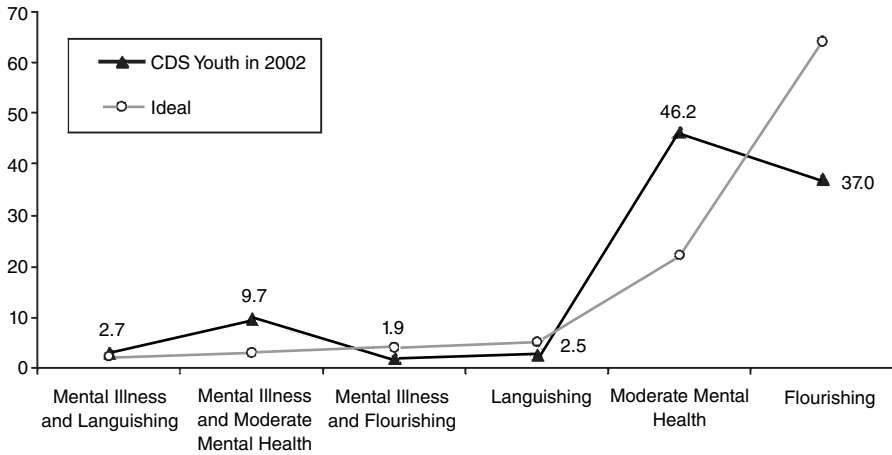


Figure 2.3 Point prevalence of complete mental health in the U.S. adolescent population (based on the nationally representative sample in the Child Development Supplement in 2002).

screening for depression) may not be that far from the best estimate of 20% overall mental illness in youth. What is unique for the CDS is that it permits demarcating the population of youth with a mental illness (as well as without) by level of mental health.

As shown in Figure 2.3, most youth who screened for depression had moderate mental health; only 1.9% of the youth was flourishing and 2.7% was languishing. The fact that the proportion of youth who are languishing with possible depression is relatively small is good news, because youth who screen for depression and are languishing function worse than those with moderate mental health (e.g., in terms of conduct problems). Of those who screened negative for depression, only 2.5% of these youth were languishing. Thus, languishing in the absence of a mental disorder is rare in youth and is lower than among adults, among whom languishing in the absence of mental disorders is 9.5% (Keyes, 2007). Furthermore, of those who screened negative for depression, just over 46% of these youths are moderately mentally healthy and 37% are flourishing. By comparison, about half (50.8%) of adults otherwise free of an episode of mental disorder are moderately mentally healthy, and only 16.8% of adults are flourishing.

In general, compared with their adult counterparts, youth in the United States are mentally healthier, with just over 20% more youth than adults flourishing. Yet, compared with the ideal distribution of mental health in the population (this ideal was originally reported in Keyes, 2007 for the adult data), Figure 2.3 clearly shows that the population of youth, like the adult population, is far from the public mental health goal of 6 of every 10 youth flourishing. Although the ideal distribution may seem arbitrary, it dramatizes the point that any national agenda that purports to promote the mental “health” of the population of youth must work to increase the ranks for flourishing, and not solely treat or prevent mental disorder. Toward that end, the promotion and protection of positive mental health must simultaneously accompany all national efforts to treat and prevent mental illness in America’s youth.

Conclusion

Despite a long-standing misconception for Americans to equate subjective well-being with emotional well-being (i.e., happiness), research clearly has shown that subjective well-being in U.S. adults is a multi-faceted, multidimensional construct. One result of the nearly 50 years of research

on this important concept is that researchers have proliferated upwards of 13 facets of subjective well-being. In turn, theory and research has supported the meta-theoretical models of hedonia and eudaimonia that reflect different kinds of well-being. That is, subjective well-being consists of a cluster of measures reflecting emotional, or hedonic, well-being and a cluster of measures reflecting positive functioning, or eudaimonic, well-being.

Research on the subjective well-being of youth, as with adults, has focused exclusively on the dimension of hedonia, or emotional well-being. The purpose of the research reviewed in this chapter was to investigate whether subjective well-being in youth is more complex, and whether its structure is equivalent to the structure of subjective well-being found among adults. Findings based on data from the nationally representative CDS sample of youth clearly supported the complex, comprehensive approach to the subjective well-being of youth. That is, among youth ages 12 to 18, subjective well-being is characterized in terms of distinct dimensions of emotional (e.g., happiness), psychological (e.g., autonomy), and social (e.g., socially integrated) well-being. These measures exhibited construct validity, correlating highly with measures of the quality of one's self-concept, a youth's self-determination, as well as the degree to which youth felt integrated into their school. Moreover, the well-being measures also correlated modestly with the Kovacs (1992) child depression inventory and a measure of self-rated overall health, and weakly with perceived math and reading skill.

Findings also revealed that levels of emotional well-being are highest, followed closely by psychological well-being, and levels of social well-being are lowest in youth between the ages of 12 and 18. Roughly speaking, these findings suggest that American adolescents experience social well-being about once a week. What this means is that typical American adolescents felt they had something to contribute to the world about once a week; adolescents felt liked they belonged somewhere about once a week; they felt that way our society works made sense to them about once a week; they felt that our society was becoming a better place about once a week; and our adolescents felt that people in our society were basically good about once a week. It appears more sober when put this way, making it clearer, I hope, that America's youth sorely lack social well-being. In contrast, youth reported that they experienced psychological well-being (i.e., managing responsibilities, trusting relationships with kids, growth-producing experiences, and confidence to express ideas) about two or three times a week during the past month. However, youth reported that they experienced emotional well-being—i.e., interest in life, happiness, and satisfaction—about every day during the past month.

Is it sufficient to have youth who regularly feel happy, only rarely feel that they have experiences that challenge them to grow and become a better person, but infrequently feel that they have something important to contribute to society? Parents may hope they can raise children who become happy adults, parents probably also aspire to raise children who are and become psychological healthy and socially healthy human beings. Any nation that claims to prepare its youth to become democratically engaged citizens must have youth who know how to, and feel: integrated into society, contribute to society, accept people not like them, work to improve and understand society. They also need to have a purpose in life, and be self-accepting and autonomous. However, they also need be able to cultivate positive relations with others while exerting some mastery over their immediate environments. Above all, they need to be capable of continued personal growth throughout life. A comprehensive approach to the assessment of youth subjective well-being can provide a more detailed picture of the strengths and weakness of our youth and such an approach will suggest directions for future programmatic initiatives.

Indeed, it must, because less than 4 in every 10 American adolescents are flourishing. Findings suggest that fewer adolescents are mentally healthy—nearly 40%—than would be implied by taking the obverse of the best-estimate (i.e., Shaffer et al., 1996) of any mental disorder in youth,

which would imply that about 80% or youth are free of a mental illness and therefore mentally healthy. Just over one-half of adolescents fit the criteria for moderate mental health, whereas 6% were mentally unhealthy (i.e., they fit the criteria for languishing). Moreover, findings here suggest that flourishing may decline, whereas moderate mental health increases, during adolescence. Nearly one-half of the middle school youth ages 12 to 14 were flourishing. Flourishing was the most prevalent mental health status among adolescents ages 12 to 14; moderate mental health was the most prevalent mental health status among adolescents ages 15 to 18. These data suggest—although causality cannot be inferred from them—that there is approximately a 10% loss of flourishing between middle school and high school.

Findings support the descriptive hypotheses that flourishing youth function better than moderately mentally healthy youth, who in turn function better than languishing youth. Flourishing youth had the *fewest* depressive symptoms and conduct problems, and the *highest levels* of global self-concept, self-determination, closeness to other people, and school integration. Languishing youth had the *highest number* of depressive symptoms and conduct problems, and the *lowest levels* of global self-concept, self-determination, closeness to other people, and school integration. Conduct problems were higher in the older than younger adolescents; however, flourishing in both age groups was associated with the lowest level of conduct problems. Languishing (i.e., the absence of mental health) was associated with the highest level of conduct problems in both age groups.

Although results of this study suggest a promising line of future research on the mental health continuum in children and youth, caution is warranted in placing too much credence to the current prevalence estimates. Although the measures of subjective well-being exhibited construct validity, and the diagnostic thresholds mirror the criteria established by American Psychiatric Association via the *DSM* taxonomic system, the data reported here are nonetheless self-report and the mental health diagnoses have not been corroborated by expert clinical judgments. Future research should investigate convergence of the child's and youth's reports of subjective well-being with parent's and teacher's reports of the child's and youth's well-being. Moreover, research should investigate the degree of correspondence of the diagnoses with school counselor and clinical, psychiatric workup of mental health.

Continued research on the epidemiology of children's mental health in the CDS and other national studies of youth can point toward new directions for prevention of mental illness and for the study of resilience. Findings reviewed here indicate that flourishing in adolescence is associated with developmentally desirable outcomes (e.g., low depression, few conduct problems, and high psychosocial functioning). Because these data are cross-sectional, future research is needed to determine the important question of whether positive mental health is a cause or consequence (or both) of conduct problems and psychosocial functioning. What youth are most likely to be flourishing, what factors (intrapersonal, familial, educational, and community) explain how youth come to flourish over time, could provide new insights for promoting positive development and resilience in youth and their transition into adulthood.

Moreover, the diagnostic criteria offered here are rational and statistical in the same sense as the criteria adopted in the *DSM*. Of course, the *DSM* is not without its critics, and this research is not meant to defend or criticize it. Complex statistical techniques have been developed (e.g., latent taxometric analysis) that promise the identification of thresholds and whether a condition is categorical or continuous. However, all statistics require a host of imperfect, sometimes untenable, assumptions (e.g., distribution of the error term). Moreover, all statistics are applied to data collected from imperfect sampling, and sometimes of rare and highly specialized populations (i.e., clinical populations in the case of taxometrics). Taxometric and cluster-type analyses have hardly solved the debate over diagnosis and assessment in psychopathology research, leading many experts (e.g., Kessler, 2002) to argue for the inclusion of both categorical and continuous approaches. This

sensible solution, too, should be the approach to positive mental health, especially because the findings reported here suggest that both approaches yield the same conclusions and each approach provides valuable information (see Kessler, 2002).

Ultimately, the research summarized here raises questions for (a) national public mental health goals, and (b) creating effective techniques and interventions for promoting mental health in youth. It is no longer possible to blithely announce that America promotes the mental health of its citizens, while only investing in the study, treatment, and prevention of mental illness. The two-continua model clearly dispels this as a “wanting-doing gap,” because the stated goal is to promote positive mental *health*, whereas resources are allocated to activities directed solely toward mental *illness*. It is not possible to promote mental health by solely reducing mental illness, and no amount of wishful political thinking will make this fact go away. The two-continua model can be ignored by policy makers, but this will serve only to sacrifice more young lives to the recurrent, chronic, and incurable condition of mental illness. Indeed, I’m not convinced anymore that as a nation America can reduce mental illness without promoting mental health.

In turn, and in recognition that subjective well-being includes the hedonic and eudaimonic traditions, it may be necessary to better understand that feeling good and functioning well (or functioning better) may not always be compatible. Can individuals feel good about their lives at the same time they are attempting or being pushed to grow, to become better people, to become fully contributing members of society? Studies suggest that in the short-term when individuals make improvements in their functioning life, hedonic well-being may be sacrificed (Keyes, 2000; Keyes & Ryff 2000). In the long run, striving to function better in life, and being supported by a nation that supports that endeavor, will clearly result in the revival of feeling good about a life in which our youth can also function well.

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II

Internal Assets and Positive Student Development

3

Life Satisfaction

SHANNON M. SULDO, E. SCOTT HUEBNER, ALLISON A. FRIEDRICH,
AND RICH GILMAN

In the introduction to the book entitled *Happiness and Education*, Noddings (2003) noted that many skeptics declared, "... happiness and education don't go together!" (p. 1). Nevertheless, observations based on her many years of teaching led Noddings to conclude that "... happy people are rarely mean, violent, or cruel" and that "children learn best when they are happy" (p. 2). Thus, happiness and education are interrelated and happiness should be a major goal of education. Noddings further concluded that discussions regarding this nexus should shape future educational reform efforts.

This chapter examines the empirical support for Noddings' contention by reviewing the literature on one major component of happiness—life satisfaction—in children and youth. The chapter begins by defining the construct and briefly reviewing global and domain-specific measures that have been used over the past decade. A compendium of research on life satisfaction in children and youth will then follow. The chapter concludes with specific recommendations for life satisfaction promotion in students.

Defining Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction research has been conducted from social indicators, subjective well-being, marketing, and quality of life perspectives (Lent, 2004; Sirgy et al., 2006). Our perspective has been most influenced by the work of Diener and colleagues (Diener, 1984; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999) in their larger study of subjective well-being. This perspective conceptualizes life satisfaction as a "cognitive judgmental process in which individuals assess the quality of their lives on the basis of their own unique set of criteria" (Pavot & Diener, 1993, p. 164). These cognitive judgments are largely independent from an individual's more immediate affective (emotional) interpretation of an event. Because individuals are likely to differ on the standards they use to determine the degree of their life satisfaction (e.g., relative importance of economic resources, social resources, physical health), such judgments are often measured using global items (e.g., "the conditions of my life are excellent") rather than domain-specific items. Nevertheless, it is recognized that assessing life domains is more closely tied to concrete experiences, and yields unique variance that is not accounted for by assessing global satisfaction alone (Biswas-Diener, Vitterso, & Diener, 2005; Chen, 2003). Thus, measures that assess satisfaction within specific domains have also been explored

(Cummins, 1996). At all events, life satisfaction reports are believed to transcend momentary emotional experiences within and across life situations and are thus considered more stable than affective states when assessing life quality over time (Kim-Prieto, Diener, Tamir, Scollon, & Diener, 2005; Pavot & Diener, 1993).

Measurement of Life Satisfaction in Children and Youth

In contrast to studies among adults, life satisfaction research using child and adolescent samples began only recently. Nevertheless, the volume of research continues to grow as psychometrically sound measures have become available. Gilman and Huebner (2000) provided an early review of the literature on measures of life satisfaction, most notably those that were considered as psychometrically adequate for research purposes among youth ages 8 to 18. A complete description of these scales is beyond the scope of this chapter, and the reader is referred to this earlier study, as well as more recent publications that describe an array of global and multidimensional satisfaction measures (see Huebner, Gilman, & Suldo, 2007; Zullig, Mathews, Gilman, Valois, & Huebner, in press). Typically reviewed global measures include Huebner's (1991) *Students' Life Satisfaction Scale* (SLSS) and the *Perceived Life Satisfaction Scale* (Adelman, Taylor, & Nelson, 1989), while typically reviewed multidimensional measures include the *Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale* (MSLSS; Huebner, 1994), the *Comprehensive Quality of Life Scale-Student Version* (ComQOL; Cummins, 1997), and *Quality of Student Life Questionnaire* (Keith & Schalock, 1995). Each type of satisfaction measure yields different levels of information. Global measures offer potentially important information (e.g., mean level of overall life satisfaction for an individual or group) for intervention programs aimed to enhance global life satisfaction across multiple settings, including schools (Huebner et al., 2007), while multidimensional measures offer more differentiated information related to specific domains.

Most reviewed measures have to date yielded adequate internal consistency reliability (with most alphas at least in the .70–.80 range) and suitable test-retest reliability across several time frames (up to one year). Life satisfaction reports also show strong evidence of various types of validity. For example, factor analytic studies show construct comparability among different groups of youth within and across a variety of countries (Cummins, 1997; Gilman et al., 2008; Huebner, Gilman, & Laughlin, 1999). Further, in spite of their moderate stability, life satisfaction reports are not static; they are influenced by changes in life experiences, with these observed fluctuations moving in the expected direction. For example, a longitudinal study found that global and domain-specific life satisfaction reports decreased from baseline in response to stress, but increased from baseline as the student's life circumstances improved (Gilman & Handwerk, 2001). Evidence for the convergent validity of life satisfaction measures has been obtained through consistent and positive relationships with parent reports (Gilman & Huebner, 1997; Huebner, Brantley, Nagle, & Valois, 2002) and theoretically related constructs (e.g., hope, self-concept; see Huebner, Gilman, & Suldo, 2007, for a review). They also correlate, albeit modestly, with social desirability measures (Huebner, 1991).

Correlates of Life Satisfaction

Students' life satisfaction reports are associated with specific individual characteristics and their interaction with multiple environmental contexts. Bronfenbrenner's (1992) biopsychosocial theory of development has been used as one framework to explain how internal characteristics interact with various contextual levels to yield different levels of satisfaction (see Huebner, Gilman, & Ma, in press). The framework has been used primarily to explain how life satisfaction influences, and is influenced by, a student's individual characteristics and contextual variables. These variables are reviewed below.

Individual Differences Correlates of Life Satisfaction

One of the most robust findings in child and adolescent satisfaction research is that youth who hold positive evaluations of their self-worth and/or personal characteristics (i.e., self-efficacy) often perceive the highest levels of global satisfaction (Huebner, Gilman, & Laughlin, 1999; Nevin, Carr, Shelvin, Dooley, & Breaden, 2005). Such findings also extend to domain-specific self-efficacy; that is, youth who report high confidence in their emotional regulation, as well as their social and educational abilities, also report elevated levels of satisfaction (Suldo & Shaffer, 2007). Most of these studies are cross-sectional, which precludes inferences of causality. Nevertheless, recent studies suggest that the relationship is unidirectional, with self-efficacy influencing global life satisfaction. For example, one longitudinal study of Chinese students found that self-perceptions of competence in core academic subjects were strongly associated with current life satisfaction and predicted global life satisfaction 7- to 9-months later (Leung, McBride-Chang, & Lai, 2004). Furthermore, youth who perceive more personal control over events in their lives (having an internal locus of control) report higher life satisfaction than student reporting an external locus of control (Gilman & Huebner, 2006; Nevin et al., 2005; Rigby & Huebner, 2005). Other internal characteristics related to life satisfaction include optimism and maintaining high personal standards. Adolescents who have a tendency to expect more positive outcomes and those who hold high personal standards also report elevated life satisfaction (Extremera, Duran, & Rey, 2007; Gilman & Ashby, 2003; Gilman, Ashby, Sverko, Florell, & Varjas, 2005).

Internal assets can be influenced by life circumstance. For example, studies among children diagnosed with disabilities have revealed a number of findings, some of which yield equivocal results. Although students diagnosed with severe hearing losses report diminished global life satisfaction compared to a non-clinical sample of students (Gilman, Easterbrooks, & Frey, 2004), global life satisfaction, but not domain-specific life satisfaction has been shown to be invariant across students with cognitive impairments, such as mild to moderate mental disabilities and learning disabilities, and students without disabilities (Brantley, Huebner, & Nagle, 2002; McCullough & Huebner, 2003; Shogren, Lopez, Wehmeyer, Little, & Pressgrove, 2006). Furthermore, although some research reports comparable average levels of life satisfaction in children with and without chronic illnesses (Hexdall & Huebner, 2007), other research finds that life satisfaction is compromised among general samples of youth who rate their physical health as poor, participate in negative health-related behaviors such as smoking and poor eating, or whose daily activities are limited by chronic health problems (Piko, 2006; Suldo & Shaffer, 2008; Zullig, Valois, Huebner, & Yoon, 2005). These latter findings suggest that coping styles may mediate the relationship between life satisfaction and health-related stressors. Support for this contention comes from recent findings that students who employ adaptive coping strategies (such as positively appraising stressful situations, soliciting the support of others in times of stress, and communicating with their families) report elevated life satisfaction. In contrast, life satisfaction was inversely associated with avoidance coping strategies such as blaming others and complaining in response to stress (Nevin et al., 2005; Suldo, Shaunessy, & Hardesty, 2008).

Other studies have reported significant relationships between life satisfaction and specific personality characteristics, including positive associations with extraversion (Heaven, 1989) and emotional stability (Rigby & Huebner, 2005). These relationships between personality characteristics and life satisfaction may be mediated by individual differences in cognitive variables, such as optimistic attribution styles (Rigby & Huebner, 2005).

Finally, life satisfaction and school performance and behavior have been linked. Although a connection between academic achievement and life satisfaction is not consistently reported in the different developmental groups (Chang, McBride-Chang, Stewart, & Au, 2003), some research has suggested that academic achievement is moderately correlated with adolescents' global life

satisfaction (Gilman & Huebner, 2006) and school satisfaction (Huebner & Gilman, 2006). Furthermore, recent research with American middle school students found that students with the highest subjective well-being had superior grades in courses and scores on standardized achievement tests (Suldo & Shaffer, 2008). With regard to in-school behavior, studies have shown significant concurrent and predictive linkages between lower levels of life satisfaction and problem behaviors, such as acting out behaviors (Huebner & Alderman, 1993; Valois, Paxton, Zullig, & Huebner, 2006).

Microsystemic Correlates of Life Satisfaction

Studies of environmental contexts and their relationship with life satisfaction have primarily focused on the quality of youths' home, school, and peer groups. Each context appears to be related to levels of reported satisfaction. Specifically, recent studies of adolescents who report very high global life satisfaction (i.e., top 10%–20% of the scoring distribution) found that, in comparison to their peers with very low and average levels of global satisfaction, highly satisfied youth also reported the highest levels of social support from parents, teachers, classmates, and close friends (Gilman & Huebner, 2006; Suldo & Huebner, 2006). Other studies have examined life satisfaction and its relationship with specific factors within environmental contexts. For example, qualitative research finds that family/home factors that contribute to adolescents' satisfaction with life include: (a) a safe, comfortable home; (b) a loving atmosphere characterized by familial pleasures, closeness, and harmony; (c) open and trusting communication; (d) parental monitoring of and involvement in adolescents' activities; (e) sense of importance within the family; and (f) family supportive of children's relationships with people and activities outside of the family (Joronen & Astedt-Kurki, 2005). Furthermore, although youth from two-parent households may be happier with their lives than youth who live with only one or no parent (Winkelmann, 2006), residing in intact households in which the quality of the parental relationship is poor is related to low life satisfaction (Grossman & Rowat, 1995). Authoritative parenting practices, in which parents are perceived as warm and supportive and promote psychological autonomy, are among the strongest predictors of middle and high school students' life satisfaction regardless of family composition (Edwards & Lopez, 2006; Suldo & Huebner, 2004; Yoon, 2004).

Particularly salient for this chapter is the relationship between life satisfaction and the school environment. In support of Noddings' (2003) contention that happiness (i.e., life satisfaction) and education are inextricably linked, recent research reported that school grades, personal beliefs about learning, and positive school climate accounted for substantial variance in high school students' global life satisfaction (Suldo, Shaffer, & Riley, 2008). Other aspects of the school setting that have been positively linked to life satisfaction include availability of extracurricular activities and students' feelings of attachment to their school (Gilman, 2001).

Positive peer relationships represent a third microsystemic variable that consistently yields robust associations with high youth life satisfaction (Dew & Huebner, 1994). In particular, youth who report high life satisfaction also report higher levels of attachment to their peers (i.e., relationships characterized as having high loyalty, mutual caring, and commitment; Nickerson & Nagle, 2004). Furthermore, peer relationships that promote life satisfaction often are characterized as having frequent positive and reciprocal supportive acts (Martin & Huebner, 2007). These studies also find that life satisfaction is inversely associated with frequent peer victimization (i.e., threats of bodily or social harm) and alienation from peers and/or affiliation with peers who support delinquent behavior.

Macrosystemic Correlates of Life Satisfaction

The macrosystem consists of the influences of a given culture or broader social context on various microsystems. Macrosystem factors that have empirical links with life satisfaction in youth

include culture and the degree of acculturation among youth immigrants. Preliminary research on the role of culture has identified similarities and differences in mean levels and predictors of global life satisfaction, depending on the countries compared. For instance, mean levels of life satisfaction are similar across family income levels and racial groups (most notably African American and Caucasian youth) in America, but have differed among youth representing various nationalities. For example, Gilman, Huebner et al. (2008) reported that adolescents from Ireland and the United States (nations characterized as “individualistic”) reported significantly higher self-satisfaction mean scores than adolescents from China and South Korea (nations characterized as “collectivistic”). The inverse was found for these groups on family satisfaction. With regard to predictors of life satisfaction, Park and Huebner (2005) reported that satisfaction with school was more strongly related to Korean adolescents’ global life satisfaction among Korean adolescents relative to American adolescents.

Research on the acculturation of immigrants suggests that while youth who recently immigrated to a foreign country may initially experience slightly diminished life satisfaction when compared to immigrants who have resided in a new country for some time (Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000), this relationship may be mediated by the degree of positive perceptions of one’s native culture and/or proximity to other youth with the same cultural background. For instance, global life satisfaction among a sample of Mexican-American high school students living in the United States was unrelated to their identification with the Anglo culture, but was positively associated with orientation towards a Mexican culture (Edwards & Lopez, 2006; see also Yoon, 2004). Similar findings have been noted among recent adolescent immigrants to Portugal and Norway, who reported higher life satisfaction mean scores when living in a neighborhood in which most people were from their same ethnic group (Neto, 2001; Sam, 1998).

Implications for Prevention and Intervention

Interventions to Increase Life Satisfaction

Indirect and direct approaches towards enhancing life satisfaction among school-aged youth have been discussed (Huebner, Suldo, & Gilman, 2006). Indirect approaches initially target a given stressor or determinant (e.g., poor parental support, pessimistic attributional style), with the goal of increasing life satisfaction as these stressors decrease in severity. Conversely, direct approaches target satisfaction promotion, in hopes of helping the adolescent modify their purposeful activities to include more adaptive behaviors, attitudes, and goals (cf. Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). For indirect approaches, factors that are likely most amenable to change and relevant to the school setting include increasing the quality of interpersonal relationships (e.g., family, teacher, and peer support), changing and improving self-perceptions (e.g., self-efficacy), promoting adaptive cognitions (e.g., attribution style), and increasing opportunities for students to participate in school-sponsored and out-of-school extracurricular activities. Specific strategies can be found amongst a number of chapters in this book and will not be discussed here.

More important is a discussion of direct interventions that target well-being (satisfaction) promotion, although it is to be noted that such interventions have been limited to samples of adults. Nevertheless, the results of such studies are promising and demonstrate that intentional and/or goal-directed activities can lead to sustainable gains in well-being. As one example of a direct intervention, King (2001) had college students write narrative descriptions about their best possible selves in the future (i.e., “the realization of all of your life dreams”) for four consecutive days. Results found that these participants experienced greater levels of psychological well-being relative to students who only wrote about traumatic experiences. Other studies using similar methodologies have found that thinking and writing about one’s best possible future self resulted in an immediate

increase in positive affect (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006). Other research studies have identified scenarios in which practicing grateful thinking by “counting one’s blessings” enhances wellness. For instance, college undergraduates and older adults with neuromuscular disease who, for multiple weeks listed five things in their lives for which they were grateful or thankful, also rated their lives better and reported more positive affect than adults in control conditions (e.g., reflecting on stressors, no intervention; Emmons & McCullough, 2003).

It is to be noted that the strength of these interventions may be contingent on the length of, fidelity to, and dosage of the intervention. For example, Sheldon and Lyubomirsky (2006) found that positive benefits were only maintained in participants who continued to perform the exercise on their own over the ensuing weeks. Furthermore, counting one’s blessings regularly (for 6 weeks) was effective only in adults who performed the activity once per week (versus 3 times per week), suggesting that greater reliance on such strategies may yield diminishing returns (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). On the other hand, an Internet study in which adults were randomly assigned to one of five happiness-intervention conditions or a control condition found that people who wrote down three good things that went well each day, each night for 1 week, experienced increases in happiness that only began 1 month after the intervention concluded but lasted for at least 5 more months. These findings suggest that the benefits of such strategies may not begin immediately, but rather have a delayed (but long-term) effect (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005).

In sum, interventions that target person-centered factors such as dispositions (e.g., cognitive focus on positive aspects of life and goals) and resources (e.g., character strengths; Seligman et al., 2005) have support for their ability to increase well-being. Possible applications of these findings in school settings pertain to classroom writing assignments, character education curricula, and vocational guidance. For instance, language arts teachers may consider using the best possible selves and gratitude-focused activities (e.g., gratitude visits, journaling about the positive aspects of one’s life) as prompts for writing assignments. In addition, character education programs may benefit from including lessons on how specifically to develop kindness and compassion to others, as well as to one’s self (see Park & Peterson, chapter 6, this volume).

Unfortunately, research directly targeting life satisfaction in adolescents is in its nascent stages. In the absence of controlled studies showing that indirect or direct interventions described above can improve life satisfaction in youth, perhaps the best recommendations that can be made at this point necessarily focus on individualized, multi-faceted interventions that incorporate both direct and indirect approaches. An example of a comprehensive, multi-component group intervention for middle school students, which resulted in increased life satisfaction, can be found in Farrell, Valois, and Meyer (2003).

Suggestions for Future Research

The literature base on children and adolescents’ life satisfaction has grown exponentially in the past 15 years. Most existing studies, however, have been limited to individual characteristics and micro- and macrosystemic correlates of life satisfaction. The field is ripe for more complex examinations of mesosystem- and exosystem-level variables that may impact students’ life satisfaction. For instance, at the exosystem system, factors that influence teachers’ availability to attend to positive student-teacher relationships are necessary to delineate conditions that may lead to high levels of social support (e.g., supportive administration, smaller class sizes) as well as conditions that may hinder positive student-teacher relations (e.g., high-stakes testing, merit pay based solely on test scores). At the mesosystem level, knowledge of determinants of students’ life satisfaction may be advanced through studies of how relationships with classmates interact with perceptions of one’s school climate or further examinations of the role of home-school collaboration.

The need to apply and extend research on direct satisfaction interventions from the adult literature to children and adolescents is paramount. Controlled trials involving developmentally-appropriate versions of these interventions is considered to be a first step towards allowing educators to recommend evidence-based interventions for increasing students' happiness. The development and widespread availability of measurement tools such as character strengths (see the VIA Strength Survey for Children available at www.authentic happiness.org) and life satisfaction (see www.cas.sc.edu/psyc/facdocs/huebner.html) can be used to facilitate and evaluate such applications.

Conclusion

There is a developing body of research related to Noddings' (2003) contention that schools should pay greater attention to the life satisfaction of their students, and that school professionals can do well to make systematic efforts to facilitate *current and future* life satisfaction in their students as a fundamental aim of education. In this manner, schools could provide a firm foundation in basic academic skills at the same time that they could provide a broader array of curricular options, instructional methods, and evaluation procedures to promote global and domain-specific satisfaction. Although additional research is clearly needed, there is preliminary evidence to support Noddings' notion that students' educational experiences and happiness do "go together" and must be addressed in tandem.

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4

Measuring and Promoting Hope in Schoolchildren¹

SHANE J. LOPEZ, SAGE ROSE, CECIL ROBINSON,
SUSANA C. MARQUES, AND JOSE PAIS-RIBEIRO

Watching young children on a playground tells all one needs to know about hope. A child's vision transforms a series of obstacles (tall ladders, hard to reach monkey bars, wobbly wooden bridges) into limitless opportunities for fun. Goals become very clear ("I am going to swing across all the monkey bars"), the plan develops ("I am going to climb the ladder, grab the bar, and swing from the first one to the second one"), and support is requested ("Can you help me up?") while confidence grows ("I think I got it. Yeah, I am doing it!").

Psychologists along with other educational colleagues (teachers, counselors, social workers, administrators) are more than passive observers of the hope of children and youth. In fact, "caring coaches" (Snyder, 1994) in the schools contribute greatly in helping students and schools become hopeful places for children. In this chapter, we explore the hope that is alive on the playground and the soccer field, and in the classroom and in the music hall. Accordingly, we describe the tenets of hope theory, along with two brief hope scales that can be used with young children and adolescents. Moreover, we summarize the hope research conducted over the last 15 years, along with its implications for use by psychologists and educators.

Hope Theory

Snyder and colleagues (Snyder, 1989, 1994, 2000a, 2000b; Snyder, Harris, et al., 1991) characterized hope as a human strength manifested in capacities to: (a) clearly conceptualize goals (goals thinking), (b) develop the specific strategies to reach those goals (pathways thinking), and (c) initiate and sustain the motivation for using those strategies (agency thinking). Goals-thinking is ubiquitous in youth, but often untamed and unrefined. Pathways and agency thinking are both necessary, but neither by itself is sufficient to sustain successful goal pursuit. As such, pathways and agency thoughts are additive, reciprocal, and positively related, but they are not synonymous.

Whereas other positive psychology constructs such as goal theory (Covington, 2000; Dweck, 1999), optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985, Boman, Russo, Furlong, Lilles, & Jones, 2008), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982), and problem-solving (Heppner & Petersen, 1982) give differentially weighted emphases to the goal itself or to the future-oriented agency- or pathways-related processes, hope theory equally emphasizes all of these goal-pursuit components (Snyder, 1994). For detailed

comparisons of the similarities and differences between hope theory and other theories (e.g., achievement motivation, flow, goal setting, mindfulness, optimism, optimistic explanatory style, problem-solving, resiliency, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and Type A behavior pattern), see Magaletta and Oliver (1999), Peterson (2000), Snyder, (1994), and Snyder, Rand, and Sigmon (2002).

According to hope theory, a goal can be anything that an individual desires to experience, create, get, do, or become. As such, a goal may be a significant, lifelong pursuit (e.g., developing a comprehensive theory of human motivation), or it may be mundane and brief (e.g., getting a ride to school). Goals also may vary in terms of having anywhere from very low to very high perceived probabilities of attainment. On this point, it should be noted that individuals reporting high levels of hope often prefer “stretch goals” that are slightly more difficult than previously attained goals.

High-hope individuals—as compared to low-hope individuals—are more likely to develop alternative pathways, especially when the goals are important and when obstacles appear (Snyder, Harris, et al., 1991; Snyder, Sympson, et al., 1996). However, pathways are useless without the associated agency-inducing cognitions (Snyder, Cheavens, & Michael, 1999; Snyder, Michael, & Cheavens, 1999). These agency thoughts are reflected in the positive self-talk that is exhibited by high-hope individuals (e.g., “I can do this” or “I will not give up”; Snyder, LaPointe, Crowson, & Early, 1998). High-hope people are sustained by their agency thinking when confronted with challenging situations or impediments (Snyder, 1994, 1999). Thus, high-hope more than low-hope people exhort themselves to “take the next step” or to take a long-range goal and separate it into steps (i.e., “stepping”).

Nevertheless, defining hope provides little information about its development. To date, it is clear that hope is built on a foundation of contingency thinking (Snyder, 1994) and that it is socially primed (Snyder, Cheavens, & Sympson, 1997). Recent research (Marques, Pais-Ribeiro, & Lopez, 2007b) supports previous thinking about how caregivers foster hope development in children (Snyder, 1994). Specifically, Marques et al. (2007b) identified the relation between children’s hope and their respective guardians in a sample of 256 Portuguese students. They found a significant and positive correlation, $r = .37$, suggesting that guardian hope may be related to the development of children’s hope.

Measuring Hope

Hope can exist as a relatively stable personality disposition (i.e., a trait), or as a more temporary frame of mind (i.e., a state). Similarly, hopeful thought can occur at various levels of abstraction. For example, one can be hopeful about achieving: (a) goals in general (i.e., a trait); (b) goals in a certain life domain (e.g., school); or (c) one goal in particular. Lopez, Ciarlelli, Coffman, Stone, and Wyatt (2000) provide an in-depth coverage of these latter approaches, including the development and validation of various self-report, observational, and narrative measures of hope.

Snyder, Hoza, et al. (1997) developed the *Children’s Hope Scale* (CHS) as a trait hope measure for children ages 7 through 14 years. The scale is comprised of three agency and three pathways items. An example of agency item is: “I am doing just as well as other kids my age” and a pathways item is: “When I have a problem, I can come up with lots of ways to solve it.” The CHS has demonstrated satisfactory: (a) internal consistencies (overall alphas from .72 to .86); (b) test-retest reliabilities of .71 to .73 over 1 month; and (c) convergent and discriminant validities. Furthermore, the scale has been used with physically and psychologically healthy children from public schools, boys diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, children with various medical problems, children under treatment for cancer or asthma, child burn victims, adolescents with sickle-cell disease, and early adolescents exposed to violence (Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997). Recently, more criterion-related validation work has been done on the scale (Valle, Huebner, & Suldo, 2004) revealing adequate

internal consistency and support for the two-factor structure. Furthermore, a small number of studies have addressed measurement equivalence across particular cultural groups. For example, Marques, Pais-Ribeiro, and Lopez (2007a) found structural and psychometric properties in the Portuguese version of the CHS that are equivalent to the original version, such as similar mean (24.10) and standard deviation (4.01) values, comparable Cronbach alpha of .81 and the identification of a two-factor—pathways and agency—model of hope.

To measure the trait aspect of hope in adolescents (and adults) ages 15 and older, Snyder, Harris, et al. (1991) developed the *Hope Scale*. This scale consists of four items measuring agency, four items measuring pathways, and four distracter items. Having been used with a wide range of samples, the *Hope Scale* has exhibited acceptable (a) internal consistency (overall alphas from .74 to .88; agency alphas of .70 to .84; and pathways alphas of .63 to .86); (b) test-retest reliabilities ranging from .85 for three weeks to .82 for 10 weeks; and (c) concurrent and discriminant validities (Snyder, Harris, et al., 1991).

In the remainder of this chapter, we use “high-hope children” to describe those who have scored in the top third of the CHS or the *Hope Scale* distributions. Conversely, “low-hope children” applies to those who have scored in the bottom third of these scale score distributions. In an absolute sense, however, it should be noted that the children who score around the mean of these self-report instruments are reporting fairly frequent hopeful thinking (e.g., they mark the “a lot of the time” option, which is the fourth point on the six-point response continuum of the CHS).

Research on Hope

Over the last 15 years, researchers have gained a clearer understanding of the relationships between hope and important aspects of students’ lives. In this section, we address areas that are most salient to the activities of school professionals.

Views about the Self and the Future

Correlational findings indicate that a child’s higher hopeful thinking is positively associated with perceived competence and self-esteem or self-worth (Marques, Pais-Ribeiro, & Lopez, 2007c), and negatively associated with symptoms of depression (Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997). Indeed, researchers have reported that lower hope predicts more depressive symptoms (Kwon, 2000), and it does so independently of other coping strategies (Chang & DeSimone, 2001). Additional evidence suggests that children and adolescents (Snyder, Hoza et al., 1997), as well as young adults (Snyder, Harris, et al., 1991) who report higher levels of hope also view themselves in a favorable light and have slight positive self-referential illusions.

Regarding views about the future, those with high hope typically are more optimistic, they focus on success rather than failure when pursuing goals (Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997), they develop many life goals, and they perceive themselves as being capable of solving problems that may arise (Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997). Likewise, recent research suggests that higher hope is linked closely to having a greater perceived purpose in life (Feldman & Snyder, 2005).

Satisfaction with Life and Well-Being

Accumulating evidence suggests that hope is related to life satisfaction and well-being. Some research (e.g., Gilman, Dooley, & Florell, 2006) suggests that hope scores are correlated negatively and significantly with measures of internalizing and externalizing behavior problems, indicators of psychological distress and school maladjustment. In terms of direct relationships with positive

outcomes, in a sample of 367 Portuguese middle-school students, Marques, Pais-Ribeiro, and Lopez (2007c) found that hope is significantly and positively correlated with global life satisfaction and mental health.

Physical Health

Research suggests that hope may play a role in student health. Berg, Rapoff, Snyder, and Belmont (2007) investigated the relationship between hope and adherence to a daily-inhaled steroid regimen among 48 asthma patients ages 8 to 12. Participants completed the CHS, and parents provided demographic and disease-related information. Adherence was measured over 14 days by electronic monitoring of the use of the participant's metered-dose inhaler. A multivariate model with children's hope level in the second step predicted adherence. No other demographic or psychosocial variables were significant predictors of adherence. These results support hope as a significant predictor of student adherence to prescribed medication. To explain hope's role in student health perceptions, low-hope individuals may not believe their medication will provide a pathway to their goals of improved health; or, it may be that taking the medication is difficult or uncomfortable, thus affecting their agency beliefs (Snyder, 2000b). These findings highlight the need to attend to psychosocial predictors of adherence, specifically hope, and may help practitioners target these factors in their efforts to increase adherence among pediatric asthma patients.

Academic Achievement

Students with low hope experience high anxiety, especially in competitive, test-taking situations. The underlying presumption of this anxiety is that such students often do not use feedback from failure experiences in an adaptive manner so as to improve their future performances (Onwuegbuzie, 1998; Onwuegbuzie & Snyder, 2000; Snyder, Sympson, et al., 1996). That is, rather than using such feedback constructively, low-hope individuals are prone to self-doubt and negative ruminations that interfere with attending to the appropriate cues for both inputting (i.e., studying) and outputting information (i.e., test taking; Michael, 2000; Snyder, 1999).

High-hope students, on the other hand, do not derogate their abilities when they "fail," and they do not let such failures affect their self-worth over time. In this regard, the high-hope students make adaptive attributions that the "failure" feedback merely means that they did not try hard enough in a given instance, or that they did not identify the correct studying or test-taking strategies. These emphases on strategies and effort attributions may explain, in part, why hope is not significantly related to native intelligence (Snyder, McDermott, Cook, & Rapoff, 2002), but instead is related consistently to academic achievement (even when correcting for perceived self-worth and ability).

Higher levels of hope are related to greater reported scholastic and social competence, as well as to elevated creativity (Onwuegbuzie, 1999), and they are positively correlated with greater problem-solving abilities and actual academic achievements (Chang, 1998; Lopez, Bouwkamp, Edwards, & Teramoto Pedrotti, 2000; McDermott & Snyder, 1999, 2000; Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997). Not surprisingly, therefore, high-hope students have reported significantly greater academic (and interpersonal) satisfaction than their low-hope counterparts (Chang, 1998).

Given hope's relationship with perceived competence and adaptive coping strategies, it follows that high-hope grade school children have better scores on achievement tests (Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997), and that high-hope high school (Snyder, Harris, et al., 1991) and beginning college students (Snyder, Shorey, Cheavens, Pulvers, Adams, & Wiklund, 2002) have higher overall grade point averages (and fewer drop-outs; see Worrell & Hale, 2001). In these studies, the predictive power of

hope remained significant even when controlling for intelligence (children's studies), prior grades and self-esteem (high school and beginning college student studies), and entrance examination scores (beginning college student study).

Most recently, two teams of researchers have further examined the role of hope in children's academic success. Marques, Pais-Ribeiro, and Lopez (2007d) explored the relationship between hope, satisfaction with life, self-worth, and academic achievement among middle schoolers. Students' academic achievement reports were obtained from their school records. Core subjects (i.e., Portuguese, English, and French languages, History, Geography, Mathematic, Physics-Chemistry, and Natural Sciences) and all subjects (core subjects plus Musical, Physical, Visual and Technological Education) were analyzed. Results found that hope significantly predicted academic achievement for core subjects as well as all subjects, while satisfaction with life and self-worth did not predict variance in academic achievement over and above that accounted for by hope.

The second team of researchers, Rose and Robinson (2007a), explored academic domain-specific hope theory (Campbell & Kwon, 2001; Kwon, 2002; Lopez, Ciarlelli, Coffman, Stone, & Wyatt, 2000) to account for more variance in academic achievement and retention. Specifically, they explored the relationship between academic domain-specific hope and academic achievement among undergraduate and high school students. Their findings indicated that domain-specific academic hope predicted undergraduate final course grades, college GPA, and high school GPA beyond the trait hope scale. A second study (Robinson & Rose, 2007) examined the relationship between general academic hope, math hope, and academic achievement among undergraduate students. Their findings indicated that general academic hope predicted college GPA and final course grades in introductory psychology courses, but math hope predicted final course grades in math classes beyond academic hope. These studies provide evidence that measures of hope may have greater predictive validity when matched to the specific academic domains each scale is intended to assess.

Subsequent research has attempted to distinguish hope from other similar motivation frameworks in predicting student achievement. Rose and Robinson (2007b) found that academic hope was found to predict academic achievement beyond demographics, self-efficacy (Sherer, Maddux, Mercandante, et al., 1982), self-regulation (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990), goal orientation (Elliot & McGregor, 2001), and optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985) across an undergraduate population and a working-class, ethnically diverse, high school population. The extent to which academic hope predicts achievement beyond these motivation frameworks provides the divergent validity needed to further hope research, and to address critiques made about the lack of empirical evidence for the distinction between hope and constructs that predict similar outcomes (Aspinwall & Leaf, 2002; Tennen, Affleck, & Tennen, 2002).

Athletic Achievement

Higher hope has been positively related to superior athletic (and academic performances) among student athletes (Curry, Maniar, Sondag, & Sandstedt, 1999; Curry, Snyder, Cook, Ruby, & Rehm, 1997), even after statistically controlling for variance related to their natural athletic abilities. For example, Curry et al. (1997) reported that high-hope student athletes performed significantly better in their track and field events than their low-hope counterparts, with trait and state hope scale scores together accounting for 56% of the variance in subsequent track performances.

Based on their initial findings relating hope to sports, Curry et al. (1999) have begun a class at the University of Wyoming to raise students' levels of hope. After taking this class, students have increased confidence related to their athletic ability, academic achievement, and self-esteem (see positive follow-up reported by Curry and Snyder, 2000). In the only other reported study

investigating the relationship between hope and athletics, high—as compared to low-hope—children have reported being less likely to consider quitting their sports (Brown, Curry, Hagstrom, & Sandstedt, 1999).

Interpersonal Relationships

When hopeful thinking is stymied, interpersonal struggles may result. For instance, ruminations block adaptive goal-related thinking, and cause increased frustration and aggression against others (Collins & Bell, 1997; Snyder, 1994; Snyder & Feldman, 2000). In addition, the interpersonal problems of others can translate into lowered hope for children. On this point, children who have witnessed family members or friends who have been victims of interpersonal violence have shown lower levels of hope than children who have not seen such violence (Hinton-Nelson, Roberts, & Snyder, 1996). Conversely, higher hope has been correlated positively with social competence (Barnum, Snyder, Rapoff, Mani, & Thompson, 1998), pleasure in getting to know others, enjoyment in frequent interpersonal interactions (Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997), and interest in the goal pursuits of others (Snyder, Cheavens, & Sympson, 1997).

Individual Differences Related to Sex and Race

The findings consistently reveal no differences in hope between girls and boys, or young women and men. Further, the posited two-factor structure has been supported in at least 10 studies across various cultures. Moreover, the differences in the hope scores of children and young adults across ethnic groups have been examined, and it appears that while not statistically significant, Caucasians tend to report fewer obstacles (e.g., oppression, prejudice) in their lives than their ethnic minority counterparts. However, minority groups have been shown to produce higher average hope scores than Caucasians (see McDermott et al., 1997; Munoz-Dunbar, 1993). To date, few studies have examined the relative levels of hope among gifted students, or students with learning disorders or physical disabilities. Hope research is needed among these populations.

Enhancing Hope in Students

As we have noted previously, even children and youth with average scores on one of our scales have considerable hope in an absolute sense. Thus, based on our sampling, the good news is that the majority of American children typically describe their thinking as being filled with considerable hope. Furthermore, even if a student has a less than an average amount of hope, it still can be parleyed into a level of hopeful thinking that makes a positive difference in her or his life. A small amount of hope can be cultivated to bolster agency and pathways perceptions that support goal attainment. Hence, we propose that psychologists and education professionals should use and refine techniques for enhancing hope in all children. Table 4.1 lists some of the basic steps associated with hope enhancement.

When working with individual students, psychologists may use a variety of standard testing instruments aimed at tapping interests and aptitudes. Added to these usual instruments, we suggest that school psychologists consider giving the CHS for the younger children and the *Hope Scale* for those who are age 15 and older. Although these scales have been used mostly for research to date, their reliabilities and validation support indicate that they may be used with appropriate precautions to measure the hopeful thinking of students in actual, applied school settings. In this regard, we suggest that attention be given to the levels of the specific agency and pathways scores. For example, it may be that the student has a full low-hope pattern (i.e., low agency *and* low pathways

Table 4.1 Steps to enhancing hope in students

Administration of the Children's or Adult Hope Scale (trait)	—The first step in this process is to have the student complete the appropriate measure of hope. The psychologist will then tally the total score and compute subscale scores for both pathway and agency.
Learning about Hope	—Once a baseline hope score is determined, the psychologist can then discuss hope theory with the student and its relevance to the change process and to positive outcomes.
Structuring Hope for the Student	—In this step, the student will create a list of important life components, determine which areas are most important and discuss the level of satisfaction within those areas.
Creating Positive and Specific Goals	—Using the important life components identified above, the student and psychologist work together to create workable goals that are both positive and specific. These goals should be salient to the student and attainable. Additionally, the student will develop multiple pathways for each goal and identify agency thoughts for each goal.
Practice Makes Perfect	—Once the student and psychologist have agreed upon these goals, the student should visualize and verbalize the steps to reach their goals. With this practice, the student and psychologist can collaborate on the most effective pathways and the agency behind the goals.
Checking In	—Students will incorporate these goals, pathways and agency into their life and report back to the psychologist on the process of goal attainment. Again, collaboration can occur to adjust or modify any disparities in actions or thinking that may hinder the successful achievement of their desired goals.
Review and Recycle	—This process is cyclical and requires continual assessment by both the student and psychologist. Once the student has grasped the concepts of hope theory, however, the student can then assume the bulk of responsibility in the implementation of hope theory to unique life experiences.

scores); or, more happily, the student may have the full high-hope pattern (i.e., high agency *and* high pathways). Additionally, the student may have a mixed pattern of high agency/low pathways or low agency/high pathways. In these mixed patterns, attention needs to turn to raising the particular hope component that is low.

Students with the least hope tend to benefit most from hope interventions (Bouwkamp, 2001), however, our research shows that virtually all students raise their hope levels when taking part in school hope programs (Lopez, Bouwkamp, et al., 2000). That is to say, mental health and education professionals may want to develop group-based approaches for raising the hopeful thinking of all students, irrespective of their levels of trait or school-related hope. Likewise, for those students who are identified as having obviously low levels of hope, special approaches may be tailored to raise their hopeful thinking.

In applying hope theory to work in the schools, we aggregate our suggestions into three categories—those involving goals, pathways, and agency. These suggestions, which we discuss next, can be applied in individual or group settings. See McDermott and Snyder (1999, 2000) or Snyder et al. (2002) for more detailed information about imparting goal setting as well as pathways and agency thinking to students.

Helping Students to Set Goals

The foundation of imparting hope rests on helping students set goals. The goals, of course, must be calibrated to the student's age and specific circumstances. Among many adolescents, who often need encouragement to set goals in various life domains, sometimes these goals relate to interpersonal matters such as wanting to feel happier or meeting new people, whereas at other times they may involve selecting a career or deciding whether to go to college. By helping adolescents to select several goals, they can turn to their other important goals when they face a profound blockage in one goal.

If the school-based psychologist first gives instruments that measure values, interests, and abilities, then specific goals can be designed for each given student. Likewise, the student can be asked

about recent important goals that are quite meaningful and pleasurable. These recent activities then may be used to generate an appropriate future goal. Once the student, with the help of the mental health or education professional has produced a list of goals, the student then should rank the importance of these goals. In this process, the student learns important skills about how to prioritize goals. Some students, particularly those low in hope, do not prioritize their goals (Snyder et al., 2005); instead, they have the maladaptive practice of impulsively wanting to go after any or all goals that come to their minds.

Assuming students have been helped to establish desired goals, the next step is to teach them how to set clear markers for such goals. These markers enable the students to track progress toward the goals. A common goal, but one in our view that is quite counterproductive, is the vague “getting good grades.” This and similar goals are sufficiently lacking in clarity that the student cannot know when they are attained (Pennebaker, 1989). Moreover, related research shows that abstract goals actually are more difficult to reach than well-specified goals (Emmons, 1992). Thus, we advocate concrete markers such as, “to study an hour each day in preparation for my next biology exam.” With this latter goal, students not only can tell when they have reached it, but they also can experience a sense of success.

Another important aspect of helping students is to encourage them to establish approach goals in which they try to move toward getting something accomplished. This is in contrast to avoidance goals, in which students try to prevent something from happening (Snyder, Feldman, Taylor, Schroeder, & Adams III, 2000). Avoidance goals work to maintain the status quo, but they are not very reinforcing to students. We have found that high-hope students are more likely to use approach goals in their lives, whereas low-hope students tend to use avoidance goals. Thus, students should be helped to abandon avoidance goal setting and to embrace the more productive approach goal setting (Snyder et al., 2002).

High-hope people also appear to be interested in other people’s goals, in addition to their own. Accordingly, we see advantages in instructing students to think in terms of “we” goals in addition to their own “me” goals (Snyder, Cheavens, & Sympson, 1997). For example, encouraging students to help each other on difficult math problems can create a sense of shared accomplishment while deemphasizing competition. This has the benefit of helping students to get along with their peers, and it makes for easier and more fulfilling interpersonal transactions. Related research (e.g., Batson, 1991) indicates that people who help others fulfill natural human altruism needs, and they thus have the pleasure of feeling good about themselves as they think about and attend to the welfare of others (Snyder, 1994).

Helping Students to Develop Pathways Thinking

Perhaps the most common strategy for enhancing pathways thinking is to help students to break down large goals into smaller subgoals. The idea of such “stepping” is to take a long-range goal and separate it into steps that are undertaken in a logical, one-at-a-time sequence. Low-hope students tend to have the greatest difficulty in formulating subgoals (Snyder, Cheavens, & Sympson, 1997). They often hold onto counterproductive and inaccurate beliefs that goals are to be undertaken in an “all at once” manner. Likewise, low-hope students may not have been given much instruction by their caregivers, teachers, or other adult figures in the planning process more generally. Such planning can be learned, however, and with practice in “stepping” students can gain confidence in the fact that they can form subgoals to any of the major goals in their lives.

Perhaps a student’s deficiency is not in stepping per se, but rather involves difficulty in their identifying several routes to a desired goal. Blockage to desired goals happens frequently in life and, lacking alternative pathways to those goals, a student can become very dejected and give up.

This may explain, in part, the previous research findings on low-hope students' high probabilities of dropping out of school (Snyder, Shorey, Cheavens, et al., 2002). Thus, we advocate teaching students to have several routes to their desired goals—even before they set out to reach their goals. Likewise, students need to learn that if one pathway does not work, they then have other routes to try.

Additionally, it is crucial for the production of future pathways—as well as for the maintenance of agency—that students learn not to attribute a blockage to a perceived lack of talent. Instead, we believe that a more productive attribution when encountering impediments is to think of that information as identifying the path that does not work—thereby helping one to search productively for another route that may work.

Helping Students to Enhance Their Agency

Although it may seem obvious that students would select goals that are important to them, such goals actually may reflect those imposed by their peers, parents, or teachers. As such, the student does not obtain an accompanying sense of motivation in pursuing these imposed goals. Related to this point, research indicates that the pleasure in meeting externally derived goals is fleeting (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Furthermore, when students lack personal goals that fill their needs, their intrinsic motivations and performances are undermined (Conti, 2000). Thus, goals that are built on internal, personal standards are more energizing than those based on external standards.

Helping students to set “stretch” goals also is invigorating for them. These stretch goals are based on a child or adolescent's previous performances and personally established more complex goals. Stretch goals thus can enhance intrinsic motivation and perseverance when progress is hindered.

Often individuals do not realize the impact their self-talk can have on their goal attaining abilities. Having students keep a diary of their ongoing self-talk (via a small notebook or audio tape recorder) can be helpful in determining if their internal dialogues are high (e.g., “I can ...” and “I'll keep at it ...”) or low in agency (e.g., “I won't ...” and “I can't ...”). Students sometimes are amazed at how negative they are in such self-talk. Students of various ages can be cruel to each other, but they also can be extremely critical of themselves. As such, there are plenty of sources for these negative self-scripts. We suggest that students who have low-hope internal dialogues be taught to dispute their negative, hypercritical self-talk. Teachers and mental health professionals can emphasize to such students how they can replace the ongoing self-criticism with more realistic, positive, and productive thoughts. This approach requires repeated practice before it begins to work, so it is important to inform students of this fact so as to lessen their needless discouragement.

Hopeful children often draw upon their own memories of positive experiences to keep them buoyant during difficult times. In this way, they tell themselves their own uplifting stories, or they create their own positive personal narratives (Snyder et al., 2002). In contrast to high-hope children, low-hope children may not have a base of positive memories to sustain them. These children, especially when in grade school, can be helped to create their own personal narratives. Telling them stories and providing them books that portray how other children have succeeded or overcome adversity can give low-hope children a model on which to begin building their own sense of agency. For suggested children's books, listed by specific hope-related topics (e.g., adoption, alcohol, anger, arguing, attachment, communication, confidence, crying, and death), we refer the reader to the appendices in *The Psychology of Hope: You Can Get There From Here* (Snyder, 1994) and *Hope for the Journey: Helping Children Through the Good Times and Bad* (Snyder et al., 2002) and to Table 4.2, which summarizes daily strategies that can be used to increase hopeful thinking. Yet another means of raising hope in children, is to see that they become involved in team-related activities. In this regard, engaging children in exciting activities that involve teamwork has been found to be effective in raising their levels of hope (Robitschek, 1996).

Table 4.2 Checklist for enhancing pathways and agency in students**Pathways**

DO

- Break a long-range goal into steps or subgoals.
- Begin your pursuit of a distant goal by concentrating on the first subgoal.
- Practice making different routes to your goals and select the best one.
- Mentally rehearse scripts for what you would do should you encounter a blockage.
- In you need a new skill to reach your goal, learn it.
- Cultivate two-way friendships where you can give and get advice.

DON'T

- Think you can reach your big goals all at once.
- Be too hurried in producing routes to your goals.
- Be rushed to select the best or first route to your goal.
- Over think with the idea of finding one perfect route to your goal.
- Conclude you are lacking in talent or no good when initial strategy fails.
- Get into friendships where you are praised for not coming up with solutions to your problems.

Agency

DO

- Tell yourself that you have chosen the goal, so it is your job to go after it.
- Learn to talk to yourself in positive voices (e.g., I can do this!).
- Recall previous successful goal pursuits, particularly when in a jam.
- Be able to laugh at yourself, especially if you encounter some impediment to your goal pursuits.
- Find a substitute goal when the original goal is blocked solidly.
- Enjoy the process of getting to your goals and do not focus only on the final attainment.

DON'T

- Allow yourself to be surprised repeatedly by roadblocks that appear in your life.
- Try to squelch totally any internal put-down thoughts because this may only make them stronger.
- Get impatient if your willful thinking doesn't increase quickly.
- Conclude that things never will change, especially if you are down.
- Engage in self-pity when faced with adversity.
- Stick to a blocked goal when it is truly blocked.
- Constantly ask yourself how are doing to evaluate your progress toward a goal.

Enhancing Hope in Teachers

School-based psychologists typically focus on facilitating students' classroom learning and adjustment through direct intervention and consultation with teachers. Here, we use the term "teacher" to apply to those who provide education in academics and sports. As such, our recommendations should be useful for classroom teachers and coaches. In fact, we view these terms interchangeably in the sense that all teaching involves the coaching of students.

Just as young children develop hope through learning to trust in the predictability of cause-and-effect interactions with parents and caregivers, so too do school children build hope through learning to trust in the ordered predictability and consistency of their interactions with their teachers. By being firm, fair, and consistent, teachers engender hope among their students. Along with such order, we believe that the teacher needs to establish an atmosphere in which students are responsible for their actions. This is not to suggest that total obedience to authority is necessary or even desirable, but rather that students must be held to reasonably high standards reference.

With order and responsibility having been established, a teacher then can plant the seeds of trust in the classroom. Learning means taking risks, and students will not do so unless they feel assured that the teacher will respect them and refrain from demeaning them—even if their performance falls short of expectations. Whether it is in grade school or junior and senior high school, trust opens the doors to the establishment of growth-inducing stretch goals wherein students build upon previous knowledge and insights.

High-hope teachers are very clear about their objectives, both in the sense of how to master the material in each learning unit and how to attain good grades; moreover, these teachers take care to convey these objectives to their students (Snyder, Lopez, Shorey, et al., 2003). This may entail having to reinforce any written instructions orally. When goals are made concrete, understandable, and are broken down into subgoals, both the teachers and students will be more likely to see growth. Likewise, we would suggest that school-based psychologists should work with teachers to focus on long-range as opposed to short-term goals (Snyder & Feldman, 2000). Children in 21st century America are focused on short-term goals, reference, and immediate gratification, but long-term goals are crucial for productive and satisfying lives.

Beyond setting clear and specific educational goals, hopeful teachers emphasize preparation and planning; accordingly, learning tasks should be organized in an easily comprehended format. It also is helpful to devise alternate exercises for use if a primary approach does not work. No matter what the exercise, however, teachers should avoid placing an overemphasis on “winning” (e.g., an exercise where one student is singled out and rewarded for the correct answer). Instead, attempts should be made to create an atmosphere where students are more concerned with expending effort and mastering the information rather than a sole focus on obtaining good outcomes (e.g., high grades or stellar athletic records; Dweck, 1999). This atmosphere is encouraged through a give and take process between teachers and students.

We believe that school-based psychologists are well positioned in school structures to be vigilant for the signs of teacher burnout and the loss of personal hopes that are all too common for teachers and coaches (Snyder et al., 2002). To reach this objective, teachers should be encouraged to remain engaged and invested in pursuing their own important interests and life goals outside of the classroom.

Ripples of Hope in Today’s Schools

Hope can flow from one person to another’s life, thereby influencing how the latter person sees the world and pursues goals. School-based psychologists can maximize the benefits of the ripple effects of hope in students and teachers through consultation and direct interventions (as discussed previously). Psychologists, in collaboration with the other professionals in the school, also can raise hope in a school building or a school district by facilitating the hope contagions that naturally occur through individual or groups achievements. In this section, we share some ideas about maximizing hopeful thinking in school contexts.

The elimination of various forms of “barriers” is essential for spreading hope in each educational community. That is, through assessment and consultation, psychologists can identify the impediments that may be hindering students’ academic performance and growth (e.g., learning problems, behavioral problems); moreover, they may generate alternate pathways for circumventing such obstacles. Additionally, psychologists may talk with students, teachers, coaches, and staff members to find any physical or psychological barriers that they may be experiencing. Included in such barriers would be schedule problems, difficulties stemming from the physical layout of the facilities, lack of resources, parental disinterest, stressful societal events and health-related epidemics.

Facilitating goal setting also is part of a psychologist’s acumen. Hope can be promoted by connecting one student’s goal (e.g., a child with behavior problems who wants to learn how to play chess) with another student’s goal (e.g., a socially awkward student who is good at chess, but likes working one-on-one). We would encourage psychologists to foster interdependence among diverse sets of students, much in the spirit of Aronson’s “jigsaw” approach. Within the jigsaw cooperative learning technique, students are divided into diverse groups in which each member of a group receives a portion of material to be learned, which must then be taught to group members. Within

each group, all students are dependent on one another and each student is considered an expert on some aspect of the material (Aronson, Bridgeman, & Geffner, 1978; see online at www.jigsaw.org/steps.htm). In this regard, hope appears to be a cooperation-linked concept by its very nature, and efforts repeatedly should be made to facilitate such linkages. Psychologists also can help groups of students or members of an Individual Education Program team set common, attainable goals. The pursuit of shared goals can positively galvanize a group. In this sense, team activities often have inherent hope-inducing repercussions for their participants. Likewise, team activities engendering school pride, when not taken to an extreme, can produce hope.

School-based psychologists who are facile at eliminating barriers and are committed to helping students and teachers pursue meaningful goals become models of healthy goal pursuit. Often, however, the sheer number of institutional obstacles may limit the time that psychologists spend in being hopeful models. Everyone's hopes can grow more easily, however, when there are common goals aimed at lessening the number and magnitudes of obstacles in school environments. As key facilitators in this process, we view psychologists as "barrier busters" who help to make the attainment of a variety of educational goals more likely in our schools.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we presented the fundamentals of hope theory to our school-based psychology colleagues. It probably is accurate to say that engendering hope already is a part of what school-based psychologists do. As such, the present hope theory ideas may help psychologists to do an even better job of molding schools into arenas where meaningful goals are set, where the parents, teachers, and students know how to reach those goals, and where everyone involved has the requisite motivations to try hard. *Hopeful thinking can empower and guide a lifetime of learning*, and psychologists help to keep this lesson alive.

Note

1. Portions of this chapter first appeared as an article: Snyder, C. R., Lopez, S. J., Shorey, H. L., Rand, K. L., & Feldman, D. B. (2003). Hope theory, measurements, and applications to school psychology. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *18*, 122–139.

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5

Optimism and the School Context

PETER BOMAN, MICHAEL J. FURLONG, IAN SHOCHET,
ELENA LILLES, AND CAMILLE JONES

A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees
the opportunity in every difficulty

(Winston Churchill)

Optimism has its modern roots in philosophy dating back to the 17th century in the writings of philosophers such as Descartes and Voltaire (Domino & Conway, 2001). Previous to these philosophical writings, the concept of optimism was revealed in the teachings of many of the great spiritual traditions such as Buddhism and Christianity (Miller, Richards, & Keller, 2001). It has been reported that people with spiritual faith tend to have a more optimistic and hopeful outlook on life (Myers, 2000). This spiritual connection has provided the basis for research that sought to distinguish the differences between the positive psychological constructs of optimism and hope. Optimism has been defined as a general expectation for good outcomes in the future (Scheier & Carver, 1985), whereas hope has been defined as a set of cognitive processes that were directed at attaining specific goals (see the Lopez et al., chapter 6, this volume; Snyder, Sympson, Michael, & Cheavens, 2001). Recent research supports this distinction (Bryant & Cvengeos, 2004).

In the 20th century, optimism research involving youth focused on its association with academic achievement and attainment (Gough, 1953; Teahan, 1958). These early studies examined optimism as a personality trait emphasizing its association with future time orientation, which characterized high-performing students. As research progressed, optimism became defined in juxtaposition to pessimism, sometimes conceptualized as a bipolar unidimensional construct and others as two related, but separate constructs (Garber, 2000). Contemporary models (Scheier & Carver, 1985; Seligman, 1991) have increasingly focused on distinguishing optimism–pessimism as a general dispositional orientation, as described by expectancy theory, and a coping explanatory process, as described by explanatory style theory. Optimism as an expectancy is “a sense of confidence or doubt about the attainability of a goal value” (Carver & Scheier, 1999, p. 183). From the expectancy perspective, optimism and pessimism are forward looking, proactive dispositional tendencies. Alternatively, the explanatory perspective maintains that optimism and pessimism are immediate, reactive tendencies that are used to explain the cause of events, and these tendencies are associated with a general coping response. Thus, expectancy is a generalized belief about goal attainment, and explanatory style describes a predominant process of cognitive mediation.

The following sections (a) review the expectancy and explanatory style perspectives of optimism, (b) summarize the various benefits associated with high optimism, (c) summarize instruments that can be used in school contexts to assess optimism with youth, and (d) conclude by showing how school-based prevention and intervention programs are using optimism as an organizing theme.

Optimism and Pessimism as Generalized Expectancy

There are no universally agreed upon definitions for dispositional optimism and pessimism (Chang, Maydeu-Olivares, & D’Zurilla, 1997). However, researchers have offered related definitions that involve biases in generalized positive or negative expectations for future events (Peterson & Bossio, 1991). Optimism has been defined as the tendency to expect positive outcomes (Kassinove & Sukhodolsky, 1995), the belief that positive events exceed negative ones (Yates, Yates, & Lippett, 1995), or a tendency to look on the bright side of things (Silva, Pais-Ribeiro, & Cardoso, 2004). Conversely, pessimism has been defined as failure expectancy (Kassinove & Sukhodolsky, 1995), anticipating bad outcomes, or a tendency to take a gloomy view of things (Scheier & Carver, 1985).

Both optimism and pessimism have been associated with the coping strategies that individuals use (Chang, 1996; Helton, Dember, Warm, & Matthews, 1999; Scheier, Weintraub, & Carver, 1986). Optimism is linked with adaptive strategies such as problem solving, obtaining social support, and looking for any positive aspects in stressful situations. In a study using stressful work tasks, optimists were problem focused and more task engaged, whereas pessimists were emotion focused and diverted themselves from the task (Helton et al., 1999).

Scheier et al. (1986) found that optimism not only related to problem-focused coping in undergraduate students, but also to the use of positive reframing and a tendency to accept the reality of the situation. Optimism was also negatively correlated with the use of denial and attempts to distance oneself from a problem. Pessimism, on the other hand, was related to maladaptive strategies, namely, problem avoidance, denial, withdrawal, and the failure to complete goals when a stressor intruded.

The above definitions and strategies suggest ways in which overly optimistic individuals and overly pessimistic individuals perceive the world. Optimists assume over time that good things will happen, whereas pessimists believe that bad things will happen (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Optimists also have expectations of positive outcomes that enable them to restore their efforts to reach a goal when confronted by obstacles (Puskar, Sereika, Lamb, Tusaie-Mumford, & McGuinness, 1999; Scheier et al., 1986). In contrast, pessimists tend to give up in the face of challenges and can develop depressive or even suicidal tendencies (Kassinove & Sukhodolsky, 1995; O’Connor & Cassidy, 2007). Overall, optimism and pessimism can be expected to play an important role in generalized outcomes or in situations where the individual has no previous experience.

Optimism and Pessimism as a Cognitive Explanatory Style

Seligman (1991) advanced another major theory that incorporated constructs of optimism and pessimism. This perspective emphasized the role of cognitive explanatory style and emerged from learned helplessness research that focuses on individuals with depression (Seligman, 1975). Learned helplessness refers to expectations that lead individuals to conclude there is nothing they can do to help or control future outcomes. This expectation develops from a person’s experiences with uncontrollable events where attempted responses did not help. The belief that one lacks control leads to lowered response initiation and persistence (motivational deficits), an inability to perceive new opportunities for control (cognitive deficits), and lowered self-esteem and sadness (emotional deficits; Seligman, 1975).

The theory of learned helplessness, however, was critiqued on several grounds (Nolen-Hoeksema, Girgus, & Seligman, 1986; Seligman, 1991). First, not all vulnerable people became helpless and, of those who did, some never recovered while others responded positively almost immediately. Second, some people only gave up in the immediate situation they faced, whereas others gave up in new situations. Third, some people blamed themselves for their circumstance and others blamed someone or something in the surrounding environment. Seligman and other researchers turned to Weiner's attribution theory to address outcomes that learned helplessness theory did not predict (Seligman, 1991).

Weiner's attribution theory posited that certain causal interpretations of other individual's behaviors or events largely determine both emotional and behavioral reactions to achievement or failure (Weiner et al., 1971). These include whether the cause is viewed as internal or external to the person, its perception as stable or permanent over time, and the degree to which the other views it as controllable or uncontrollable.

Drawing from Weiner's theory, Seligman and colleagues revised their original learned helplessness theory to state that individuals have a habitual explanation style, not just a single explanation for each discreet failure experience (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Seligman, 1991). To this end, they added a third dimension—labeled pervasiveness—to Weiner's ascribed permanent and personal dimensions (Seligman et al., 1984; Seligman, Kamen, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1988). Further, they shifted the focus from achievement to mental illness and therapy (e.g., Reivich, Gillham, Chaplin, & Seligman, 2005). These modifications became the basis of explanatory style theory (Seligman, Reivich, Jaycox, & Gillham, 1995).

Explanatory style theory uses optimism and pessimism constructs in relation to how people attribute or explain the cause of events to themselves (Seligman, 1991). In essence, youths can differ in their manner of personal attributions; that is, their style of explanation. Those with pessimistic explanatory styles are more inclined to use *permanent* ("It always happens this way"), *personal* ("It's my fault"), and *pervasive* ("It affects everything I do") dimensions of causal attribution when faced with hardship, setbacks, challenges, or stressful circumstances. Youths with optimistic explanatory styles are more inclined to perceive setbacks as only temporary, not being their fault, and limited to the immediate incident. Conversely, youths pessimistic explanatory styles see a good event as being temporary, not their fault, and only an isolated incident. These explanatory styles are influenced by the modeling behavior of parents and other significant adults (Seligman et al., 1995).

Comparing Expectancy and Explanatory Style Perspectives

Scheier and Carver (1992) reported several studies where explanatory style did not correlate strongly with dispositional optimism and pessimism. Overall, correlations have tended not to be more than .20. However, Hjelle, Belongia, and Nesser (1996) found a correlation of .41 with college students, and a study of men with HIV symptoms reported a correlation of .25 (Tomaskowsky, Lumley, Markowitz, & Frank, 2001). Scheier and Carver believe the limited amount of conceptual overlap is due to the different foci of the two theories; that is, causal explanations for specific events opposed to generalized expectations for the future. Garber (2000) suggests that "there is a clear conceptual and empirical difference between attributions and expectancies" (p. 303), but also that attributions may predict expectations. That is, once a person explains the cause of an event, expectations maintain the positive or negative affect associated with that event.

Despite the conceptual issues between explanatory style and dispositional optimism and pessimism, studies have revealed a relation between both perspectives and depression (Chang, 1996; Chang, Maydeu-Olivares, & D'Zurilla, 1997; Garber, Weiss, & Shanley, 1993; Nolen-Hoeksema, Girgus, & Seligman, 1986; Peterson, Vaidya, Kowalski, & Leary, 2004; Scheier & Carver, 1992).

Overall, research indicates that people with pessimistic explanatory styles are more likely to become depressed following a negative event. On the other hand, those with a pessimistic disposition are more likely to become depressed because of a negative expectation of an event. However, as Garber (2000) suggests, more research is needed to examine the roles of both explanatory style and expectancy in the development of depression and other mental health outcomes.

Distinction Between Optimism and Pessimism

Despite the generally accepted view that optimism and pessimism play a role in coping and adjustment, there are two opposing views about how they should be measured (Chang et al., 1997; Fischer & Leitenberg, 1986; Myers & Steed, 1999; Olason & Roger, 2001). Some researchers consider optimism and pessimism to be a single bipolar continuum. Scheier and Carver's (1985) unidimensional view of optimism and pessimism has tended to be the dominant view, contending that a person is either optimistic or pessimistic, but cannot be both.

Not all researchers see an optimist as being totally devoid of pessimism; both constructs are mutually dependent and can coexist within a person. Several studies reveal optimism and pessimism as yielding two separable, but correlated factors (e.g., Chang et al., 1997; Fischer & Leitenberg, 1986). However, Lai and Yue (2000) found support for this partially dependent view among Mainland Chinese students only, in comparison to youth from Hong Kong. This finding may be suggestive of the Western influence in Hong Kong compared to Mainland China, that is, the duality of optimism and pessimism may be more reflective of Eastern rather than Western cultural influences. Further support for the partially dependent model comes from Chang and Bridewell's (1998) study of undergraduate students, which reported that those who endorsed more irrational beliefs (e.g., "I absolutely should not have made obvious mistakes in my life") were found to be significantly more pessimistic but not necessarily less optimistic.

The effects of optimism have also been suggested as an artifact of personality variables such as neuroticism, self-mastery, or trait anxiety (Marshall & Lang, 1990; Robbins, Spence, & Clark, 1991). These studies have challenged the notion that optimism is a stand-alone construct. However, Scheier, Carver, and Bridges (1994) have refuted these assertions, showing the relationship between optimism and depression remained significant even when the effects of trait anxiety, self-mastery, and self-esteem were statistically controlled. Myers and Steed (1999) and Chang (1998a) also found that neuroticism did not account for the effects of optimism on outcome variables. It is also noted that the reported relationships between optimism and certain personality variables (particularly neuroticism) reflect what Wallston (1994) calls "cockeyed optimists"—people who believe everything will turn out right but who will not do anything to achieve their desired outcomes. These types of "optimists" do not have a grasp on reality but live in a world of illusion. In effect, it may be a misnomer to even suggest they are "optimistic" by any formal definition.

Measurement of Optimism

Expectancy Optimism Instruments

The Life Orientation Test (LOT; Scheier & Carver, 1985) and the Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R; Scheier et al., 1994) are the most widely used assessments of dispositional optimism and pessimism among adults. The LOT and LOT-R are designed to be a unidimensional measure of optimism in that the pessimism scores are reversed and added to the optimism scores. The LOT has 12 items, four of which are fillers. Four items are positively worded (e.g., "I always look on the bright side of things") and four are negatively worded (e.g., "If something can go wrong for me it will"). The LOT-R has 10 items with three positively and three negatively worded items plus

four fillers. It was felt that there was some overlap in the items of the LOT so some of these were removed (Chang, 2001). Three other scales, the Expanded Life Orientation Test (ELOT; Chang et al., 1997), the Generalized Expectancy for Success Scale (Fibell & Hale, 1978), and the Optimism and Pessimism Scale (Dember, Martin, Hummer, Howe, & Melton, 1989), have been developed, but have not been used as extensively in research.

The ELOT has been used in research with adolescents (Boman & Yates, 2001; Boman, Smith, & Curtis, 2003), but more recently, the Youth Life Orientation Test (YLOT) was developed more specifically for use with children and adolescents (Ey et al., 2005; Taylor et al., 2004). The YLOT is a 16-item self-report measure created to better evaluate optimism and pessimism in school-age children. Items from the LOT-R were reworded to be developmentally appropriate for children. Additional items that reflect positive and negative expectations were added to the scale yielding a total of seven optimism items, seven pessimism items, and two filler items, all on a 4-point Likert scale—children respond using on a scale of 0 to 3 (0 = “not true for me” to 3 = “true for me”). The scale yields three scores: optimism, pessimism, and a total optimism score. The initial administration of the instrument reported internal consistencies in the acceptable range, as noted by alpha coefficients (optimism = .70; pessimism = .78; and total optimism = .83). However, the alphas were acceptable among children in grades 3–6, but the alphas for the first and second graders were unacceptable.

Assessing Optimism and Pessimism as an Explanatory Style

Explanatory style is most commonly assessed among adults by using the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ; Peterson et al., 1982). The instrument measures personal, permanent, and pervasive dimensions in relation to specific events after initially asking the individual to attribute a cause for a hypothesized event. Several versions of the ASQ have been designed to target specific audiences or settings (Dykema et al., 1996; Furnham, Sadka, & Brewin, 1992; Lieber, 1997; Mayer-son, 1991; Norman, 1988; Peterson & Villanova, 1988; Whitley, 1991). For example, Boman et al. (2003) developed a version for use with high school students that utilized 12 hypothetical negative events, which reflected situations likely to occur within the school context (e.g., “You fail a test or an examination”). Students were asked to write one main cause for the event and then recorded permanent (“How likely is it that this cause will continue to affect you?”) and pervasive (“Is this cause something that just affects failing a test or does it affect other areas of your life?”) responses only. The Cronbach alphas were strong at .90 and .93, respectively.

The Children’s Attributional Style Questionnaire (CASQ; Kaslow et al., 1978) is the most widely used measure of explanatory style for children (Reivich & Gillham, 2003). The CASQ is a 48-item forced-choice questionnaire designed with the same structure as the ASQ, but altered to be developmentally appropriate for children as young as 8-years-old. Each item consists of a hypothetical scenario (24 positive and 24 negative) followed by two statements explaining why the event happened. Children are asked to choose the statement that best explains why the event took place. For example, with the item “you get an ‘A’ on a test” the child is asked to choose between because “I am smart” or because “I am good in the subject that the test was in.” Items were designed to measure the attributional or explanatory style of the child (internal versus external, global versus specific, and stable versus unstable). The CASQ yields three scores: positive composite score, negative composite score, and overall composite score. Psychometric examinations of the CASQ show moderate internal consistency for all three composite scores (.47–.73) for positive scores, (.42–.67) for negative score, and .62 for the overall composite scores. In addition, there was moderate stability with six-month test-retest reliabilities of .71 for positive scores and .66 for negative scores, and 12-month stability of .35 for the overall composite score (Thompson, Kaslow, Weiss, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1998).

It is noted that the length of the CASQ is not always ideal for limited administration time or when assessing children with short attention spans. In response to this concern, Kaslow and Nolen-Hoeksema (1991) developed The Children's Attributional Style Questionnaire-Revised (CASQ-R), which reduced the number of items to 24. The measure was designed to be a more user-friendly assessment, catering to children's short attention spans. Thompson and colleagues evaluated the psychometric structure of the revised measure against the original CASQ (Thompson et al., 1998). The internal consistency of the CASQ-R revealed no age or gender differences; however, the CASQ-R was more internally consistent for Caucasian students than African American students. No gender, race, or age differences were found in the stability of the CASQ-R over the 6-month period (Thompson et al., 1998). Overall, results comparing the CASQ-R and the CASQ show that the CASQ-R is psychometrically sound and is appropriate when time constraints are an issue. However, if time allows the CASQ would be the measure of choice.

Optimism Related Correlates

Research attention to optimism has been fueled by interest in its relationships with clinical, medical, psychological, and educational practice. It has also been suggested that optimism assists in the development of resilience in children (Seligman et al., 1995); that is, the tendency for a child to spring back, rebound or recoil from adverse situations (Russo & Boman, 2007). Generally, a growing body of research has examined the role optimistic expectancies play in the promotion of adjustment (Cassidy, 2000; Yarcheski, Mahon, & Yarcheski, 2004) and response to stress and illness (Chang & Sanna, 2003). Applied research drawing upon the explanatory style perspective has often addressed mental health issues (Gillham, Hamilton, Freres, Patton, & Gallop, 2006) with some specific universal prevention applications in school settings (Roberts & Pintabona, 2006). The following section presents findings related to the correlates of optimism and pessimism in relation to children and adolescents.

School-Related Correlates of Optimism and Pessimism

Research has shown that optimism and pessimism play a role in school-related adjustment. For example, it has been shown that students with more optimistic students are better able to cope with school-related challenges than more pessimistic students (Boman & Yates, 2001). Koizumi (1995) also found that students' perception of optimism and goal attainment markedly changed during the transition from primary to secondary education—a time that is noted as highly stressful. Another study found that children with high levels of pessimism were more likely to be hostile towards school and more inclined to use destructive ways of dealing with their anger than students with high levels of optimism (Boman, Smith, & Curtis, 2003).

Relatedly, optimism and pessimism have also been shown to affect adjustment to college. Aspinwall and Taylor (1992) found first-year college students with higher levels of optimism made the transition to college more effectively, as noted by lower levels of psychological distress at the end of the first semester. Chang (1998b) also found that optimism had a direct influence on psychological adjustment to stressful events in college students. Even in younger children, studies have found that optimism and pessimism differentially affects levels of general interest in school and academic studies (Koizumi, 1995; Stipek, Lamb, & Zigler, 1981). Stipek et al. (1981) found that optimism was positively related to attitude towards school, self-concept, delay of gratification, and locus of control in first-grade children. Still other studies have examined the generalized expectancies of children and adolescents (Chang, 1996; Fischer & Leitenberg, 1986; Koizumi, 1995; Scheier et al., 1986). For example, in a study of 9- to 13-year-olds, a majority of students were overwhelmingly optimistic

and minimally pessimistic regarding their future success and failure (Fischer & Leitenberg, 1986). Kassinove and Sukhodolsky (1995) found American students (11- to 18-year-olds) and Russian students (10- to 18-year-olds) to generally have optimistic views of the future.

Huan, Yeo, Ang, and Chong (2006) reported a significant inverse relationship between dispositional optimism and adolescents' perception of their academic stress. The results of a study conducted by Ek, Remes, and Sovio (2004) emphasized the social foundation of optimism and the role that social interaction and successful achievement of developmental tasks play in its development. Their results found that dispositional optimism predicted success in meeting the demands of social situations, in the family (in infancy), at school (in childhood and adolescence), and on the labor market (in early adulthood).

Health Correlates of Optimism and Pessimism

Optimism has been shown to affect physical health (Peterson, 2000; Peterson & Bossio, 1991; Seligman, 1991; Tomaskowsky, Lumley, Markowitz, & Frank, 2001). For example, in a study of 150 college students, those reporting higher pessimistic explanatory styles had twice as many infectious illnesses and visits to the doctor than those reporting more optimistic explanatory styles (Peterson & Bossio, 1991). Peterson (2000) also found that college students with pessimistic explanatory styles were more likely to report accidents such as sprained ankles, poked-eyes, and motor vehicle collisions. Further, Scheier and Carver (1985) reported that across time optimistic students compared with pessimistic students develop fewer physical symptoms such as dizziness, blurred vision, muscle soreness, and fatigue. Carvajal, Garner, and Evans (1998) found that sexually active adolescents with higher levels of optimism were more likely to engage in safe sex practices. Moreover, optimistic adolescents were also more likely to use less alcohol before engaging in sex, and demonstrate less substance use, less violent behavior, and more physical activity.

The primary focus of optimism and mental health has been on linkages between attributions and depression (Schwartz, Kaslow, Seeley, & Lewinsohn, 2000). For example, pessimistic explanatory style has been shown to predict the onset of depression in young adults (Seligman et al., 1995), while other studies have examined the relationship between explanatory style and depression in school children and adolescents (Garber, Weiss, & Shanley, 1993; Kaslow, Rehm, Pollack, & Siegel, 1988; Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 1986; Panak & Garber, 1992; Peterson, 1990; Pinto & Francis, 1993; Rodriguez & Pehi, 1998; Schwartz et al., 2000; Seligman et al., 1984; Yates et al., 1995). Garber et al. (1993) found pessimistic explanatory style to be positively related to depression, anxiety, and dysfunctional attitudes in adolescents. Pessimistic explanatory style was also correlated with depression and anxiety in children ages 8- to 14-years-old (Rodriguez & Pehi, 1998). In studies with clinically depressed and non-clinic children, clinically depressed children had significantly higher levels of pessimistic explanatory style (Kaslow et al., 1988). Nolen-Hoeksema et al. (1986) found pessimistic explanatory style correlated positively with higher levels of depression and negatively with school achievement. Interestingly, children of parents with pessimistic explanatory styles did not fulfill their own academic potential (Vanden Belt & Peterson, 1991). Finally, considering the strong relationship between mental distress and inappropriate behaviors, it is not too surprising to find that a pessimistic explanatory style inhibits the benefits of traditional behavior modification methods in boys (7- to 11-year-olds) with behavior problems (Eslea, 1999).

In summary, the mental and physical health problems associated with a pessimistic explanatory style suggest an optimistic explanatory style may not only protect physical health but may preserve mental health in critical life events as well (Taylor, Kemeny, Reed, Bower, & Gruenewald, 2000).

Can Optimism Be Changed?

Building Optimism in School

Programs developed to change levels of optimism and pessimism have often been linked to reducing depression and/or helplessness. As a consequence, other related programs have been developed to manage the latter but not necessarily target optimism and pessimism. Nevertheless, programs target cognitive processes can yield a positive effect on a student's disposition or explanatory style, as the research on the health correlates suggests.

In general, school-based programs to promote optimism and other cognitive constructs have produced mixed results. Seligman and others specifically developed the *Penn Prevention Program* to help change explanatory style and prevent depressive symptoms developing in at-risk 10- to 13-year-old children (Seligman et al., 1995; Shatte, Reivich, Gillham, & Seligman, 1999). The program includes training in both developing an optimistic explanatory style and positive social skills. It was effective in reducing depressive symptoms and improving classroom behaviour. A 2-year follow-up study found that the effects of the prevention program were stronger (Gillham, Reivich, Jaycox, & Seligman, 1995). Overall, these children had a positive change in explanatory style and use more optimistic thinking (Shatte et al., 1999). Recently, this program has been called the Penn Resiliency Program (PRP) and subsequent studies have all reported successful results (see Reivich, Gillham, Chaplin, & Seligman, 2005; Gillham et al., 2006). These studies have shown improved explanatory styles and lower levels of depressive tendencies across cultures.

Based on the successful evaluations of PRP in America, a number of similar programs have been adapted from, or are similar to, the PRP for school-based trials in Australia. To date, there have been a limited number of random controlled trials (RCT's) conducted for these programs with varying results, ranging from positive and significant outcomes to inconclusive and insignificant results. It has been suggested though, that these equivocal findings may be due to the small sample sizes employed in some studies, high attrition rates, and poor design (as per criteria published by the Society for Prevention Research), as opposed to the effectiveness of the programs themselves (Horowitz & Garber, 2006; Spence & Shortt, 2007).

One such program directed at upper primary school students (i.e., grades 6 to 7) is the Aussie Optimism Program. This was based directly on the PRP, although modified to suit the Australian school system timetable and culture (Quayle, Dziurawiec, Roberts, Kane, & Ebsworthy, 2001; Roberts, Kane, Thomson, Bishop, & Hart, 2003; Roberts, Kane, Bishop, Matthews, & Thomson, 2004). Using Quayle et al.'s (2001) universal RCT as the guiding model, there was no significant difference in symptoms of depression between the control and intervention groups at posttest. These findings may be explained by the smaller sample size reducing the study's overall power, the above average mental health and well-being of participants, and the lowered attendance rate. Further evaluation of the program was conducted in a larger indicated RCT for preadolescents with elevated levels of depression (Roberts et al., 2003, 2004). The study found no effect size for depression on any of the follow-up tests. There was a small intervention effect for anxiety at posttest, and at the 6-month and 30-month follow-ups. A goal of the program (to promote an optimistic explanatory style among participants) only showed an effect in the intervention group at posttest, but not in any of the further follow-up conditions.

Another program with varied results is the Problem Solving for Life Program (PSFL) directed at secondary school students (grades 8 to 10). The program is designed to promote optimistic thinking by teaching better problem-solving skills, and was designed as a preventative program for depression in preadolescents. There have been two major RCT studies conducted for the PSFL program, which employed larger sample sizes in comparison to the majority of other program evaluations. The initial results of the first study found a significant decrease in depressive symptoms in par-

ticipants in the high-risk for depression intervention group compared with the high-risk control group (Spence, Sheffield, & Donovan, 2003). Likewise, the low-risk for depression intervention group also showed less depressive symptoms than the low-risk control group, although the effect size was smaller. These results were not maintained at the 12-month follow-up. A subsequent study conducted further follow-ups at 2-, 3-, and 4-year points since the initial intervention, which again showed no significant intervention effects at these later stages (Spence, Sheffield, & Donovan, 2005). In the second RCT study, the results were even more disappointing with interventions showing no effect on any time points (Sheffield, Spence, Rapee, et al., 2006).

The Friends Program is a universal cognitive-behavioral school-based prevention program designed primarily to target anxiety and depression. The program has been subjected to several RCT studies in Australian samples. All studies have yielded positive results. For instance, in a sample of 432 preadolescent children Lowry-Webster, Barrett, and Lock (2003) found significant reductions in anxiety and depression levels in participants in the intervention group—both at posttest and 1-year follow-up—compared with a control group. The decrease of depressive symptoms was only significant in participants with high pretest levels of anxiety at 12-month follow-up. Similarly, Lock and Barrett (2003) reported lower rates in measures of anxiety and depression among preadolescents and adolescents in the intervention condition at posttest and follow-up points. Interestingly, the preadolescent intervention group showed significantly lower levels of depression and anxiety compared with the adolescent intervention group, suggesting that the preadolescent age level is the optimal time for delivery of prevention programs such as these.

The Resourceful Adolescent Program (RAP) also has shown promising results with adolescents on depressive symptoms and helplessness. The RAP program is a universal school-based program designed for 12- to 16-years-olds to build resilience and prevent depressive symptoms. The RAP program integrates cognitive-behavioral and interpersonal perspectives. A number of the modules are devoted to skills in cognitive restructuring aimed at counteracting pessimistic explanatory styles. An initial efficacy trial (Shochet et al., 2001) showed that students in the intervention conditions reported significantly lower levels of depressive symptoms at post-intervention and 10-month follow-up compared with a control group. Program effects demonstrated benefits both for students who were initially in the healthy range of depression and hopelessness as well as those that were initially “at risk.” In an excellent blind placebo controlled trial conducted in New Zealand with teachers as facilitators, Merry, McDowell, Wild, Bir, & Cunliff (2004) found that participants recorded significantly greater improvements in depressive symptoms at post-intervention than those in the placebo condition. A significant small positive effect of the intervention on depression was noted at 18-month follow-up.

Overall, while RCT’s for school-based prevention programs for promoting optimism and changing depressive cognitions have yielded some promising and varying results, more research is needed to establish their long-term effectiveness (Merry et al., 2004). Meta-analyses suggest that specific (as apposed to universal) approaches appear to have more consistent results, but the need for routine screening would render these approaches less sustainable over time. Most of the successful outcomes for promoting optimism in particular have been with the preadolescent age group. Little longitudinal data are available for assessing the long-term effects of increasing optimism and resilience in children in relation to many areas other than protection against some mental health problems.

Building Optimism in the Classroom

Children are influenced in their lives by teachers and other significant people such as coaches. One could also presume optimistic teachers would be better able to cope with life and school related

stress. To promote optimism and coping in students, teachers need to have experiences that support the development and maintenance of optimism. According to Jenson, Olympia, Farley, and Clark (2004), teachers seem to think they are positive and see themselves as using positive techniques to manage behaviors in the classroom. However, these self-reports of positiveness are in contrast to observations of teachers in their classrooms. For example, Boman and Yates (2001) found that although optimism was the single most important predictor of a student's successful transition to high school, the teachers' views of a successful transition was only predicted by gender. That is, although a student may have an optimistic disposition, teachers were not necessarily likely to recognize and develop this asset. In another study that analyzed differences between teachers' beliefs and their behavior, Russo and Boman (2007) found that although teachers reported a very sound knowledge of resilience, they were not as successful in recognizing which children were resilient. That is, teachers may not be as aware of children's strengths or weaknesses as they might suggest. It appears that some teachers may need more professional development in these areas to help them move beyond the theoretical knowledge and to develop the necessary practical skills to help children develop their optimism and other positive attributes.

Nevertheless, teachers can generally promote optimism by their attributions in relation to students' successes or failures in the classroom (Dweck, Davidson, Nelson, & Enna, 1978). By attributing success to effort, or failure to lack of effort, teachers can help promote a sense of optimism in their students. They can also help students learn to problem solve and look for alternatives in addressing troubling issues (Seligman, 1991). Teachers should model problem solving in the classroom and show students there is always something they can do rather than giving up. Being realistic in feedback to students is also important in helping to develop optimism. Students know when they have not put their best effort into something. Giving honest constructive feedback rather than trying to protect their feelings helps them learn that it is their effort or behavior that is the problem and not them personally. Overall, schools and teachers can play a vital role in not only developing children's optimism but also in, as Seligman (1991) suggests, immunizing them against debilitating mental health problems such as depression.

Conclusion

Optimism can play a vital role in helping children to adapt to new situations. Generally, both forms of optimism—expectancy and explanatory style—can ultimately protect children from depression and a range of other physical and mental health issues. However, it is important to understand that optimists' lives are not perfect and they do have negative events in their lives. It is their ability to recover from these events and resolve problems more quickly that is the key. Building children's levels of optimism will not prevent them from encountering problems and trauma in their lives, but it will make sure that they deal with them well and adjust psychologically in the best possible way. What more could we ask for our children?

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6

Strengths of Character in Schools

NANSOOK PARK AND CHRISTOPHER PETERSON

Good character is important in the daily lives of individuals and families, in the workplace, in school, and in the larger community. For centuries, building and strengthening good character among children and youth have been universal goals for parenting and education. Good character is what parents look for in their children, what teachers look for in their students, what siblings look for in their brothers and sisters, and what friends look for in each other. Character is critical for lifelong optimal human development (Colby, James, & Hart, 1998). Despite the importance of good character, psychology largely neglected this topic throughout much of the 20th century. However, character has never gone away. It has figured in public discourse at least from the time of Aristotle in the West (Aristotle, 2000), and Confucius in the East, and it remains a major societal concern today (Hunter, 2000).

Character refers to those aspects of personality that are morally valued. Good character is at the core of positive youth development. Baumrind (1998) noted that “it takes virtuous character to will the good, and competence to do good well” (p. 13). Most schooling and youth programs today focus on helping youth acquire skills and abilities—reading, writing, doing math, and thinking critically—that help them to achieve their life goals. However, without good character, individuals may not have the desire to do the right thing.

Good character is not simply the absence of deficits, problems, and pathology but rather a well-developed cluster of positive traits. The building and enhancing of character not only reduces the possibility of negative outcomes (Botvin, Baker, Dusenbury, Botvin, & Diaz, 1995), but are important in their own right as indicators and indeed causes of healthy development and thriving (Colby & Damon, 1992; Damon, 1988; Kornberg & Caplan, 1980; Park, 2004a; Weissberg & Greenberg, 1997). Growing evidence shows that certain strengths of character—for example, hope, kindness, social intelligence, self-control, and perspective—can buffer against the negative effects of stress and trauma, preventing or mitigating disorders in their wake. In addition, character strengths help youth to thrive. Good character is associated with desired outcomes such as school success, leadership, the valuing of diversity, the ability to delay gratification, kindness, and altruism (Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000). In addition, it is associated with reduced problems such as substance use, alcohol abuse, smoking, violence, depression, and suicidal ideation (Benson, Leffert, Scales, & Blyth, 1998; Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992; Hudley & Graham 1993, 1995; Lochman, Coie, Underwood, & Terry, 1993; Meyer, Farrell, Northup, Kung, & Plybon, 2000; O’Donnell, Hawkins, Catalano, Abbott, & Day, 1995; Pepler, King, Craig, Byrd, & Bream, 1995).

In recent years, under the rubric of “character education,” character, virtues, and issues of morality of young people have received growing attention from educators, parents, policy makers, and the general public (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004). Most character education programs try to teach students traditional moral virtues such as respect, compassion, responsibility, self-control, and honesty. Over the years, there have been a number of major nationally initiated character-education movements, including the Character Education Partnership, the Character Education Network, the Aspen Declaration on Character Education, and the much-publicized Character Counts campaign. Despite current nationwide efforts and interests to promote character and virtues among young people through such programs, concerns have been voiced about the effectiveness of these programs and the lack of a consensual rationale for choosing the virtues and values to foster (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Furthermore, most character education programs focus on rules per se (what to do or not to do) and not on the students who are urged to follow these rules. Needed is an underlying theoretical framework for character development—one informed by developmental theory and research—to guide the design, delivery, and evaluation of programs (Kohn, 1997). No one argues against the importance of raising caring, honest, fair, courageous, and wise youth, but there is little agreement about the main components of character or virtue, and how these should be conceptualized as psychological constructs.

Within psychology, the dominant theoretical framework for understanding moral development has been the approach pioneered by Piaget (1965) and elaborated by Kohlberg (1963) and Gilligan (1982). This approach regards moral development as a special case of cognitive development and assumes that children and youth pass through discrete stages defined by how they think about moral dilemmas—concretely and egocentrically versus abstractly and selflessly. As valuable as this tradition has been, it has inspired mainly measures of moral reasoning as opposed to moral behavior and moral emotion.

Although a growing research literature has contributed much to our understanding of such positive traits such as altruism, gratitude, forgiveness, optimism, social intelligence, self-control, and wisdom, most of these lines of research have focused on one aspect of character at a time, leaving unanswered questions about the underlying structure of character within an individual (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Some individuals may be wise and have integrity but are neither courageous nor kind, or vice versa. Thus, there is a need for a systematic approach to character in multidimensional terms.

In recent years, the new field of positive psychology has refocused scientific attention on character, identifying it as one of the pillars of the field and central to the understanding of the psychological good life (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Among the pillars of positive psychology, character may occupy the most central role. The other pillars of positive psychology are positive experiences and positive institutions. Positive experiences like pleasure and flow come and go, but they are enabled by good character (Peterson, Ruch, Beerman, Park, & Seligman, 2007). Positive institutions like families, schools, and communities make it easier for individuals to have and display good character, but these institutions are only positive in the first place when comprised of people with good character. Positive psychology specifically emphasizes building the good and fulfilling life by identifying individual strengths of character and fostering them (Park & Peterson, 2008; Peterson, 2006; Peterson & Park, 2003).

Necessary first steps in this process of understanding the development of character strengths are conceptualizing character strengths, identifying their core components, and developing scientifically reliable and valid measures of character strengths and virtues appropriate for different cultural and developmental groups.

The Values in Action Project

Values in Action Classification of Strengths

For several years, guided by the perspective of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), we have been involved in a project that addresses important strengths of character and how to measure them (Park & Peterson, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Our project—The Values in Action (VIA) Classification of Strengths—focuses on what is right about people and specifically about the strengths of character that contribute to optimal human development. The project first identified components of good character and then devised ways to assess these components as individual differences. The VIA Classification identifies 24 ubiquitously acknowledged character strengths and organizes them under six broad virtues (see Table 6.1). We have argued that each strength is morally valued in its own right (see detailed discussions in Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The most general contribution of the VIA project is to provide a vocabulary for psychologically-informed discussion of the personal qualities of individuals that make them worthy of moral praise.

In our work, *virtues* are the core characteristics valued by moral philosophers and religious thinkers: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. These six broad categories of virtue appear consistently from historical surveys (Dahlsgaard, Peterson, & Seligman, 2005). *Character* is the entire set of positive traits that have emerged across cultures and throughout

Table 6.1 VIA classification of strengths

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wisdom and Knowledge—cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creativity: thinking of novel and productive ways to do things • curiosity: taking an interest in all of ongoing experience • open-mindedness: thinking things through and examining them from all sides • love of learning: mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge • perspective: being able to provide wise counsel to others 2. Courage—emotional strengths that involve exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, either external or internal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • honesty/authenticity: speaking the truth and presenting oneself in a genuine way • bravery: not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain • perseverance: finishing what one starts • zest: approaching life with excitement and energy 3. Humanity—interpersonal strengths that entail “tending and befriending” others. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kindness: doing favors and good deeds for others • love: valuing close relations with others • social intelligence: being aware of the motives and feelings of self and others 4. Justice—civic strengths that underlie healthy community life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fairness: treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice • leadership: organizing group activities and seeing that they happen • teamwork: working well as member of a group or team 5. Temperance—strengths that protect against excess. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forgiveness: forgiving those who have done wrong • modesty: letting one’s accomplishments speak for themselves • prudence: being careful about one’s choices; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted • self-regulation: Regulating what one feels and does 6. Transcendence—strengths that build connections to the larger universe and provide meaning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appreciation of beauty: noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in all domains of life • gratitude: being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen • hope: expecting the best and working to achieve it • humor: liking to laugh and joke; bringing smiles to other people • spirituality/religiousness: having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of life |
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history as important for good life. *Character strengths* are the psychological processes or mechanisms that define the virtues. They are distinguishable routes to displaying one or another of the virtues. These strengths are ubiquitously recognized and valued, although a given individual will rarely if ever display all of them (Walker & Pitts, 1998). Character strengths are the subset of personality traits on which moral value is placed. Introversion and extraversion, for example, are traits with no moral weight. In contrast, kindness and teamwork are morally valued, which is why they are considered character strengths. By implication, therefore, good character is:

1. a family of positive traits that exist in individual differences: in principle distinct strengths that people possess to varying degrees;
2. shown in thoughts, feelings, and actions;
3. malleable across the lifespan;
4. measurable; and
5. subject to numerous influences by contextual factors, proximal and distal.

This way of conceptualizing good character has important implications for assessment. Once we identified and classified character strengths and virtues, we focused our efforts on how to measure them (Park & Peterson, 2005, 2006a, 2006c; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

The Development of Measures of Character Strengths

Our approach to measurement is notable for several reasons. First, we approached good character as a family of positive traits reflected in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Character is plural and must be measured in ways that do justice to its breadth (Walker & Pitts, 1998). To convey the multidimensionality of good character, we call its components *character strengths*. One needs to be cautious about searching for single indicators of good character. There is no reason for a researcher to refrain from assessing a single component of good character—kindness or hope, for example—but it would be misleading to then treat this single component as the whole of character. Individuals might be very kind or very hopeful but lack the other components of good character. They can of course be described as kind or hopeful, but only as that. Researchers interested in character per se must assess it in its full range. Good character can only be captured by a set of components that vary across people.

Second, we approached character as individual differences that exist in degrees. Components of good character must be assessed in ways that allow gradations. People often talk about character as present versus absent (e.g., “character must be restored to schools”), but such statements are rhetorical and at odds with a considered definition of good character. Again, researchers need to be cautious about searching for single indicators of a good character or even single indicators of a component of good character. Some “indicators” are important in their own right and can be assessed with simple yes–no questions; e.g., sexual abstinence or sobriety among adolescents. However, these behaviors should be regarded only as indicative of themselves, not as infallible signs of prudence as a trait and certainly not of good character in a broad sense. If interest lies beyond specific behaviors, the best researchers can do is to ask about a range of behaviors and look for common threads. Our measures are different from previous work such as the Search Institute’s measures of internal developmental assets, in that they measure strengths separately with a number of items rather than forming composite scores across single indicators of different strengths (Leffert et al., 1998; Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000).

Third, in contrast to moral competence research that emphasizes the understanding of moral rules, our work stems from the philosophical tradition that emphasizes moral virtues, dispositions

to behave in moral ways (Anscombe, 1958; Rachels, 1999; Yearley, 1990). We measure character as manifested in a range of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. This approach separates our work from those of others who approach moral competence in terms of moral reasoning or abstract values (e.g., Schwartz, 1994).

Fourth, we arrived at this family of character strengths by identifying core virtues recognized across world cultures and throughout history (Dahlsgaard, Peterson, & Seligman, 2005; Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2006) and thinking of the different ways these virtues are manifested. Strengths of character that are arguably culture-bound were excluded, and conclusions of some generality can potentially be drawn.

Lastly, our measures not only allow the comparison of character strengths across individuals but also can be scored ipsatively—identifying an individual’s “signature strengths” relative to his or her other strengths. Helping people to use their signature strengths at work, love, and play may provide them a route to a psychologically fulfilling life (Seligman, 2002). The effects of naming these strengths for an individual, and encouraging their use, deserve study.

Our measurement work has been deliberately broad (Park & Peterson, 2006a, 2006b; Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In addition to self-report questionnaires, we have devised and evaluated several different methods: (a) *focus groups* to flesh out the everyday meanings of character strengths among different groups; (b) *structured interviews* to identify what we call signature strengths; (c) *informant reports* (e.g., by parents, teachers or peers) of how target individuals rise to the occasion (or not) with appropriate strengths of character (e.g., open-mindedness when confronting difficult decisions or hope when encountering setbacks); (d) *case studies* of nominated paragons of specific strengths; and (e) a *content analysis* procedure for assessing character strengths from unstructured descriptions of self and others. Each of these methods allows for the study of a broad range of people in different age and situations, which complements limitations of popular survey method. For instance, in order to study character strengths of young children 3 to 9 years old, we used content analyses method of parental descriptions of their children (Park & Peterson, 2006b).

The measures of character strengths that we have developed are relatively efficient, but they take time to administer, and younger respondents sometimes require supervision to prevent break-off effects due to wandering attention. However, anyone interested in assessing character strengths needs to appreciate that there is no shortcut to measuring good character. No one questions that the assessment of intellectual ability requires hours on the part of researchers and individual research participants. The assessment of moral competence is no simpler and certainly no less important (Park & Peterson, 2005). The VIA project is a work in progress. Changes in the classification and measurements are to be expected as empirical data accumulate.

The VIA-Youth Survey

The VIA Inventory of Strengths for Youth (VIA-Youth) is a self-report survey that allows for a comprehensive assessment of the 24 character strengths among youth ages 10–17. The assessment occurs in a single 45-minute session on average. The current VIA-Youth measure contains 198 items (7–9 items for each of the 24 strengths). For example, the character strength of persistence is measured with items such as “When I start a project, I always finish it.” Kindness is measured with items such as “I often do nice things for others without being asked.” Respondents use a 5-point scale to indicate whether the item is “very much like me” (5) or “not like me at all” (1). Subscale scores are formed by averaging the relevant items. The survey yields solid evidence of reliability (alphas in all cases exceed .70) and construct validity. Test–retest reliability over 6 months was substantial for each of the 24 strengths (correlations in all cases exceed .45), showing good stability consistent

with our view of character strengths as trait-like. Further information about the VIA-Youth survey can be found online at www.viastrengths.org.

Our classification of strengths in terms of six core virtues was based on a priori philosophical notions, not the expectation that it would exactly capture the empirical structure of positive traits. Exploratory factor analysis has revealed a four-factor solution that is readily interpretable. Factor 1 consists mainly of the *temperance strengths*: prudence, self-regulation, and perseverance, plus authenticity. Factor 2 is captured by the *intellectual strengths*—more broadly, cognitive strengths—love of learning, creativity, curiosity, appreciation of beauty, fairness, and open-mindedness. Factor 3 can be labeled *theological strengths* because the strongest loadings are hope, spirituality, and love (cf. Aquinas, 1989); also included are zest, gratitude, social intelligence, and leadership. Factor 4 entails the *other directed strengths* of modesty, kindness, teamwork, and bravery, which means we can identify this factor as one of communion or collectivism. Finally, it should be noted that “bravery” was tapped by items asking if respondents stood up for other people.

The structure of the VIA-Youth subscales is compatible with the Big Five scheme of basic personality traits, which we expected given our conception of character strengths as positive traits. However, the VIA-Youth is not just a different way to ascertain the Big Five. The VIA-Youth reflects something more than what the Big Five measures—specifically, the moral flavor of character strengths. For instance, in our analyses, the VIA-Youth explains life satisfaction above-and-beyond the contribution of Big Five measures (Park & Peterson, 2006a). Thus, character strengths are distinctive psychological constructs that need to be studied in their own right.

Empirical Findings

Evidence concerning the correlates and positive outcomes of the character strengths is accumulating, and it is clear that certain character strengths are linked to well-being and flourishing among children and youth. Overall, the youth we have studied show most of the components of good character (Park & Peterson, 2006a). Despite the widespread negative perceptions of youth—e.g., that they are immature, egocentric, impulsive, unhappy, and irresponsible—the majority of young people have developed a set of character strengths. Among them, gratitude, humor, and love, are most common; whereas prudence, forgiveness, spirituality, and self-regulation are less common, much as is found among adults. In general, interpersonal, humanity strengths are more frequently developed and displayed than are the temperance strengths. According to Bok (1995), the humanity-related strengths reflect universal values that are necessary for a viable society.

Although there is a degree of convergence when comparing the relative prevalence of strengths among youth and adults, there are also interesting differences (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004b). Specifically, hope, teamwork, and zest are relatively more common among youth than adults, whereas appreciation of beauty, honesty, leadership, forgiveness and open-mindedness are relatively more common among adults than youth. These latter strengths arguably require maturation to be displayed. For very young children, the most prevalent strengths of character are love, kindness, creativity, curiosity, and humor (Park & Peterson, 2006b).

Educators and parents often try to teach children the character strengths that adults value. However, it is also important to know that children and youth naturally already possess many of the components of good character. If attention is not paid to them, children may lose them as they mature.

The character strengths of love, hope, and zest are consistently related to life satisfaction for individuals across all ages (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004a). Among youth, the most robust predictors of life satisfaction are love, gratitude, hope, and zest. Among young children between ages 3 and 9, those described by their parents as showing love, zest, and hope are also described as happy.

Developmental differences are implied by these findings. Gratitude shows an association with life satisfaction only as children become older, and curiosity is related to life satisfaction only among adults. Given that curiosity is one of the most common character strengths among young children, this finding is especially interesting. Most young children are naturally curious, which means that this strength may not differentiate between those who are more versus less happy. But only those adults who are still able to sustain curiosity are happy. It is important that educators, parents, and youth program leaders not discourage natural curiosity among children and indeed help them to use it constructively in their learning and play.

Furthermore, in our longitudinal study with middle school students, certain character strengths such as love, hope, and zest at the beginning of school year were related to *increased* levels of life satisfaction at the end of school year (Park & Peterson, 2006a). However, effects in the opposite direction—that life satisfaction increased with later level of character strengths—were not supported by these data. That is, certain character strengths are not only linked to present happiness but also lead to later happiness. Considering that life satisfaction is critical for health, good relationships, success, and well-being across all ages (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005; Park, 2004b), character strengths represent critical pathways to a good life.

An interesting finding was that the parent's strength of self-regulation was strongly associated with his or her child's life satisfaction, although it did not strongly relate to the parent's own satisfaction. This finding suggests that self-regulated parents provide more stable environment for their children, one in which they are more likely to lead a satisfied life. This finding further suggests that cultivating the strength of self-regulation is important for all adults who work with children and youth.

"Popular" students (identified by teacher ratings) were more likely to score highly on VIA–Youth scales measuring civic strengths such as leadership and fairness and temperance strengths such as self-regulation, prudence, and forgiveness. Interestingly, none of the humanity strengths such as love and kindness was related to popularity, suggesting that these strengths can be deployed (or not) in a variety of social circles, "popular" and "unpopular" (cf. Park & Peterson, 2006a). Peer interaction and social relationship among children and youth becomes more important during school years. Maintaining good peer relationships and popularity is related to better psychological development and adjustment at schools (Berndt, & Keefe, 1995; Cillessen, & Rose, 2005; Hartup, 1996). However, being bullied, being unpopular, and being lonely have negative impacts on emotional and social development of children (Bierman, 2004; Hanish & Guerra, 2002). Perhaps working on students' character strengths can provide ways to prevent possible social problems and furthermore to increase opportunities for children to build healthy relationships with lifelong positive consequences.

Character strengths were also related to less psychopathology among youth. The strengths of hope, zest, and leadership were substantially related to fewer internalizing problems such as depression and anxiety disorders, whereas the strengths of persistence, honesty, prudence, and love were substantially related to fewer externalizing problems such as aggression. Different sets of character strengths were related to less of internalizing and externalizing problems. Again, building and enhancing certain strengths could be an important strategy of providing protective factors against common youth problems (Park & Peterson, 2008).

The relationship between academic achievement and character strengths was examined in a longitudinal study with 250 students using course grades (Park & Peterson, 2007). After controlling for student IQ scores, it was found that the character strengths of perseverance, fairness, gratitude, honesty, hope, and perspective predicted end-of-year GPA (grade point average). This finding is important because it shows important nonintellectual influences—character strengths—on academic achievement. These findings are consistent with previous research showing that prosocial

behaviors predict academic achievement above-and-beyond intellectual ability per se (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000; Wentzel, & Caldwell, 1997).

We examined parent-child strengths convergence in 395 pairs of children and their parents or guardians. We found a modest level of convergence between parents and their children's strengths, especially for mother-daughter and father-son. The greatest degree of child-parent convergence was for spirituality. This is consistent with other work that points to the family (as opposed to peers or schools) as the primary arena for religious socialization (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). However, the source of this parent-child convergence is unclear—e.g., modeling, parenting, a shared psychosocial or physical environment, common biogenetic predispositions, or other variables.

A study with adult twins provides insight on the origin of character strengths (Steger, Hicks, Kashdan, Krueger, & Bouchard, 2007). Researchers tried to tease out the influence of heredity, shared environment, and non-shared environment for each of 24 character strengths. All strengths were influenced by heredity and non-shared environment such as (presumably) friends, school, and community. However, the researchers also found that some strengths such as love of learning, zest, and open-mindedness were influenced by shared family environment. This finding is unusual in twin studies, which rarely find any the influence of shared environment on psychological variables once genetic influence is taken into account. The strengths of love, humor, modesty, and teamwork were influenced most by non-shared environment, findings of which educators should be aware as they develop programs likely to succeed. Perhaps these strengths in particular might be suitable targets for school-based interventions.

Implications

These findings have significant implications for educators, mental health professionals, and policy makers who are concerned about promoting positive youth development. First, schools should start to measure students' assets such as character strengths as much as deficits. Measures of problems, deficits, and weaknesses have a long lineage within education and mental health, whereas measures of positive development such as character strengths and virtues are neither as numerous nor as well developed (Moore, Lippman, & Brown, 2004). Researchers assess and track behaviors and outcomes that society wishes to prevent among the young: violence, substance abuse, school dropout, academic failure, and depression. For the most part, schools rarely monitor positive development and outcomes, despite the proliferation of character education programs.

It has been said that one measures what one values and that one values what one measures. If society really values good character among students, researchers should start assessing character and paying attention to its development. Society should take seriously what researchers find. Under the mandate of No Child Left Behind, all schools in the United States are busy measuring student academic abilities and monitoring the progress of learning. We hope that someday schools will assess the character strengths of students and record them on report cards.

Second, educators and policy makers concerned with educating happy, healthy, and successful students will want to pay explicit attention to character strengths. Research consistently shows that strengths of the "heart" that connect people together—like love and gratitude—are much more strongly associated with well-being than are strengths of the "head" that are individual in nature—like creativity, critical thinking, and aesthetic appreciation (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004a, 2004b). Formal education stresses the latter strengths, but if one goal of education is to encourage the good life, the research results suggest that the former strengths deserve attention as well for balanced character development.

Our research also showed that students' academic achievement was significantly influenced by a set of character strengths above-and-beyond intelligence. Character strengths were also related

to popularity of students and to measures of psychopathology. These findings imply that the encouragement of certain character strengths would not only make students happier, healthier, and more socially connected but also help them attain better grades. Working on students' character is not a luxury but a necessity, and it entails no tradeoff with traditional "academic" concerns.

Third, given the importance of character to the psychological good life, questions of course arise about how good character might be cultivated. This work is in its infancy, and to date, only a handful of character strengths have been seriously considered. It seems that variety of influences contribute to development of good character—genetic, family, schools, peers, and communities.

According to Aristotle, virtues, a reflection of the individual's character, can be taught and acquired by practicing them. Aquinas further argued that a virtue is a habit that person can develop by choosing the good and consistently acting in accordance with it. Scholars emphasized that character must be developed by action and not mere by thinking or talking about it (e.g., Maudsley, 1898). These various notions about virtues suggest consistently that character can be cultivated by good parenting, schooling, and socialization and that it becomes instantiated through habitual action. Character development programs should teach specific activities of strengths and encourage youth to keep using them in their daily lives. Also, individualized character education based on each student's character strength profile may be more effective than a general program for all students. Simply chanting slogans, putting up banners, or holding monthly school assemblies will not be as effective as creating an individualized program for each student that encourages him or her to behave in different ways (Park & Peterson, 2008).

Positive role models are also important for character development (Bandura, 1977; Radke-Yarrow, Zahn-Waxler, & Chapman, 1983; Sprafkin, Liebert, & Poulos 1975). Important adults in youths' lives such as parents, teachers, youth development program leaders, and sports coaches may play roles as character mentors. If adults value and want to teach children good character, they should start showing them how through their actions.

Fourth, our multidimensional approach to character strengths has practical implications for teachers and mental health professionals. The VIA classification provides a vocabulary for people to talk about character strengths in an appropriately sophisticated way. Simply saying that a student has (or does not have) good character does not lead anywhere useful. In contrast, using the VIA classification, teachers and mental health professionals can describe the *profile* of character strengths that characterize each student. As previously mentioned, VIA measures not only allows the comparison of character strengths across individuals but also within individuals. That is, the VIA measures can be scored ipsatively (e.g., rank ordered)—to identify a student's "signature strengths" relative to his or her other strengths. We believe that everybody has strengths regardless of where they stand compared to others. This strength-based approach is particularly useful for working with students with a history of disability or low achievement. When we compare these students against the norm or other students, as often we do, it is hard to find anything at which they are good. However, if we compare the 24 strengths *within* a student, we can identify those strengths that are stronger than others. Teachers and professionals can help students to use these strengths in their lives, in school and out of school.

These strengths-based approaches can be used with students at any level. Because signature strengths are the ones students already possess, it is often easier and more enjoyable for students to work with them. Once students build their confidence by keep using their signature strengths, they can be taught how to use these strengths to work on weaknesses or less-developed strengths. It is frustrating and difficult to work only on weaknesses and problems from the beginning. Often students give up early or become defensive about their problems. However, if discussions and interventions start with the strengths of students—things at which they are good—this can build rapport and increase motivation. The net effect of a strengths-based approach should be greater success of interventions.

We have hypothesized that the exercise of signature strengths is particularly fulfilling. In a study with adults, individuals completed a VIA survey and identified their top strengths, which they were then asked to use in novel ways (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Relative to a comparison group without this instruction, these individuals showed meaningful increases in happiness as well as decreases in depression at 6 months follow-up. Not surprisingly, these changes were evident only if research participants continued to find new ways to use their strengths. Finding *novel* ways to use strengths is therefore critical and reflects the importance of ongoing personal growth in producing a flourishing life. Currently underway are analogous studies with youth.

Conclusion

Character strengths are a family of positive traits manifest in a range of thoughts, feelings, and action. They are the foundation of lifelong healthy development. They are critical for the well-being of the entire society. Evidence is accumulating that character strengths play important roles in positive youth development, not only as broad-protective factors, preventing or mitigating psychopathology and problems, but also as enabling conditions that promote thriving and flourishing. Children and youth with certain sets of character strengths are happier, do better at school, are more popular among peers, and have fewer psychological and behavior problems. These strengths can be cultivated and strengthened by appropriate parenting, schooling, various youth development programs, and healthy communities.

Studies of character strengths go beyond a focus on problems and their absence to reflect healthy development. The VIA project supports the premise of positive psychology that attention to good character—what a person does well—sheds light on what makes life worth living. The goal of positive youth development should not be merely surviving in the face of adversity but flourishing and thriving.

Problem-focused approaches can be useful only in reducing and treating the specific targeted problems. But, they do not necessarily prepare young people to have a healthy, fulfilling, and productive life. In contrast, strengths-based approaches may pay much greater dividends, not only preventing or reducing in the short run specific problems but also building in the long run moral, healthy, and happy people who can overcome challenges in life and enjoy a good and fulfilling life (Albee, 1996; Cowen, 1994, 1998; Durlak, 1997; Elias, 1995; Lerner & Benson, 2003).

No one will go through life without challenges and setbacks, but to the degree that young people have more life satisfaction, greater character strengths, and better social support, they will experience fewer psychological or physical problems in the wake of difficulties (e.g., Cobb, 1976; Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2006). Franklin D. Roosevelt said, “We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.” We know little about the mechanisms of positive development and thriving (Pittman, 2000), and how they might preclude psychological disorders. Future studies will continue to refine measures and to use empirical findings to understand the structure of character, its development, effective interventions, and the processes by which strengths of character give rise to healthy behavior.

Character is vital force for individual and societal well-being. We hope more parents, teachers, and policy makers will recognize and celebrate good character among young people. We dream of the day when we will see bumper stickers proclaiming: “I am the proud parent of a child who is curious, kind, and grateful.”

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7

Gratitude in School

Benefits to Students and Schools

GIACOMO BONO AND JEFFREY FROH

My life wouldn't be the same without the people that have shaped and molded my character ... I think it is important to be humble, let go of all ideas of self-importance, and acknowledge the people that helped you get where you are. I am thankful to God, my family, friends, and even my teacher for helping me improve my life.

(Diary entry of a high school student research participant)

Establishing social relationships and achieving a sense of identity are two main challenges in adolescents that occur against the backdrop of many changes (e.g., physical, sexual, cognitive, and emotional). Such turbulence may make a grateful outlook difficult to hold, but doing so may be beneficial and transformative. It can focus individuals on the good turns in their life and the enablers that likely played a role, if they only took a moment to look. The above quote, written by a student in a study on gratitude and youth (Froh, 2008), illustrates this nicely.

One reliable way to feel good *and* strengthen relationships is to experience and express gratitude. Acknowledging the caring acts of others can strengthen relationships and help secure new ones. Learning to do this early in life may contribute to the bedrock of many positive outcomes in development. Gratitude is a common response to the kind act of another. Opportunities to help others and to cooperate abound in schools. Nevertheless, in spite of the benefits attributed to gratitude (see Emmons & McCullough, 2004, for reviews) and its many potential applications (Bono, Emmons, & McCullough, 2004; Bono & McCullough, 2006), research on this construct in youth is scant (Froh & Bono, 2008; Froh, Miller, & Snyder, 2007).

This chapter covers research on gratitude, emphasizing its potential to enhance youths' well-being, social development, and achievement. We begin by focusing on the concept of gratitude and its potential determinants and differences among youth. We then turn to the consequences of having low gratitude, followed by a review of interventions designed to promote gratitude in youth samples. Finally, we close with a focus on fruitful avenues for research, potential applications, and benefits that gratitude may have for students and schools.

What is Gratitude?

When one receives a personal gift or benefit that was not earned, deserved, or expected, but instead due to the good intentions of another person, a typical emotional response is gratitude (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). People are grateful if they are aware of and thankful of the good things that happen to them and if they express thanks to those responsible (Emmons, 2004). McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002) found that grateful people (in comparison to their less grateful counterparts) are more likely to feel appreciative (a) for a wider *span* of benefits at any given time (e.g., family, friends, teachers, being included in a special event, or having been defended by someone); (b) with greater *density* for any given benefit (i.e., grateful to more people); (c) more *frequently*; and (d) more *intensely* for any benefit received.

In the first major survey of the literature, McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, and Larson (2001) examined whether research supported a functional conceptualization of gratitude. This review found that gratitude served three functions, all based within a moral paradigm. First, gratitude serves as a *moral barometer*. Evidence suggested that people tend to be grateful in response to: benefits that they value; benefits that are provided intentionally and at some cost to the benefactor (Okamoto & Robinson, 1997; Tesser, Gatewood, & Driver, 1968); and benefits that are offered gratuitously rather than obligatorily (Bar-Tal, Bar-Zohar, Greenberg, & Hermon, 1977). McCullough et al. (2001) thus reasoned that gratitude signals when interpersonal exchanges are beneficial. Follow-up studies supported this notion, finding that people are more grateful for benefits that they value (Tsang, 2007) and that are done out of kindness rather than self-interest (Tsang, 2006a). Recognizing and feeling the positive impact others have on our welfare provides a distinct indication of the value of certain relationships.

Second, McCullough et al. (2001) found evidence supporting their notion that gratitude can also serve as a *moral reinforcer*. Showing gratitude can increase the chance that a benefactor will act kindly again in the future—just as showing ingratitude can potentially decrease kind acts in the future. Examples of evidence for this are many, including findings that expressions of thanks can reinforce the amount of aid given, such as volunteering with HIV/AIDS patients (Bennett, Ross, & Sunderland, 1996) and kidney donation (Bernstein & Simmons, 1974). Further, field experiments reveal that “thank-you notes” can increase restaurant servers’ tips (Rind & Bordia, 1995) and yield more visits from case managers in a residential treatment program (Clark, Northrop, & Barkshire, 1988). Finally, laboratory experiments show that benefactors are willing to give, sacrifice, and expend effort on behalf of others more if they are thanked than if they are not (Clark, 1975; McGovern, Ditzian, & Taylor, 1975; Moss & Page, 1972).

Finally, McCullough et al. (2001) examined whether gratitude functions as a *moral motive*—by motivating a beneficiary to respond altruistically to a benefactor or others. Although they only found weak support for this notion (Graham, 1988; Peterson & Stewart, 1996), recent experiments have shown that gratitude can cause people to exert effort to help a benefactor in return (Tsang, 2006b, 2007), or even a neutral third party (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006). Gratitude also appears to increase general trust in others (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005). Thus, evidence supports gratitude’s role in motivating moral behavior.

Overall, research suggests that gratitude is particularly suited to helping people maintain and build strong, supportive social ties. The development of gratitude, however, has only been examined using theories of children’s social and cognitive development (McAdams & Bauer, 2004). The early sources of gratitude and factors that promote or inhibit its development remain unexamined (Froh & Bono, in press).

Assessment of Gratitude Among Adolescents

A main challenge is assessing gratitude, especially in younger children, where it is often difficult to distinguish gratitude from social politeness. To date, three gratitude rating scales have been

used with adolescent samples. The Gratitude Adjective Checklist (GAC; McCullough et al., 2002), which is the sum of three adjectives—gratefulness, thankfulness, and appreciativeness—was used to measure gratitude in youth both as a disposition (Froh & Yurkewicz, 2007) and as a transient mood (Froh, Sefick, & Emmons, 2008; Froh, Yurkewicz, & Kashdan, in press). Students were asked to rate the degree to which they experienced each emotion “in general” in the former study (trait) and “since yesterday” in the latter studies (mood). As a dispositional measure, the GAC demonstrated good internal reliability (i.e., alphas $\geq .82$) and discriminant validity (i.e., GAC did not correlate with favorite color and shoe size) with early and late adolescents. As a measure of grateful mood over a 5-week period, the GAC showed comparable internal reliability estimates across 11 time points and moderate temporal stability (i.e., pretest gratitude correlated with gratitude at week 2, $r = .49$ and at week 5, $r = .67$). Both dispositional and mood measures correlated as expected with various measures of well-being. These data suggest that the GAC is a valid and reliable self-report measure of adolescents’ trait gratitude and grateful moods.

Research is underway to examine if two separate self-report measures of trait gratitude among adults can be successfully used with children and adolescents (Froh, 2008). One, the Gratitude Questionnaire-6 (GQ-6; McCullough et al., 2002) has six items that measure four facets (i.e., intensity, frequency, span, and density). Sample items include, “I have so much to be thankful for,” “If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list,” and “I am grateful to a wide variety of people.” The second—the Gratitude, Resentment, Appreciation Test, 16-item short version (GRAT; Thomas & Watkins, 2003)—measures one’s sense of abundance in life and appreciation of others. Sample items include: “I couldn’t have gotten where I am today without the help of many people,” and “I think it’s important to appreciate each day that you are alive.” Preliminary evidence suggests that these measures may be suitable for children and adolescents (Froh, 2008), but further research is needed.

Hypothesized Developmental Determinants of Gratitude

Although empirically very little is known about the development of gratitude, many social and cognitive factors likely play a role in its development. Here we focus on such factors that are believed to be the most influential. After describing these factors, we then turn to what is empirically known about other developmental factors (such as gender differences).

Emmons and Shelton (2005) stated that “gratitude does not emerge spontaneously in newborns” (p. 468) but emerges from environmental factors. Thus, it is likely that parents, peers, teachers, and other adults aid children’s emotional understanding by providing conversations and structured activities that embed psychological insight about social experiences, which would include providing prompts to child who receives help or a gift from another person. To illustrate, Greif and Gleason (1980) audiotaped exchanges between parents and their 2- to 5-year-old children to examine their politeness routines (saying “hi,” “thanks,” or “bye”). They found that parental prompting lead 86% of the children to express thanks. Without parental prompting, however, expressions of thanks were reduced to only 7%.

Some linguistic prompts may aid language development in children more than others. For instance, if a student offers their snack to another student, it would be quite common for an adult to say to the student receiving the snack, “That was nice of him to share—say thank you.” Such a prompt merely focuses on the obligation to express thanks for a benefit received. Little focus is placed on *why* thanks should be given. For instance, it would be uncommon for an adult to say the following to the student receiving the snack: “Wow, he *noticed* you had no snack. That was nice of him to share. He didn’t have to. Say thank you.” Because gratitude is an acquired virtue that focuses on the conditions of a benefit-giving situation (Emmons & Shelton, 2005), children could benefit from prompts that not only encourage politeness but also elaborate on the intentions of another person’s kind act insofar as is comprehensible to the beneficiary.

Age is also likely a prime factor in the development of gratitude. It is only after children develop a theory of mind, around age 4 (Wellman, 1990) that they begin to perceive behavior as intentional—a key cognition needed to experience gratitude (McCullough et al., 2001). As children become less egocentric and enter early adolescence, they develop the improved social competence that comes with empathy (Saarni, 1999). Indeed, the ability to empathize may be the strongest developmental catalyst of gratitude, as it enables the social cognitive appraisals needed to appreciate and reciprocate the conditions of benefit-giving situations (McCullough et al., 2001).

Engaging youths in mutually beneficial interactions with adults (e.g., coordinated activities at school, service learning in the community, or joint play at home), and encouraging them to do the same with peers (e.g., through creative learning projects or during extracurricular activities in which youths can collaborate on personally meaningful tasks) may also facilitate gratitude through the adult helping to provide structure and guidance for grateful appraisals. No doubt, gratitude would also be fostered in youths if adults regularly modeled appreciative responses in interactions with other adults and with youths themselves and if adults were to explicitly emphasize the social cognitive elicitors of gratitude mentioned earlier (i.e., the value of a benefit, a benefactor's effort, intention, and gratuitousness of the behavior) in discourse with youths.

Among factors that have been empirically studied in gratitude, gender has been the primary focus. For example, Froh et al. (in press) found that girls tended to report experiencing gratitude more than boys ($p = .07$, $d = .30$). This is in line with research using other youth samples (Becker & Smenner, 1986; Gordon, Musher-Eizenman, Holub, & Dalrymple, 2004) and adult samples as well (Kashdan, Mishra, Breen, & Froh, 2008; Ventimiglia, 1982). However, boys may derive more benefit from gratitude than girls—findings that were inconsistent with adult samples (Kashdan et al., 2008). One reason for these differences, although rarely studied, may be that social expectations mediate the expression of gratitude. That is, because men are more inclined to display emotions linked with status and power (Brody, 1999), they may associate gratitude with indebtedness and dependency and see it as less useful. Should this hypothesis be supported by additional studies, interventions to encourage gratitude should be sensitive to sex differences in the expression of gratitude (Gordon et al., 2004). Furthermore, emotional re-education appealing to boys' desire to be seen as brave (Emmons, 2004) would help encourage boys that giving thanks for gifts from others does not undermine their own accomplishments or autonomy.

Review of Research on Outcomes Linked To Gratitude

For centuries, gratitude has been considered a powerful ingredient of health and well-being for individuals and society. It is encouraged by religions and cultures throughout the world (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000) and is widely deemed as central to happiness; over 90% of American teens and adults indicated that expressing gratitude made them “extremely happy” or “somewhat happy” (Gallup, 1998). Considered an important virtue for thriving, gratitude figures as a character strength of transcendence because of its potential to provide one with a sense of meaning and connection to entities that are greater than the self—other people, communities, or a spiritual force (Emmons, 2004). Research in the last decade has shown a variety of ways that gratitude is beneficial for optimal development. We now briefly review that research.

Psychological or Subjective Well-Being

Happy people tend to also be grateful (McCullough et al., 2002; Watkins, 2004). Gratitude is associated with a variety of positive psychological outcomes. Research with adults has shown that, compared with less grateful people, grateful people report experiencing greater happiness, hope, pride (Overwalle, Mervielde, & DeSchuyter, 1995), positive mood, optimism, satisfaction with

life, vitality, religiousness and spirituality; and they also tend to report less depression and envy (McCullough et al., 2002). McCullough et al. also found that many of these associations held after controlling for the Big Five personality traits or social desirability bias and that many even held using peer-report methods, demonstrating the robustness of these relationships.

Expressing thanks for or reflecting on benefits received can enhance one's positive mood. In one recent experiment, Watkins, Woodward, Stone, and Kolts (Study 4; 2003) assigned undergraduates to a control group (who wrote about their living room) or a gratitude condition (who wrote a letter to someone they were grateful to, or wrote an essay on gratitude). Dependent measures were completed before and after group activities. Those in the gratitude conditions reported increases in positive affect, compared with those in the control group.

Until recently, however, research on gratitude and its links to subjective well-being have been restricted to adult populations. As one exception, Froh et al. (in press) examined how gratitude correlated with a variety of well-being constructs in 11- to 13-year-olds. Gratitude was positively related with optimism, overall positive affect, and satisfaction with school and family but was not related to negative affect. These findings were consistent with studies using adult samples (Watkins et al., 2003; although not others, see McCullough et al., 2002). Froh and Yurkewicz also explored gratitude's place among the myriad emotional states found under the positive affect framework. Results of a factor analysis showed that gratitude loaded onto a component that included pride, hope, excitement, forgiveness, and inspiration.

The regular experience of positive emotions can make people healthier and more resilient, fueling an upward spiral of optimal functioning, well-being, and development (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). Positive emotions broaden problem-solving strategies (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005) and can undo the aftereffects of negative emotions (Fredrickson, Mancuso, & Branigan, 2000). Indeed, one reason resilient people bounce back from negative life events better is that they experience positive emotions regularly and use them more often in response to stressful situations (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Given its relationship to positive affect, gratitude may be used to engage this upward spiral (Fredrickson, 2004). For example, after compassion, gratitude was the second most common emotion experienced after the September 11 attacks in 2001. Thus, gratitude appeared to be a powerful factor that helped people to cope with the disaster (Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003). Such effects may occur with youth too. For example, in an archival study of newspaper accounts of things children were thankful for, themes of gratitude for basic human needs (e.g., family, friends, and teachers) were found to increase after 9/11 (Gordon, Musher-Eizenman, Holub, & Dalrymple, 2004). Whether these positive emotions helped the children cope with the disaster remains unclear.

Relational Well-Being

Grateful people are more prosocially oriented. That is, they tend to be more helpful, supportive, forgiving, and empathic toward others, and they have more agreeable personalities (McCullough et al., 2002). They also tend to be less narcissistic (Farwell & Wohlwend-Lloyd, 1998). As mentioned before, feeling grateful makes people respond prosocially to benefactors (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006; Tsang, 2006, 2007) and unrelated others (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006).

Grateful people may act prosocially as an expression of their appreciation, but over time these actions build and strengthen social bonds (Emmons & Shelton, 2005; Komter, 2004). The most current view is that gratitude serves a social evolutionary purpose; its unique social characteristics seem to have adaptive value for facilitating humans' tendency to cooperate with non-family members (McCullough, Kimeldorf, & Cohen, in press) and for sustaining reciprocal altruism (Nowak & Roch, 2007; Trivers, 1971).

Potential Long-Term Benefits of Gratitude

Promoting grateful moods in students may help nurture beneficial processes, such as creativity and motivation to improve one's self, which in turn can build lasting resources for feeling good and functioning well in the future (Fredrickson, 2004). Gratitude does not prompt one to reciprocate benefits in a tit-for-tat fashion, but instead can stretch one to repay kindness creatively (Komter, 2004). As Fredrickson noted (2004), "new methods of repaying kindness can become lasting skills in a person's repertoire for expressing love and kindness" (p. 152). When practicing as a school psychologist, the second author recalls an art teacher giving a gifted student with Asperger syndrome art supplies to use during counseling (drawing reduced his stress). Instead of saying "thank you" or writing a "thank you" letter, the student drew a cartoon character offering a colorful bouquet of flowers. Insofar as the student felt grateful, this story illustrates the creative prosocial behavior that gratitude can trigger. There is a good chance that gratitude for help received early in life (e.g., mentoring) may even help fuel later generative behavior, like giving time or money to a charitable cause (Peterson & Stewart, 1996).

In a study examining the effects of gratitude interventions on well-being, Emmons and McCullough (2003) found that student and adult participants randomly assigned to a gratitude condition reported fewer physical symptoms, more positive and optimistic life appraisals, and more time exercising, than their counterparts in a control or other conditions. Their results also showed that gratitude boosts immediate positive affect and improves optimal functioning and well-being over a longer period of time among adults. We describe a similar study with adolescents (Froh et al., 2008) in the intervention section below.

Gratitude also may promote intrinsic goal striving and reduce materialistic goals. For example, people who pursue intrinsic goals report greater well-being than those who pursue extrinsic or materialistic goals (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). This finding may be partly explained by the eroding effects of materialism on friendships (Kasser, 2002), but gratitude may safeguard against this erosion. Gratitude seems to influence intrinsic goal pursuit, other-oriented motivations, and the fulfillment of higher-order needs (e.g., self-expression and purpose), whereas materialism seems to fuel extrinsic goal pursuit, individualistic motivations, and the fulfillment of lower-order needs (e.g., possessions of comfort and safety) (Kasser, 2002; Polak & McCullough, 2006). For example, in a daily diary study examining undergraduate students' gratitude and materialism over a 2-week period, Bono and Polak (2008) found that on days when people were less materialistic than usual (as measured by the *Aspirations Index*; Kasser & Ryan, 1996), they also tended to be more grateful (as measured by the GQ-6; McCullough et al., 2002; effect size $r = -.19$). This link held after controlling for trait materialism, implying that gratitude is related to less materialistic strivings, no matter how generally materialistic the person may be. Further, while materialism was related to increased social loneliness and conflicted exchanges ($ES\ r_s = .20$), gratitude was related to even stronger decreases in these outcomes ($ES\ r_s = -.35$ to $-.38$).

Helping to explain the above patterns, Kashdan and Breen (2007) found that materialism was negatively related with well-being by way of increased experiential avoidance (i.e., unwillingness to face negatively evaluated thoughts, feelings and sensations, as well as the circumstances begetting such experiences). Together, these findings illustrate ways gratitude and materialism pull people toward different ways of being in the world—gratitude promotes valuing connections to people, mindful growth, and social capital; whereas materialism promotes valuing possessions, instant comfort, and social status.

It is unknown, however, whether and how these effects occur in children. Research examining if gratitude serves as a buffer against materialism in youth is currently underway, and preliminary results suggest that lower gratitude can account for materialism's negative links to purposefulness and life satisfaction as well as materialism's positive links to envy and negative affect (Froh, Bono,

& Wilson, 2008). If gratitude and materialism have divergent associations with purpose and fulfillment among youths, then gratitude would prove useful for advancing many of the social development goals increasingly addressed by schools. For example, there is evidence that strong extrinsic values are linked to increased health risk behavior (in terms of tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana use, as well as sexual activity) and that both are negatively predicted by perceptions of parents' autonomy support (Williams, Cox, Hedberg, & Deci, 2000). Thus, gratitude may aid flourishing in youth because it motivates them to fulfill basic needs of personal growth, relationships, and community—all of which reduce vulnerability to the main health risks they face.

Promoting Gratitude in Youth Through Interventions

Froh, Sefick, and Emmons (2008) conducted a novel investigation the impact of gratitude (in this case, “counting blessings”) on positive outcomes among early adolescents. Eleven classrooms were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: gratitude, hassles, or a no treatment control. Measures were completed daily for 2 weeks and then again at a 3-week follow-up. For 2 weeks, students in the gratitude condition were asked to count up to five things for which they were grateful and students in the hassles condition were asked to focus on irritants. Gratitude journal entries included benefits such as: “I am grateful that my mom didn’t go crazy when I accidentally broke a patio table,” “My coach helped me out at baseball practice,” and “My grandma is in good health, my family is still together, my family still loves each other, my brothers are healthy, and we have fun everyday.” The results found that counting blessings was related to higher levels of optimism, more life satisfaction, less negative affect and marginally fewer physical complaints. Students who reported feeling grateful in response to aid also reported levels of positive affect. In fact, feeling grateful for aid demonstrated a linear relationship with positive affect throughout the intervention—becoming stronger by the 3-week follow-up. Gratitude for aid also mediated the relationship between the intervention and general gratitude. Feeling thankful for having received aid seemed to prompt a broadened view of other instances of kindness in students’ daily lives. Thus, acknowledging blessings such as help from others may boost subsequent gratitude by increasing awareness of other gifts in life.

The most significant finding, in our view, was the relationship between counting blessings and satisfaction with school. Satisfaction with school is related to academic and social success (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). Many middle and high school students, however, report dissatisfaction with their experience of school (Huebner, Drane, & Valois, 2000; Huebner, Valois, Paxton, & Drane, 2005). Students who are satisfied with their school experience tend to find school interesting, feel good at school, believe they are learning a lot, and look forward to going to school. In the Froh et al. (2008) study, students who counted blessings (in comparison with students in the hassles and control groups) reported greater satisfaction with school right after the 2-week intervention. Therefore, regular doses of gratitude in students may help counter negative appraisals of the academic experience and may improve school bonding and social adjustment.

The practicality of some gratitude interventions (e.g., counting blessings) can make their use appealing. For instance, Froh (2007) tested whether a gratitude intervention had appeal and potential as a learning activity for approximately 1,000 middle school students in their home-rooms. Students were asked to count up to five blessings they were grateful for on a daily basis for 2 weeks. Afterward, teachers followed a lesson plan using the focused conversation method of teaching (Nelson, 2001). Students were asked the following types of questions: *Objective* (e.g., What specific blessings did you count?), *Reflective* (e.g., What did you like most about counting your blessings?), *Interpretive* (e.g., What are the benefits of giving thanks?), and *Decisional* (e.g., How can we practice gratitude in our lives and at school?). Several students recognized that “life

could be so much worse.” One student—from a wealthy family—stated, “I realized how good I really have it. Some kids have nothing. I just never thought about it before.” Though no outcome measures were collected, this intervention showed anecdotally that reflecting on fortunate events in life can engage students and may help make them more mindful as well. It also illustrates one way the entire school can be taught to be grateful.

Because gratitude may strengthen supportive relationships and increase prosocial behavior in adolescents (Froh et al., in press), these resources may be especially useful for students with special needs, physical disabilities, or social adjustment difficulties. Teaching students to respond gratefully to friends who help protect them from a bully, encourage them to persist on a task, or offer help on homework might strengthen friendships—increasing students’ satisfaction with school and their chances of succeeding. Future research should explore the sources of youth gratitude and examine more rigorously if promoting gratitude in youth improves goal striving, academic achievement, and social development.

Other Potential Gratitude Applications in Schools

Simmel (1950) argued that gratitude is the moral glue that bonds people together into a functioning society. His logic of gratitude as the “moral memory of mankind” (p. 388) can be applied to school communities. School-based psychologists and other educators can help students identify resources provided by the local board of education (e.g., funding for extracurricular activities), school-level administration (e.g., support for school plays), teachers (e.g., giving up lunch to help students), support staff (e.g., cleaning the facilities), and community volunteers (e.g., hours committed to organizing or chaperoning enrichment events). Most importantly, recognizing the contributions and investments others make toward their welfare would focus students on concrete ways that they and their progress are valued at the school, and knowing that others believe in and care to bring out the best in them would likely engage their motivation to better themselves. Gratitude felt and expressed by students and the improved behaviors that could ensue would likely spread to teachers and staff, encouraging them to work harder on students’ behalf and helping to prevent burnout. Therefore, teaching students to count blessings and develop an attitude of gratitude may foster stronger bonds to schools *and* communities, helping both students and schools to thrive.

Social exchange is necessary for most organizations in society to function properly. The positive emotions of leaders (e.g., principals, teachers) predict the performance for their entire group (George, 1995). Grateful principals may beget grateful teachers, who beget grateful students; grateful teachers and grateful students may outperform their less grateful counterparts. Gratitude and the valuing of benefits may be contagious. Indeed, evidence suggests that gratitude promotes social cohesion, relational and job satisfaction, and even organizational functioning (Emmons, 2003). Appreciation interventions using physiological awareness techniques have shown that a wide range of people in organizational, educational, and health care settings can also benefit from experiences of gratitude (Childre & Cryer, 2000). Thus, gratitude may benefit teachers and staff, especially as schools become the nexus for various youth programs that foster learning readiness. Combine this with increasing student diversity, and the challenges teachers and staff confront in today’s school environment become clearer. More supportive relationship networks among teachers and staff would only help meet these rising challenges. Examining such issues would help identify novel ways of improving schools.

Conclusion

The desire to form strong social ties is a fundamental need, and securing strong and supportive relationships early on can provide the bedrock for many positive outcomes in human development.

Experiencing and expressing gratitude is one way for youths (and adults) to boost their mood, strengthen their social ties, and cultivate a sense of purposeful engagement with the world. Though having such experiences are critical for healthy youth development, research on gratitude in youth or the development of gratitude is only now emerging.

In terms of the potential benefits of gratitude to students and schools, research should apply gratitude's moral functions to adolescents' relations with peers and adults at school (e.g., mentors, role models, teachers, counselors). If students feel respected and are able to focus on the people and things that they appreciate at school, this should build trust with the very people who are trying to help them. This should, in turn, foster a stronger satisfaction with and sense of engagement with school. Also, given the centrality of identity formation among adolescents (Marcia, 1980), would gratitude help indicate to youths strengths that are worth building? Further, would school staff and practitioners be more likely to view students as good investments if they were thanked for their efforts? This could also boost staff morale. Finally, if appreciation is more often experienced and expressed school-wide, then the moral motive function suggests that students would become more cooperative and helpful with each other, thus improving their peer relationships. It is unknown if gratitude could benefit schools in these ways, but it seems reasonable to postulate that instilling grateful habits in young people when this virtue is emerging holds much promise for students and schools.

We have sought in this chapter to review the literature on gratitude and to bring into focus its relevance to students and schools. We have also underscored important directions for future research in this area. Gratitude has been shown to lead to many positive outcomes that are of central importance to children and adolescents—psychological well-being, satisfaction with school and with other domains, prosocial relationships, and it likely improves focus on priorities and fulfillment of meaningful goals. Thus, developing gratitude applications for students and schools may help catalyze achievement and improve school bonding.

For instance, could gratitude be designed into existing programs (e.g., character and civic education or service learning projects) and services (e.g., mentoring and counseling) to enhance their effectiveness? Involving youth in volunteer in community/service activities, where they could witness firsthand the appreciation of their beneficiaries, may also help instill gratitude. Coaches could encourage appreciative responding to the help and support of team mates, a practice that may better focus students on improving their skills and boost a team's cohesiveness. English and writing classes might also benefit from the inclusion of appreciation exercises because of the personal relevance and nuances of benefit-exchanges. Such activity may also motivate students to focus on their unique life stories and priorities.

Teachers can encourage appreciative responding in students by pointing out and reinforcing kind acts in the classroom, and teachers and staff could model reciprocity and thankfulness in coordinated activities or play with students—all things parents can do at home too. Use of a gratitude board to display pictures and things for which students are grateful, for instance, could help induce gratitude and boost self-esteem, pride, and cohesiveness in classrooms. The more youths are exposed to such behaviors and engaged in environments where balanced and supportive exchanges take place, the more apt they may be to generalize such behaviors to peers and to develop the capacity for gratitude. The prospect that these simple activities could have positive impacts that spread to the rest of the school underscores the value of gratitude for students and schools. At best, gratitude could help make schools places where youth and their potential are valued above all else while simultaneously encouraging all the people and communities involved to thrive.

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8

Positive Self-Concepts

BRUCE A. BRACKEN

The importance of self-concept as a psychological construct has been recognized since the work of the earliest American psychologists, including James (1890/1983) and Cooley (1902). Little has changed in the degree of emphasis placed on the construct during the past century, leading Bracken and Lamprecht (2003) to suggest that “It might be only a slight exaggeration to suggest that fostering healthy, positive self-concepts, self-esteem, or self-images in children and adolescents has become a national preoccupation among parents, teachers, psychologists, and educational policy makers” (p. 103). Sheldon, Elliot, Kim, and Kasser (2001) expressed a similar position, “It is interesting that if one were to pick a single need that is most important to satisfy in the United States, the current data suggest it would be self-esteem” (p. 336). Further, The California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility (1990) identified self-esteem as the “likeliest candidate for a social vaccine” (p. 4). The reason for a societal emphasis on self-concept is easily understood—compared to individuals who have negative self-views people with positive self-views tend to be happier (Swann, 1990), better adjusted (Dumont & Provost, 2001), more popular (Jackson & Bracken, 1998), have a better subjective sense of well-being (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; McCullough, Huebner, & Laughlin, 2000), profess greater life satisfaction (Diener, 1984; Diener & Diener, 1995; Huebner, 1994; Huebner, Gilman, & Laughlin, 1999; Terry & Huebner, 1995), come from intact families (Sweeney & Bracken, 2000), and are less likely to run away from home (Swaim & Bracken, 1997).

It is clear that agreement exists among professionals and the general population that helping children, adolescents, and adults grow healthy self-concepts is a worthwhile goal. This chapter describes how healthy self-concepts are grown (i.e., acquired and modified), using an agricultural metaphor. Just as anyone can grow fruits, flowers, and vegetables, the art and science of growing positive self-images is not a secret skill possessed only by psychologists; everyone can learn to foster healthy self-concepts in themselves and in others. Growing into healthy human beings and the use of an agricultural metaphor to describe the developmental process has Biblical precedence. The Parable of the Sower illustrates that for a crop (i.e., faith) to grow bountifully, the sower must carefully scatter seed upon prepared soil of sufficient depth to permit the seed to germinate and take root, and the sower must ensure that proper nurturance of the new plant is consistently and carefully provided. Once the seed is scattered it is imperative that the sower protect the seed from predators and the foundling plants from infiltration of competing weeds. If properly planted and

tended, the sower's crop, it is promised, will produce "thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold"... and we are further boldly admonished ... "he who has ears to hear, let him hear."

As such, growing healthy self-concepts requires a sound working theory, receptive and informed participants, and thoughtful planning and common-sense application. Unfortunately, much of the what we hear or read in the media about developing healthy self-concepts promulgates unrealistic expectations within the general population, especially because much of the self-help media promotes self-concept development through means that are not theoretically or empirically supported or evidence-based. Much of the self-concept improvement literature often represents little more than enjoyable activities with little basis in psychological, developmental, or personality theory (e.g., Canfield & Siccone, 1993; Canfield & Wells, 1976; Siccone & Canfield, 1993). This chapter provides teachers, parents, and individuals with the theory and common-sense methodology to grow healthy self-concepts.

A Model of Self-Concept: Understanding the Interrelationship Between Self and Environmental Factors

The Self

The "self" has been a fertile psychological construct with a long history. William James (1890/1983) conceived of self-esteem as a ratio between one's objectively determined skills and abilities and his or her actual or accurately perceived accomplishments (i.e., *Self-Esteem = Success / Pretensions*). Although James's formula is illustrative, the presumption that individuals maintain an accurate perception of their abilities is not supported and it failed to take into account the interactive influence of environmental factors. By placing sole emphasis on the individual, James set the stage for a cognitive-affective system that emphasizes the "self" as an important and authentic entity. Contemporary authors such as Harter (1983) maintain that the self is responsible for maintaining control, regulation, discipline, or achieving some discernable level of esteem, actualization, or confidence.

John B. Watson and B. F. Skinner championed the effects of the environment on the developing person and recognized that individuals need a nurturing environment to thrive. In his last publication before his death, Skinner (1990) spoke directly to the issue of the self and its relevance to psychology:

In face-to-face contact with another person, references to an initiating self are unavoidable. There is a 'you,' and there is an 'I,' I see what "you" do and hear what 'you' say and you see what 'I' do and hear what 'I' say. We do not see the histories of selection responsible for what is done and therefore infer an internal origination, but the successful use of the vernacular in the practice of psychology offers no support for its use in a science. In a scientific analysis, histories of variation and selection play the role of the initiator. There is no place in a scientific analysis of behavior for a mind or self. (p. 1209)

Thus, from a behavioral perspective the "self" is thought of as a pattern of behaviors that is sufficiently unique to an individual to characterize the individual. It is these behaviors that are used to describe the individual (Bracken, 1992). In other words, the self cannot be observed but psychologists, teachers, and parents infer children's and adolescents's self-concepts from their unique personal behaviors and behavioral patterns. For example, students who interact with others in a confident manner would likely be identified by their teachers as having positive self-concepts. These individuals might also vocalize descriptive and evaluative personal statements about their social interactions that others cite as evidence for the person's positive self-concept.

Following in the tradition of Skinner, Bracken (1992) proposed a behaviorally oriented model of self-concept; a model that in part describes how healthy self-concepts are germinated and grown. The model considers the interaction of the seed and the nurturing (or threatening) environment. Bracken's model considers both global self-concept and important life domains or self-concept dimensions, against multiple standards of comparison and evaluative perspectives. The model is explicated later in the chapter.

Self-Concept, Self-Esteem, and Self-Image: Roses by Other Names?

A question commonly posed by educators and psychologists is whether self-concept, self-esteem, and self-image are synonymous constructs or do they differ in meaningful ways (e.g., Bear, Minke, Griffin, & Deemer, 1997; Bracken, 1992; Byrne, 1996). Some theoreticians draw distinctions among the various constructs (e.g., Brown, 1993; Fleming & Courtney, 1984), whereas others view the distinctions as minimal (e.g., Bracken, 1992). For the purposes of this chapter, self-concept, self-esteem, and self-image will be used interchangeably, because meaningful distinctions between the related constructs are difficult to discern in day-to-day functioning (Brinthaupt & Erwin, 1992) and because the constructs are essentially indistinguishable as assessed by current self-concept and self-esteem scales (Bracken, Bunch, Keith, & Keith, 2000).

Global Versus Domain-Specific Self-Concepts

James's formula for self-esteem not only led the field toward a cognitively oriented self-system, it also set the stage for the commonly held perception of self-esteem as a broad, global construct that included all aspects of self-evaluation (see also Cooley, 1902). As a global entity, self-concept was seen as all encompassing and generalizable to all aspects of a person's life—much like general intelligence. Although most theorists currently accept self-concept as a multidimensional construct (e.g., Byrne, 1996; Hattie, 1992; Marsh, 1990; Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976), the media, public, and the “occasional” self-concept researcher continues to focus on global self-concept rather than to its various subdomains.

The earliest self-concept scales naturally reflected foundational conceptualizations of the construct. These instruments typically comprised collections of self-evaluative statements drawn from disparate subdomains, often haphazardly weighted, to yield a total test or global self-concept score. These total test scores varied in magnitude from instrument to instrument in direct proportion to the differences in domain-specific content sampling and the corresponding weights of domains as represented within each instrument. Because of their historical nature and longstanding use, these early instruments remain as some of the best known and most widely used dependent measures (e.g., the Coopersmith, Piers-Harris, Rosenberg scales).

Nevertheless, Wylie (1974, 1979) soundly criticized many of the pioneer instruments and lamented that these tests failed to contribute meaningfully to our understanding of self-concept and its correlates. Wylie astutely recognized that disparate item and scale representation in these early measures had led to a corpus of literature with equivocal research findings, which has perpetuated confusion among educators and psychologists regarding the nature and correlates of self-concept. In addition to inconsistent domain sampling, Wylie critiqued the early self-concept scales on the basis of their psychometric qualities, as have others since (e.g., Bracken & Mills, 1994; Byrne, 1996; Davis-Kean & Sandler, 2001; Keith & Bracken, 1996). Unfortunately, little has been done to address the substantive issues raised by Wylie more than 30 years ago.

Although Wylie's serious and comprehensive criticisms of extant self-concept scales have gone largely unheeded, there have been new instruments developed since that have addressed Wylie's

concerns (e.g., Multidimensional Self Concept Scale, MSCS; Bracken, 1992; Self Description Questionnaires, Marsh, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c). These newer instruments are theoretically based, multidimensional in nature, have sound psychometric characteristics, evenly weighted subdomains, and some have national normative samples.

Multidimensional Self-Concepts

Self-concepts, like plants, grow differently in different media and climates. There is a “goodness of fit” issue that must be considered between given seed stock and the soil and climate in which the seed is planted. A succulent raised in a humid tropical environment will not thrive as well as it might in a more arid environment. Similarly, psychologists now recognize that a person’s adjustment and self-concepts are context-dependent (Bracken, 1992). Since the seminal work of Shavelson et al. (1976), self-concept has become widely accepted as a multidimensional construct (e.g., Bracken, 1992; Harter, 1983; L’Ecuyer, 1981; Marsh & Holmes, 1990; Minton, 1979; Piers, 1984). Bracken (1992) proposed six specific domains—*social, competence, affect, physical, academic, and family*—which were culled from the literature. These domains have gained common acceptance as foundational domain-specific self-concepts (e.g., Bear, Minke, Griffin, & Deemer, 1997; Bracken, 1992, 1996; Coopersmith, 1967, 1984; Harter, 1978, 1982a, 1982b, 1983; Huebner, 1995; Marsh & Holmes, 1990; Minton, 1979; Piers, 1984; Shavelson et al., 1976).

To test the universality of the six context-dependent domains, Bracken et al. (2000) conducted a multiple-instrument factor analysis. The researchers sought to examine the extent to which the six previously mentioned foundational domains were represented in five diverse self-concept and self-esteem instruments. Although only one of the five instruments was based on the entire six-domain model, the Multidimensional Self Concept Scale (MSCS; Bracken, 1992), items across all five self-concept and self-esteem measures combined reliably according to the six MSCS domains or life-contexts (i.e., social, affect, academic, competence, family, physical). This finding suggests that despite the theoretical orientation of various self-concept/self-esteem scales, primary context-dependent domains are commonly found within each of the measures. That is, there appears to be several varieties of the plant called self-concept, but the various varieties have more in common than previously thought.

In addition to its multidimensionality, self-concept is now generally accepted as hierarchically structured. Such a theoretical organization presents global self-concept as embodying all domains together, akin to an intellectual *g*-factor, with various inter-correlated foundational dimensions comprising secondary levels of self-concepts (e.g., Bracken, 1992, 1996; Epstein, 1973; Shavelson et al., 1976). Figure 8.1 depicts the MSCS hierarchical, multidimensional model of self-concept with global self-concept depicted at the center and six context-dependent domains overlapping with the center, thereby contributing to global self-concept but remaining relatively independent.

Bracken (1992) used a Venn diagram to graphically present the MSCS theoretical model. Each of the segments in the Venn diagram represents one of six individual self-concept domains. The six important context-dependent domains are largely independent but overlap with the other domains to create subdomains. The six self-concept domains represented in this model and a brief definition of each follows.

Academic Self-Concept Academic self-concept represents how a person feels about himself or herself within a school or academic setting, or in relation to a student’s academic progress. Factors that affect academic self-concept include influences such as: (a) successes and failures in the school curricula (subject specific self-concepts can also be acquired, such as a reading or math self-concept); (b) ease or difficulty with which information is acquired; (c) the student’s overall

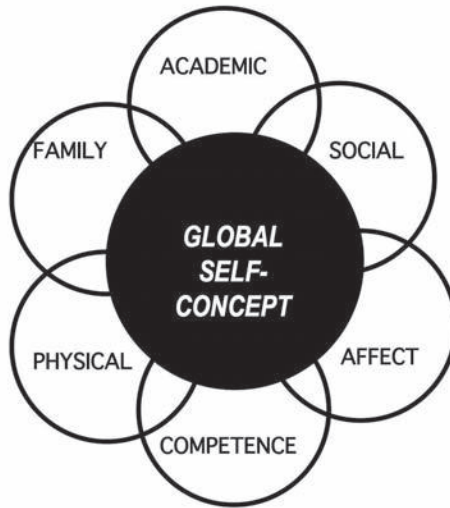


Figure 8.1 Multidimensional self-concept.

intellectual or cognitive abilities (and comparatively, the abilities and achievement of the student's peers); (d) the student's relationship with adults and peers within the school setting (e.g., classroom, lunchroom, playground); and (e) acceptance of the student's ideas, contributions, suggestions, and so on, by others in the school setting.

Affect Self-Concept Affect self-concept is a self-evaluative awareness and acceptance of one's affective state and those issues or conditions that contribute to different affective states experienced by the individual. For example, some students are easily embarrassed, shamed, angered, saddened, or made anxious, and their ability to cope, to be resilient in the face of these negative affective states, and to maintain a positive affective orientation is key to maintaining a positive affect self-concept.

Competence Self-Concept Competence is defined herein as a person's evaluation of his or her ability to get their basic needs met. Individuals who have the intellectual, verbal, social, physical, financial, or other means to meet their needs in a facile manner are more likely to develop positive sense of competence than others who are less able or who struggle more to meet their needs.

Family Self-Concept How people feel about themselves as members of a family, within their family milieu, represents a person's family self-concept. Family self-concept is dependent upon many factors, including extra-individual characteristics such as family constellation, size, and mental and physical health, and parenting style (e.g., authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, neglectful, abusive). Family self-concept is also dependent on intra-individual characteristics such as the physical and mental health of the child, the child's academic, social, physical, artistic successes and failures, and the child's early temperament and resulting later behaviors (e.g., easy going, disruptive children).

Physical Self-Concept Physical self-concept is essentially how a person feels about himself or herself as a physical person. This includes one's physical appearance (e.g., size, attractiveness, hair or skin color), health and physical limitations (e.g., chronic health limitations, disabilities, robust health), and prowess (e.g., stamina, agility, athletic ability).

Social Self-Concept Social self-concept reflects how a person feels about his or her ability to interact with others, participate socially, and be accepted within social settings. As with any specific domain, there may be subareas of social self-concept that can be acquired, depending on individual successes and failures (e.g., same sex peer relations, opposite sex peer relations, same sex adult relations, opposite sex adult relations). Importantly, social interactions and interpersonal relations are key to healthy mental health (Bracken, 2006).

Hybrid Self-Concepts

Where two or more self-concept domains overlap, more finite hybrid subdomains of self-concept are represented. For example, where *physical self-concept* overlaps with *competence self-concept*, the resulting segment graphically represents a subdomain that might be thought of as *physical competence* or *athletic skill*. Where family self-concept overlaps with social self-concept, the overlap relates to the influence that families have on children's social acceptance (e.g., socioeconomic status, families' religious or political affiliations).

The shaded area represented in the center of the Venn diagram includes the variance shared by all of the primary domains of self-concept and can be thought of as *global self-concept*. Such a hierarchical and multidimensional model of self-concept makes sense from an ecological and logical point of view, and has empirical support (Bracken et al., 2000). This approach differs from other prominent researchers, wherein fewer primary domains are identified and each domain is considered as being uncorrelated with the other domains (Marsh & Hattie, 1996). Failing to consider the extent to which domains overlap misses the hybrid nature of domains that share common elements and the interactions of those elements (e.g., *social* and *family* domain influences on children's developing *academic* self-concepts).

Self-Concept Acquisition

One of the shortcomings of various cognitively oriented self-concept scales and models is lack of a clear explanation for how self-concept is acquired or modified. Bracken's (1992) model incorporates behavioral learning theory to explain how children acquire self-concepts as a function of their direct and indirect interactions with environmental factors. Specifically, people receive positive or negative feedback about their behavior or attributes from two feedback modes or perspectives—directly from their personal experiences (i.e., *Personal Perspective*) and indirectly from other individuals within their environment (i.e., *Other Perspective*). The feedback students receive from their environment then can be evaluated according to specific standards. A detailed explanation of each of the two perspectives and the four standards follow.

Self-Concept Perspectives

James's early writings characterized self-concept development as an internal event, with little emphasis on external contributors. James recognized the value of the individual's self-perspective. On the other hand, Cooley (1902) emphasized the external perspective from which an individual's self-concepts are based. Cooley coined the term "looking glass self," suggesting that we tend to see ourselves as others reflect our actions and characteristics back to us. That is, our self-perceptions are directly affected by how others in our environment act toward us and respond to our actions and attributes. Bracken's (1992) model acknowledges and incorporates both of these perspectives (i.e., *Personal* and *Other*).

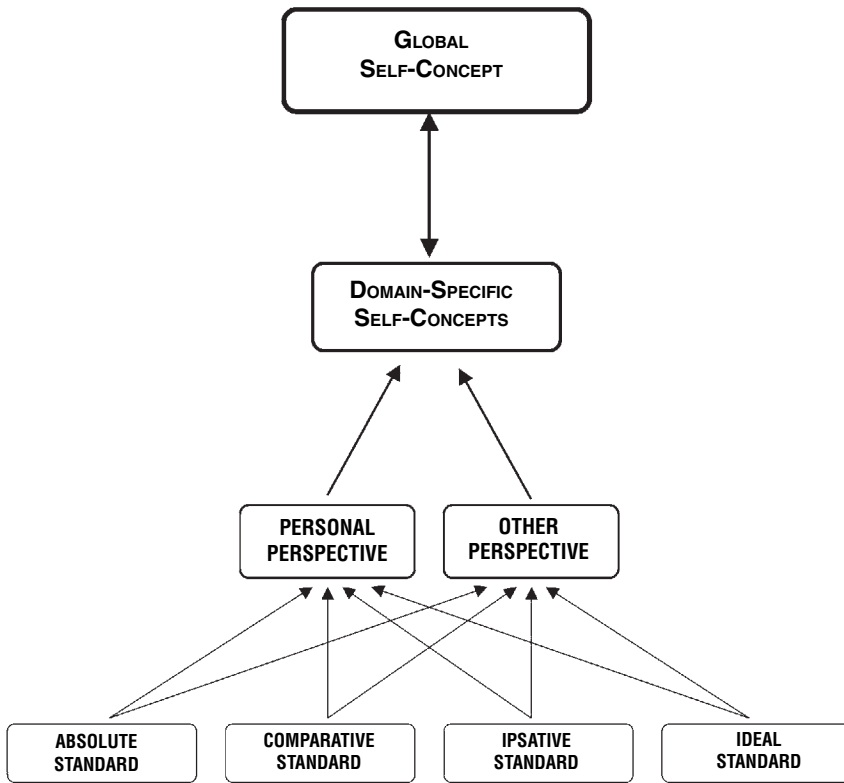


Figure 8.2 Self-Concept Behavioral Acquisition Model

Self-Concept Standards

After we directly (*Personal Perspective*) or indirectly (*Other Perspective*) receive feedback from our environment about our performance or our characteristics, we evaluate that information according to four evaluation standards, separately and in combination. The four identified standards of evaluation include the *absolute*, *comparative*, *ipsative*, and *ideal*. Figure 8.2 depicts the manner in which these standards and perspectives influence the development of children's domain-specific self-concepts. The four standards are contrasted below in an example that uses the same behavioral event (i.e., Math test performance).

Absolute Standard

An *absolute standard* reflects a fairly objective personal evaluation based on directly observable outcomes. A student who passes 25 math test items evaluates his accomplishment directly. The accomplishment, whether appreciated privately (i.e., *Personal Perspective*) or by others (i.e., *Other Perspective*), represents an absolute, direct, and objective outcome.

Comparative Standard

The *comparative standard* is used when an individual's behavior or characteristics are contrasted with the behaviors or characteristics of another person or other people. Math test performance

can be evaluated as either a solitary activity (i.e., absolute standard) or in comparison to a group's performance. Competition among peers may develop in classroom academic performances, with students trying to best others. Although each student might evaluate his or her test performance from an absolute sense, counting the number of items passed (i.e., absolute standard), the students' test performance can also be compared with others or the class average (i.e., comparative standard). As with the other standards, the comparative standard can be evaluated personally (i.e., *Personal Perspective*) or by others (i.e., *Other Perspective*). Thus, a student who normally earns C's on math tests might be happy with having avoided making a D on the test, but the teacher or the student's parents might be disappointed with the student's C-level performance relative to his or her peers, believing that the student should be earning letter grades of B or higher.

Ipsative Standard

Ipsative standards represent the evaluation of a student's test performance in one subject area as compared to other subjects (Bracken, 1992). A student who is not especially strong at math may recognize that he or she achieves well in other content areas (e.g., language arts, science, history), and thereby evaluates him or herself in an intra-student mode. Bracken's ipsative standard is similar to Marx and Winne's (1980) concept of "compensatory self-concept" in which a student might balance negative self-evaluations in one domain with positive self-evaluations in other domains.

Ideal Standard

Ideal standards are employed when an ideal level of accomplishment is used as the standard of comparison by the student (*Personal Perspective*) or by others (*Other Perspective*). Ideal goals are seldom realistic expectations, but may be used in a healthy manner to motivate students to seek maximum improvement. For example, the goal of earning a math test score of 100% might be realistic for only a few students, but for most students the goal of having a flawless test score is unrealistic. As a realistic goal, students might strive to be the best in the class or, importantly, to be the best he or she can possibly be. As an unrealistic goal, students will continually fail and experience disappointment and frustration. In contrast to an unrealistic goal pursuit, Sheldon and Houser-Marko (2000) present the realistic folk wisdom that "... it is possible to be happier through one's striving pursuits, if one picks the right goals and does well at them ..." (p. 160). To grow healthy self-concepts, it is important for parents and teachers to help students identify reasonable and attainable goals to work toward and achieve, and to work toward being the best they can possibly be.

Developmental Considerations: Climate Zones and Soils

Self-concept is developmental in the sense that as a person ages his or her behaviors and consequent self-views become increasingly crystallized *within* individual domains and increasingly differentiated *across* domains. Because infants have limited life-experiences, they would be expected to have fairly undifferentiated self-concepts; however, as they are exposed to different contexts on a regular basis and they differentially evaluate their interactions with and within those contexts, their context-specific self-concepts will become increasingly crystallized—hence the increased difficulty in altering students' self-concepts as they grow older. Because children experience somewhat consistent outcomes *within* similar environmental contexts, and somewhat inconsistent outcomes *across* different environmental contexts, these differential learning experiences accumulate and lead to well-defined, differentiated, domain-specific self-concepts. Thus, self-concept domain differentiation begins sometime during infancy and continues to develop through adolescence, and incrementally throughout adulthood reference.

Correlates Related to Self-Concept

Many researchers have investigated the relationship between basic human characteristics (e.g., age, race, and gender) or conditions (e.g., disabilities, achievements) and self-concept. Below are some of the common human characteristics that have been studied in relation to self-concept development.

Age and Self-Concept The relationship between chronological age and self-concept has long been debated. Some investigators have found self-concepts of adolescents to be more positive than children's self-concepts (McCarthy & Hoge, 1982; O'Malley & Bachman, 1983; Savin-Williams & Demo, 1984); others have concluded that self-concept remains relatively stable across the age span (Dusek & Flaherty, 1981; Engel, 1959; Marsh, Parker, & Barnes, 1985; Osborne & LeGette, 1982). Still others still have concluded that self-concept diminishes during adolescence (Roid & Fitts, 1988; Simmons, Rosenberg, & Rosenberg, 1973).

Reviewing studies published before 1978, Wylie (1979) in her seminal work concluded that there was no convincing evidence for any age-related effect, positive or negative, in global self-concept between the ages of 6 and 50, especially when better known and better quality self-concept instruments were employed. In contrast to Wiley's analyses, Marsh (1989) proposed a curvilinear model of global self-concept development, wherein global self-concept becomes increasingly more positive during childhood and then less positive during preadolescence, followed by improved self-concepts in early or middle adolescence, adolescence and early adulthood. Of the studies reviewed, however, Marsh found only partial evidence for a curvilinear age effect. Bracken (1992) and Crain and Bracken (1994) investigated global self-concept differences among 2,501 American children and adolescents (ages 9 to 19), and found a pattern of development *opposite* of what Marsh (1990) had predicted. Crain and Bracken reported only minor age-related differences across the age-span, with no effect sizes greater than .50. These differences may be due to specific methodologies used in each study. For example, Marsh included scales that mostly failed to meet the methodological and psychometric criteria (e.g., equal weighting of domains, acceptable reliability) proposed by Wylie (1974, 1979), whereas Crain and Bracken's (1994) study used a highly reliable instrument with domains of equal weighting and a very large U.S. sample ($N = 2,501$). Importantly, Crain and Bracken also found no context-specific self-concept age-related differences. In a separate literature review, Crain (1996) considered the literature to date, including the Crain and Bracken study, and concluded, "Longitudinal research may well uncover clinically meaningful age-related differences in children's views of themselves, but for now, it seems warranted to say that age is essentially a weak moderator of domain specific self-concepts at best" (p. 403).

Race and Self-Concept Many educators believed that minority children would develop poor self-concepts because of societal disenfranchisement, especially historically during the tense transition from attending "separate but equal" schools to attending schools comprised primarily of White, middle-class children (Coleman, 1966). Others believed that minority students' self-concepts would improve because of healthy competition with White peers in desegregated school settings (Soares & Soares, 1969). Claims of race differences in self-concept have been inconsistent in both direction and magnitude, with some researchers claiming that White students exhibit more positive global self-concepts than do African American students (e.g., Caplin, 1969; Osborne & LeGette, 1982; Stenner & Katzenmeyer, 1976; Trowbridge, 1972), while other researchers report opposite conclusions (e.g., Lay & Wakstein, 1985; Powers et al., 1971). Still other studies found no differences in self-concept among African American and White students (e.g., Calhoun, Kurfiss, & Warren, 1976; Carpenter & Busse, 1969; Cicirelli, 1977; Hirsch & Rapkin, 1987; Zirkel & Moses, 1971).

Wylie's (1974, 1979) concerns about instrument quality are as meaningful in the interpretation

of race differences in self-concept as in the interpretation of age differences. Bracken (1992) and Crain and Bracken (1994) investigated self-concept differences among a diverse, national sample of children and adolescents (2,010 White, 239 African American, 110 Hispanic students) and found that African American students reported higher global and physical self-concepts than did White or Hispanic students; however, they achieved small effect sizes. Although there is some evidence to suggest that Hispanic children have lower global self-concepts than do African American and White children (Wasserman, Rauh, Brunelli, Garcia-Castro, & Necos, 1990; Zirkel & Moses, 1971), Bracken (1992), Crain and Bracken (1994) and Healey (1969) found no differences in global self-concept between Hispanic students and White or African American students. It appears that when highly reliable, domain-specific, nationally-normed self-concepts scales are employed, there is little consistent evidence of meaningful race differences in self concept.

Gender and Self-Concept Ambiguity also exists as to whether males and females differ in self-concept. Some researchers have reported more positive global self-concepts among males than females (e.g., Allgood-Merten & Stockard, 1991; Feather, 1991; Seidner, 1978), whereas others report virtually no differences (Greene & Wheatley, 1992; Hanes, Prawat, & Grissom, 1979; Kimball, 1973; Kokenes, 1974; Marsh et al., 1985; Mullis, Mullis, & Normandin, 1992; Prawat, 1976; Prawat, Grissom, & Parrish, 1979; Wilson, 1998). Wylie (1979) concluded that there was no convincing evidence that boys and girls differ in their overall self-concept at any age level, and that detectable differences may be due to the foibles associated with the various global self-concept scales used as dependent measures.

A fair number of meta-analyses have been conducted to study gender differences in self-concept, and these studies collectively have detected significant, but minor differences (i.e., effect sizes ranging from .10 to .24) in global self-concept between males and females, favoring males (Feingold, 1994; Hall, 1984; Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999; Wilgenbusch & Merrell, 1999). Given the collective effect sizes, cautious interpretation of gender differences in self-concept is warranted, especially in light of other factors that might differentially affect self-concept within gender groups (e.g., physical attractiveness, academic achievement).

Using the same instrument used by Crain and Bracken (1994) (i.e., MSCS), Wilson (1998) reported no gender differences among 300 third- through sixth-grade students on any of the six domain-specific subscales. Other researchers have reported a trend for gender differences in domain-specific dimensions of self-concept, most notably the area of physical self-concept, favoring males, and academic self-concept (specifically, reading), favoring females (e.g., Crain & Bracken, 1994; Harter, 1982b; Marsh, 1987; Marsh & Jackson, 1986; Wilgenbusch & Merrell, 1999). In addition, there appears to be convincing evidence that girls report higher English and lower math self-concepts than boys (Byrne & Shavelson, 1987; Marsh et al., 1985; Wilgenbusch & Merrell, 1999). Smaller gender differences in the social domain (favoring girls) and affect/emotionality domain (favoring boys) have been noted as well (Dusek & Flaherty, 1981; Marsh et al., 1985; Osborne & LeGette, 1982; Petersen, 1981; Wilgenbusch & Merrell, 1999).

There are several reasons why males may report more positive self-concepts than females in some unique self-concept domains (Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999). These reasons include: (a) the favorable relationship between self-concept and masculine gender roles for both males and females (e.g., Marsh, 1987; Orlofsky & O'Heron, 1987; Whitley, 1983); (b) less emphasis on physical appearance among males (e.g., Mendelson, White, & Mendelson, 1996; Wood, Becker, & Thompson, 1996); and (c) the positive influence of participation in athletics on students' self-concepts, with the availability of athletic participation, historically favoring males (e.g., Holland & Andre, 1994; Taylor, 1995).

In summary, there continues to be considerable support for Wylie's (1979) common-sense,

three-decade-old conclusion that there is little evidence for truly meaningful, systematic, and reliable differences in global self-esteem as a function of age, race, or gender. Many professionals and media have adopted the opposite view. Nevertheless, research evidence overwhelmingly supports the contention that positive self-concepts do not know age, race, or gender boundaries. As noted by Bracken and Lamprecht (2003): “Self-concept seems to be an ‘equal opportunity’ construct, in which everyone can hope to achieve a positive and healthy self-image” (pp. 113–114).

Academic Self-Concept

Although the development of self-concept in the six life-contexts could be explored in much more detail, the scope of the life-contexts considered in this article will be reduced to the most salient domain for educators, academic self-concept or self-concepts that are enhanced as a result of education-based interventions. However, it should be noted that to a considerable degree the issues, findings, and conclusions are similar and generalize across all of the self-concept domains.

Level of Academic Achievement Educators have long believed that students’ self-concepts are inherently linked to their academic achievement. Purkey (1970), for example, in a review of the literature to that date claimed, “Over-all, the research evidence clearly shows a persistent and significant relationship between the self concept and academic achievement” (p. 15). Many researchers since Purkey have examined the relationship between school success and positive self-concept and have reached different conclusions. For example, Hattie (1992) in a meta-analysis of 128 studies found the average correlation between self-concept and academic achievement to be only .21.

Bear et al. (1997) considered commonly held perceptions about self-concept and academic achievement, including the common belief that “Children with LD [learning disabilities] have low self-esteem” (p. 257). Independent studies and several meta-analyses have fairly reliably shown that learning disabled students do in fact report less positive global and domain-specific self-concepts than non-disabled students (e.g., Chapman, 1988; Kavale & Forness, 1996; Prout, Marcal, & Marcal, 1992).

There also is considerable evidence that gifted children are significantly better adjusted than their non-gifted peers (Bracken & Brown, 2006, 2007) and that they generally report positive self-concepts and self-acceptance (e.g., Lewis, Karnes, & Knight, 1995; Manaster, Chan, Watt, & Wieche, 1994). Hoge and Renzulli (1993) conducted a meta-analysis exploring the difference between gifted students’ self-concepts and the self-concepts of non-gifted peers and reported a modest effect size (.19) for differences in global self-concept, but a larger effect size (.47) for academic self-concept. It is to be noted that generalizations about gifted children should be made cautiously. Some gifted students are classified as twice-exceptional and as a result may be underachievers or have specific learning disabilities (Reynolds, 1997; Van Boxtel & Moenks, 1992; Waldron, Saphire, & Rosenblum, 1988).

Bracken (1977) found minor differences between gifted students’ self-concepts as compared to the national norm. He concluded that not all gifted students receive uniformly positive regard from their parents, teachers, and peers, echoing Torrance’s (1965) awareness that if the effects of Cooley’s (1902) *looking glass self*—that is, if significant “others” in a gifted child’s life do not view the child’s gifts favorably, then the child’s self-concept might suffer as a result.

Across all areas of academic achievement, students’ academic self-concepts develop as a function of the evaluation standards applied (e.g., absolute, comparative, ipsative) and which perspective is most influential (e.g., self or other). It makes sense then that some lower achieving students might feel better about themselves because of a healthier standard of comparison and perspective than a high-achieving student with a less healthy standard of comparison and perspective.

Self-Concept Remediation Educators have contended that exceptional students' self-concepts can be improved through special educational programs. Elbaum and Vaughn (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 82 samples of learning disabled students participating in educationally oriented self-concept enhancement programs. Of the 205 individual effect sizes analyzed, Elbaum and Vaughn reported treatment effect sizes ranging from -1.22 to 1.95 , with an overall mean effect size of $.22$ (i.e., an overall small positive effect). Hattie, Biggs, and Purdie (1996) conducted a synthesis of 304 meta-analyses examining a broad range of educational interventions and outcomes, based on more than 40,500 studies, and found an average effect size that was only slightly larger ($.40$). Elbaum and Vaughn's results suggest that the self-concepts of learning disabled students may be enhanced significantly with well-designed and conducted efforts, though there was considerable variability in the efficacy of the treatments used in the various studies.

The low effect sizes reported in the studies represented in the meta-analyses may well be a function of trying to improve self-concept artificially. That is, if academic self-concept is a result of success or failure in school and the extent to which standards and perspectives are differentially applied, it makes sense that the most direct method of improving a student's self-concept is to help them become higher achievers.

Growing Healthy Self-Concepts

By systematically using the Bracken (1992) model for developing, maintaining, and remediating children's self-concepts, it is likely that more consistent and favorable results will emerge than when less systematic or theoretically sound procedures are employed. Individuals interested in improving their own or others' self-concepts must be cognizant of several important issues. First, interventionists must recognize that self-concepts are multidimensional and it is much easier to target one or more individual context-specific domains for change than it is to attempt to improve a person's global or overall self-concept. For example, rather than attempting to create an intervention that would be sufficiently broad and deep to alter another person's global self-concept, it would be easier to improve a person's domain-specific self-concept. The more refined, focused, and intense the intervention, the more likely it will succeed.

Second, interventionists must understand that self-concept is a barometer of internalized perceptions of one's successes and failures (formed by self- and other evaluations). To improve a person's domain-specific self-concept, interventionists must help the person become or perceive themselves as becoming more successful than they were previously. Self-concept enhancement should not be a goal in itself; the goal should be to help a person become more competent, successful, and self-accepting than he or she was previously. Educators put the "cart before the horse" when they suggest that if the child had a better academic self-concept, he or she would achieve better. In reality, if the student achieved better or was perceived as achieving better, the student's self-concept would improve as a result.

Third, Cooley's (1902) concept of the *looking glass self* is important. We often feel the embarrassment, humiliation, disappointment, and shame or conversely the pride, confidence, and happiness that we see in the eyes of others who are watching and judging us. If parents, teachers, therapists, wish to improve the self-concepts of their children, students, or clients, they must become less judgmental, less critical, and less punitive and more supportive, accepting, encouraging, and reinforcing—that is, employ appropriate standards and perspectives to facilitate the students' positive self-evaluation. Interventionists must project the hope, confidence, and belief in the child that they wish children to demonstrate and feel about themselves. When children feel safe from physical and emotional threats, they are freer to feel better about themselves. It is important that interventionists realize that the child sees himself or herself in part in the expressions of the viewer and that the viewer should express encouragement, optimism, and unconditional acceptance of the student.

Similarly, the interventionist must understand that the child may not have an accurate self-perception and view themselves negatively when a negative self-appraisal would not seem warranted by any realistic standard. In instances of overly critical self-perceptions (e.g., perfectionistic students), interventionists should help “reframe” or adjust the student’s personal expectations, perceptions, or beliefs. Talking openly and frankly about the student’s feelings and helping them to accept a less self-critical and more self-accepting perception will facilitate their adoption of more realistic overall self-expectations and more positive self-concepts.

Fourth, interventionists must create an environment that is rich with successful opportunities, and allow for successive approximations leading toward the end goal. As students acquire confidence that they can successfully complete the range of individual steps leading to the end goal, the more confident they will feel. If, for example, the goal is to get a child to stand boldly in the batter’s box and swing at a fast-pitch hardball with some accepted level of success (keeping in mind that professional ball players are happy to get a hit one-third of the times at bat), the coach (e.g., parent) should begin by providing many opportunities to learn the requisite skills and achieve success doing so. A parent of a young child might begin with an oversized bat and an oversized ball (e.g., softball) and toss the ball from a short distance with a soft pitch. The more successful the batter becomes, the more confident she or he will feel. With reliable batting success, the coach might substitute a standard bat for the oversized bat; later substitute a hardball for the softball; later still, employ an overhand slow pitch, as opposed to an underhand pitch. As the batter continues to be successful and gains confidence, the coach can begin throwing successively faster overhand pitches until the batter is comfortable and confident swinging with moderate accuracy at fast-pitch hardballs. Hours of practice in a mechanized batting cage will accomplish the same sense of success.

Fifth, interventionists should carefully employ each of the four standards of evaluation, helping the student and others in the student’s environment to create a healthy situation for acquiring positive self-concepts. As in the example above, the child who regularly makes contact with the thrown ball with his or her bat achieves the “absolute” standard of success; that is, the batter recognizes that he or she can hit the ball fairly frequently. These early practice sessions might best be held in private, so the child is not embarrassed in front of more talented ball players.

The comparative standard is one that has potential negative consequences if the contrast between the child’s abilities is considerably lower than the abilities of most of his or her peers. In such cases, the interventionist should consider continuing private practice sessions, including visits to a hard-pitch batting cage until the child finds a comparative standard not overly negative. Comparative standards are especially difficult because poor players are often the youngest, the smallest, or the developmentally slowest children in the group. Sometimes, placing the child in groups of age, size, or in developmentally matched groups will help create a more appropriate comparative standard. Although talking to the child supportively about age and size differences and not blaming them for their younger age or smaller size can help in a cognitive sense; however, being the last chosen for a team or striking out continually and having teammates recognize your limitations can make for a difficult comparative standard, regardless of your understanding of the reasons. Teamwork, sportsmanship, and peer (and coach) acceptance and support is an important goal for creating positive comparative standards, even when winning may be the most important goal for the team.

The ipsative standard can be employed to bring focus onto a child’s strengths on and off the field. For example, although a player may not be a strong batter, he or she might be a good fielder. As such, parents and the coach can focus on the player’s strengths while shoring up his or her weaker ball playing skills through practice, patience, and encouragement. On the other hand, parents may also point out to the child that although he or she is not a strong baseball player, the child may be strong at other things off the playing field that are important and appreciated. That is, the less able child might play ball because it is fun, but avoid feel badly about not excelling at the sport. Emphasis might be made on the fact that the child excels at other things and should be proud of

those accomplishments and forgiving of the areas where they do not succeed as well. Some children (e.g., youth with mental retardation) may not excel at virtually anything relative to their peers, but they can excel at some things more so than other activities. Honest, forthright encouragement and empathy is necessary to help students feel better about themselves, and the ipsative standard is one way to do so. It is important to recognize that by discounting the importance of one skill in light of another skill, the interventionist is not “taking the easy way out” or “copping out on the child.” To do so simply recognizes that, at present, the child’s ball playing skills are not among their strongest talents and there is no reason for anyone to be overly critical for this human foible or limitation.

The ideal standard is one that can cause a lot of damage to a child’s self-concept if not applied appropriately. By its very nature, an ideal goal is unreachable for most people. Not everyone can be the best at anything, and virtually everyone must accept, eventually, they will be topped by someone else. If a child’s (or their parents’ or coaches’) goal is to be “the best” of all players, then the child may be setting himself or herself up for failure and a resulting diminished self-concept. If the goal is to encourage a talented player to seek to be among the best players on a team, that goal may be achievable for many players. If parents and coaches encourage a player to make the team, that ideal goal may be achievable to an even larger group of players. However, not all players who try out for a team make the team; many are not invited to remain with the team. Parents and coaches (and students) can set a realistic ideal standard of evaluation, and that would be to strive to be the best ball player *that you can be*. By continually striving to better one’s own skills, the child will have a healthier ideal goal and a more realistic standard of comparison (i.e., Did I do my best in practice today?).

Conclusion

By thoughtfully following the previous guidelines for tilling, planting, and tending self-concepts, guidelines that correspond with the elements outlined in the Parable of the Sower, interventionists can help others harvest healthy self-concepts. By preparing the soil and carefully planting seeds of positive self- and other-perspectives, interventionists can begin the process of growing healthy self-concepts. These budding positive self-concepts, require rich environments to grow in and they need to be continually tended to avoid damage from predators or weeds choking them out. Interventionists must ensure that rich opportunities for success are made available and that the environment is a maximally nurturing and supportive. Given these simple but effective procedures, interventionists can effectively help anyone grow healthy self-concepts to levels greater than they currently exist, and possibly “thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.”

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9

Emotion Regulation

Implications for Positive Youth Development

MAUREEN BUCKLEY AND CAROLYN SAARNI

A young person's ability to recognize, regulate, and express emotions appropriately and effectively plays a crucial role in determining his or her ability to achieve personal or academic goals, as well as to cope with environmental and social challenges. In the past three decades, tremendous gains in research and theoretical development have bolstered our understanding of children's emotional functioning and its role in positive developmental outcomes (see Saarni, Campos, Camras, & Witherington, 2006). Emotion regulation, an area of focus within emotional development, has been recently sharpened in its definitions and implications for behavior (Campos, Frankel, & Camras, 2004). This chapter provides an overview of emotional regulation, in terms of both its definition and importance in positive youth development. The latter will be addressed by examining how emotional regulation is integrated within the larger framework of emotional competence (Saarni, 1999). We provide a review of recent empirical findings regarding emotional regulation and its impact on developmental outcomes for children and adolescents, including social-emotional and academic functioning. The chapter concludes by addressing the implications of these findings for school-based professionals, with an emphasis on school-based methods for enhancing emotional competence in general, and emotion regulation more specifically. Suggestions for future research are offered.

Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation consists of two main components: management of emotional expression (the socially effective use of emotionally expressive behavior) and modulation of emotional arousal (including its duration, intensity, and latency to emotion evocation). Management of emotional expressiveness involves recognition that an inner emotional state need not correspond to outer expression of feelings. For example, if 6-year-old Billy falls down while playing with his older cousins, he is likely to do all he can to avoid crying in their presence, brushing the grit from his skinned knees and attempting to laugh, his slightly trembling lips perhaps betraying his actual distress. At more mature levels, it reflects the capacity to understand that one's emotional-expressive behavior may affect others and to take this into account in one's self-presentation strategies. This may occur when Luca opens a dismal gift from his Aunt Alice, but manages to smile and say how much he loves it.

Effective emotion regulation and adaptive coping also entails the capacity to modulate emotional reactions, using strategies that modify the intensity, duration, or aversiveness of such emotional responses. We can regulate emotions by avoiding situations that we know from past learning will likely evoke aversive emotions (e.g., sadness, shame, anxiety) or by seeking out those circumstances that will likely bring pleasure. For example, 8-year-old Kym knows that she gets overwhelmed at large social gatherings. Although all of her friends have decided to host large birthday parties, Kym chooses to invite two close friends over for a dinner and sleepover party. Among older children, cognitive strategies may be used to regulate emotions. Thus, if the norm at Kym's school is to invite the entire classroom to birthday parties, Kym may lessen her anxiety by focusing on the large number of presents she will receive with all 20 students in attendance.

Adaptive emotion regulation is more than simply controlling one's internal and external affective experience in order to achieve a harmonious or positive emotional state. Indeed, we argue that optimal functioning entails the ability to experience the full range of human emotions, including empathy with another's distress, grief, guilt, morally justified anger, and so on (Buckley, Storino, & Saarni, 2003). These "negative" emotions allow for interpersonal connection, mobilization of protest, or reparative actions.

Researchers have also examined how other behaviors become modified as a function of emotion regulation. For example, if a child has successfully reduced the intensity of her emotional reaction, then she is more likely to access problem-solving strategies, as opposed to simply attempting to flee the situation and avoid similar situations in the future. In this example, emotion regulation plays a *mediating* role in how one copes with a particular taxing situation: modulation of one's emotional arousal allows for a different sort of coping behavior than simple flight or avoidance. However, in other contexts emotion regulation might play a *moderating* role; for example, sustaining the duration of an expressive display of happiness (a genuine smile) influences the likelihood that one's interactant will respond positively in kind. In other words, regulation of emotional-expressive behavior often increases or decreases the sorts of social interaction one desires with another.

Lastly, a number of studies have examined how emotion *regulates* other behaviors (e.g., anxiety facilitates self-protective behaviors); processes (attention deployment, effortful control, e.g., Eisenberg et al., 2004); or even other people's responses (e.g., a child's fear elicits protective behavior in her caregiver) (for reviews, see Thompson, 1995; Walden & Smith, 1997). We turn next to consider how emotional competence, a superordinate construct, helps us understand how emotion regulation is dynamically linked with several critical skills of emotion processing. By embedding emotion regulation within this larger construct, we also begin to address how positive development is fostered.

Emotional Competence

In previous articles, Saarni (1997, 1999, 2000, 2007; Saarni et al., 2006) articulated a theoretical model of emotional competence by emphasizing the emotional skills that bolster self-efficacy, adaptation, and coping. These skills emerge according to a developmental process, through the combined influences of factors such as learning, temperament, cognitive maturity, and developmental history. Given that one's emotional experience is inseparable from past or current interpersonal relationships, Saarni's model recognizes that the emotional skills one shows are contingent on the social context in which they are evoked.

Saarni (1999) proposed eight specific but mutually inter-dependent skills of emotional competence. Given that it can be difficult to track eight different skills, they can be grouped into three broad categories: emotion expression, emotion understanding, and emotion regulation. However, even with this simplification, there is inter-dependence. *Emotion expression* includes both verbal and

nonverbal emotion communication, yet this requires the development of emotion understanding and emotion regulation. *Emotion understanding* encompasses the knowledge people have about emotional experience, both their own and that of others, but this too requires development in the domain of an emotion lexicon. Finally, and as previously noted, *emotion regulation* refers to managing one's emotional reactivity in the service of engaging with others and coping with challenging circumstances. Children and youth also learn to regulate (or manage) their emotional expressions in order to cope with social demands as well as to modulate their felt sense of arousal.

In emphasizing the social context in which emotional responses unfold, Saarni's theory highlights the skills required to successfully adapt to the demands of the current social environment (Saarni, 1999). When children possess well-developed emotion expression, emotion understanding, and emotion regulation, they are better equipped to cope, problem solve and, ultimately, achieve their goals. For example, Gottman, Katz, and Hooven (1997) found that grade school children who could "down-regulate" their emotional arousal were more effective negotiators with their peers. Conversely, Hubbard (2001) found that rejected children were more likely to express anger verbally and facially when frustrated in a rigged computer game than were children rated as more likeable and accepted.

Insofar as the skills of emotional competence assist in adaptation and goal attainment, they contribute to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Saarni, 1999). As young people learn to cope with affectively charged situations, they develop the confidence that they can connect with others and handle emotionally challenging interactions. When faced with an affectively powerful interaction, whether positive or negative, those individuals who appropriately recognize their own and others' emotional reactions, and who can manage their emotional arousal in the service of problem solving, will also be able to absorb new information, gain new insights, or connect with others in a productive manner.

Emotional competence is interactional and, as such, plays an important role in a young person's ability to engage with others and develop relationships (Saarni, 1990). Although emotional competence and social competence are uniquely defined and consist of distinct skills, the two domains are also highly interconnected. Broadly speaking, social competence may be defined as effectiveness in interpersonal interaction (Rose-Krasnor, 1997), whereas emotional competence reflects effectiveness in both intra-personal as well as social interaction that is invariably emotionally laden. Social competence may also be more precisely articulated as a specific constellation of social, emotional, and cognitive assets and behaviors (Rose-Krasnor, 1997). Elements of social competence, such as encoding and interpreting social cues, call upon embedded skills of emotional competence, such as reading affective indicators and the capacity for empathy. Emotional competence contributes significantly to social competence, even as early as preschool (Denham et al., 2003). As with emotional competence, research suggests that social competence contributes to school readiness (Denham et al., 2003).

Both social and emotional competencies fall under the larger construct of social and emotional learning (SEL). SEL can be thought of as a set of dynamic processes which are broadly described as those avenues "through which children enhance their ability to integrate thinking, feeling and behaving to achieve important life tasks" (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004, p. 6). Social and emotional learning involves developing children's skills in five core competencies: social awareness, self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, 2003; Zins et al., 2004). The category of self-management is perhaps most closely connected with emotion regulation, and encompasses three key areas: (a) impulse control and stress management, (b) self-motivation and discipline, and (c) goal setting and organizational skills (Zins et al., 2004). We will return to the concept of SEL later in the chapter, within the context of school-based promotion of emotion regulation.

Emotion Regulation's Relationship to Positive Youth Development

Emotional processes and competencies are influential in both normal and atypical development (Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2002). Although successful young people do not necessarily live problem-free lives, they are equipped with both individual and environmental assets that help them cope with a variety of life events. Skills related to emotional competence are one set of resources that students draw upon when faced with challenges. In the specific instance of emotion regulation, children who can manage their feelings and expressive behavior are better equipped to manage impulses, make informed decisions, and persist in pursuing goals. This in turn enhances other characteristics associated with positive developmental outcomes, including feelings of self-efficacy, prosocial behavior and supportive relationships with family and peers.

The majority of the research on emotion regulation in children has been deficit oriented, exploring such issues as the effects of maltreatment on emotion regulation (e.g., Cicchetti, Ackerman, & Izard, 1995) or focusing on children prone to negative emotionality and social impairments (e.g., Eisenberg et al., 1997; Fabes, Hanish, Martin, & Eisenberg, 2002). Thus, reframing emotion regulation as a protective influence has less empirical support. In the following section, we review existing research in order to summarize the role that emotional regulation skills play in positive developmental outcomes. We frame this review in terms of two significant areas of adaptive functioning for children: the social-emotional and academic domains.

Social-Emotional Functioning

Navigating social relationships, both with peers and with adults, requires continual management of positive and negative emotional arousal, and the ability to regulate emotions is associated with peer acceptance (Shields, Ryan, & Cicchetti, 2001; Trentacosta & Izard, 2007). For example, children who cannot contain their joy, to the point of shrieking and running around the classroom, may indeed receive contemptuous stares from peers. In order to manage intense emotional arousal, a child may instead learn to engage in strategies such as self-comforting, distraction, or seeking external support. Thus, it is not surprising to find that emotion regulation, particularly management of distress, is associated with positive social development in both preschool and school-age children (Denham et al., 2003; Denham, Blair, Schmidt, & DeMulder, 2002; Eisenberg et al., 1996; Eisenberg, Fabes, Guthrie, & Reiser, 2000; Eisenberg et al., 2001; Hill, Degnan, Calkins, & Keane, 2006). Among high-risk preschool girls, the ability to regulate emotion has been shown to be a potential protective factor in decreasing behavior problems in early childhood (Hill et al., 2006).

Moreover, individuals who can cope with anger, frustration and other strong, negative emotions demonstrate self-regulatory strategies that minimize the strength or duration of such emotional states. Difficulty regulating anger and other negative affect has been linked with problematic social outcomes (Casey, 1996; Denham et al., 2002; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003). Even as early as the preschool years, children's styles of affective regulation are closely linked to their everyday anger-related actions (Eisenberg, Fabes, Nyman, Bernzweig, & Pinuelas, 1994).

The combination of intense negative emotionality and trouble regulating emotions hinders children from learning socially competent behavior (Eisenberg et al., 1997; Perry, Perry, & Kennedy, 1992; Schwartz, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1997). Young people prone to unrestrained episodes of intense negative emotion are socially vulnerable. Indeed, children tend to dislike peers who express predominantly negative affect, and their teachers find them less friendly and more aggressive than their more emotionally balanced peers (Denham, McKinley, Couchoud, & Holt, 1990). Among preschoolers and school-age children, negative affect and expression of anger are associated with increased risk for aggressive behavior (Arsenio, Cooperman, & Lover, 2000; Bohnert, Crnic, & Lim, 2003; Calkins & Dedmon, 2000; Dodge, Lochman, Harnish, Bates, & Pettit, 1997; Shields &

Cicchetti, 2001) and victimization by peers (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004; Schwartz, Proctor, & Chien, 2001). In the following section we will briefly review specific instances where emotional regulation plays a role in developmental outcomes.

Peer Aggression

A child's choice of coping strategy when their negative emotions are aroused plays a role in developmental outcomes. For example many, if not most, children experience peer aggression, but some rise above it while others are victimized repeatedly. Kochenderfer-Ladd (2004) explored the role of emotions in elementary school students' coping with peer victimization. Faced with peer aggression, students in this study showed various emotional reactions, including anger, fear, or embarrassment. These different types of emotional responses were associated with different coping strategies used by the child to deal with the aggression. In general, scared or embarrassed children sought advice, whereas angry children sought revenge. Further, prosocial attempts at conflict resolution were used by children who reacted with fear or embarrassment (e.g., giving an "I" message, telling the perpetrator to stop, taking time to cool down) and these strategies were associated with decreased victimization and fewer difficulties with internalizing problems. In contrast, children who reacted to peer aggression with anger were at an increased risk for victimization, loneliness, anxiety and depressive symptoms.

Fearfulness and Worry

Likewise, research reports differential relationships between specific cognitive strategies and a child's response to negative life events (Garnefski, Rieffe, Jellesma, Terwogt, & Kraaij, 2007). Less adaptive strategies include self-blame and catastrophizing, which is related to depression, worry, and fearfulness. In contrast, strategies such as positive reappraisal and positive refocusing appear to offer a protective influence. Endorsement of these more adaptive strategies is associated with fewer reported symptoms of depression and worry and reduced fearfulness. As one hypothetical scenario, during a soccer game Diana is criticized by some teammates because she missed an important defensive kick. She may conclude that she is a lousy soccer player and did not work hard enough in practice last week (self-blame). She may even conclude that she will never be a good player and will not be able to show her face at practice the next day (catastrophizing). In contrast, Diana might choose to review how she came to miss the kick, and take it as an opportunity to improve her skills (positive reappraisal). Or, she might focus on her team's win, and the fact that her teammates included her fully in their celebratory group dance (positive refocusing). In the latter two instances, Diana maintains her focus and continues to pursue her goals, which might include becoming a better soccer player and/or maintaining peer relationships. Furthermore, her self-efficacy likely remains intact.

Effective Management of Aversive Emotions

Effective management of distressing emotions requires the coordination of several skills of emotional competence. Children who manage their anger may be better equipped to communicate their distress in an appropriate manner. Children lacking an adequately developed lexicon of emotion may instead "blow up" or display tantrum behaviors (see Chambers, 1999, for a review of relevant research). Effective anger management requires young people to mobilize self-presentation strategies that work in their best interest. Children who respond to peer aggression with strong negative emotion, for example, crying or fighting back, are more likely to experience chronic victimization

(Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997). Such displays of emotional distress may be reinforcing to bullies (Perry, Williard, & Perry, 1990), increasing the likelihood of re-victimization. Effective children also use self-regulatory strategies to manage aversive emotions. The child who effectively regulates negative emotion in the service of goal attainment is likely to develop a sense of self-efficacy regarding emotion-laden transactions.

Effective Self-Regulation Strategies

More recently, researchers have tried to clearly delineate the relationship between emotional regulation and behavior. Accordingly, Eisenberg and Spinrad (2004) distinguish between effortful control and reactive control. Effortful control, or the ability to voluntarily inhibit or activate behavior, is considered an essential element of emotion regulation. It encompasses attentional control (capacity to focus or shift attention and to persevere on task), and the ability to activate or inhibit behaviors required for adaptive responding. Reactive control refers to a purportedly temperament-linked, and thus less voluntary tendency, which can range from being overly inhibited to being excessively impulsive. Problems in adjustment may occur due to a propensity towards either over-controlled or under-controlled behavior. For example, a child prone to excessive control may present as overly inhibited and experience internalizing difficulties such as anxiety (Biederman et al., 1993). In contrast, a child with a tendency toward insufficient control may be prone to maladaptive impulsivity and externalizing problems (Schwartz, Snidman, & Kagan, 1996).

Recent research suggests that a combination of negative emotionality and inability to sustain attention predicts later negative behavioral outcomes. In one study, impulsivity and deficient effortful control directly predicted externalizing problems, particularly for children ranked high in dispositional anger (Eisenberg et al., 2004). Another study found that young children who frequently displayed high intensity negative emotions were more likely to be distractible and to exhibit less constructive coping (Eisenberg et al., 1993). These children were also viewed as less desirable playmates by their peers and less socially mature by their teachers. Lawson and Ruff (2004) found that the “double hazard” of negative emotionality and difficult sustaining attention at age 2 combined to predict cognitive function (IQ) and problem behavior ratings at age 3.5 years.

Academic Outcomes

Social and emotional competencies are integral to academic learning (Collaborative For Academic, Social And Emotional Learning, 2003). Research links social and emotional learning and a host of academic attributes (e.g., attitudes, motivation, commitment) and outcomes (e.g., attendance, graduation rates, performance, behavior; Zins et al., 2004). The academic environment brings with it an array of stimulating emotions, including excitement and anxiety, and how well a child manages such feelings is likely to influence her ability to absorb academic information (Graziano, Reavis, Keane, & Calkins, 2007). It seems reasonable to assume that emotionally competent children learn more effectively because they can attend to classroom lessons as opposed to being preoccupied by emotion-laden stressors and unresolved internal and external conflicts.

Emotion regulation specifically has been found to impact school adjustment (Shields et al., 2001). Among junior high students, emotional distress was associated with lower grade point average, school problem behavior, and self-perceptions of academic competence (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 1998, 2000). However, seventh-grade students who conferred a positive value on school and perceived themselves as academically competent experienced less emotional distress by the conclusion of grade 8 (Roeser et al., 2000).

Given the link between emotion regulation, attention shifting, and focus described by Eisenberg and colleagues (2001), it may be that children who possess solid emotion regulation skills can better

focus on academic tasks (Trentacosta & Izard, 2007). Recent research finds that emotion regulation indirectly impacts academic competence in first grade. The relationship is mediated by teacher rating of behavioral self-regulation (Howse, Calkins, Anastopoulos, Keane, & Shelton, 2003) and attention (Trentacosta & Izard, 2007). A number of interesting findings emerged in a study examining the relationships among emotional dispositions, academic-related affect and school performance (Gumora & Arsenio, 2002). As predicted, significant relationships existed between emotionality, academic affect, and emotion regulation. Moreover, each of these affect-related variables were correlated with academic performance. Middle school students who reported higher emotion regulation also reported less negative academic affect and were viewed by their teachers as having more positive moods. Students prone to negative academic affect achieved lower grades. The affect-related variables held a predictive value for GPA even after accounting for cognitive ability.

Research has also shown parent-reported emotion regulation to significantly predict kindergarten's academic success, both in terms of teacher reports and standardized test results (Graziano et al., 2007). In this study, emotion regulation also predicted parent reported behavior problems and the quality of the student-teacher relationships. These findings indicate that children with a higher capacity to regulate their emotions experience more academic success, fewer behavior problems, and better relationships with their teachers. The contribution of emotion regulation to academic success was unique and persisted even when controlling for cognitive abilities, behavior problems, and student-teacher relationships. The authors posited that children with more functional emotion regulation skills may more effectively cope with the emotional demands of the learning environment and thus be less vulnerable to emotion-related disruptions in cognitive functioning.

School-Based Promotion of Emotion Regulation

The School Context

Schools present a more stable and consistent setting than many children's home environments and thus can become a significant locus for change in children's development (e.g., Elias et al., 1997). The promotion of positive development—which includes emotional competence in general and emotion regulation more specifically—requires an examination of how children's emotional processes emerge in the school context. However, reciprocity works between the school and the child's home environment as well—what the child learns in school, including social and emotional skills, can be taken home and used adaptively within the family and community. This idea of mutual influence across contexts as being critical to development has been thoughtfully elaborated by Lerner (e.g., 1991, 1992, 1998) among others. Likewise, acquiring the skills of emotional competence occurs across multiple interactive contexts. A child does not learn how to be aware of his or her feelings or to understand what others feel in a piecemeal fashion; instead these skills are developed across multiple settings. Learning the language of emotion, having the capacity for emotion awareness, and knowing how to regulate one's arousal and expressive behavior are similarly acquired across multiple contexts. Schools figure prominently among these influential contexts, whether or not the school explicitly acknowledges this process.

The school setting is replete with opportunities to consistently reinforce adaptive social and emotional behaviors, including the development of meaningful relationships with peers and adults (Elias et al., 1997; Eron, Gentry, & Schlegel, 1994). Characteristics of schools that are consistent with developing emotional competence include establishing clear behavioral standards (Elias et al., 1997), goals for prosocial behavior, programs for developing social-emotional skills, and resources for rewarding prosocial displays (Bronfalo, Baruch, Conway, & Marsh, 1994).

Given the integral relationship between social and emotional development, many school-based assessment procedures simultaneously target both domains (Wittmer, Doll, & Strain, 1996). Our

position is similar—emotions have a biological substrate, but their function invariably reflects the influence of interpersonal relationships, either developmentally (as in the socialization of emotion expression) or motivationally (as in socially constructed goal-directed behavior). Furthermore, we argue that learning how to regulate one's emotional experience mediates effective social behavior. Emotion regulation speaks as much about the individual's learning to modulate internal emotional arousal (e.g., the emotion dynamics of intensity, duration, lability, latency, and so forth) as the individual's learning to cope with provoking and challenging external circumstances. As noted previously in this chapter, research indicates that the ability to regulate one's emotional arousal, subjective experience of emotion, and emotion-laden expressive behavior and communication are at the crux of what informs adaptive behavior. By comparison, when emotion regulation is disturbed and malfunctioning, we see children and youth who are characterized as internalizing or externalizing, or both.

In our view, any discussion of the promotion of emotion-regulation must begin with the consideration of SEL in general. At the forefront of applying SEL research to school settings is the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). For over a decade, CASEL has worked to establish effective, evidence-based social and emotional learning as a fundamental element of education from preschool through high school. Drawing on a multi-year, federally funded study, CASEL published a comprehensive guide to contemporary SEL programs, *Safe and Sound* (CASEL, 2003, 2005). CASEL publications demonstrate that, similar to academic skills, social and emotional skills can be developed within the school setting (Greenberg et al., 2003; Zins et al., 2004). These authors advocate for coordinated and comprehensive SEL programming to replace “one-shot” prevention efforts (CASEL, 2003). The CASEL model calls for instruction in five core areas of social and emotional competencies (i.e., self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationships skills, and responsible decision making; CASEL, 2003, p. 7).

The *Safe and Sound* publication includes a review of 80 multi-year, sequenced SEL programs intended for use in general education classrooms. Of the programs reviewed, 22 received the designation “select SEL program,” based on factors such as comprehensive SEL coverage, supportive outcome research and quality of staff development. For 21 of these select programs, the domain of self-management, most closely related to emotion regulation, is listed as a strength. Thus, there are a number of quality, comprehensive SEL programs that integrate emotion regulation and show promising results.

Based on the work of CASEL, it seems clear that the most effective social and emotional learning occurs within the context of comprehensive and systemically supported interventions. Thus, any consideration of promoting emotion regulation specifically must take such interventions into account. That stated, we also contend that emotion regulation as a *protective* factor is significant and warrants attention as well. At all events, emotional learning requires consistent practice and ongoing opportunities for feedback and skill development (Elias et al., 1997). Indeed, interventions with high-risk children call for ongoing reinforcement of appropriate behaviors from childhood through adolescence (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 1999). Furthermore, emerging research suggests that early intervention efforts might be especially crucial for children at-risk for the “double hazard” of poor emotion regulation and inattention (Lawson & Ruff, 2004).

Although developed with a focus on parenting, the work of Gottman, Katz, and Hooven (1997) on the importance of emotional processes between parent and child holds potential for application in the school setting. As articulated by these authors, “emotion coaching” pertains to a style of parenting that includes five key elements: (a) awareness of the child's emotions, (b) understanding of emotion as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching, (c) assistance in helping the child attach verbal labels to emotional experiences, (d) empathy with the child's emotions, and (e) assistance in helping the child problem solving (p. 84). These parents do not perceive conflict as a negative

thing and thus do not avoid it. Parents who exhibit emotion coaching behaviors do not disengage, dismiss, or denigrate the child who is angry. Rather, they are responsive and maintain warmth and connection, even during emotionally charged encounters. They use the emotional incident to instruct the child regarding *acceptable behavior*, while conveying that all *feelings* are acceptable.

Gottman et al. (1997) acknowledge that, although emotion coaching emphasizes labeling, expressing and talking about feelings, these are not necessarily behaviors that lead to social success. If 12-year-old Kendra is teased, she would likely not be well-served by becoming teary and telling her tormenter how hurt and sad she is by the teasing. In fact, the best thing she could probably do is keep a cool head, focus on the task at hand and inhibit the display of her feelings. How then, could emotion coaching be helpful to young people? These researchers posit that emotion coaching fosters the development of what they call emotional intelligence, or a general set of emotion related skills, among them the ability to inhibit negative affect, regulate emotions, self-soothe, and focus attention during emotionally arousing situations (Gottman et al., 1997). Furthermore, they propose that these are skills promoted through exposure to emotion coaching parenting.

At first glance, it might seem like a mighty challenge to expect a parent to maintain such a calm, aware, and empathic approach to a child overcome with negative affect and who is discharging this affect in every counterproductive way possible. It might seem downright absurd to suggest this approach to a teacher who is trying to successfully instruct 25 children. However, Gottman's research indicates that how parents talk to children when they are emotionally aroused may either facilitate or interfere with developmental processes (Gottman et al., 1997). It would follow that the emotional exchanges between child and teacher are similarly influential.

An important component of the emotion coaching approach rests in its potential to minimize dysregulation before it escalates to extreme maladaptive behavior. For example, emotion coaches are sensitive and aware of emotion not just in its blatant expression, but also in its more subtle form. Thus, there is more of an opportunity to intervene earlier in the regulation process, minimizing the negative repercussions often associated with episodes of extreme dysregulation.

We propose that applying the principles of emotion coaching to the school setting would optimally entail an initial exploration of the meta-emotional climate of the individuals making up the system. In other words, how do teachers and other school personnel feel about feelings? This initial assessment would include considering educators', administrators', and support staffs' awareness of and comfort with emotions, both in themselves and the students. It would also take into account the adults' comfort with emotions and ability to regulate their own emotional state. The proximity or distance from a meta-emotional climate associated with optimal child outcomes could then be assessed, and a plan for altering the school climate to more closely align with emotion coaching principles devised. The emotional climate of a school impacts not just the students, but also the teachers, administrators, and support personnel. The processes associated with emotion coaching would likely benefit all members of the school community. In addition, these principles help foster the sort of safe and caring learning environment advocated by CASEL (2003).

Conclusion

As discussed in this chapter, emotional regulation, including the ability to modulate emotional arousal and manage emotional expression, facilitates adaptive coping. Research indicates that emotion regulation skills play a role in developmental outcomes. Children with well-developed emotion regulation skills, particularly in terms of strong negative emotions, appear to fare better socially, emotionally, behaviorally, and academically. They are more likely to manage their feelings in a manner that facilitates goal attainment.

Existing research suggests both direct and more complex relationships between emotion

regulation and developmental outcomes. Of particular note is the increasing evidence that problematic behavioral outcomes are associated with a combination of negative emotionality and the inability to sustain attention. A fruitful area of future research is the exploration of the various pathways through which emotional regulation may exert its influence, such as its relationship to academic attitudes and behaviors (e.g., attitudes, motivation, attention) and its connection to social support (e.g., relationships with teachers and peers).

We agree with the researchers at CASEL that attention to the social and emotional lives of children is integral to our educational system's mission. We acknowledge the value of offering and supporting comprehensive, evidence-based social and emotional learning programs, and advocate for the specific consideration of emotion regulation as a crucial element of these programs. The utility of emotion coaching for educators needs to be empirically verified to determine whether it facilitates the social-emotional climate of the classroom and thus benefits children's academic functioning. In addition, it may be beneficial to explore the impact of emotion coaching application to other aspects of school functioning, such as teacher retention rates. Given the research indicating the importance of administrative support and teachers' level of implementation to other social and emotional learning programs (i.e., Promoting Alternative Thinking Skills Curriculum; Kam, Greenberg, & Walls, 2003), these would be important factors to explore.

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10

Empathy, Prosocial Behavior, and Positive Development in Schools

TRACY L. SPINRAD AND NANCY EISENBERG

The ability to respond appropriately to others' distress is an important topic in child development. Prosocial behavior has been defined as voluntary behavior intended to benefit another (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998). Contemporary researchers have distinguished between several emotional responses thought to contribute to prosocial behavior. These responses include: (a) *empathy*, which is defined as an affective response that is identical to or very similar to what another person is feeling or is expected to feel; (b) *sympathy*, which is an affective response that consists of feelings of sorrow or concern for others; and (c) *personal distress*, which is characterized by a proneness to over-arousal in the presence of another's distress. Children's empathy and especially sympathy have been positively related to prosocial behavior, such as altruistic behaviors and helping (Batson, 1991; Eisenberg, Fabes, Schaller, & Miller, 1989; Zahn-Waxler, Robinson, & Emde, 1992), whereas personal distress reactions have been negatively related or unrelated to prosocial actions toward others (Eisenberg et al., 1993; Zahn Waxler, Cole, Welsh, & Fox, 1995).

In this chapter, we review findings of studies involving the relation between empathy-related responses and prosocial behaviors (e.g., helping, sharing) to children's social and academic functioning. In addition, we discuss literature pertaining to the socialization of empathy and prosocial behaviors. Finally, the effectiveness of school programs designed to improve children's social skills (and empathy-related responding) are described. The majority of this chapter focuses on children's empathy and sympathy (rather than personal distress reactions), although it is important to differentiate personal distress from other aspects of responding.

Development of Empathy

Hoffman (1982, 2000) outlined a series of phases in the development of empathy, shifting from self-concern to more empathic, other-oriented concern. Specifically, in infancy empathic responses are rudimentary reactions, typically marked by reactive or contagious crying in response to the cries of other infants. In the second year of life, toddlers are capable of experiencing concern for another, rather than simply seeking comfort for themselves. In this phase, labeled *egocentric empathy*, toddlers demonstrate empathic concern and prosocial behaviors in response to another's distress, although these behaviors likely involve giving the other person what they themselves find comforting (e.g., bringing a favorite teddy bear to a distressed adult). As children cognitively

mature and develop more sophisticated perspective-taking skills, they acquire greater awareness of another person's needs. They also understand that these needs differ from their own. For example, older children begin to experience empathy towards people who are not physically present (e.g., if they hear about someone in distress), and by later childhood, the ability to experience empathy for another's life condition or general plight develops (Hoffman, 1982, 2000). Hoffman predicted that this ability could be acquired by 9 or 10 years of age, although there is no direct research on the development of this ability. Nevertheless, empirical research does find that empathy/sympathy and prosocial behavior increases during childhood. For example, Fabes and Eisenberg (1996; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998) conducted a meta-analysis of developmental trends in prosocial behavior and found that older children exhibited more prosocial behavior than did younger children and were higher in some measures of empathy/sympathy. However, effect sizes for age differences varied as a function of study design (i.e., method, type of prosocial behavior). Thus, although empathy and prosocial behavior increase as children develop, the findings are relatively complex due to varying study characteristics.

The Relation of Empathy-Related Responding to Behavioral and Academic Competence

Children's appropriate responses to others' distress have important implications for school success. As will be discussed below, empathy and prosocial behavior have been linked with children's social competence and lower problem behaviors, and in much of the work these constructs have been measured in the school context (i.e., reported by teachers). In addition, empathy and prosocial skills have been shown to contribute to academic functioning, although children's social competence and problem behaviors possibly mediate the relation between empathy/prosocial behavior and the level of a child's academic achievement.

Social Competence

Prosocial behavior, and more specifically empathy and sympathy, have been consistently empirically related to children's positive social functioning (see Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006). In a longitudinal study, Eisenberg et al. (1996) found that teachers' reports of 6- to 8-year-olds' sympathy were positively related to teacher-rated social skills and socially appropriate behaviors concurrently and/or 2 years prior. In a follow-up study when these children were 10- to 12-years-old (Murphy, Shepard, Eisenberg, Fabes & Guthrie, 1999), similar relations were found between sympathy responses and measures of social competence concurrently and two, four, and six years earlier. In addition, young adolescents' sympathy was linked with same-sex peers' reports of sociometric status 6 years earlier (Murphy et al., 1999).

Individuals who experience other-oriented emotional reactions and behave prosocially are likely to have positive peer relationships and interactions. Indeed, prosocial children tend to be popular with their peers (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000; Clark & Ladd, 2000; Denham et al., 2003; Graziano, Keane, & Calkins, 2007; LaFontana & Cillessen, 2002; Lansford et al., 2006; Warden & Mackinnon, 2003), are relatively sociable (Robinson, Zahn-Waxler, & Emde, 1994; Young, Fox, & Zahn-Waxler, 1999), and tend to have supportive peer relationships (Clark & Ladd, 2000; Sebanc, 2003). Thus, children who experience concern for others behave sensitively towards others and are viewed positively by adults and peers.

Aggression and Problem Behaviors

The relations of empathy-related responding to children's problem behaviors also have received attention from investigators. This literature is particularly relevant for school personnel because dis-

ruptive children are thought to spend less time on task (Arnold et al., 1999; NICHD Early Childcare Research Network, 2004; Ramsey, Patterson, & Walker, 1990), do less homework (Dishion, Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber, & Patterson, 1984), and may receive less instruction from teachers (Arnold et al., 1999; Coie & Dodge, 1998; Pianta, La Paro, Payne, Cox, & Bradley, 2002). Thus, externalizing problem behaviors in the classroom likely have adverse consequences for children.

Extant research reveals negative relations between empathy/prosocial behavior and aggression or externalizing problems (Diener & Kim, 2004; Hastings, Zahn Waxler, Robinson, Usher, & Bridges, 2000; Hughes, White, Sharpen, & Dunn, 2000; Strayer & Roberts, 2004), although few studies have examined these constructs longitudinally. In one exception, Zhou et al. (2002) assessed elementary school children's facial and self-reported empathic reactions after viewing mildly evocative slides of other people in positive or negative situations. At the first assessment, children who exhibited more facial empathy during the evocative slides were rated by parents and teachers as lower in externalizing problem behaviors (e.g., argues, lies, aggression). Two years later, children's facial empathy and their self-reported empathy (combined in a latent construct) were associated with lower levels of adult-reported externalizing problems. Thus, observed empathy has been found to predict lower levels of externalizing problems in school-aged children across time.

Interestingly, the negative relation between aggressiveness and prosocial behavior may be evident only in the school years (Lovett & Sheffield, 2007). Indeed, aggressive toddlers have been found to display *more* empathic responses than less aggressive toddlers (Gill & Calkins, 2003). It is possible that the lack of social inhibition often associated with aggression allows children to approach and exhibit concern toward an unfamiliar adult. In a recent study, Spinrad and Stifter (2006) reported that the relation between anger (the emotion thought to underlie aggression; Eisenberg et al., 2001; Rothbart & Bates, 1998) and prosocial behavior in toddlers was moderated by the level of maternal responsiveness. A negative relation between anger and prosocial behavior toward the mother was found when mothers were low in responsiveness. Conversely, when mothers were relatively high in responsiveness, toddlers' anger was positively related to prosocial behavior. Thus, at young ages, the relation between aggression/anger and prosocial behavior is more complex, perhaps because of the measurement of prosocial behavior in young children (towards an unfamiliar person) or because the links are moderated by parental behavior.

Academic Competence

Prosocial behaviors, and more specifically empathy/sympathy, may also play an important role in children's school success. Children who are relatively prosocial or empathic are likely to cooperate in class and exhibit appropriate classroom behaviors and/or may be well-liked by teachers. In turn, these students may receive more help from teachers and peers and may be more engaged in school activities (Coie & Dodge, 1988; Wentzel, 1993).

Some investigators have obtained positive correlations between empathy or prosocial behavior and measures of intelligence, vocabulary or reading skills, language development, or mental developmental level (Carlo, Hausmann, Christiansen, & Randall, 2003; Cassidy, Werner, Rourke, Zubernis, & Balaraman, 2003; van der Mark, van Ijzendoorn, & Bakermans Kranenburg, 2002). In a recent longitudinal investigation, Miles and Stipek (2006) found a positive and significant relation between kindergarten or first-grade teachers' ratings of children's prosocial behavior and children's literacy achievement across elementary school (through grade 5). The authors suggest that perhaps children with well-developed social skills (i.e., those high in prosocial behavior) also develop closer relationships with teachers, and as a result, earn more instruction time from teachers. Similar findings have been noted in other recent studies. For example, emergent literacy problems in boys were associated with fewer prosocial interactions, suggesting that prosocial boys

may receive positive attention from teachers (e.g., increased interactions with teachers) that lead to increased opportunities for learning (Doctoroff, Greer, & Arnold, 2006).

In addition, prosocial behavior and empathy has been found to predict children's grade-point average (GPA) and other measures of school-based achievement (e.g., academic self-efficacy, general achievement tests; Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, & Regalia, 2001; Caprara et al., 2000; Johnson, Beebe, Mortimer, & Snyder, 1998; Wentzel, 2003; Wise & Cramer, 1988). Moreover, these relations have been found over time. For example, Caprara and colleagues (2000) found that early prosocial behavior (in third grade) predicted higher academic achievement in eighth grade, even after accounting for variation in early academic achievement. Thus, prosocial skills may help foster children's academic learning and school success.

It is also important to note that some researchers have found no significant or inconsistent relations between tests of intelligence or academic competence and children's prosocial behavior or sympathy (Jennings, Fitch, & Suwalsky, 1987; Strayer & Roberts, 1989; Turner & Harris, 1984; Wise & Cramer, 1988). It is likely that the relation between empathy or prosocial behavior and academics is mediated by other factors such as more general social competence (i.e., a well-behaved child) and the quality of teacher-child relationships, or that the relation between academics and empathy-related responding is derived from differences in children's attention or regulation abilities. In other words, children who do well in school may have the ability to sit still in class and to focus on the teacher. These same skills (i.e., attention skills, behavioral regulation) may also underlie empathy and prosocial behavior (see Eisenberg et al., 2006). Further research is needed to examine these processes.

Socialization of Children's Empathy-Related Responses to Distress

Researchers have shown considerable interest in understanding the contribution of the social environment to the development of children's empathy and prosocial behaviors (Knafo & Plomin, 2006). Although the majority of work in this area has focused on parental socialization, one might expect similar processes for other socializing agents, such as peers, teachers, and the school environment. Each agent will be reviewed in turn.

Parental Socialization

The quality of the parent-child relationship may be an important factor in understanding children's empathy-related responding. A high-quality parent-child relationship (i.e., characterized as secure with low conflict) may facilitate the child's sense of connection or partnership with others (Staub, 1992). Indeed, securely attached children tend to display more concern toward a stranger (van der Mark et al., 2002) and are relatively prosocial (Kestenbaum, Farber, & Sroufe, 1989; Laible, 2006).

Moreover, maternal responsiveness has been positively related to children's empathic responding. Maternal responsiveness (including appropriate, contingent, and sensitive responding to their child's cues) has been linked with higher empathy or prosocial behavior from 18- to 30-months-old (Kestenbaum et al., 1989; Kiang, Moreno, & Robinson, 2004; Kochanska, Forman, & Coy, 1999; Robinson, Zahn-Waxler, & Emde, 1994; Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, & King, 1979) and in older children (Davidov & Grusec, 2006; Iannotti, Cummings, Pierrehumbert, Milano, & Zahn-Waxler, 1992; Janssens & Dekovic, 1997; Robinson et al., 1994). Although most research in this area has used concurrent data, a recent longitudinal study found that maternal sensitivity observed in infancy predicted toddlers' responses to distress eight months later (Spinrad & Stifter, 2006). Specifically, when infants were 10 months old, mothers' responsive behaviors were observed in a free-play

setting, and toddlers' empathy-related responding to distress was observed at 18 months of age. Findings revealed that early maternal responsivity predicted toddlers' higher concerned attention (i.e., sympathy reactions), higher prosocial behavior and lower personal distress reactions, although some findings held only for girls.

In addition, much of the research on the relations between parenting practices, children's empathy/sympathy responses and prosocial behavior has focused on discipline techniques. Specifically, parental induction, which is characterized as attempts to focus on another's emotional reactions or on the consequences of the child's behavior, is considered a practice likely to induce sympathy and prosocial behavior. This supportive practice may promote children's perspective taking and likely contributes to children's internalization of parental values (Hoffman, 1982; Hoffman, 2000). Empirical work supports this notion, as inductions have been linked with children's higher empathy and prosocial behavior (Bar Tal, Nadler, & Blechman, 1980; Krevans & Gibbs, 1996; Stanhope, Bell, & Parker-Cohen, 1987).

On the other hand, researchers have found that parental punitive responses have been negatively related to prosocial behavior and sympathy (Hastings et al., 2000; Russell, Hart, Robinson, & Olsen, 2003). Punitive and power-assertive discipline practices, such as physical punishment, strict supervision, or deprivation of privileges, may over-arouse children, and the opportunity for children to empathize may be lost. Indeed, such practices have been associated with higher levels of self-focused personal distress reactions in children (Eisenberg, Fabes, Schaller, Carlo, & Miller, 1991). It is important to note, however, that the occasional use of power-assertive responses (e.g., physical punishment) in the context of a positive parent-child relationship is different than the use of power-assertive techniques as the predominant discipline practice. Indeed, Miller et al. (1989) found that physical discipline techniques (including corporal punishment) was actually positively associated with children's empathy, but only for children whose mothers also used relatively high levels of inductive discipline.

Learning theories emphasize the importance of modeling and reinforcement, and these aspects of socialization are also associated with children's empathy-related responding. Consistent with this view, parents who model relatively high levels of sympathy are likely to have same-sex children who are willing to help someone in need (Fabes, Eisenberg, & Miller, 1990) or are prone to sympathy (Eisenberg et al., 1991, 1992). Moreover, children model prosocial behavior in adults, such as volunteerism, helping, and altruistic behaviors (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006; Garner, 2006). In addition, parental reinforcement for children's empathy-related responding is related to appropriate responses to others' distress (Eisenberg et al., 1992; Hastings, McShane, Parker, & Ladha, 2007).

Non-Parental Socialization

Although the majority of research regarding the socialization of prosocial behavior and empathy has focused on mothers' potential influence on children's empathy, peers, teachers, and the school environment also may play a role in this regard. For example, although limited in scope, research finds that peers serve as important socializing agents of prosocial behavior. Similar to research on parental modeling, investigators have demonstrated that adolescents who volunteer are relatively likely to have friends who are involved in community and volunteer work (Zaff et al., 2003) and are less likely to volunteer if they belong to a crowd that places a high value on "having fun", that is frequently being involved in activities such as partying or attending rock concerts (Youniss, McLellan, & Mazer, 2001; see also Pugh & Hart, 1999). Moreover, prosocial peer models have been found to be effective in eliciting prosocial behavior in the laboratory (Owens & Ascione, 1991). Specifically, children were more likely to share if they had observed a peer donating than if they

had observed an adult displaying the same activity. Using naturalistic data, Fabes, Martin, and Hanish (2002) found that preschoolers who interacted with prosocial peers had more positive interactions with other children later in the same school year. Furthermore, exposure to prosocial peers was related to increased prosocial behavior one year later (Fabes, Moss, Reesing, Martin, & Hanish, 2005). Prosocial peer interactions also have been related to increases in positive affect and life satisfaction in middle-school students (Martin & Huebner, 2007).

In addition to modeling, peers also may positively reinforce prosocial behavior (Eisenberg-Berg, Cameron, Tryon, & Dodez, 1981). For example, Eisenberg-Berg et al. (1981) reported a positive link between girls' (but not boys') spontaneous prosocial behavior and positive reinforcement for prosocial actions from peers. Thus, peers' responses to children's prosocial behaviors may impact the degree to which children engage in prosocial actions.

Teachers are also an important influence on children's empathic responses, with teachers' warmth positively and significantly associated with children's empathy-related responding and prosocial behavior (Kienbaum, Volland, & Ulich, 2001). In addition, secure attachments to teachers have been found to predict preschoolers' prosocial behaviors and empathy (Howes, Matheson, & Hamilton, 1994; Mitchell-Copland, Denham, DeMulder, 1997). In a study of first graders, learner-centered practices (i.e., child centered, emphasizing positive social climate) were predictive of a student's greater empathy towards classmates (Donohue, Perry, & Weinstein, 2003). Finally, quality of the child care or preschool environment, such as high teacher-warmth and child-centered care, has been associated with children's empathy and social competence (Broeberg, Hwang, Lamb, & Ketterlinus, 1989; Kienbaum, 2001) and mother- and caregiver-ratings of children's prosocial behaviors (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2002).

School-Based Programs to Promote Empathy-Related Responding

School-based programs have been designed to promote empathy and prosocial behavior, and evidence indicates that these programs can be effective. For example, Solomon and colleagues (Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000) developed a program that promoted positive teacher-child relationships and provided opportunities for children to engage in collaborative interactions. Teachers were trained in child-centered approaches (e.g., students participate in rule-setting and decision making, inductive discipline, mutual problem solving), and the program provided children with opportunities to participate in collaborative activities, such as participating in rule-setting and engaging in different roles in the classroom. In addition, teachers were trained to promote social understanding (e.g., make use of spontaneous events, such as conflicts among students), highlight prosocial values, and provide helping activities (such as classroom chores, buddies, community service). The program was implemented for five consecutive years (kindergarten through grade 4). Students who participated in the program scored higher on ratings of prosocial behavior, compared to children in control classes. Further, these patterns held even when controlling for teachers' general competence and students' participation in cooperative activities (Solomon et al., 1988). The program also was effective in promoting personal, social, and ethical values, attitudes and motives, and reducing substance abuse and other problems when implemented over a three-year period (Battistich, Schaps, Watson, Solomon, & Lewis, 2000; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000).

Interestingly, children enrolled in the program evidenced the highest ratings for prosocial behavior and harmony in kindergarten as opposed to the later years in the program. Thus, it appears that the impact of this program was greatest when first introduced. One explanation for this finding is that the teachers in the program had only one year of experience in implementing the program. Had teachers been given additional time to develop their techniques and fully integrate

the program into the ongoing routine of the classroom, the program effects may have had more lasting benefits (Battistich, Watson, Solomon, Schaps, & Solomon, 1991).

Other school-based programs designed to promote empathy have demonstrated effectiveness. For example, Feshbach and Feshbach (1982) developed a school-based, empathy-training program that involved small-group classroom activities, including role-playing and discussions of conflict resolutions. Children in the empathy-training group displayed higher frequencies of helping and cooperative behaviors (Feshbach, 1983; Feshbach & Feshbach, 1982). Moreover, there was a decline in aggressive behavior for children in the empathy-training program (Feshbach, 1983). In another recent intervention designed to improve girls' social problem solving, social skills training had a positive impact on social behavior. Specifically, for girls with high baseline social problems, participation in the program was linked to increased teacher ratings of prosocial behavior (Cappella & Weinstein, 2006). Finally, Head Start preschool children who participated in an empathy-training program were reported as more tolerant, prosocial, and cooperative than children enrolled in an academic enrichment program that did not involve emotion or empathy training (Chiang, Douglas, Kite, Barber, & Webb, 2007).

Moreover, the use of cooperative educational techniques in classroom activities has been found to promote acceptance of others (Johnson & Johnson, 1987), as well as cooperation and prosocial behavior (Hertz-Lazarowitz, 1983; Hertz-Lazarowitz, Sharan, & Steinberg, 1980). In addition, Ascione (1992) studied the effects of a humane education program in elementary-school children. Humane attitudes and empathy were enhanced for older children (fourth and fifth graders) both immediately and a year later. There were few immediate effects for younger children, although there was an effect on humane attitudes at posttest a year later (Ascione & Weber, 1993).

Other intervention programs using a classroom component and other components (such as providing parent training, social skills training, and scheduling home visits) have been found to improve social competence and prosocial behavior. For example, the Fast Track Project, targeting children at-risk for antisocial behavior used such an approach (see Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 1999). At the end of Grade 1, children in the intervention group engaged in more prosocial activities with peers and showed more improvement in aggressive-disruptive behavior than did children in the control group. Children in the Fast Track intervention group also showed improvements in aggressive and prosocial behavior by third grade, and these skills contributed to behavioral outcomes in fourth grade (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2002). Thus, effective interventions for children are likely to have multiple components including parents and schools.

In general, a focus on empathy in the school system, including a focus on other people's feelings and on creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom, can enhance children's social functioning. Although there is relatively limited research in this area, it appears that it is a worthwhile investment for teachers to focus not just on academic achievements, but also on children's moral emotions and behaviors. In addition, further research on the effectiveness of the programs, including ways to enhance teacher implementation and the generalizability of the findings to later years and other contexts is needed.

Conclusion

Clearly, empathy-related responding is associated with important domains relevant to school functioning. Moreover, socialization by parents, teachers and others such as peers has been related to, and may contribute to, individual differences in children's empathy and prosocial behavior. Intervention studies designed to promote children's social skills also can be effective, suggesting that the school environment can be an important context for learning social skills, such as empathy. These findings point to the need for schools to value social skills as part of their curriculum.

There is a need to continue to develop programs designed to improve children's prosocial behavior and empathy and to test the complexities involved in supporting children's positive development. For example, the effectiveness in promoting children's empathy-related responding may depend on many factors, such as children's temperament, culture, cognitive development, and gender. In addition, the processes involved (i.e., mediating factors) in the socialization of children's empathy-related responding need to be examined in future research.

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11

Flow in Schools

Cultivating Engaged Learners and Optimal Learning Environments

DAVID J. SHERNOFF AND MIHALY CSIKSZENTMIHALYI

Educators have often observed that children have limitless curiosity and thirst for knowledge before they enter school (e.g., Jackson, 1968). Several years later, those same children can be found in school buildings with their minds wandering and attention straying. Suddenly, student motivation is a problem. Public schools are continually characterized by pervasive boredom (Goodlad, 1984; Steinberg, 1996), with up to two-thirds of public school students classified as disengaged from learning (Cothran & Ennis, 2000). Student perceptions of school appear to range from apathy to anger (Gilman & Anderman, 2006). This holds true for students nationally and internationally (Larson & Richards, 1991). So, if children begin life as curious learners, why is it that they dislike the main place that they come together to learn?

Schools have historically struggled to provide meaningful, intrinsically motivating experiences for many youth. Students see themselves as passive participants in a mass, anonymous educational system (Larson & Richards, 1991). Increasingly, there is the sense that boredom is a close cousin to frustration, frustration stemming from an inability to act or to be somebody—learned powerlessness, if you will. Fostering student motivation and enjoyment in learning has become a dominant concern, and one that has been effectively addressed through a variety of perspectives, including a focus on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000), and goal orientations (Ames, 1992). Yet, many students remain feeling apathetic towards school.

Can positive psychology foster healthier schools, with its focus on optimal health and human functioning rather than on illness? The concept of optimal experience, or flow, has served as a theoretical cornerstone of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In this chapter, we illustrate how flow theory can help explain student engagement and enjoyment in learning by reviewing multiple studies bearing on this issue over the last 20 years. We focus on the environmental and personal factors that can influence student engagement, leading towards a conceptual summary of those influences as well as outcomes associated with engagement. Next, we highlight several promising school contexts that can foster optimal learning experiences, before closing with some new directions in this line of research.

Flow and Learning

By interviewing individuals from diverse backgrounds about their peak experiences, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and colleagues identified the phenomenological characteristics of the most meaningful and satisfying moments in life. From rock climbers to chess players to accomplished scientists and artists, optimal experiences in diverse activities were often described in similar terms: intense concentration and absorption in an activity with no psychic energy left over for distractions, a merging of awareness with action, a feeling of control, loss of self consciousness, and a contraction of the normal sense of time (i.e., time seems to fly). “Flow” describes the subjective buoyancy of experience when skillful and successful action seems effortless, even when a great deal of physical or mental energy is exerted. The subjective experience of flow also appeared to be enhanced by certain properties of the task. In most flow activities, goals were clear, and feedback with respect to meeting those goals was immediate and forthcoming. The activities were also *autotelic*, or a goal in-and-of-itself performed for the sheer experience of it—sometimes even in the face of personal risk or danger.

Perhaps the most central condition for flow experiences to occur is that the challenge of the activity is well matched to the individual’s skills. That is, the challenges and skills are high and in balance—individuals stretch their skills to their limits in pursuit of a challenging goal. Csikszentmihalyi reasoned that various combinations of high or low challenges and skills predicts distinct psychological states: (a) apathy, resulting from low challenge and low skill; (b) relaxation, resulting from high skill but low challenge; (c) anxiety, resulting from high challenge but low skill; and finally (d) flow, resulting from high challenge combined with high skill. As concrete examples of these states, if an intermediate-level female skier first skis on a bunny slope, she may find that she has more skills than required and feels only relaxation as she takes in the scenery. If she continues to ski on this slope, boredom may set in. Later in the day, when confronted with a slope that is too steep, bumpy, or icy for her ability, anxiety is experienced until she safely navigates her way down. Only on her favorite slopes that are quite challenging for her ability, but not excessively so, does she feel herself enter into an enjoyable, rhythmic peak experience in which time seems to stand still.

Flow experiences can involve mental tasks as much as physical ones. Anyone who has been “sucked into” a good novel that could not be set down implicitly understands the phenomenon. Here again, an experienced reader may not enter the flow state reading a children’s book. A more sophisticated novel appeals not only to one’s reading ability, but stimulates a full array of skills: to understand the geographical and historical context, infer the motivations of the characters, or solve the central mystery. The relationship between flow and the balance of challenge and skills has been empirically supported in numerous settings (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; for a recent, comprehensive review of the concept of flow and related empirical research, see Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002).

The theory of flow is inherently related to learning. When learning a new skill, the challenge of undertaking even a basic task may exceed a student’s beginning level of ability, and hence they may feel overwhelmed—even “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” may be too difficult for the novice pianist. To reach flow, the level of skill must increase to match the challenge. Much like Vygotsky’s *zone of proximal development*, the level in which most learning occurs is just one step beyond the skills one has already mastered. In this case, sufficient practice may be needed until the song is mastered. Once the song is played comfortably with relative ease, learning a new song at a higher level of challenge, causing one’s skill to increase yet again, can restart a cycle of fresh learning. Thus, the pianist may progress through increasingly difficult songs at ever higher levels of skill. Flow is experienced at the highest level of challenge and skill for that individual—as when a master pianist is playing a Mozart concerto.

In addition, flow activities tend to be selected and replicated over time because they are so gratifying. This process of *psychological selection* plays a crucial role in the development of specific interests, goals, and talents over the course of one's life (Delle Fave & Massimini, 2003). Flow has been empirically related to the development of talent in adolescents (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993). In addition, highly creative adult artists and scholars have reported flow when they are engaged in the creative processes of discovery and invention (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Measuring Flow and Engagement in Learning

In the past 25 years, the study of flow has been pursued mainly through the use of the Experience Sampling Method (or ESM; Hektner, Schmidt, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2007). Respondents carry a paging device (usually a programmable wristwatch), which signals them at random moments throughout the day. Each time they are signaled, they complete a brief questionnaire in which they answer open-ended and scaled questions about the day and time of the signal, their activities and thoughts, as well as the cognitive, affective and motivational qualities of their experience. Example items include: "As you were beeped, did you *enjoy* what you were doing?" "How well were you *concentrating*?" "Was this activity *interesting*?" In addition, ratings are given for the challenge of the activity and the respondent's skill in the activity. By reporting on immediate experiences throughout waking hours over several days, the ESM solicits repeated "snapshots" of subjective experience, and improves upon the problem of recall and estimation errors inherent to surveys and interviews. For reliability and validity information regarding the ESM, the reader is referred to Hektner, Schmidt, and Csikszentmihalyi (2007).

Based on flow theory, we conceptualized and measured *student engagement* as the simultaneous occurrence of high *concentration*, *enjoyment*, and *interest* in learning activities (Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider, & Shernoff, 2003). *Concentration*, which is central to flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), is related to meaningful learning (Montessori, 1967), including depth of cognitive processing and academic performance (Corno & Mandinach, 1983). *Enjoyment* is related to the demonstration of competencies, creative accomplishment, and school performance (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 1993; Nakamura, 1988). Finally, *interest* directs attention, reflects intrinsic motivation, stimulates the desire to continue engagement in an activity, and is related to school achievement (Hidi, 1990; Schiefele, Krapp, & Winteler, 1992). Student engagement is highest when concentration, enjoyment, and interest are simultaneously elevated.

What Flow Theory and the ESM Have Taught Us About Student Engagement in Public Schools

Initial ESM research in U.S. public schools has highlighted the rarity of flow experiences while in school (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984). Our research of student engagement (see Shernoff, 2001; Shernoff et al., 2003; Shernoff & Hoogstra, 2001) focused on a national sample of 526 high school students who participated in the Sloan Study of Youth and Social Development (SSYSD; see Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000) in three separate cohorts in the 1990s. A total of 3,630 self-reports occurring inside public high school classrooms were analyzed for both the influences on and outcome springing from student engagement.

High school students were less engaged while in classrooms than anywhere else. Their concentration was higher than outside of classrooms, but their level of interest was lower and their enjoyment was especially low. Students were also found to be thinking about topics entirely unrelated to academics a full 40% of the time in classrooms (Shernoff, 2001). Moreover, students spent the largest chunks of time in class doing less engaging activities, such as listening to lectures, taking

notes, and doing homework or studying. Much smaller amounts of time were spent more interactively in discussions, group or lab work, or talking with teachers individually.

These findings support the notion of schooling as largely a passive, individualistic, and teacher-controlled activity dominated by direct instruction (Goodlad, 1984). Although repeated studies have found that schools do engender heightened concentration during classes, alternative approaches appear to be needed in order to provide what is most lacking: greater enjoyment, motivation, and opportunities for action in the learning process (Bassi & Delle Fave, 2004; Shernoff et al., 2003).

Perceptual and Contextual Factors Influencing Student Engagement

Perceptual Factors

Concentration, attentiveness, and student engagement were significantly higher when instruction was perceived as challenging and relevant (Shernoff et al., 2003). This finding suggests that students are more likely to become engaged when academic work intellectually involves them in a process of meaningful inquiry extending beyond the classroom (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992). Students also experienced greater enjoyment, motivation, self-esteem, and overall engagement when they perceived themselves to be active, in control, and competent. Such findings suggest that the perception of competence and autonomy contributes to students' motivation, perhaps via self-efficacy and perceptions of self-worth, as suggested in much of the motivational literature (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008).

Further, as flow theory would predict, student engagement was maximized in classroom experiences in which perceived challenge and skill were above average compared to those marked by apathy (i.e., low challenge, low skill), anxiety (i.e., high challenge, low skill), or relaxation (i.e., low challenge, high skill) (Shernof et al., 2003). Concentration and attention in classrooms were optimized by an appropriate balance between challenge and skills, where "appropriate" may be taken to mean offering the reasonable prospect of success with a good faith effort (Brophy, 1983). In addition, students were found to be paying attention 43% of the time in the apathy condition, but 73% of the time—almost twice as frequently—when challenges and skills were both perceived to be high. Optimally engaging activities were therefore neither trivially simple nor impossibly hard; rather, the appropriate match between challenge and skill led to higher quality learning experiences in terms of perceived engagement, intrinsic motivation, mood, and self-esteem.

Contextual Factors

Student engagement appeared to be significantly influenced by the activity in which students were involved. Students were more engaged in group and individual work than while listening to a lecture or watching TV or a video. While taking a test or quiz, students reported very high levels of concentration, but low enjoyment. Overall, students were more engaged during instructional methods that present opportunities for action and to demonstrate their skills, but such activities were rare while the disengaging activities were more common.

Similar results were reported by Peterson and Miller (2004). Also using the ESM the researchers compared the quality of experience of 113 students from a private, mid-Atlantic university while participating in cooperative learning activities to their experience while in large group instruction. Students reported greater flow, task importance, on-task attentiveness, and engagement during cooperative learning tasks than during large group instruction. What is most striking was that both the study of high school students (Shernoff et al., 2000) and one of the college students (Peterson & Miller, 2004) found small groups to be one setting in which students reported both high concentration and high enjoyment, the combination indicative of meaningful engagement.

Students in our sample were also significantly more engaged in their non-academic courses than in their academic courses. This finding may be partially explained by the differences between subjects with respect to allocation of time using various instructional formats. Students spent more time in high-engagement activities (e.g., individual or group work) during their non-academic classes, and more time in low-engagement activities (e.g., lecture, video) during their academic ones.

Individual Variables Associated with Engagement

Some research has suggested that fluctuations in engagement (Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003) and boredom (Larson & Richards, 1991) are in part the result of individual differences. Personality traits associated with high levels of flow include optimism and self-esteem (Schmidt, Shernoff, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2007). In our studies, background characteristics also influenced engagement (Shernoff, 2001). For example, family supportiveness had a positive influence on engagement. Further, female high school students reported higher levels of flow in classrooms than did males (Shernoff et al., 2000), but this may well be a reflection of the tendency for females to report higher levels of flow across all contexts (Schmidt et al., 2007). Moreover, older students (i.e., 12th graders) also reported higher engagement than younger students (i.e., 10th graders). Finally, African American students reported experiencing more flow in classrooms than Caucasian students, as did students from low socioeconomic communities compared to those from high socioeconomic communities. The tendency for ethnic minority students and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds to be more engaged in comparison with Caucasian students and those from high socioeconomic backgrounds, respectively (Shernoff & Schmidt, 2008), has been corroborated in other ESM studies of engagement (Lindstrom, Ulriksson, Arnegard, & Brenner, 2005; Uekawa, Borman, & Reginald, 2006) as well as those using other methodologies (M. K. Johnson, Crosnoe, & Elder, 2001).

Ability Level

Ability level has been found to be a significant factor influencing the quality of school experiences. Csikszentmihalyi et al. (1993) found that talented and committed adolescents reported being happier, more cheerful, and more motivated in school than their less talented counterparts. In a group of 130 Italian adolescents, those with high self-efficacy associated their school work with optimal experience unlike those with low self-efficacy (Bassi, Steca, Delle Fave, & Caprara, 2007). The literature also supports a relationship between quality of experience in school work and academic achievement, although the nature and directionality of this relationship is unclear. A number of studies have associated flow with commitment and achievement in the high school years (e.g., Carli, Delle Fave, & Massimini, 1988; Nakamura, 1988). On the other hand, Larson and Richards (1991) found higher rates of boredom at school among those with higher achievement test scores.

Engagement and Educational Outcomes

Differences in engagement across achievement levels raise the question of what short- and long-term academic outcomes are associated with student engagement. With respect to short-term outcomes, in our studies there was a significant relationship between engagement and reported grades after controlling for background characteristics (Shernoff & Schmidt, 2008). In a follow-up study in which we interviewed the high school sample several years later once they had enrolled in college (Shernoff & Hoogstra, 2001), we tested whether students reporting high engagement in math and science classes during high school were more likely to continue their interest in those subjects (as

demonstrated by majoring in them 2 years later). After accounting for student background characteristics including academic performance, engagement was a significant predictor of continuing motivation in science. Enjoyment and interest during high school science class were the strongest predictors of choosing a science-related major in college. In addition, student engagement in high school math and science classes was the strongest predictor of reported grades in college—even stronger than grades in high school. These findings suggest that spontaneous engagement with school learning may operate in subtle ways that have important, long-term effects on students’ intellectual and professional development.

Conceptual Model of Student Engagement and Optimal Learning Environments

Based on our studies (Shernoff, 2001; Shernoff et al., 2003; Shernoff & Hoogstra, 2001), there are two separate processes related to student engagement (see Figure 11.1). Challenge and relevance have strong effects on students’ concentration, interest, and attention. We refer to these aspects as *academic intensity*. For example, students taking a test or a quiz, or completing tasks in math class are usually very challenged and concentrate very hard, but do not enjoy the experience. On the other hand, experiencing high skill, control, and activity level are associated with significant increases in positive affect, enjoyment, esteem, and intrinsic motivation. This process, which we refer to as a *positive emotional response*, is distinguished from the more cognitive nature of academic intensity. For example, students usually enjoy watching TV or a video, and attending art class, but they report these experiences as low in academic intensity. Both academic intensity and a positive emotional response are integral parts of optimal engagement in the learning process. Supporting previous studies (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000; Rathunde, 1993), however, we found that both processes seldom operate together during school instruction.

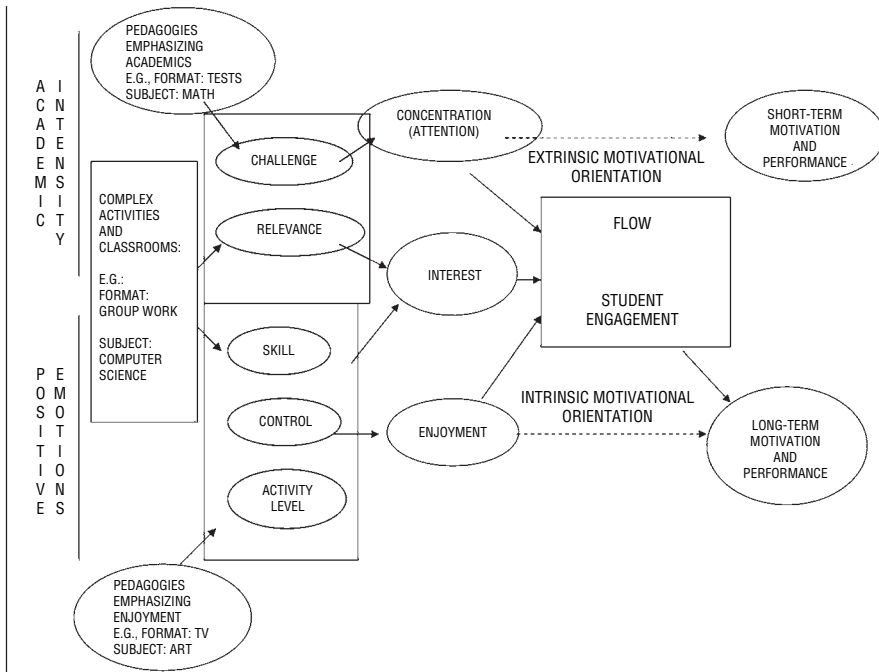


Figure 11.1 Empirically-based model of influences on student engagement and related outcomes.

Some learning experiences are lacking in both aspects of engagement, such as when students listened to a teacher lecture (Shernoff, 2001). Activities or environments that can combine both aspects of engagement, such as individual work in computer science class or a group lab activity in science class, are of utmost importance, however, because they suggest examples of *meaningful engagement*. We will use this phrase to indicate the critical balance of work-like and play-like engagement.

Furthermore, academic intensity appears to be more related to short-term performance than positive emotions. For example, attention appears to have a stronger relationship with short-term performance than many of the more emotionally-based factors, and may be externally motivated. On the other hand, the emotional side of engagement, particularly students' enjoyment and interest, appears to be a strong predictor of long-term performance and motivation, and the source of motivation appears to be more intrinsic. This model suggests that activities that are both academically intense and foster positive emotions are more likely to engage students both in the short term and in the long term. Therefore, optimal learning environments include activities that are challenging and relevant, and yet also allow students to feel confident and in control, exact concentration but also provide enjoyment; are intrinsically satisfying in the short-term, as well as build a foundation of skills and interest for the future; and involve both intellect and feelings (Shernoff, 2001).

What About the Teacher's Role?

An obvious influence on students' engagement or boredom is the teacher, but not all ESM studies have gathered data from the teacher or related experiential information from students to the teacher's actions. By combining a modified version of the ESM with classroom observations, Turner, Meyer, and colleagues (Schweinle, Meyer, & Turner, 2006; Turner & Meyer, 2004; Turner, Meyer, Cox, Logan, DiCintio, & Thomas, 1998) illuminate how the teacher plays a critical role in cultivating optimal learning environments. For example, Turner et al. (1998) examined the relationship between teachers' instructional discourse with students and involvement in mathematics instruction. Fifth- and sixth-grade students in seven mathematics classrooms completed questionnaires regarding their experience at the end of four or five class periods rather than being beeped at random times in classrooms. The extent of students' involvement was determined by the match between challenges and skills based on the flow paradigm.

The results suggest that students in high involvement classrooms reported feeling more intrinsically motivated, open, and relaxed than those from low involvement classrooms. The researchers also observed differences in instructional interactions between high- and low-involvement classrooms. Specifically, teachers in high-involvement classrooms fostered intrinsic motivation and utilized more scaffolded instruction to adjust the challenge of the material to students' level of skill. Teachers of high involvement classrooms directed more attention than those in low-involvement classrooms to helping students reach understanding and become autonomous learners. Conversely, teachers in low-involvement classes tended to emphasize procedures and used extrinsic incentives with higher frequency.

Turner and Meyer (2004) conclude from their studies that instruction providing both challenge and emotional support is necessary for promoting positive motivation. Their prescription supports our conceptual model of optimal learning environment as incorporating both academic intensity and support for positive emotions. Their observational research provides a rich, contextualized picture of how skilled teachers go about achieving optimal levels of challenge and support. For example, optimally engaging teachers might require fewer problems, but challenging ones, and support the competence necessary to solve them independently. Teachers also ask questions for higher order conceptual understanding, combined with providing the feedback, strategies, and

encouragement that are emotionally supportive. Emotional supportiveness is also modeled through enthusiasm, humor, and risk-taking.

Educational Contexts Promoting Engagement

To summarize our research so far: There is not a great deal of flow or engagement in traditional U.S. public schools as a whole, but there are exceptions to this trend. Over the past decade, researchers have gained insights into ways to promote optimal learning environments, where experiencing flow and high engagement are the norm rather than the exception. The following is a review of in several empirically-supported educational contexts that hold promise for understanding optimal learning environments: alternative schools (a nontraditional public school in Seattle, Washington, and selected Montessori middle schools), nontraditional public school programs (particularly the Key School in Indianapolis and the PASS program in California and Illinois), organized after-school programs, and selected schools in foreign countries (especially in Scandinavia and Japan).

Several studies have compared the quality of students' experience in selected alternative schools to experiences garnered in traditional public schools, using the SSYSD sample to represent the traditional public schools. Because we have already described engagement in the traditional public schools based on our analysis of the SSYSD data, we will focus here on engagement in the respective alternate schools.

A Nontraditional High School in Seattle, Washington

In the first study, Johnson (2004) collected ESM data from students ($n = 80$) attending an nontraditional, urban public high school (Nova High School) in Seattle, Washington, and compared these data to comparable school students in traditional public schools ($n = 80$). As some background, the Nova High School consistently achieves some of the highest SAT scores among high schools in Seattle. The school is democratically governed by students and staff, and promotes egalitarian relationships. The school also supports the autonomy of students in their decision to select and attend an unusual diversity of courses. Other unique aspects of the school's philosophy include (a) creating a community climate among teachers, students, and administration, which involves mutual respect, involvement, and fairness, (b) coordinating curriculum with input from students, and (c) issuing academic "credits" rather than letter grades. Results revealed that students in the school spent a higher percentage of time in student-centered activities, and reported greater engagement in school and during lecture and independent study specifically. Lectures were infrequent, but when they occurred students found them to be more engaging. High engagement in the Nova school appeared to be highly influenced by students' sense of autonomy and belongingness.

Montessori Middle Schools

Rathunde and Csikszentmihalyi (2005a, 2005b) conducted a large-scale study measuring the quality of experience students ($n = 290$) from several Montessori middle schools. They compared these results to a demographically matched sample of public middle school students from the SSYSD. As background information, the foundational writings of Maria Montessori emphasized intrinsic motivation and were consistent with modern theories of motivation on goal orientations as well as flow. Montessori observed children's "spontaneous concentration," which was similar to the concept of flow and engagement in exploration, play and learning activities. Montessori believed these episodes of spontaneous concentration were a normal part of development for healthy children. Similar to creating optimal environments for student engagement through challenge and emo-

tional support, the Montessori philosophy emphasizes the creation of a “prepared environment” that integrates both freedom and high demands in order to create the likelihood of spontaneous concentration in learning activities (Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005a).

As expected, the Montessori students had more positive perceptions of their teachers and schools compared to the traditional students (Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005b). They were also more likely to perceive their classmates as friends—a perception that grew over time. These positive perceptions are significant because previous research has found adolescents to have extremely low intrinsic motivation when with classmates, but extremely high intrinsic motivation when with friends (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984). Montessori students also spent more time in academic activities such as individual and group work (Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005b). In contrast, students in public schools spent more time socializing and were more off-task with their studies. Corresponding differences in engagement and quality of experience were also observed. Montessori students reported higher combinations of high intrinsic motivation and importance indicative of *meaningful engagement* (Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005a). In contrast, public school students reported greater salience and importance but low intrinsic motivation, a combination suggestive of a performance goals orientation (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000). Despite one limitation of the study—that the Montessori schools included were not randomly selected—these findings suggest that the public school approach can be significantly improved in terms of engaging students cognitively, affectively, and motivationally.

The Key School in Indianapolis

The Key School in Indianapolis, Indiana, is a nontraditional public school in which a group of teachers implemented a K-12 curriculum based on flow theory and Gardner’s (1993) theory of multiple intelligences. One of the unique innovations of the Key School is the creation of a flow activities room (Whalen & Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). Students in the Key School visit the “flow room” several times per week and freely participate in structured activities of choice. The main idea of the flow room is to allow students to develop and use different competencies in an intrinsically motivating fashion, skills that might otherwise go untapped by the traditional curriculum. Part of the hidden agenda is to infuse the rest of the more structured classes with a halo of enjoyment and enthusiasm. It was hypothesized that if certain learning experiences were enjoyable, students might realize that all of their educational encounters could be rewarding. Whalen and Csikszentmihalyi (1991) found that the degree of choice provided in the flow room helped students to discover and clarify their interests, and that intensified play led to the meaningful learning of process-oriented skills and sustained attention. They also found that the frequent flow and the high quality of experience reported when in the flow room was similar to that reported in students’ favorite activities in other settings. In sum, the flow room allowed students to develop new talents while making the connection between intense enjoyment and concentration characteristic of flow. The level of transfer of flow to other educational experiences and settings, however, has not yet been directly studied.

The PASS Program

Created by the American Sports Institute, the PASS program (Promoting Achievement in School through Sport) has been implemented in 28 middle and high schools primarily in California and Illinois, helping students to achieve academically—particularly those interested in sports (Griffin, 1997). The goal of the PASS program is to offer an elective class that integrates the positive aspects of sports culture into the academic curriculum, which includes: (a) self-paced learning (individuals developing skills at their own pace), (b) mastery-based learning (moving on to the next level or

assignment only after mastering the present skill), (c) relevance (knowing the reasons for working on a topic, and developing an intrinsic interest in it), (d) active engagement (as with sports, except applied to learning process), (e) performance learning (in which students must frequently demonstrate their skills in a variety of ways), (f) team-oriented learning (contributing the success of one's group as well as one's individual success), (g) character development (including concentration, balance, relaxation, power, and rhythm), and (h) project-based learning (relying on interdisciplinary fields of study). A distinctive feature of the PASS program is that it does not ask students to downplay their involvement in sports in favor of academics. Rather, it encourages youngsters' interest in sports and seeks to channel that same energy into making similar investments to school. In the process, the PASS program attempts to facilitate the realization that "giving 110%" can apply to goals beyond sports.

No studies have yet measured the quality of experience of students participating in PASS with the ESM; however, McCombs and Lauer (2002) assessed the PASS program for its alignment with APA Learner-Centered Principles and outcomes. On almost all measures of learner-centered practices, PASS teachers met or exceeded standards established by learner-centered models of excellence. In turn, students of PASS met or exceeded guidelines for motivation and learning such as the development of self-efficacy, epistemic curiosity, and task mastery goals.

Organized After-School Programs

In contrast with formal classroom activities, extracurricular activities that include academically enriching activities, athletics, and the arts have been associated with heightened levels of engagement, challenge, enjoyment, intrinsic motivation, and initiative among adolescents (Mahoney, Larson, & Eccles, 2005). The study of engagement in these contexts is a relatively new line of research with implications for positive youth development (Larson, 2000; Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006). Using the ESM, Vandell, Shernoff, Pierce, Bolt, Dadisman, & Brown (2005) contrasted the experience of middle school students ($n = 160$) while at a variety of school-based after-school programs with their experience when at other types of after-school settings. While attending after-school programs, participants reported spending more time in sports activities and arts enrichment and less time watching TV and eating/snacking than was the case in other settings such as their homes. The adolescents also reported higher intrinsic motivation, concentrated effort (perceptions of high concentration, challenge, and use of skills), and positive mood states at the after-school programs than elsewhere after school, as well as in comparison to students who did not attend after-school programs ($n = 31$). The combination of higher concentrated effort and intrinsic motivation suggested that after-school programs may be an ideal environment for stimulating *meaningful engagement*.

Shernoff and Vandell (2007) found that students were most engaged in sports and arts enrichment activities during after-school programs. Students' affect was significantly higher while doing academic enrichment activities compared to homework, suggesting that a positive emotional response was enhanced when academic work was approached as a group activity with frequent feedback, allowing students to demonstrate their skills and initiative. Students also reported being more engaged in activities involving both adults and peers than activities with peers only. After school programs, then, were uniquely qualified as optimal learning environments by providing a diversity of enriching activities in which students interacted with peers while supervised by adults.

Selected Schools in Denmark, Finland, and Japan

Andersen (2005a,b; 2007) observed students in selected schools in a variety of countries and wrote reports on the high levels of engagement observed while in Denmark, Finland and Japan.

He completed a “flow observation form” to rate the flow of students in classrooms, and followed up the observations with student interviews. Overall, Danish students reported above average on measures of flow during class time compared to students in a variety of other countries. Andersen attributes this finding to an emphasis on student autonomy, independence, initiative, and intrinsic motivation in Denmark, as well as the use of alternative forms of evaluation rather than grades. The quality of engagement among Danish students is high; however, these students are not as successful at learning basic academic skills when compared to Finnish students (Andersen, 2005a).

In Japan, Andersen (2005b) observed the use of a variety of combined instructional methods in selected elementary schools, including computer use (with each child working on a laptop), collaborative discussions, individual reflections, and opportunities for practice. Learning was characterized by “action competence,” referring to the acquisition of deep knowledge through processes of creativity, innovation and cause-effect experimentation. Quality of experience was characterized by high interest and self-direction as well as a greater frequency of flow experiences compared to that experienced in more teacher-centered methods in many other countries. Somewhat conversely from the Danish sample, Japanese elementary schools excelled at fostering higher order competencies and skills, but also tended to cultivate anxious students who did not enjoy school (Andersen, 2005a).

Andersen (2005a) identified Finland as the closest among the countries he observed to providing the “best of both worlds”—in terms of combining “hard skills” demonstrated by their superior international performance on reading and math competencies tests, with learned “soft skills” through student-teacher collaboration and a flexible curriculum. On the one hand, students were challenged to meet the scholastic demands of an increasingly detailed national curriculum as well as of a competitive global society; and on the other, students were involved in child-initiated, playful, creative, cooperative, and flow-enhancing activities. One of the most unique features of the Finnish schools was that each 45-minute lesson was followed by a compulsory 15-minute break for outdoor games.

Table 11.1 presents a summary of these schools, including their key characteristics and Web sites for more information.

New Directions in Student Engagement Research

Flow, E-Learning, and Computer Games

Video games have become enormously popular among adolescents within the last 20 years, with adolescent youth in the United States spending more than 1 hour per day playing them on average and the vast majority owning at least one video game (Roberts, Foehr, & Rideout, 2005). Bassi and Delle Fave (2004) found that among the wide array of leisure activities to choose from, computer and video games became the number one leisure activity of choice among Italian adolescents, and was associated primarily with optimal experience or flow. Despite similar trends in the United States and other countries, interactive computer technology is rarely used for class work or homework. Only recently have researchers considered their educational benefits (Griffiths, 1997). Scoresby and Shelton (2007) reference several associations that researchers have made (e.g., Hedley, Billingham, Postner, May, & Kato, 2002; Witmer & Singer, 1998) between students reporting a sense of “presence,” “being there,” or “immersion” in different virtual reality interfaces and positive learning outcomes. Flow theory has been the natural theoretical base for exploring the implications of learning through immersion in these virtual learning environments since the emotional composition of these experiences resemble the flow state and precipitate a deeper engagement with learning.

Table 11.1 Summary of researched contexts cultivating student engagement and flow in schools

School/ Program	School/Program Type	Characteristics facilitating flow	Additional Information
The Nova High School, Seattle, WA	Nontraditional public high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic governance • Egalitarian relationships • Community climate • Student contracts versus grades 	www.novaproj.org/
Montessori (national)	Private middle schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared environment for stimulating spontaneous concentration • Combination of freedom and high expectations 	www.montessori.org/ www.amshq.org/ www.montessori-namta.org/NAMTA/index.html
The Key School, Indianapolis, IN	Nontraditional public elementary school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes multiple intelligences • Uses flow activities room to develop untapped talents and cultivate enthusiasm and enjoyment 	www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/atrisk/at6lk69.htm
The PASS Program The Arete School, San Rafael, CA	Public middle and high schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrates positive aspects of sports culture into the curriculum • Self-paced learning • Mastery learning • Performance and team orientation • Character development 	www.amersports.org/
Organized after-school programs	Public middle schools, programs funded by federal, state, and local monies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of sports, arts, and academic enrichment activities • Combination of peer interaction and adult supervision 	www.afterschool.gov/ www.ed.gov/programs/21stcccl/index.html
Selected Danish Schools	Public primary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on autonomy, independence, intrinsic motivation, and alternative evaluations 	www.legolearning.net/eng/default.asp?menu=papers&pagename=papers
Selected Japanese Schools	Public elementary and special afternoon schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermingled instructional methods and technologies • Development of knowledge and competence through creativity and innovation 	www.legolearning.net/eng/default.asp?menu=papers&pagename=papers
Selected Finnish Schools	Public primary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combination of superior training in basic skills with collaboration and flexible curriculum • Integrates scholastic demands with playful, creative and cooperative activities • Academic breaks including frequent exercise 	www.legolearning.net/eng/default.asp?menu=papers&pagename=papers

Teacher's Flow and Group Flow

Several researchers have explored the teacher's flow experience while in classrooms. Di Bianca (2000) conducted an ESM study on both students and teachers in a limited sample of mathematics classrooms, and reported that students were *not* in flow when teachers were in flow, and vice-versa. One hypothesis may be the issue of control, that is, when teachers were in control of instruction, they were in flow but students were not; the reverse may have been true when students had more control. More recently, however, teachers have frequently reported that students' engagement caused their flow to occur, while the students indicated that their flow was caused by the enthusiasm of their teachers (Basom & Frase, 2004). When in the flow state, teachers report feeling connected to their class; they maintain good eye contact and can sense the attentiveness of the class. One recent

study of 178 music teachers and 605 students in 16 schools specifically tested the hypothesis that flow experiences can “crossover” from teachers to their students (Bakker, 2005), and found that flow between teachers and students was indeed positively related.

Implications for Promoting Student Engagement

Several implications for practice may be derived from our analysis of flow as related to student engagement and learning. Although there has not been a great deal of engagement or flow found in U.S. public schools, factors such as student perceptions, instructional formats and school subjects, personality traits, and teacher characteristics all influence student engagement. Almost all of the research available tends to converge on the observation that meaningful engagement is composed of two independent processes—academic intensity and a positive emotional response—and that optimal learning environments combine both in order to make learning both playful and challenging, both spontaneous and important (e.g., Andersen, 2005a; Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005a; Shernoff et al., 2003; Turner & Meyer, 2004). Other principles distilled from the empirical research suggest distinctive avenues to promote engagement and positive psychology in the schools. For example, students appear to be meaningfully engaged in learning activities when they are structured more like non-academic classes (Shernoff et al., 2003) and after-school enrichment activities (Shernoff & Vandell, 2007). These structures may promote autonomy and initiative, as well as the opportunity to interact with peers and adult supervision. Some innovative, non-traditional schools are concrete examples that students’ sense of belongingness, autonomy, equal relationships with staff, and the right to self-governance, can go a long way towards creating optimal learning environments (Johnson, 2004). Other research suggests that utilizing the model of a positive sports culture (Griffin, 1997) and providing opportunities for physical activity during the school day can be an extremely effective strategy to reach and engage many students, particularly the athletically inclined. Some budding research suggests that new technologies that have “presence” or the ability to “envelop” the learner in a virtual learning environment can be extremely flow-inducing (Pearce, 2005; Scoresby & Shelton, 2007). Finally, the flow of teachers can be contagious, having the potential to crossover into the flow of students (Bakker, 2005; Basom & Frase, 2004).

Using the flow model, researchers have discovered that creating engaged learners and optimal learning environments requires attention to a variety of contextual, instructional, developmental, and interpersonal factors beyond the preoccupation with educational “outcomes” narrowly defined. Nevertheless, a number of examples are beginning to demonstrate that schools need only the vision, initiative, and commitment to create environments where learning is enjoyable as well as rigorous for flow in schools to become a reality.

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III

Contextual Resources and Positive Student Development

12

Toward a Positive Psychology of Academic Motivation

The Role of Self-Efficacy Beliefs

FRANK PAJARES

During the first half of the 20th century, behaviorist and psychoanalytic notions of human behavior held sway in American psychology. Apprehensive about what they considered the passive and deterministic view of human functioning that behaviorism represented, and dissatisfied with the focus on abnormality and hidden impulses that characterized psychoanalytic interests, a third group of psychologists called for attention to positive life influences, adaptive functioning, and human agency. During the 1950s, the writings of these theorists began to catch the attention of scholars, researchers, and educators. One powerful voice in the new movement was that of Abraham Maslow (1943), who proposed a dynamic theory of motivation in which internal and intrinsic forces and affective processes lead to personal, social, and psychological well-being. Humanistic psychologists, as these theorists came to be known, proffered a view of human functioning in which the Self played a prominent role, and they were successful in convincing mainstream psychologists that self-constructs were central to educational concerns. As Diggory (1966) noted, “the fact that the new self psychologists were able to argue substantive matters of learning theory and motivation with the heirs of the behaviorists made the latter pay attention and finally to agree that there might be something to the idea of self after all” (p. 57).

Fueled by the arguments of humanist theorists, during the 1960s and 1970s there was an enthusiastic renaissance of interest in affective processes in education, particularly with reference to the dynamic importance of the self-beliefs that individuals create and develop about themselves. In the long run, however, the myriad reforms and practices that the humanistic movement brought to education had profoundly uneven results. This was in part because the new emphasis on self-processes—particularly on self-esteem—had the effect of encouraging a personal and cultural self-absorption that minimized the importance of collective well-being (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000b). The gap from theory to practice also proved difficult to breach, and many laudable but misguided efforts to nurture the self-esteem of children fell prey to excesses and, ultimately, ridicule (Purkey, 2000; see also Bracken, chapter 8, this volume). Because most research efforts were unsystematic and results inconsistent, the tenets of humanistic psychology failed to develop an empirical base (Pajares & Schunk, 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000b). Consequently,

the goal of fostering positive self-perceptions became mired in controversies over the value of self-processes in education—controversies that continue unabated to this day (see Kohn, 1994).

It came as no surprise that the humanistic movement should wane during the 1980s as psychologists shifted their interest to cognitive processes and information-processing views of human functioning. Through the years, educators have tended to follow the prescriptions of psychologists, and so, when psychology abandoned the humanistic movement, so did education. Alarmed by what they perceived to be plummeting academic standards and fueled by international studies that erroneously made it appear as if American children graduated from high school practically illiterate, parents and educators demanded changes in curricula and practice (see Pajares & Schunk, 2002). The reforms that followed were accompanied by an effort to dictate curricular practices according to their success in raising achievement test results. Research on self-constructs did not merely wane, it was viewed as antithetical to sound educational understandings, as a “psychology-lite” undertaking of a feel-good movement.

As the 21st century arrived, however, there was another vigorous call within the discipline for a science of psychology grounded on the study of positive experiences and factors that contribute to human fulfillment (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003; Bandura, 1998, 2008; Gilham & Seligman, 1999; Peterson, 2000; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000a; Snyder & Lopez, 2002; Vaillant, 2000). This *positive psychology* emphasized the study of human strengths and optimal functioning, and one of its key aims was to foster research on the positive personal traits and dispositions that are thought to contribute to subjective well-being and psychological health. Such research stands in contrast to the traditional study of people’s distress, pathology, and maladaptive functioning that had come to characterize American psychology. Although positive psychology shares many of the same tenets with the humanistic movement, a key distinction between the two is that positive psychologists emphasize methodology that is firmly grounded in systematic and scientific inquiry (Myers, 2001).

In the area of education, researchers believe that insights available from investigations that emphasize a positive psychology perspective will illuminate key differences between students who are “at-risk” or “unmotivated” and students who are resilient, resourceful, and successful. One way to accomplish this is to shift the emphasis from research frequently conducted on concepts such as learned helplessness and anxiety to the study of learned optimism, self-beliefs, and confidence (Scheier & Carver, 1992; Seligman, 1991; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000b).

Overview of Social Cognitive Theory

One of the most prominent voices calling for renewed attention to self-processes and adaptive functioning has been that of Albert Bandura. In 1977, with the publication of “Self-efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change,” Bandura put forth the contention that individuals create and develop self-perceptions of their capabilities that become instrumental to the goals they pursue and to the control they are able to exercise over their environments. This contention led to his proposing of a social cognitive theory of human functioning, which emphasized the critical role of self-beliefs in human cognition, motivation, and behavior (Bandura, 1986). This was a view of human behavior that accorded a central role to cognitive, vicarious, self-regulatory, and self-reflective processes in human adaptation and change. From this theoretical perspective, human thought and action result from a dynamic and reciprocal interplay of personal, behavioral, and environmental influences.

Central to Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory is the concept of human agency, in which individuals are proactively engaged in their own development. Key to this sense of agency, human beings possess self-beliefs that enable them to exercise a measure of control over their thoughts,

feelings, and actions. Thus, people are viewed both as products and as producers of their own environments and of their social systems. Also rooted within Bandura's social cognitive theory is the understanding that individuals are imbued with capabilities that define what it is to be human. Primary among these are the capabilities to symbolize, plan alternative strategies, learn through vicarious experience, self-regulate, and self-reflect. These capabilities provide human beings with the cognitive means by which they are influential in determining their own destiny.

For Bandura (1986), the capability that is most distinctly human is that of *self-reflection*, for it is by examining their own thoughts and feelings that people make sense of their experiences, explore their own cognitions, and alter their thinking and behavior accordingly. It is also through self-reflection that people make judgments about their capability to accomplish tasks and succeed in the many activities that comprise their lives. These *self-efficacy* beliefs provide the foundation for human motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment because no matter what other factors may serve as motivators, "they are rooted in the core belief that one has the power to effect changes by one's actions" (Bandura, 2004, p. 622). Indeed, unless people believe that their actions can produce the outcomes they desire, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties.

Academic Self-Efficacy

Bandura's (1986, 1997) contentions regarding the motivational benefits of self-efficacy beliefs have had a particularly profound influence in education, where self-efficacy has become one of the most researched psychological constructs in the areas of academic motivation and achievement (see Graham & Weiner, 1996). Indeed, educational researchers have investigated the role that these self-perceptions play in the academic lives of students at all levels and in most subjects.

Academic self-efficacy refers to beliefs about one's capabilities to learn or perform academic tasks at designated levels (Schunk & Pajares, 2002). These beliefs can be relatively broad—as when referring to general beliefs that one has the skills and capabilities to succeed in school—to highly contextual, in that they can be focused on specific academic tasks, activities, and areas. This contextual and task- and domain-specific nature of self-efficacy beliefs has proven particularly effective in maximizing self-efficacy's predictive utility across academic tasks, activities, school levels, and subject areas.

Academic self-efficacy beliefs touch virtually every aspect of students' lives—whether they think productively, self-debilitatingly, pessimistically or optimistically; how well they motivate themselves and persevere in the face of academic challenges; how they regulate their cognition and behavior; and their vulnerability to anxiety, stress, and depression. As a consequence, these self-beliefs can powerfully influence the level of accomplishment that students ultimately realize, and they are critical determinants of the courses of action they pursue and the life choices they subsequently make. Typically, students will choose to engage in activities in which they feel competent and avoid those in which they do not. This is particularly critical at the high school and college levels, where young people progressively have more academic pathways available to them.

Students form their academic self-efficacy by interpreting information primarily from four sources (Bandura, 1997). The most influential source is the interpreted result of one's previous performance, or *mastery experience*. Outcomes interpreted as successful raise self-efficacy, whereas those interpreted as failures undermine it, although an occasional failure after many successes will not have much effect. Students also form self-efficacy perceptions through the *vicarious experience* of observing others. When students are uncertain about their own capabilities or when they have limited prior experience, they become more sensitive to what others do. Vicarious experience is particularly powerful when observers see similarities in some attribute and then assume that

the model's performance is diagnostic of their own capability. Conversely, watching models with perceived similar attributes fail can undermine observers' beliefs about their own capabilities. It bears noting that students seek out models who possess qualities they admire and capabilities to which they aspire. A significant model in one's life can help instill self-beliefs that will influence the course and direction that life takes.

Academic self-efficacy is also influenced by the *social persuasions* and verbal judgments that students receive from others. Effective persuaders cultivate students' beliefs in their capabilities while at the same time ensuring that the envisioned success is attainable. And just as positive persuasions may work to encourage and empower, negative persuasions can work to weaken self-efficacy. Finally, *somatic and emotional states* such as anxiety, stress, arousal, and mood states provide information about self-efficacy. Students can gauge their confidence by the emotional state they experience as they contemplate an academic task or activity. Strong emotional reactions to a task provide cues about the anticipated success or failure. When a student experiences strong negative thoughts and fears about an academic activity, those affective reactions can lower self-efficacy perceptions and trigger additional stress and agitation that help ensure the inadequate performance feared.

Academic self-efficacy beliefs help determine how much effort students will expend on an activity, how long they will persevere when confronting obstacles, how resilient they will be in the face of adverse situations, and the degree of anxiety or serenity with which they approach and engage their academic work (Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Urdan, 2006; Schunk, 1995). The higher a student's sense of efficacy, the greater the effort, persistence, resilience, and serenity. As a consequence, self-efficacy beliefs exercise a powerful influence on academic achievement.

The knowledge and skills that students possess certainly also play critical roles both in the academic choices they make and in the level of accomplishment they obtain. But it is important to emphasize that people must invariably *interpret* the results of their attainments, just as they must make judgments about the quality of the knowledge and skills they possess. Imagine, for example, two students who receive a B on an important exam. In and of itself, a B has no inherent meaning, and certainly no causal properties. How will receiving such a grade affect a particular student? One accustomed to receiving an A on exams in this particular class and subject and who worked hard throughout the term and studied for the exam will view the B in ways quite dissimilar from that of another accustomed to receiving Cs and who worked equally hard. For the former, the B will be received with distress; for the latter, the B is likely to be received with elation. The student accustomed to receiving As is likely to have his/her academic confidence bruised; the C-acquainted student is sure to have his/her confidence boosted.

The process of creating and using academic self-efficacy beliefs is intuitive. Students engage in an academic task or activity, interpret the results of their actions, use these interpretations to create and develop beliefs about their capability to engage in subsequent behaviors in similar tasks and activities, and behave in concert with the beliefs created. Thus, the choices, behaviors, and competencies of students in school can typically be better predicted by the beliefs they hold about their accomplishments than by what they are actually capable of accomplishing. This is because the beliefs that students develop help determine what they do with the knowledge and skills they have learned. It also bears noting that self-efficacy beliefs are critical determinants of how well knowledge and skill are acquired in the first place. Consequently, their academic performances are in part the result of what they come to believe that they have accomplished and can accomplish. This helps explain why students' academic performances may differ markedly when they have similar ability.

A strong sense of academic self-efficacy enhances human accomplishment and well-being in countless ways. Confident students approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. They have greater interest and deep engrossment in the activities

they select or are assigned, set challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to them, and heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of difficulty or failure. They more quickly recover their confidence after failures or setbacks, and they attribute such failure to insufficient effort or deficient knowledge and skills which they believe they can acquire if they but persevere. High self-efficacy helps create feelings of serenity in approaching difficult tasks and activities. Conversely, students who doubt their academic capabilities may believe that things are tougher than they really are, a belief that fosters stress, depression, and a narrow vision of how best to solve a problem. It is not surprising that confidence in one's academic capability is a critical component of school success (Schunk & Pajares, 2005).

Because students operate collectively as well as individually, academic self-efficacy is both a personal and a social construct. Educational contexts can develop a sense of collective efficacy—a shared belief in a group's capability to attain goals and accomplish tasks. Classrooms and schools, even school clubs and academic departments, develop collective beliefs about the capability of students to learn, of teachers to teach and otherwise enhance the lives of students, and of administrators and policymakers to create environments conducive to these tasks. Schools and other educational groups with a strong sense of efficacy empower and vitalize their constituents.

It should not be inferred from this discussion that self-efficacy is the only, or even the most important, influence on academic achievement at any particular time or on any particular academic task or activity. High self-efficacy will not influence behavior when people do not value the outcomes that their actions will produce. Students with high self-efficacy may not attempt an activity if they find themselves in prejudicially structured systems in which they expect that their labors will bear little or no fruit (Bandura, 1997). Also, goals motivate and direct behavior (Locke & Latham, 2002), and people often pursue a valued goal even when they have low self-efficacy for attaining it. Finally, students cannot accomplish tasks beyond their capabilities simply by believing that they can. No amount of self-efficacy will produce a competent performance when requisite skills are lacking (Schunk, 1995). Optimal academic functioning requires harmony between self-beliefs on the one hand and possessed skills and knowledge on the other. These and other factors notwithstanding, a wealth of research shows that self-efficacy can affect students' motivation, achievement, and choice of activities across academic levels and domains.

Correlates of Academic Self-Efficacy

During the past three decades, a wealth of empirical evidence has shown that self-efficacy correlates with and influences numerous academic outcomes and that it mediates the effect of skills, previous experience, mental ability, and other self-beliefs on these outcomes (see Pajares & Urdan, 2006). For example, the mediational role of self-efficacy beliefs has been demonstrated in studies of students' selection of career choices, where findings indicate that college undergraduates choose majors and select careers in areas in which they feel most competent and avoid those in which they believe themselves less competent or less able to compete (Hackett, 1995).

A meta-analysis of self-efficacy studies published between 1977 and 1988 revealed that self-efficacy beliefs were positively related to academic achievement (Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991). Self-efficacy related to academic outcomes ($r = .38$) and accounted for approximately 14% of the variance. Effects were stronger for high school and college students than for elementary students. Stronger effects were obtained by researchers who compared efficacy judgments with cognitive skills measures of performance or classroom-based indexes such as grades than with global, standardized achievement tests. Effect sizes also were stronger in studies in which researchers developed self-efficacy and performance assessments that carefully mirror each other.

Correlations between self-efficacy and academic performances in investigations in which

self-efficacy corresponds to the criterial task with which it is compared have ranged from .49 to .70; direct effects in path analytic studies have ranged from $\beta = .35$ to .55 (Pajares, 2006). Self-efficacy explains approximately 25% of the variance in the prediction of academic outcomes beyond that of instructional influences. Self-efficacy is responsive to changes in instructional experiences and plays a causal role in students' development and use of academic competencies (Schunk, 1995).

Researchers have also demonstrated that self-efficacy influences self-regulatory processes such as goal setting, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and strategy use. Confident students embrace more challenging goals (Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992), use more cognitive and metacognitive self-regulatory strategies, and persist longer than those who lack confidence (Zimmerman, 2000, 2006). In studies of college students who pursue science and engineering courses, high self-efficacy influences the academic persistence necessary to maintain high academic achievement (see Hackett, 1995). Students who believe they are capable of performing tasks use more cognitive and metacognitive strategies and persist longer at those tasks than those who do not. Academic self-efficacy influences cognitive strategy use and self-regulation through use of metacognitive strategies, and it is correlated with in-class seatwork and homework, exams and quizzes, and essays and reports. Pintrich and De Groot (1990) suggested that self-efficacy facilitates cognitive engagement such that raising self-efficacy likely leads to higher achievement by increasing use of cognitive strategies.

Students with similar previous achievement and cognitive skills may differ in subsequent achievement as a result of differing self-efficacy perceptions because these perceptions mediate between prior attainments and academic achievement (Schunk, 1995). As a consequence, performances often are better predicted by self-efficacy than by prior attainments. Collins (1982) identified children of low, middle, and high mathematics ability who had, within each ability level, either high or low mathematics self-efficacy. After instruction, the children were given new problems to solve and could rework those they missed. Collins reported that ability was related to performance but that, regardless of ability level, children with high self-efficacy completed more problems correctly and reworked more of the ones they missed. Pajares and Kranzler (1995) tested the joint contribution of self-efficacy and mental ability (the variable typically acknowledged as the most powerful predictor of academic outcomes) to mathematics performance and found that self-efficacy beliefs made a powerful and independent contribution to the prediction of performance.

Findings also support Bandura's (1997) contention that self-efficacy mediates the effect of possessed skills or other self-beliefs on subsequent performance by influencing effort, persistence, and perseverance. For example, using path analysis, Schunk (1981) showed that modeling treatments increased persistence and accuracy on division problems by raising children's self-efficacy, which had a direct effect on skill (.46). In another study, he demonstrated that effort attributional feedback for prior performance (e.g., "You've been working hard") raised children's self-efficacy and this increase was, in part, responsible for increased skill in performance of subtraction problems (Schunk, 1982).

Not only do children learn from the actions of models, but modeling practices affect self-efficacy perceptions (see Schunk & Pajares, 2005, for a review). When peer models make errors, engage in coping behaviors in front of students, and verbalize emotive statements reflecting low confidence and achievement, low-achieving students, who are themselves prone to make similar errors and express low confidence, perceive these coping models as more similar to themselves and develop greater skills and self-efficacy. Social cognitive theorists recommend that teachers select peers for classroom models judiciously so as to ensure that students view themselves as comparable in learning ability to the models.

Academic self-efficacy is positively associated with other constructs that are of particular interest to positive psychology. These include optimism, resilience, mastery goal orientation, authentic-

ity, value of school and of various academic subjects, academic and subject-specific self-concept, and invitations of self and of others (see Pajares, 2006). Pajares (2001) suggested that students who value school, who view learning as an end in itself and believe that the purpose of learning is to master ideas and seek personal challenge, and who accompany these beliefs with confidence, positive self-feelings, and confidence in their self-regulatory practices also engage the world with optimism and view their accomplishments as merited and deserved. Such students are also more likely to regard themselves and show regard for others. These are attitudes and dispositions well worth nurturing in school. Moreover, they are the very elements with which a positive educational psychology should concern itself.

Implications for School-Based Professionals and Researchers

Educational psychology has greeted the new century by heeding William James' (1890/1981) call for a view of human functioning attentive to the processes of reflection and introspection. Such a view focuses on human strengths, capabilities, and self-beliefs. The import of scholarly findings about these self-beliefs is that students' academic difficulties are often directly related to their *beliefs* that they cannot read, write, handle numbers, regulate their academic practices, or think that they cannot learn—even when such things are not objectively true. Put another way, many students have difficulty in school not because they are incapable of performing successfully but because they have come to believe that they cannot perform successfully. They have learned to view themselves as incapable of handling academic work. As they continue to develop their self-beliefs, these beliefs do not include being successful in school. What, then, are the implications of these conclusions to the real-life world of teachers, students, and school-based mental health professionals?

The first and major implication is that teachers do well to take seriously their share of responsibility in nurturing the self-beliefs of their pupils, for it is clear that these beliefs can have beneficial or destructive influences. Bandura (1997) has argued that self-efficacy beliefs constitute the key factor of human agency, the ability to act intentionally and exercise a measure of control over one's environment and social structures. As children strive to exercise control over their academic life, their transactions are mediated by teachers who can empower them with self-assurance or diminish their self-beliefs. Students rely on the judgments of others to help create their own self-efficacy judgments, and they are attentive, and often quite vulnerable, to the messages they receive both from their teachers and from their peers. It is during childhood that the metaphor of the "looking-glass self"—the idea that children's sense of self is formed as a result of their perceptions of how others see them—is at its most powerful. As others define us, we use their definitions to define ourselves. Teachers who provide children with challenging tasks and meaningful activities that can be mastered, and who chaperone these efforts with support and encouragement, are our earliest academic mirrors, and they can help ensure the development of a robust sense of academic self-confidence.

Maria Montessori (1966) wisely counseled that "since children are so eager to learn and so burning with love, an adult should carefully weigh all the words he speaks before them" (p. 104). The verbal and nonverbal judgments of others can play a critical role in the development of a young person's self-confidence, and these judgments often become the self-talk that students repeat covertly further down the road (Purkey, 2000). Successful persuaders cultivate young people's beliefs in their capabilities while ensuring that the envisioned success is attainable. Positive persuasions encourage and empower; negative persuasions defeat and weaken self-beliefs. Such persuasions should be genuine, should offer specific information about what was praiseworthy, and should provide avenues for continued improvement.

Effective persuasions should not be confused with knee-jerk praise or empty inspirational homi-

lies. Praise and encouragement should be delivered honestly and in their proper measure when they are deserved. It is, of course, important that young people feel positively about themselves and about their capabilities, and teachers play a critical role in nurturing these positive self-beliefs. But teachers would do well to carefully heed Erikson's (1959/1980) caution that students "cannot be fooled by empty praise and condescending encouragement. Their identity gains real strength only from wholehearted and consistent recognition of *real* accomplishment ... a strong ego does not need, and in fact is immune to, any attempt at artificial inflation" (p. 95). Praising a student for a job well done is an important way of showing encouragement and support. Providing praise when it is undeserved, however, is dishonest and manipulative, not to mention counterproductive. A teacher's persuasion should never be guided by impression management. Rather, it should be guided by the desire to provide authentic and encouraging feedback founded on the honest appraisal of the matter at hand. When capable students accomplish competent work with minimal effort, knee-jerk praise sends the quite peculiar message that putting forth minimal effort is praiseworthy. Self-efficacy is unaffected when praise is perceived as undeserved, and teachers who provide such praise soon lose credibility. Moreover, in such situations the student is clearly underchallenged, and a teacher is better served by raising standards and expectations and challenging the student to meet these expectations.

An incontrovertible finding in education and in psychology is that children learn from the actions of models. Teachers and students who model excellence can imbue other students with the belief that they too can achieve that excellence. As outlined earlier, Schunk and his colleagues have demonstrated that different modeling practices can differently affect self-beliefs. For example, when peer models make errors, engage in coping behaviors in front of students, and verbalize emotive statements reflecting low confidence and achievement (such as "Gosh, I seem to be having some trouble with this, don't I?"), low-achieving students perceive the models as more similar to themselves and experience greater achievement and self-efficacy under their tutelage. To help bring about this recognition, teachers can instruct students in "talk-aloud" techniques that are carried out during group activities. Social cognitive theorists recommend that teachers engage in effective modeling practices and that they select peers for classroom models judiciously so as to ensure that students view themselves as comparable in learning ability to the models.

Students inevitably compare themselves to other students, and these social comparisons are critical to the development of self-efficacy beliefs. Social-comparative school practices that emphasize standardized, normative assessments, involve ability grouping and lock-step instruction, use competitive grading practices, and encourage students to compare their achievement with that of their peers work to destroy the confidence of those who are less academically talented or prepared. As Bandura (1997) has noted, these are practices that can work to convert "instructional experiences into education in inefficacy" (p. 175).

When classroom structures are individualized and instruction is tailored to students' academic capabilities, social comparisons are minimized and students are more likely to gauge their academic progress according to their own standards rather than compare it to the progress of their classmates. It is inevitable that students will evaluate themselves to some degree in relation to their classmates regardless of what a school or teacher does to minimize or counter these comparisons. But it is also the case that in cooperative and individualized learning settings, students can more easily select the peers with whom to compare themselves. Individualized and cooperative structures that lower the competitive orientation of a classroom and school are more likely than traditional, competitive structures to foster adaptive self-efficacy beliefs. Similarly, classrooms that emphasize mastery orientation goals, which is to say that they emphasize the view that learning is an enjoyable activity and should be undertaken for its own sake rather than for extrinsic or performance oriented reasons, also help lower apprehension and foster academic self-efficacy (see Anderman and Anderman, chapter 13, this volume).

Some researchers have suggested that teachers should pay as much attention to students' perceptions of competence as to actual competence, for it is the perceptions that in so many cases more accurately predict students' motivation and future academic choices. Assessing students' self-efficacy beliefs can provide teachers with important insights about their pupils' academic motivation, behavior, and future choices. For example, unrealistically low self-efficacy, rather than lack of capability or skill, can be responsible for avoidance of courses and careers, as well as diminishing school interest and achievement. Students who lack confidence in skills they possess are less likely to engage in tasks in which those skills are required, and they will more quickly give up in the face of difficulty. In such cases, in addition to continued skill improvement, teachers and schools must work to identify their students' inaccurate judgments and design and implement interventions to challenge these maladaptive self-beliefs.

Because self-efficacy beliefs are created and developed from various sources, there is no single remedy for unwarranted low self-efficacy. When lack of confidence is rooted in poor competence, skills that will bring satisfaction must be cultivated. When it is rooted in unrealistically high standards, students can be helped to adopt standards of achievement they can more readily attain or encouraged to be more self-forgiving when they fall short. When it is rooted in social inequities, self-efficacy must be affirmed with humane treatment. When it is rooted in multiple causes, multiple corrective measures are required.

There are also ways of maintaining a joint focus on the development of increased academic mastery and of the self-efficacy beliefs that accompany such mastery. In the area of writing, for example, instructional programs such as the Writers' Workshop approach to writing instruction have as a key priority the building of a child's sense of confidence in writing. Writers' Workshop advocates stress the idea that children must gain confidence in themselves as writers if they are to improve and grow in this skill. Attention to children's self-beliefs is made an explicit feature of teacher education in such programs, and teachers are encouraged to assess both competence and the accompanying confidence as part of regular writing evaluations.

Just as researchers recommend that teachers should regularly assess their students' self-efficacy beliefs, they also encourage teachers to introduce the concept of self-efficacy to their students early on and teach them how to calculate it. "By rating their self-efficacy, students become more finely attuned to the role that judgments of capability can play in guiding their efforts" (Zimmerman, Bonner, & Kovach, 1996, p. 63). Such a judgment requires focusing attention on the beliefs that accompany the learning methods that students employ and the strategies they use to maximize their learning.

Over a century ago, William James (1896/2001) observed that "education is for behavior, and habits are the stuff of which behavior consists" (p. 34). For James, the critical challenge that educators face is making their students' adaptive self-beliefs habitual as early as possible. Schools can aid their students in these pursuits by helping them to develop the habit of excellence in scholarship while at the same time nurturing the self-efficacy beliefs necessary to maintain that excellence throughout their adult lives. As Bandura (1986) argued,

educational practices should be gauged not only by the skills and knowledge they impart for present use but also by what they do to children's beliefs about their capabilities, which affects how they approach the future. Students who develop a strong sense of self-efficacy are well equipped to educate themselves when they have to rely on their own initiative. (p. 417)

It seems prudent at this point to offer a few words on what has come to be known in self-efficacy research as *calibration*, the "match" between self-efficacy and performance, which is to say the "accuracy" of a self-efficacy judgment (see, for example, Klassen, 2006). Bandura (2008s) has suggested that "we are currently witnessing the pathologizing of optimism ... a positive outlook is regarded

as a ‘cognitive failing’ requiring downward correction to match performance.” Because accuracy of self-perception is lauded as desirable, it is not unusual for a teacher to try to lower the self-efficacy of students in the well-meaning hope of making them more “realistic” about what they can and cannot do. This is sometimes due to the fear that it is not wise for a student to hold “unrealistic” and lofty aspirations that, the teacher judges, are unlikely to be met. Reality and perceived potential, the caring teacher may argue, should be well matched. But, who can ever assess a student’s *full* potential with complete accuracy? Students surprise us all the time, just as we surprise ourselves. And, who has the key to understanding the precise nature of reality?

According to social cognitive theory, successful functioning is best served by reasonable efficacy appraisals, but the most functional efficacy judgments are those that slightly exceed what an individual can actually accomplish, for this overestimation serves to increase effort and persistence (Bandura, 1997). Manipulating the “accuracy” of a student’s self-efficacy beliefs so that these beliefs are better matched with a teacher’s sense of the student’s potential capabilities is an enterprise fraught with danger. Indeed, American students are often viewed as too academically overconfident for their own good (Burson, Larrick, & Klayman, 2006; Lundeberg, Fox, & Puncochar, 1994). Perhaps, but recall that the stronger the self-efficacy, the more likely are persons to select challenging tasks, persist at them, and perform them successfully (Bandura, 1986, 1997). Efforts to lower efficacy beliefs should generally be discouraged. Strategies to improve the match between belief and perceived reality should emphasize helping students to be stronger metacognizers, which is to say to better understand what they know and do not know so that they may more effectively deploy appropriate cognitive strategies as they perform a task and engage in activities. Issues of accuracy and calibration cannot easily be divorced from issues of well-being, optimism, resilience, and optimal functioning.

Research supports the notion that as people evaluate their lives, they are more likely to regret the challenge not confronted, the contest not entered, the risk unriskened, and the road not taken as a result of underconfidence and self-doubt rather than the action taken as a result of overconfidence and optimism (and, yes, even the occasional foolhardiness; Hattiangadi, Medvec, & Gilovich, 1995; Roesse & Sommerville, 2005). The challenge to educators on this account is to make students more familiar with their own internal mental structures without lowering confidence, optimism, drive, and passion. The shakers and movers of this world believed they could shake and move the world even when those around them often ridiculed their beliefs.

The aim of education should always transcend the development of academic competence. Schools have the added responsibility of preparing fully-functioning and resilient individuals capable of pursuing their hopes and their aspirations. To do so, they must be armed with optimism, confidence, self-regard, and regard for others, and they must be shielded from unwarranted doubts about their potentialities and capacity for growth. Teachers can aid their students by helping them to develop the habit of excellence in scholarship, while at the same time nurturing the confidence to maintain that excellence throughout their adult lives.

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13

Oriented Towards Mastery

Promoting Positive Motivational Goals for Students

LYNLEY H. ANDERMAN AND ERIC M. ANDERMAN

Public conversation about the goals and purposes of education reveals a clear conflict between the rhetoric of schooling and its actual practice. It is common for educators and parents to use catchy phrases such as “promoting life- long learning” to describe the goals of education and schooling. In practice, however, the prevalence of high-stakes testing programs required by legislation such as the No Child Left Behind initiatives means that many students come to believe that the main purpose of education is to perform well on examinations (Nichols & Berliner, 2006). The role of schooling in promoting knowledge and learning often gets lost behind the strong emphasis on assessment that is prevalent today.

Nevertheless, a large body of research clearly indicates that educators play a critical role in influencing the types of goals that students adopt in schools and in classrooms (Ames, 1992a, 1992b; E. Anderman, Maehr, & Midgley, 1999; Midgley & Maehr, 1999; Roeser, Midgley, & Urdan, 1996). When educators emphasize the importance of learning and match their instructional practices to those beliefs, students in turn can and do adopt goals that lead to learning and mastery, even in the presence of high-stakes assessments. In the present chapter, we review research using a goal orientation theory approach, which is a motivational framework that has been particularly prominent in the educational and social psychological research literatures for the past 20 years. This theoretical perspective is particularly useful for informing educational practice, since it has framed both basic and applied research on student motivation. More importantly, research from a goal orientation theory perspective clearly indicates that instructional contexts are malleable and can be altered effectively in ways that lead to the adoption of adaptive goals in student populations.

Goal Orientation Theory

Goal orientation theory is a social-cognitive theory of academic motivation that focuses on the individual's perceptions of the meanings and purposes of achievement. That is, in contrast to goals specified in more behaviorally oriented theories (e.g., Locke & Latham, 1990), the term “goal orientation” does not refer to a specific performance objective (such as setting the goal of achieving 95% correct on a test) but rather refers to a broader understanding of the *reasons* for striving toward certain objectives. Thus, in goal orientation theory the focus is not on *what* the student is trying to achieve, but rather *why* the individual is trying to achieve (Ames & Archer, 1988; E. Anderman

& Wolters, 2006; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Nolen, 1988; Urdan, 1997). This approach focuses less on the amount or quantity of a student’s motivation (i.e., this student is more motivated than that one) and more on the quality of motivation (i.e., this student is motivated because she wants to...; Ames, 1987, 1992b; Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1989). Goal orientations, therefore, are defined in terms of the individual’s subjective understanding of the overall purposes of achievement behavior. Goal orientations provide a “cognitive structure that organizes how individuals define success and failure in achievement situations, their attributions for the causes of success and failure, their affective reactions, and their subsequent behavior” (Urdan, 1997, p. 101).

There may be a number of different types of achievement goal orientations, but most research has focused on two distinct categories, each of which recently has been further subdivided into approach and avoidance sub-types. A *mastery goal* orientation (also referred to as a *learning goal* or a *task goal*) refers to students who are focused on learning, improvement, and mastering content and skills; success is defined in terms of individual progress toward this achievement. A *mastery approach orientation* refers to students who approach tasks with the goal of understanding and mastery; a *mastery avoidance orientation* focuses on the goal of not misunderstanding or failing to master material (A. Elliot, 1999; Pintrich, 2000a). In contrast, a *performance goal orientation* (also referred to as an *ego goal* or an *ability goal*) is defined in terms of demonstrating one’s competence in relation to an externally defined standard and, particularly, in relation to other students’ abilities. For instance, success is defined in terms of one’s performance against external markers (such as grades) and out-performing others. A *performance approach orientation* focuses on the goal of demonstrating one’s ability compared to others; a *performance avoidance orientation* focuses on the goal of not appearing to lack ability (A. Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Middleton & Midgley, 1997). Table 13.1 provides a graphic summary of these categories of achievement goal orientations.

In addition to individual-level goal orientations, achievement-related social contexts can also be described as emphasizing one or more goal orientations. At the classroom or school level, these goal orientations are often referred to as *goal structures* (Ames, 1992b; E. Anderman & Midgley, 1997; Meece, Anderman, & Anderman, 2006; Midgley, 2002; Urdan, 2004b). As with student-level goal orientations, classroom goal structures can be categorized as emphasizing mastery or performance, and as promoting an approach or avoidance tendency. A central assumption of goal orientation theory is that those structures perceived in a particular setting influence students’ personal adoption of similar orientations (Kaplan, Middleton, Urdan, & Midgley, 2002). That is, students are more likely to become personally oriented towards mastery in settings they perceive as emphasizing mastery goals. This assumption has been confirmed in numerous empirical studies (e.g., E. Anderman & Midgley, 1997; Roeser et al., 1996; Urdan, 2004a; Wolters, 2004).

Within the research literature on achievement goal orientations, there has been considerable controversy about the potential outcomes for students when they approach academic tasks with

Table 13.1 A 2 x 2 matrix of achievement goal orientations

	Mastery orientation	Performance orientation
Approach tendency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on developing competence: learning, understanding and mastery • Success is defined in terms of individual progress and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on demonstrating competence: outperforming others, being superior • Success is defined in terms of comparative standards, grades, awards
Avoidance tendency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on avoiding misunderstanding and failure to learn • Success is defined in terms of not being wrong or doing worse than previously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on avoiding the appearance of incompetence or inferiority in comparison to others • Success is defined in terms of not being worst or “looking stupid”

a performance approach orientation (e.g., Harackiewicz, Barron, Pintrich, Elliot, & Thrash, 2002; Midgley, Middleton, & Kaplan, 2001). In addition, research examining the definition and effects of a mastery avoidance orientation is just beginning to emerge (Pintrich, 2000a). What is generally accepted is the large number of maladaptive outcomes related to performance avoidance orientation (Elliot, McGregor, & Gable, 1999; Wolters, 2004) and the overwhelmingly positive outcomes associated with being oriented to approach mastery (E. Anderman & Maehr, 1994; E. Anderman & Wolters, 2006; Meece et al., 2006; Urdan, 1997). Given these findings, this chapter will focus specifically on mastery approach goals.

In the following section, we review the empirical research examining the associations between a mastery approach orientation at both the individual and classroom level and a range of positive outcomes for students of varying ages. We organize this review to focus on both academic and affective outcomes related to mastery orientation. We follow by describing ways in which teachers, administrators, and mental health professionals can promote such an orientation in their school and their students.

Mastery Orientation and Academic Variables

The most consistent findings related to goal orientations reveal positive associations between a mastery approach orientation and a range of desirable learning-related outcomes. When students adopt a mastery orientation, they are more likely to choose moderately challenging tasks (as opposed to those that are too easy or too difficult); use deeper cognitive processing strategies during learning tasks and self-regulate better (e.g., truly thinking about how newly learned material relates to prior knowledge); put forth effort and persist in the face of difficulty; and attribute any failures to lack of effort rather than lack of ability (see E. Anderman & Maehr, 1994; Meece et al., 2006; Urdan, 1997, for reviews).

Research also indicates that the adoption of mastery goals is related to long-term beneficial educational outcomes. More specifically, the adoption of mastery goals is related to future enrollment in courses, when coursework becomes optional. For example, in a longitudinal study examining the relations of mastery goals in introductory psychology courses to subsequent outcomes, Harackiewicz and her colleagues found that the adoption of mastery goals was related to taking more psychology courses during the remainder of college, and to choosing to major in psychology (Harackiewicz, Barron, Tauer, Carter, & Elliot, 2000).

Mastery Goals and Maladaptive Strategies in the Classroom

One specific set of learning-related strategies that has received research attention centers on different ways in which students seek help with academic tasks in the classroom (e.g., Karabenick & Knapp, 1991; Newman, 1994; Ryan, Hicks, & Midgley, 1997; Ryan, Pintrich, & Midgley, 2001). When students become aware that they need help with a task, appropriate help seeking behaviors can facilitate their learning and task completion. Such behaviors are considered adaptive when the help that is requested is limited, for example, to clarifying a problem, asking for examples, or seeking sufficient hints to allow the individual to progress independently (Karabenick & Knapp, 1991; Newman, 1994). Some students, however, particularly those with poor prior academic achievement, are reluctant to seek help in the classroom even when they are well aware that they are having difficulties. The reasons students fail to ask for academic help are varied, but include a lack of belief in their own academic competence and the potential threat to students' sense of self-worth if they are perceived as needing help (Newman, 1994). This avoidance of help seeking is undesirable in that students fail to overcome problems and their learning is hampered. In terms

of achievement goal orientations, Ryan and Pintrich (1997) demonstrated that middle school students' goal orientations were associated with help seeking attitudes and behaviors. Students' orientation towards mastery was associated with (a) understanding the benefits in seeking help, (b) higher levels of adaptive help seeking, and (c) lower levels of help seeking avoidance. In contrast, a performance goal orientation (ability goal) was associated with greater reluctance to seek help in appropriate ways (see also Ryan et al., 1997; and Ryan, et al., 2001, for a review). Thus, students who perceive the purpose of their classroom activities in terms of learning and improvement are more likely to seek help in adaptive ways as a means of supporting their continued progress towards achievement. In contrast, students who perceive the purpose of activities as demonstrating their competency are more likely to avoid seeking help.

Students' achievement goal orientations have also been associated with other maladaptive strategies in the classroom. One example is academic self-handicapping, which refers to behaviors that create "impediments to successful performance on tasks that the individual considers important" (Urduan, 2004a, p. 251). In other words, academic self-handicapping includes behaviors that a student engages in prior to an achievement activity, which create a pre-destined explanation—other than lack of ability—for poor performance. Such behaviors usually involve procrastination or excessive involvement in social and extra-curricular activities to avoid studying (Urduan; Urduan, & Midgley, 2001). Researchers theorize that students participate in self-handicapping behaviors to protect their sense of self-worth by avoiding being judged as unintelligent or academically incompetent (e.g., Urduan, Ryan, Anderman, & Gheen, 2002). Unfortunately, the very behaviors that are designed to avoid negative judgments of their ability lead students to perform poorly.

Researchers have consistently found that performance avoidance goals (i.e., wanting to avoid looking incompetent or to avoid being judged negatively) are significantly associated with the use of self-handicapping strategies (e.g., Elliot & Church, 2003; Midgley & Urduan, 1995; Urduan, 2004a; Urduan, Midgley, & Anderman, 1998). Conversely, students' personal mastery goals and perceptions of a mastery goal structure in their classes have been associated with lower levels of self-handicapping (Midgley & Urduan, 2001; Pintrich, 2000b). Thus, students who view the purpose of academic activities as mastery and improvement are less likely to engage in self-defeating behaviors than students who view academic activities in terms of demonstrating their competence and who are concerned that they will be judged negatively by teachers or peers.

Another maladaptive academic strategy that has been studied in relation to mastery goals is procrastination. Specifically, there is some evidence that the adoption of mastery goals is related to less procrastination in students. For example, in a study of middle school students, Wolters (2004) found that both personal mastery goals and perceptions of a mastery goal structure were related to lower levels of self-reported procrastination. These findings were significant even after controlling for other variables, including students' prior achievement, gender, self-efficacy, and both personal performance goals and perceived performance goal structures.

Mastery Goals and Academic Cheating

In recent years, psychologists have established a renewed interest in the study of academic cheating, and many of the recent studies of academic cheating have used an achievement goal orientation perspective (e.g., E. Anderman, Griesinger, & Westerfield, 1998; E. Anderman & Midgley, 2004; Murdock, Hale, & Weber, 2001; Murdock, Miller, & Kohlhardt, 2004; see E. Anderman, 2007, for a review). From both a theoretical and practical perspective, students who are mastery goal oriented have few reasons to engage in cheating behaviors. Although an array of definitions exist for the term "mastery goals," all definitions indicate that the student's primary goal is to master (i.e., truly learn) the task. If one's ultimate goal is learning, then it serves no purpose to engage in cheating or other forms of academic dishonesty (E. Anderman et al., 1998). In contrast, if one's goal is to

demonstrate one's ability or to avoid appearing incompetent or unable (i.e., a performance goal), then cheating may be perceived as a viable strategy for reaching that goal.

Research finds an inverse relation between mastery goal orientation and academic cheating. Students who are mastery oriented are less likely to cheat, even after controlling for other predictors of cheating. For example, Stephens and Gehlbach (2007) found that students who endorse personal mastery goals reported less cheating on academic assignments and course examinations, and less plagiarism than did their peers. Similarly, E. Anderman and Midgley (2004) examined changes in academic cheating across the transition from middle school into high school. Their results indicated that across the transition, cheating increased when students moved from middle school classes that emphasized a mastery orientation into high school classrooms with teachers who placed less emphasis on a mastery orientation (E. Anderman & Midgley, 2004).

Nevertheless, some studies that include both mastery and performance goal orientations indicate that, after performance goals are controlled, mastery goals may be unrelated to cheating. For example, both Murdock and her colleagues (2001) and Anderman and his colleagues (E. Anderman et al., 1998) found that when both performance and mastery goals are included in analyses of predictors of cheating, performance goals often emerge as being related to increased cheating, whereas mastery goals are unrelated. These studies are nascent, and future research will clarify these complex relations.

Mastery Goals and Grades

One of the most intriguing findings in the goal orientation literature is that mastery goals are seldom directly predictive of grades. Although a number of studies have examined the relations between mastery goals and grades, many studies indicate that this relation does not exist (c.f., Ames & Archer, 1988; Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001; Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Elliot et al., 1999; Harackiewicz, Barron, Carter, Lehto, & Elliot, 1997; Harackiewicz et al., 2000; McWhaw & Abrami, 2001; Miller, Greene, Montalvo, Ravindran, & Nichols, 1996; Pintrich, 2000b; Skaalvik, 1997). Given the established associations between mastery goals and improved perseverance and strategy use, this pattern is surprising. One possible explanation is that the assessment strategies regularly used to measure achievement in most educational settings do not match deep learning and engagement with the content. That is, being oriented towards mastery may improve learning in ways that current assessments do not detect (Grant & Dweck, 2003; see also Meece et al., 2006). An alternative explanation may be that mastery goals do not, and should not be expected to have a direct effect on achievement but, instead, may influence grades indirectly. For example, in a longitudinal study examining the relationship between mastery goals and learning about current events during adolescence, E. Anderman and Johnston (1998) found that students having a mastery orientation were more likely to seek their news outside of the school environment, which, in turn, predicted current events knowledge. Thus, being mastery oriented predicted a behavior (seeking news outside of the classroom) that subsequently contributed to acquired knowledge. This relation held up even when controlling for prior knowledge. Similarly, Roeser et al. (1996) reported an indirect effect of personal mastery goals on grades, through an increase in academic self-efficacy. Further research is needed to clarify the processes through which a mastery orientation and perception of a mastery goal structure affect academic performance.

Mastery Orientation and Affective Variables

In addition to the research examining academic correlates and outcomes of students' achievement goal orientations, there is considerable evidence of associations between goal orientations and a range of affective outcomes. In terms of a mastery orientation, students' personal mastery goals

have been associated with a greater general liking of school (Ames & Archer, 1988). In addition, personal orientation towards mastery is related to positive school-related affect (e.g., feeling happy, proud, relaxed in school) and negatively related to negative affect in school (e.g., feeling angry, frustrated, unhappy; Kaplan & Maehr, 1999; Pintrich, 2000b; Roeser et al., 1996). Students' perceptions of a mastery goal structure at the classroom level also are associated with an increase in positive school-related affect, over time (L. Anderman, 1999).

Beyond general measures of affect, a mastery goal orientation also has been associated with specific positive affective outcomes. One of the most consistent findings in this research is that mastery-oriented students report greater levels of intrinsic interest and a greater belief in the value of academic tasks (e.g., Butler, 1987; Harackiewicz, Barron, & Elliot, 1998; Meece, Blumenfeld, & Hoyle, 1988; Nolen & Haladyna, 1990; Wolters, Yu, & Pintrich, 1996). Students' personal mastery goal orientation also is associated with higher levels of confidence and self-efficacy for success with academic tasks (Kaplan & Midgley, 1997; Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Wolters et al., 1996). Furthermore, Wolters (2004) found that junior high school students' perceptions of a classroom-level mastery structure predicted greater individual-level self-efficacy. Similarly, Urdan and Midgley (2003) examined longitudinal changes in middle school students' perceptions of the mastery goal structure in their math classes, moving from fifth to sixth grade. Although there was an overall decline in students' self-efficacy for math from the spring semester of fifth grade to the spring of sixth grade, this decline was small and not statistically significant for those students who perceived a greater emphasis on mastery goals in their sixth grade math classes. In contrast, those students who perceived the mastery structure in their sixth grade classes to be the same as in fifth grade, or less than in fifth grade, reported larger, statistically significant declines in self-efficacy.

Some recent research also has examined the relations between mastery orientation and non school-related affective outcomes. Using Gottfried's CAIMI instrument, which measures intrinsic motivation, a construct that is highly similar although not identical to a measure of mastery goals, Gilman and Anderman (2006) used cluster analysis to identify three distinct clusters of students. One group (labeled "low adaptive motivation") was characterized by low levels of intrinsic motivation, high beliefs in external locus of control, and high self-perceptions of social inadequacy. A second group (labeled "average adaptive motivation") consisted of students who were higher than the first group in intrinsic motivation, felt less inadequate and reported a more internal locus of control. Finally, a third group (labeled "high adaptive motivation") consisted of students who were equivalent to the second group on intrinsic motivation, but reported low levels of inadequacy and a high internal locus of control. These clusters were then examined in relation to a variety of general affective measures. Results indicated that the high adaptive motivation group reported the lowest reports of maladaptive affective indicators, such as depression, anxiety, and social stress. In addition, the highly adaptive group also reported the highest levels of self-esteem, global satisfaction, and family satisfaction. In most of these cases, the "average" group was in the middle on these indicators, and the "low" motivation group reported the poorest outcomes on all of these measures.

Finally, students' perceptions of a mastery goal structure in their classes have been found to be associated with their sense of acceptance and belonging in school. L. Anderman (2003) examined longitudinal change in middle school students' sense of school belonging across three semesters, from the spring of sixth grade until the spring of seventh. During each semester, the single strongest predictor of students' sense of belonging was their perception of a mastery goal structure in their classes. This association has recently been replicated with a sample of Hispanic fifth- and sixth-grade students. Using structural equation modeling, Stevens, Hamman, and Olivarez (2007) found that Hispanic students' perceptions that their White teachers emphasized mastery goals predicted their sense of school belonging which, in turn, predicted their adoption of personal mastery goals. In another study, L. Anderman and E. Anderman (1999) found that increases in personal mastery

goal orientations across the transition from elementary school into middle school were associated with perceiving a sense of school belonging in the new school.

To summarize these collective findings, when students report a personal mastery orientation towards their academic work, they (a) enjoy school more; (b) find academic tasks more interesting, useful, and important; and (c) report higher levels of efficacy in terms of being able to complete those tasks successfully. Importantly, students' perceptions of a mastery structure in their classes also are linked to these outcomes, as well as to their sense of belonging in school and to their personal adoption of a mastery orientation. In the following section, therefore, we turn our attention to the question of how educational policies and practices create a mastery goal structure for students.

Educational Practices and Students' Mastery Orientation

What educational practices and teacher characteristics are likely to promote students' mastery orientation? As noted earlier, goal orientation theory suggests that classroom and school contexts can be described as emphasizing different goals; that is, as communicating an emphasis on either mastery of the material, performance on the material, or both. There is enough empirical evidence to suggest that instructional policies and practices at both the classroom and school level make mastery or performance goals more salient to students (e.g., Ames, 1992b; Anderman & Maehr, 1994; Maehr & Midgley, 1996). In addition, students' perceptions of the goal structures emphasized in their schools and classrooms have been shown to impact their own personal goal orientations (Kaplan & Maehr, 1999; Maehr & Anderman, 1993; Midgley, Anderman, & Hicks, 1995; Roeser et al., 1996). Thus, educators can encourage students' orientation towards mastery through a combination of practices that communicate the salience of learning, improvement, and personally-referenced success.

Ames (1992a) synthesized the results of a series of experimental studies into a coherent framework for communicating a mastery message to students. This framework, represented by the acronym TARGET, was developed originally by Epstein (1989). TARGET includes the categories of Tasks, Authority, Recognition, Grouping, Evaluation, and Time. More recently, researchers have suggested an additional category that refers to the school's or classroom's social climate (L. Anderman, Patrick, Hruda, & Linnenbrink, 2002; Patrick, 2004; Patrick, Anderman, & Ryan, 2002). These categories are presented graphically in Table 13.2.

Taken together, this body of research provides a number of practical guidelines for teachers and school administrators who wish to increase their students' orientation towards mastery. For example, academic tasks should be appropriately challenging, meaningful, and varied. Instructional grouping should be flexible and heterogeneous, and teachers should promote a sense of shared authority in the classroom, both in terms of classroom rules and decision-making and in terms of respecting multiple opinions and perspectives. Evaluation and recognition practices should be based on individual progress and effort, and avoid comparisons to norms or peers. Time should be used flexibly to emphasize engagement with challenging content, rather than being driven by the demands of a strict schedule.

Beyond these established recommendations, some researchers propose that the social climate of classes and students' perceptions of their relationships with their teachers may also contribute to the perception of a mastery goal structure. Classroom studies that incorporate mixed-methodological approaches have linked direct observation of teachers' practices to students' reports of the mastery goal structure of their classes. For example, Patrick, L. Anderman, Ryan, Edelin, and Midgley (2001) found that fifth-grade teachers who were described by students as high in mastery orientation demonstrated clearly supportive teacher-student relationships. These included communicating interpersonal warmth, enthusiasm, and respect to students; clear expectations and feedback related

Table 13.2 Characteristics of classroom practices that promote a mastery structure

	Emphasize	De-emphasize
Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriately challenging and complex • Developmentally appropriate • Emphasize problem solving and comprehension • Provide variety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low levels tasks, especially overuse of routine worksheets and text books • Avoid always having all students working on the same tasks
Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student participation in decision-making, controlled choices, and self-regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sole reliance on “top-down” decision-making
Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing progress, effort and intellectual risk-taking • Consider providing feedback and recognition in private 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public announcements of relative performance, public displays of grades, and excessive praise for relatively simple tasks
Grouping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible heterogeneous grouping based on students’ interests and choice • Emphasize group cooperation and collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term grouping based on test scores • Competition between and within groups
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use formal assessments for diagnostic purposes • Include individual progress and effort • Encourage students’ self-evaluation • Base evaluations on multiple sources of evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparisons among students or to normative standards, over-reliance on a single test score or form of assessment
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use time flexibly to allow students to explore content in depth; provide for self-pacing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-pressured tasks; expecting all students to complete tasks in the same time frame
Social Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent personal and intellectual support for students’ learning; communicate warmth, commitment, and confidence in their abilities • Encourage peer collaboration and mutual respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating low expectations for students’ success, focusing participation and attention on only certain students, calling on students as a punishment for inattention, exclusive focus on individual work

Note. See L. Anderman et al. (2002); Midgley and Urdan (1992); and Patrick (2004).

to both academic tasks and behavior; and practices that ensured that all students participated actively in class activities. In contrast, teachers who were described by students as low in mastery orientation did not communicate interest in students’ learning and progress, respect for students’ intellect, or confidence in their ability to learn. They also did not ensure participation from all students. Similarly, Patrick, Turner, Meyer, and Midgley (2003) found that sixth-grade classes that were perceived as mastery focused were characterized by a pattern of intellectual and emotional teacher support for students’ success, warmth, encouragement, respect, and the establishment of an orderly working environment. This study also highlighted the importance of consistency in the messages teachers send. Teachers in class environments that were characterized as ambiguous (e.g., teachers making positive statements that were later contradicted by actual practices) were not perceived as mastery structured, any more than were those classes categorized as non-supportive. Thus, a classroom emphasis on mastery requires that students need, not only to believe cognitively that their teacher wants them to understand content, but also to feel that their teacher is committed to supporting their learning and is confident of their success.

Research clearly indicates that students’ motivational beliefs are related to their functioning in school (e.g., Gilman & Anderman, 2006; Roeser, van der Wolf, & Strobel, 2001). Consequently, current research on mastery goal orientations offers important implications for school-based mental health professionals, including school psychologists, guidance counselors, and school social workers. First, mental health professionals can monitor instructional practices in classrooms to assess

the prevalence of mastery-oriented instructional practices. A school psychologist who observes, for example, that a teacher does not provide enough time for students to master academic tasks or consistently groups students in fixed, homogeneous groupings, may be able to offer some constructive and tactful feedback to the teacher; if the teacher takes this advice to heart, students may become more mastery oriented in that classroom. Second, when students are referred to school based mental health professionals regarding behavioral problems in specific classrooms, it may be important for the mental health professional to examine the specific instructional practices used in the classroom; a student may be misbehaving simply because the student is bored in a particular class. Boredom may occur when students are not encouraged to spend enough time on academic tasks to truly master and appreciate the tasks; thus the mental health professional may be able to explore the students' interests, and work with the classroom teacher to provide the student with engaging tasks that the student will truly be interested in and want to master.

Finally, broader school-level policies also can determine students' goal orientations. In the 1990s, Maehr, Midgley, and their colleagues conducted collaborative work with elementary- and middle-level schools, in which they worked with teachers, parents, and administrators to change school-level policies to reflect mastery goals, as opposed to performance goals (E. Anderman et al., 1999; Maehr & Buck, 1992; Maehr & Midgley, 1996). These collaborative projects demonstrated that school-level policies can affect students' individual goal orientations. In addition, this research highlighted that some school-level policies and practices can also undermine teachers' efforts to promote mastery goals. For example, a classroom teacher might work diligently to promote mastery goals in the classroom by using instructional practices that emphasize self-comparisons and self-improvement, by allowing students to spend as much time as necessary on tasks to truly learn the material comprehensively, and to take academic risks (i.e., take on challenging projects). However, if in the same school students who earn all "A's" are rewarded with free tickets to the movies or to a concert, then students may feel conflicted: Their teachers are promoting mastery goals, whereas the school is promoting performance goals. Thus, Maehr and Midgley note that for motivational interventions emphasizing mastery goals to be effective, the policies of classrooms and schools related to the promotion of mastery goals must be complementary (Maehr & Anderman, 1993; Maehr & Midgley, 1996).

Measuring Goal Orientations

Both personal-level goal orientations and perceived goal structures in educational settings are conceptualized as subjective cognitions and, thus, most appropriately measured through self-report. A number of group-administered survey measures have been developed to assess goal orientation constructs with students at different age and grade levels. Typically, however, these measures are not recommended for administration to students below third grade.

The best-known survey instrument for use with school-aged populations is the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Survey (PALS; Midgley et al., 2000). The PALS was initially developed for use with elementary- and middle-school samples and has been revised several times to reflect theoretical developments over time. Scales from the PALS have also been used with older student populations, including at the high school (e.g., E. Anderman & Midgley, 2004; Gutman, 2006) and college undergraduate (e.g., Hsieh, Sullivan, & Guerra, 2007; Shim & Ryan, 2005) levels. The PALS has been administered to students representing both ethnic and socioeconomic diversity and, to a smaller degree, to students identified as having learning disabilities (e.g., E. Anderman & Young, 1994; Barron, Evans, Baranik, Serpell, & Buvinger, 2006). Evidence of the psychometric properties of the original set of measures is reported in Midgley et al. (1998). In addition, information regarding the internal consistency and factor structure of the updated measures is provided in the

survey manual (www.umich.edu/~pals/manuals.html). Information regarding the PALS, including all survey items, manuals for administration, and a bibliography of related publications, is freely available (www.umich.edu/~pals/).

Alternative survey measures of students' personal goals include the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ; Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1993) and the Achievement Goals Scale (Elliot & Church, 1997). Both of these surveys have been used extensively and have demonstrated strong psychometric properties, although typically with a focus on older students than is the case for the PALS. The MSLQ has been administered to students from junior high school age (e.g., Pintrich & de Groot, 1990) through college undergraduates. Elliot and Church's measures are most commonly used with college students.

Finally, although classroom goal structures are conceptualized as student perceptions, researchers have attempted to assess observable teacher behaviors that are theoretically linked to those perceptions (as discussed in the previous section). Patrick et al. (2001) developed a direct classroom observation instrument, Observing Patterns of Adaptive Learning (OPAL; Patrick et al., 1997) that explicitly focuses on those dimensions of instructional practice. Compared to the survey instruments available, much less information is available regarding the robustness of the OPAL. The manual for this instrument is available (www.umich.edu/~pals/manuals.html).

Conclusion

The development of goal orientation theory has led to a wealth of empirical research on students' motivation over the past two decades. This theoretical framework is particularly notable in its emphasis on the interface between students' personal goal orientations and the characteristics of the educational and achievement-related contexts in which they work. Thus, goal orientation theory is uniquely positioned to provide specific recommendations for educational practice at both the classroom and broader policy levels. Although debate continues in relation to some aspects of the theory, the advantages of a mastery approach orientation are widely accepted (E. Anderman & Maehr, 1994; E. Anderman & Wolters, 2006; Meece et al., 1996; Urdan, 1997). As reviewed in this chapter, an orientation towards mastery has positive implications for a range of academic and affective outcomes for students. Furthermore, the research evidence is quite clear that educators at all levels have a role in influencing the personal goals students adopt; by promoting an emphasis on understanding, improvement and self-referenced evaluation, teachers and administrators can assist their students in becoming oriented towards mastery.

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14

Creativity in the Schools

A Rapidly Developing Area of Positive Psychology

JAMES C. KAUFMAN AND RONALD A. BEGHETTO

The positive psychology movement has generated much energy and excitement within psychology, education, and related disciplines. It comes as no surprise that creativity studies represent a central component of the positive psychology movement (Simonton, 2002). Indeed, nurturing creativity has many positive and beneficial aspects. For instance, creativity has been linked with economic growth and prosperity (Florida, 2002), physical health (Lepore & Smyth, 2002; Pennebaker, 1997), social harmony (Russ, 1998), and general well-being (Plucker, Beghetto, & Dow, 2004; Richards, 2007; Runco & Richards, 1998). Schools represent an important site for the cultivation and nurturing of creativity. Specifically, schools and classrooms present opportunities for students to recognize the value of human creativity and develop their own creative talents.

Unfortunately, creativity in the schools is sometimes seen as a footnote, afterthought, or as an extra-curricular activity (Aljughaiman & Mowrer-Reynolds, 2005; Beghetto & Plucker, 2006). At worst, it can be seen as not relevant or even appropriate to educational practice. Student creativity, while sometimes valued by teachers (Runco, 2004), often is viewed as potentially disruptive (Beghetto, 2007a; Scott, 1999; Westby & Dawson, 1995). As such, teachers may worry that nurturing creativity may come at the cost of covering the curriculum and even lead the class off-topic—drifting towards curricular chaos.

Indeed, with an increased focus on standardized test scores, creativity can be seen as an unnecessary extra requirement without proper incentive for its nurturance and development. In this chapter, we begin by discussing standard definitions and concepts of creativity, and then explore how a new idea that we have been developing, called “mini-c” creativity is important for broadening educators’ conceptions of creativity and its role in schools and classrooms. We then discuss the conditions necessary for nurturing students’ development of creativity, including issues surrounding the assessment of creativity and the types of educational environments conducive to nurturing creative development and expression. We close with considerations for future research.

What Is Creativity?

What does it mean for an idea to be creative? Ask most people and they might say it means the idea is “outside the box” or came from someone having a good imagination. Certainly, these are key components. Most definitions of creative ideas comprise three components. First, creative

ideas need to represent something different, new, or innovative. Second, creative ideas have to be of high quality (often determined by the collective opinion of experts; see Amabile, 1996) Third, creative ideas must also be appropriate to the task. Thus, a creative response is new, good, and relevant (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2007).

Until 1950, American creativity research was minimal, if barely existent. Less than 0.2% of all entries of *Psychological Abstracts* concentrated on creativity (Guilford, 1950). This situation changed at the 1950 convention of the American Psychological Association. In his presidential address, Guilford made a call to psychology to focus more on creativity, arguing that creativity was an important topic and was not being studied or researched at the level it warranted. Indeed, Guilford is credited with persuading psychologists of the need and possibility for scientific studies of creativity (Runco, 2004).

Since that time, creativity has grown to be a key topic of research studied by numerous scholars, representing varied disciplines (e.g., psychology, sociology, philosophy, the arts, and education) throughout the world. One way of conceptualizing how creativity is researched across the world is to focus on *whose* creativity is being studied. By way of example, the focus of study in creativity depends on whether one is studying internationally famous movie director Steven Spielberg, his plumber (who may creatively fix troublesome leaks), his computer-scientist father and musician mother (both accomplished in their own right), his daughter Mikaela, or her fifth-grade teacher. Thus, the best way to measure creativity may shift according to the person of interest.

Big-C, Little-c, and mini-c

Big-C Approaches

Most investigations of creativity tend to take one of two directions. The first direction is a focus on works from eminent individuals—particularly those that are time honored. These types of studies and theories are typically referred to as studying “Big-C” creativity. Simonton’s (1994, 1999) works on greatness is an example of studying Big-C creativity; typical creators who might be studied are eminent classical and opera composers whose works have lasted centuries (e.g., Simonton, 1977, 1997) or great scientists (Simonton, 2004). Much of the Big-C research conducted by Simonton and others uses the historiometric method, which analyzes data taken from biographies or reference sources. Such a method allows the study of many different eminent people in a way that would be impossible to do by interviewing so many eminent people personally. An example of Big-C research is the study of creativity and mental illness and nearly all such investigations (e.g., Jamison, 1993; Kaufman, 2001b; Post, 1994) have used this method to study the highly eminent.

Many theories have focused on the concepts of Big-C. One such example is the Propulsion Theory of Creative Contributions (Sternberg, Kaufman, & Pretz, 2002), which focuses on how an individual’s creative act has the possibility to change an entire field. There are eight ways in which the act achieves this possibility. The first four types of contributions all stay within the framework of an existing paradigm. Perhaps the most basic type of contribution that someone can make is *replication*. Replication tries to keep things status quo—to reproduce past work (think of a genre novelist). The second type of contribution, *redefinition*, takes a new look at the domain. A redefinitive contribution doesn’t necessarily try to push forward, but rather tries to present a different perspective. A third contribution, and perhaps the type of contribution that achieves the most immediate success, is called *forward incrementation*. This type of contribution pushes forward the domain just a little. Maybe the creator makes a slight change in what already exists. These additions usually are not groundbreaking—it takes the domain in the same direction it was heading. The final contribution that stays within the existing definitions of a domain is the *advance forward incrementation*. This contribution pushes the domain ahead two steps instead of one—and the creator often suffers

for it. This type of creative product includes people who were a little before their time (consider, for example, famed comedian Andy Kaufman, who is often credited as a key influence by top comedians yet never saw complete public acceptance and appreciation in his lifetime).

The final four types of creative contributions discussed in Propulsion Theory of Creative Contributions represent attempts to reject and replace the current paradigm. *Redirection* represents an attempt to have the domain head in a new direction. If redirection represents forward thinking, *Reconstruction/Redirection* looks backwards. This contribution is an attempt to move the field back to where it once was (a reconstruction of the past) so that it may again move forward from this point—but in a different direction. Perhaps the most radical of all of the creative contributions is *reinitiation*. In this contribution, the creator tries to move the field to a new (as-yet-unreached) starting point, and then progress from there (consider Andy Warhol's rendering of everyday objects as art, most famously his repeating images of *Campbell's Soup Cans*). Finally, the last contribution is *integration*, in which two diverse domains are merged to create a new idea.

Little-c Approaches

The other predominant approach to creativity is more focused on creative activities conducted everyday by laypersons or individuals who would not necessarily be considered as experts or luminaries (e.g., Richards, 2007; Richards, Kinney, Benet, & Merzel, 1988). The theories and studies along this line of thinking are usually said to focus on little-c. Areas of research that focus on little-c creativity may be aimed at developing and warranting the assertion that creative potential is widely distributed (see Kaufman & Baer, 2006; Plucker, Beghetto, & Dow, 2004; Runco & Richards, 1998, for reviews). Some examples of this type of research include investigations of layperson perceptions of creativity (and, specifically, how a layperson's concept of creativity may differ from how a researcher might define the construct). Layperson theories of creativity tend to de-emphasize analytical abilities, which are usually associated more with IQ tests, and emphasize such characteristics as unconventionality, inquisitiveness, imagination, and freedom (Sternberg, 1985).

There are several creativity theories that seem grounded in little-c, such as the Investment Theory of Creativity (Sternberg & Lubart, 1995), based on the market cliché of “buying low and selling high.” This theory contends that the key to being creative is to find ideas or areas of research that are not over-studied, research these ideas and convince others of how important they might be, and then, when other people have begun to study this topic, moving on to another “unpopular” area of research. Sternberg and Lubart list six variables as being essential to creativity: intelligence, knowledge, personality, environment, motivation, and thinking styles. There are, indeed, patterns in these six variables that would describe a creative person. For example, people who are born into environments that value and nurture creativity tend to grow up to be more creative than people who grow up in environments that do not value (and may even punish) creativity.

Another theory is Amabile's (1996) Componential Model of Creativity, in which she argued that three variables were needed for creativity to occur: domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant skills, and task motivation. Domain-relevant skills include knowledge, technical skills, and specialized talent. Creativity-relevant skills are personal factors that are associated with creativity. One example is tolerance for ambiguity—how does a person handle not knowing how a project might turn out, or not knowing what their plans are for the coming weekend? Other creativity-relevant skills include self-discipline and being willing to take risks. Finally, Amabile singles out an individual's motivation toward the task at hand. She argues (and has empirically demonstrated; see Amabile, 1996, for an overview) that those who are driven more by enjoyment and passion tend to be more creative than those motivated by money, praise, or and other external motivators.

Beyond Big and little

Although the distinction between Big C and little-c creativity has been useful for helping to clarify different levels of creative magnitude, important ambiguities remain. For instance, people who are very creative but not at the Big-C level are automatically considered to be at the little-c level. Yet, where does that leave the individual creative insights and interpretations in K-12 and college-level learning? Consider, for example, the standard definitions of creativity, which emphasize the combination of novelty and usefulness as defined within a particular socio-cultural context (e.g., Plucker et al., 2004). Such definitions highlight the important role that the socio-cultural context (e.g., eighth-grade poetry club vs. the *Norton Anthology of Poetry*) plays in determining what will be considered novel and useful. The core components of such definitions (e.g., novelty, usefulness, social-context) seem most appropriate for identifying little-c creativity. For instance, if an amateur poet shared some poems with a friend, he or she would not expect that friend to begin a critique by comparing the poems to Robert Frost or T. S. Eliot. Indeed, to reach the level of publishable work usually takes approximately 10 years (Hayes, 1989) and even longer to reach peak levels of performance (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2007). The friend would likely evaluate the poems by determining whether there was something new and original about them, and to make sure that the poems followed some basic conventions of poetry. At the Big-C level, on the other hand, the twin components of novel and useful are automatically assumed present. An analysis of creativity on poetry of Emily Dickenson or W. B. Yeats does not need to begin by asserting that their work was new or useful. Rather, the larger question rests on how these creators have impacted the field of poetry and influenced generations of young poets.

Where does this leave the creative insights held by students who are still learning how to write poetry? A student's initial efforts at poetry will not likely be judged novel or useful. As such, standard (little-c) definitions of creativity are not applicable (because the standard definition relies on external judgments of novelty and usefulness). Importantly, however, the student's early poems can still represent personally novel and meaningful work (such as demonstrating the insight of using the imagery of the flash of gunpowder to metaphorically describe the passing of youth). Even though the poem likely will not represent anything new to the field, the very process of learning a field (like writing poetry) presents many opportunities for students to experience creative personal insights and interpretation.

Given that Big-C and little-c conceptions of creativity fail to include the creative insights and interpretations inherent in the learning process, Beghetto and Kaufman (2007) proposed a third category, called mini-c, which is defined as the *novel and personally meaningful interpretation of experiences, actions, and events* (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007). The concept was taken, in part, from Runco's (2004) conception of "personal creativity"; it is also similar to Niu and Sternberg's (2006) notion of "individual creativity," as well as recent developmental conceptions of creativity (Cohen, 1989; Sawyer et al., 2003). Central to the definition of mini-c creativity is the dynamic, interpretive process of constructing new, personally meaningful insights and understandings.

Not only does mini-c creativity broaden traditional conceptions of creativity to include creative insights and interpretations (like the poetry student's novel and personally meaningful use of metaphor), occasionally, such insights and interpretations may develop into little-c (or perhaps even Big-C) contributions (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007). In this way, mini-c creativity can also serve as the genesis for more mature and potentially vibrant forms of creativity (little-c and Big C). For example, the invention of Velcro (Big C creativity) started with George de Mestral's mini-c insight he had after examining the burs that latched onto his clothing while hiking in the Swiss Alps. He had a new and personally meaningful insight that he might be able to manufacture a fastening system that simulated the burs latched to his clothing. Of course, the ability to move from such a mini-c insight into the manufacturing of a Big C product (like Velcro) requires expert knowledge,

persistence, resources, and some degree of luck (see Simonton, 1994, for an overview of conditions necessary for Big-C levels of productivity). Still, it is important that the unambiguous creative end-product (in this case, Velcro) overshadow the recognition the process that started with a mini-c (intrapersonal) insight. Although not everyone's insights will lead to innovative and impact products, the genesis of mini-c insights occur nearly everyday and are available to most anyone (be they world renowned inventors or grade school children).

The Promise of mini-c Creativity for Schools and Classrooms

We see the concept of mini-c creativity as holding great promise for helping educators make room for creativity in schools and classrooms. Traditional conceptions of creativity, which focus on eminent levels of creative breakthrough and high levels of productivity, make it difficult for educators to justify spending time on something with such a low probability of manifesting in their students (i.e., revolutionary breakthroughs and high levels of productivity in some domain). It is, therefore, not surprising that while teachers generally value creativity, they fail to see its relevance or importance in their own classroom (Beghetto, 2007b; Beghetto & Plucker, 2006).

The marginalization of creativity in schools and classrooms is also underwritten by a host of negative stereotypes and perceptions about creative students. These negative beliefs and perceptions are found across cultures and have long histories. For example, some teachers in Western cultures seem to value creative students less than they value bright students, in part, because they associate creativity with nonconformity, impulsivity, and disruptive behavior (e.g., Dawson, 1997; Scott, 1999). Other studies show teachers feel favorably about creative students (e.g., Runco, Johnson, & Bear, 1993). However, subsequent studies have indicated that teachers who view creative children favorably are not fully clear on what creativity means. For example, in one study, teachers reported liking creative students, but then defined creativity with adjectives such as "well-behaved" or "conforming." These perceptions changed for the negative when the same teachers were given adjectives that were more typically used to describe creative people, (Westby & Dawson, 1995; see also Aljughaiman & Mowrer-Reynolds, 2005). In another study, teachers and parents in America and India reported favorable views of creativity, but linked several words associated with mental illness (emotional, impulsive) with creativity (Runco & Johnson, 2002). Such findings are also found in Eastern cultures. Recently, Tan (2003) reported that student teachers in Singapore favored students who had pleasant dispositions (e.g., kind, friendly) over students who were more creative and risk-taking. Chan and Chan (1999) found that Chinese teachers associated socially undesirable traits with student creativity and they argue that in Chinese culture, nonconforming or expressive behavior can be interpreted as arrogant or rebellious. Similar findings have been found in Turkish teachers (Güncer & Oral, 1993). Thus, these negative perceptions can transcend cultures.

Mini-c creativity offers teachers another way of thinking about student creativity. Indeed, mini-c creativity highlights the creative process inherent in the development of learning and, in turn, helps teachers recognize that the nature of creativity that likely will manifest in their classroom will be of a different caliber and require more nurturance than traditional conceptions of creativity would allow. Importantly, mini-c creativity reframes creativity in a more positive light for teachers. Rather than viewing creativity as something extraordinary (and therefore extracurricular), mini-c stresses that creative insights and interpretations are present in students' everyday learning of core curricular topics. When teachers recognize this, they will be in a better position to provide supportive feedback to students aimed at helping students develop their creative potential.

Supportive teacher feedback is an important issue when it comes to students' creativity development. For instance, Beghetto (2006) found that middle and secondary students' reports of teachers

providing positive feedback on their creativity was the strongest unique predictor of students' beliefs in their own creativity. As such, teachers have good reason to actively seek out (and develop) strategies for providing supportive feedback that helps students develop their confidence in their own creativity and moves from mini-c interpretations to real world innovations.

How might this feedback look in the classroom? An example can be found in Beghetto's (2007b) discussion of how teachers might support students in moving between their creative interpretations (mini-c) and interpersonally (little-c) vetted expressions of their ideas. Teachers encourage movement from mini-c interpretations to little-c expressions by: (a) taking the time to hear and attempt to understand how students are interpreting what they are learning; (b) helping students recognize when their contributions are not making sense given the domain constraints, conventions, and standards of a particular activity or task, and (c) providing multiple opportunities for students to practice developing the skills of a particular domain or task. These suggestions, like other practical recommendations for supporting creativity (e.g., Beghetto, 2005), highlight the importance of teachers recognizing the value of mini-c creativity while introducing students to the socially negotiated conventions and standards of a particular academic activity (e.g., the criteria for writing and distinguishing between sonnet-form poetry versus free-form poetry).

Creativity Measurement

Another issue central to whether and how creativity will be nurtured in schools and classrooms is how it is measured. There are many ways to assess creativity, although there is no single measurement that is commonly used. One obvious way is to ask students to estimate their own creativity (e.g., Furnham, 1999). Such self-assessments are feasible for mini-c or some little-c investigations of creativity, although they would be less valid for high stakes situations (such as admission to college). The advantage to such an assessment method is that it is quick and free. The disadvantages, however, are that some people may perceive themselves as being less or more creative than they really are (Kaufman 2006; see also discussion in Kaufman, Plucker, & Baer, 2008).

Another popular assessment method is the Consensual Assessment Technique (CAT; Amabile, 1996). In this method, qualified experts assign ratings to creative products (such as a poem or a collage). This technique has been widely used by creativity researchers, but it is not readily amenable for use in most educational contexts because it provides only comparative measurements within the group of products evaluated by a specific group of experts (Kaufman et al., 2008). Nevertheless, Baer, Kaufman, and Gentile (2004) have recently shown how the technique can be applied to creative products produced under both diverse and ecologically valid (as opposed to experimentally controlled) conditions. In a related study, Kaufman, Gentile, and Baer (2005) found evidence that gifted novices can produce comparably reliable ratings to experts. However, whereas gifted novices may be comparable, non-gifted novices do not show the same levels of agreement to expert opinion (Kaufman, Baer, Cole, & Sexton, 2008).

The popular Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT; Torrance, 1974, 1998) measures creativity conceptualized as divergent production (e.g., Guilford, 1950). The TTCT items typically involve responses to questions with no single, specific correct answer. Verbal-oriented questions might ask for different uses one could make of an egg carton, or what might happen if all people were born with three arms. Figural-oriented questions might ask someone to modify a circle into an illustration or to finish an incomplete drawing. A person's responses would then be scored for *fluency* (how many different responses were produced), *flexibility* (how many categories of responses were produced), *originality* (how novel and unique the responses were), and *elaboration* (how much detail and development is present).

The TTCT assumes a creativity-general perspective; by measuring creativity on problem-solving

items, it makes assumptions about someone's overall creativity. An alternate perspective is that creativity is domain-specific (e.g., Kaufman & Baer, 2005), which means that creativity in one area, such as problem-solving, does not necessarily translate to creativity in another area, such as math or music (see studies in Baer [1993], for empirical studies of this question). At the mini-c level, creativity may be general enough that the TTCT's focus may not matter. At the little-c level and higher, such a focus is, we believe, problematic. Whereas the Consensual Assessment Technique allows evaluation in a specific domain that one may wish to examine (such as poetry), the TTCT does not. Indeed, one analogy that may be used is that divergent thinking tests are to creativity as vocabulary tests are to intelligence—certainly related to the concept, but a poor substitute for a comprehensive battery of tests (Kaufman, Lee, Baer, & Lee, 2007). Such a battery of tests for creativity has not been developed.

Environments Supportive of Creative Expression

Broader conceptions of creativity will go a long way towards helping educators recognize and support creativity in schools and classrooms. However, this is only a first step. In order for student creativity to thrive, educators must ensure that they establish an educational and motivational environment that supports the development and expression of student creativity.

The policies, practices, and procedures of schools and classrooms are laden with goal-related messages that influence the motivational beliefs and subsequent achievement behavior of students (Pintrich & Schunk 2002). Everything from grading practices to honor rolls to displaying student work in hallways and classrooms communicates what is valued in the school and classroom and provides an underlying rationale for engaging in (or avoiding) achievement directed-behaviors. For instance, if displays of student writing in classrooms emphasize social comparison by only displaying finalized products (as opposed to drafts leading to finalized products), then the importance of outperforming others or avoiding the appearance of incompetence may be (unintentionally) stressed as rationale for engaging in (or avoiding) writing activities instead of self-improvement.

Motivational researchers have categorized the messages emphasized by learning environments into two major types: *mastery goal structures* and *performance goal structures* (see Anderman & Anderman, chapter 13, this volume). A mastery goal structure is represented by goal-related messages that focus on self-improvement. The type of feedback provided to students in a mastery goal environment is aimed at helping students recognize how they are progressing relative to their own prior achievement. Mastery goal structures have been linked to: (a) the adoption of intrinsic motivational beliefs and achievement behaviors, including enhanced interest in learning; (b) more positive attitudes toward learning; (c) attribution of failure to lack of effort (rather than to lack of ability); (d) high levels of academic engagement; (e) perseverance in the face of challenges; (f) more risk-taking; and (g) asking for assistance when needed.

These outcomes parallel a long history of research on intrinsic motivation and creativity (Amabile, 1996; Amabile, Hennessey, & Grossman, 1986; Amabile, Hill, Hennessey, & Tighe, 1994). Studies typically report that creativity is associated with high levels of interest, enjoyment, and curiosity, and that creative individuals commit themselves to the task, take risks, and engage in challenging tasks—behaviors that parallel the messages stressed in classrooms with mastery goal structures. A performance goal structure, on the other hand, is represented by extrinsic motivational messages that stress the importance of avoiding mistakes, outperforming others, getting the highest grades, and demonstrating one's ability in relation to others. Feedback provided to students in schools and classrooms with a performance goal structure place a greater emphasis on social comparison (as opposed to self-improvement). Although it is important to note that some students can thrive in environments with a performance goal structure (Harackiewicz, Barron, Pintrich, Elliot, & Thrash,

2002), they also seem to have a greater chance of adopting maladaptive motivational beliefs and engaging in performance-avoidant behaviors. For instance, viewing mistakes as an indication of a lack of ability, experience greater levels of anxiety, increased novelty and challenge avoidance and, in some cases, engage in self-sabotaging behaviors, such as cheating or not seeking help when needed (see Kumar, Gheen, & Kaplan 2002; Urdan, Ryan, Anderman, & Gheen, 2002). Such beliefs and behaviors, if they manifest in performance-avoidance goals, would not seem to be conducive to the development and expression of student creativity.

There is limited empirical work that has directly examined the influence of classroom goal structures on student creativity. This is clearly an important and fertile ground for future research as the links between creativity, classroom goal structures, and students' motivational beliefs likely are more complex and nuanced than simple, straightforward assertions (such as, mastery goals are good and performance goals are bad). For example, Beghetto (2006) found a positive relationship between middle and secondary students' creative self-efficacy beliefs (i.e., self-assessments of creativity) and mastery goal orientations (i.e., focus on improvement). Interestingly, a positive link was also found between students' creativity self-efficacy beliefs and their performance approach beliefs (i.e., focus on outperforming others). This finding suggests that there may be an optimal "additive pattern" (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001) of mastery and performance approach beliefs and creative self-efficacy beliefs. In other words, it may be the case that the combination of mastery (focusing on improvement) and performance goals (focusing on outperforming others) actually bolsters and protects creativity self-beliefs from otherwise detrimental effects of competition and external rewards. At this point, such assertions require further study and, importantly, should not underplay the potentially negative impact that external rewards may have on creativity, particularly in the absence of mastery goals that may counterbalance their negative effects.

Indeed, the very presence of rewards for creative work can impact creativity and the desire to be creative in multiple ways. In one study, even with tasks presented in a context that emphasized intrinsic motivation, rewards had a negative impact on performance (Cooper, Clasen, Silva-Jalonen, & Butler, 1999). Others argue that rewards can be beneficial if given wisely. For example, neither an individual's intrinsic motivation nor creativity were negatively affected by a reward (particularly a verbal reward), and could actually be improved, if the reward was not visible during the creative activity (Eisenberger & Selbst, 1994). Eisenberger and Shanock (2003), in reviewing the many studies on the harm or benefits of reward, conclude that much of the debate involves methodological issues. Rewarding creative performance, they argue, increases both intrinsic motivation and creativity; rewarding conventional performance decreases both intrinsic motivation and creativity.

Given the strong connection between the school environment, motivation, and creativity, educators have a responsibility to actively consider how the motivational messages sent by school and classroom policies, practices, and procedures may be influencing students' willingness to develop and express their creativity. Beghetto (2005) provides several general recommendations for supporting student creativity in educational settings. Those recommendations include the following: (a) setting challenging but realistic goals for students and focusing on the features of a task that are interesting and personally meaningful (rather than attempting to motivate students to complete tasks simply because they are assigned and will be graded); (b) supporting creative expression by encouraging the generation of novel ideas and helping students then select the most promising and appropriate ideas for a given task; (c) minimizing the pressures of assessment; (d) helping students recognize that the primary reason for engaging in a task is self-improvement rather than just showing others that they can successfully complete a task, (e) helping students learn from mistakes and recognize that making mistakes is a natural part of learning; and (f) helping students consider what those grades mean rather than focusing solely on letter grades and test scores (i.e., what they did well and how they might improve in the future).

Considerations for Future Research

There are many interesting avenues for future research with respect to creativity and positive psychology in schools. We discuss two of these in some detail—creativity and mental health outcomes and the fair and equitable assessment of students' creative talent.

Promoting the health and psychological well-being of students in school (and beyond) is a key goal in the United States and abroad (e.g., Konu & Rimpelä, 2002; Samdal, Nutbeam, Wold, & Kannas, 1998). Not surprisingly, research focused on examining whether and how creativity is linked with health and well-being is a topic that has generated much interest and debate amongst creativity scholars. The actual connection between creativity and mental health is a multi-faceted, complex issue. There is much debate on whether creative geniuses are more likely to be mentally ill, with impassioned arguments weighing in for “yes” (Andreasen, 1987) and “no” (Rothenberg, 1995; Schlesinger, 2003). Regardless of whether there is a link between creative genius and mental illness (and the literature is quite conflicted; see Lauronen et al., 2004), there is little to no evidence that people who are creative at the little-c or mini-c are more likely to have a clinical mental illness. The question of whether people who are moderately anxious or depressed will be more creative has not been adequately addressed in the empirical research, in our opinion. Some research suggests there may be differences by domain (e.g., Kaufman, 2001b), but these findings tend to be more focused on those who are accomplished. Indeed, studies of Big-C creators show that the very-eminant are more likely to have a mental illness than the merely somewhat-eminant (Kaufman, 2001a; Ludwig, 1995).

Most of the research on the little-c population has focused on mood. Some studies have found results supporting a negative affect–higher creativity connection. A few studies have found that positive mood inhibited creative performance (e.g., Kaufmann & Vosburg, 1997; see Kaufmann, 2003, for a review), whereas other studies have found that negative mood either has no effect on creativity (e.g., Grawitch, Munz, & Kramer, 2003) or it can enhance creative performance. Kaufmann and Vosburg (2002) examined the influence of positive and negative mood in creative problem solving. Interesting, they found that *positive mood* led to better scores in early-idea production (similar to past findings, most recently Gasper, 2004), while *negative mood* led to better scores in later-idea production. One possible reason for this finding might be that being in a bad mood may be related to rumination (e.g., Sethi & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1997), leading someone to keep thinking of possible responses and answers. George and Zhou (2002) found that negative moods were related to higher levels of creativity (as measured by supervisor ratings) when rewards and recognition for creative work were salient.

A larger body of research, however, has found that positive affect can have beneficial influences on creative performance. Isen and her colleagues (Isen, Daubman, & Nowicki, 1987; Isen, Johnson, Mertz, & Robinson, 1985) conducted a series of studies in which they induced students and/or volunteers into a good mood (typically through watching a comedic movie or receiving a small gift of candy) and then measured innovation/creativity (typically through problem-solving tasks or verbal creativity measures). People in good moods tend to show higher creativity than those in neutral or negative moods.

One criticism of this research could be that in nearly all studies mood was induced; typically, people experience moods based on their own thoughts, emotions, or spontaneously-occurring life events. Amabile, Barsade, Mueller, and Staw (2005) studied the relationship of creativity and mood in organizational employees working on potentially creative products. They used the Electronic Event Sampling Methodology based on earlier work by Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (1987), in which participants were e-mailed daily questionnaires about the day's events. These narratives were then coded for both affective and creative thought. In addition, the creative performances of these employees were rated by their peers on a monthly basis. Amabile et al. (2005) found significant

results across their multiple measures—creative performance (self and peer evaluated) was positively related to being in a good mood. There was no relationship between creative performance and being in a bad mood.

Given these often equivocal findings, more research investigating the relationship between creativity, mental health, and mood is clearly needed at the little-c and mini-c level. It is nearly impossible to fully resolve the “mad genius” concept—and people will continue to believe this stereotype regardless of its truth (e.g., Kaufman, Bromley, & Cole, 2006). Such a conundrum should not hang over the heads of creative students, however. A solid body of research investigating these questions at little-c and mini-c level could, we believe, resolve these debates.

The second area of research to be investigated more thoroughly is the question of creativity and fairness/equity. Indeed, a persistent and troubling issue in schools is the under-representation of culturally and racially diverse students in gifted education programs (Baldwin, 2005; Naglieri & Ford, 2003). As such, culturally-diverse students who are also creatively gifted may be precluded from experiencing the support and nurturance necessary for developing their creative potential. Although there likely are several factors at play that have resulted in this under representation (e.g., educators holding deficit views of cultural difference), a key factor pertains to the measurement tools and techniques used to select and place students in gifted programs (Frasier, Garcia, & Passow, 1995). For instance, scholars have noted that traditional ability measures are too narrowly focused, and therefore are not effective or fair assessments of the abilities of culturally and racially diverse students (Naglieri & Ford, 2003).

Interestingly, unlike traditional measures of achievement and ability (e.g., standardized achievement tests, IQ tests), creativity scores tend to not show bias by gender (see Baer & Kaufman, 2008) or by ethnicity. Studies of creativity in Hispanic Americans and European Americans tend to find different results depending on whether the creativity measure is verbal or nonverbal. For example, Argulewicz and Kush (1984) found that European Americans scored higher than Hispanic Americans on three of four TTCT Verbal forms, but found no significant differences on the Figural forms. Studies using only non-verbal assessments have typically found no differences (e.g., Argulewicz, Elliott, & Hall, 1982) or show a slight advantage for bilingual Hispanic Americans (Kessler & Quinn, 1987).

Studies of the TTCT often show Western cultures outperforming Eastern cultures. Jellen and Urban (1989) administered a measure of creative thinking and drawing to children from several different countries, and found that, in general, Western countries (such as Germany, England, and the United States) scored higher than Eastern countries (such as China and India). Self-report and self-assessments tend to show fewer differences (see, e.g., Plucker, Runco, & Lim, 2006; Lim & Plucker, 2001). Creativity researchers have found few differences between African Americans and European Americans. These findings have been fairly consistent regardless of the type of measurement (e.g., Kaufman, 2006; Kaufman, Baer, & Gentile, 2004; Torrance, 1971, 1973).

Despite these many studies, however, there is nowhere near the level of research conducted on creativity across gender, cultures, and ethnicity as exists on IQ and intelligence research. There has been extensive work on the personality factor openness to experience, which has been strongly linked to biographical data on creative accomplishments (King, McKee-Walker, & Broyles, 1996), creativity ratings on stories (Wolfradt & Pretz, 2001), and psychometric creativity tests (Furnham, 1999; McCrae, 1987).

Openness to experience generally shows no difference by gender (Goldberg, Sweeney, Merenda, & Hughes, 1998), similar to the gender and creativity findings. However, the research on openness to experience and culture seems to contradict the research on creativity and culture/ethnicity. There generally tend to be no differences on any personality factors across cultures (e.g., Goldberg et al., 1998; Kyllonen, Walters, & Kaufman, 2005). However, Allik and McCrae (2004) found that people

from European and European American cultures tended to be more open to experience than people from Asian and African cultures. Schmitt, Allik, McCrae, and Benet-Martínez (2007), in a massive study of 17,837 people from 56 nations, found that people from South American and European countries were the most open to experience, with people from South Asian countries generally being less open to experience. African countries were in the middle. In addition, it is worth pointing out that Saucier and Goldberg (2001) studied personality labels in 13 languages (including English) and found that openness to experience was the only one of the Big Five personality factors to *not* be found in all languages. Openness to experience, therefore, can be considered specific to Anglo cultures (Benet-Martínez & Oishi, 2008).

In sum, the use of a wider range of measurement tools is needed to help address the long-standing inequities in the identification and placement of students in programs aimed at nurturing creative talents. At this point, much additional work is needed to addressing such inequities. However, educators, working alongside researchers, can make much greater strides in addressing such inequities by broadening conceptions and measurements of creative ability and thereby ensuring that all students have the opportunity to have their talents identified and nurtured in classrooms and schools.

Conclusion

Creativity is a key component of positive psychology, particularly in the schools. Although there is much to still be learned and determined, we see the next decade ahead as bearing exciting research and practice. Sternberg (2007), for example, has been implementing a new admissions system at Tufts University that includes (in addition to traditional measures) assessments of wisdom, practical intelligence, and creativity; in the first year, ethnic diversity *and* average SAT scores are up. With new advances in creativity measurement and theories, we believe that creativity will continue to be an essential building block of the field of positive psychology.

In K-12 settings, the nurturance of creativity represents a key opportunity to help ensure that students experience the positive psychological benefits of developing and expressing their curiosity, imagination, and unique talents. Of course, such opportunities come with a host of challenges (e.g., finding ways to nurture creativity given the ever increasing external curricular demands placed on educators). As such, creativity researchers have a responsibility to support educators in finding ways to address these challenges. Recent advances in conceptions and measures of creativity have resulted in many promising new directions regarding the nature of creativity and its relevance for school and classroom settings. We are hopeful that such efforts place educators in a better position to ensure that they and their students experience the full range of benefits associated with living the creative life.

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15

School Satisfaction and Children's Positive School Adjustment

JEAN A. BAKER AND ANGELA N. MAUPIN

Children's positive adjustment depends in part on the degree to which their key socializing contexts, such as schools, are organized so that optimum development is fostered. Schools can be designed to promote children's mental health and well-being, and we can expand our notions of well-being to include positive markers of school adaptation. This chapter will review aspects of school environments that promote school satisfaction, and suggest needed future research and educational applications in this area.

Children's school satisfaction is the subjective, cognitive appraisal of the quality of school life. It derives from a substantive line of research within personality and social psychology, and sociology related to subjective well-being (SWB; Diener, 1984). SWB is an individual's perceived experience of the positive aspects of her or his life. It is phenomenal in nature and is dependent on individuals' constructed view of their quality of life. SWB is conceptualized as tripartite consisting of positive affect (including positive emotions such as joy), negative affect (negative emotions such as sadness), and a cognitive component (life satisfaction). Life satisfaction has been studied extensively in adults and is considered multi-componential. For example, subjective appraisals can be made of the quality of life related to work, spousal relationships, or friendships. These judgments can be somewhat independent; correlations among these facets of satisfaction are typically moderate. Life satisfaction is of import because it predicts a number of positive mental health and lifestyle outcomes (Argyle, 2001).

Life satisfaction in children is conceptually similar to that of adults. Attributable primarily to the work of Huebner and colleagues (e.g., Huebner, 1994), studies with children and adolescents have demonstrated a similar componential structure and generally similar correlates and sequelae (see chapter 3, this volume, by Sulso, Hueber, Shaffer, & Gilman). Because of its roots in personality psychology, much of the literature has focused on individual difference factors associated with school satisfaction. We will first review this literature. However, we are also increasingly aware of contextual factors, such as the ecological or cultural milieu, that influence well-being. We will also review this literature, with a special emphasis on schools and schooling contexts.

Personal Factors Associated with School Satisfaction

Because its roots are within personality psychology, the SWB literature has included a focus on individual differences and personality—such as variables associated with life satisfaction. In this section, we will review individual variables associated with school satisfaction.

Student Demographic Variables

Several studies have examined the relationship between student demographic variables, including gender, race and socioeconomic status, and school satisfaction. The literature reports equivocal findings, but overall the effect of demographic variables on student school satisfaction is small.

Huebner, Drane, and Valois (2000) examined demographic correlates of adolescents' perceived overall life satisfaction and satisfaction within five specific domains, including school satisfaction. They utilized a large sample size of over 5,500 high school students. Global life satisfaction was not influenced by demographic variables including adolescents' gender, race, or grade in school. Further, a notable number of adolescents (23%) reported negative levels (i.e., significantly below the mean distribution) of satisfaction with their school experiences. There was a slight gender difference reported in satisfaction in school, with female adolescents reporting greater satisfaction in school than male adolescents. In a related study, Okun, Braver, and Weir (1990) also found a significant, but small gender difference suggesting that girls report higher school satisfaction than boys. These differences were modest and no other demographic differences were found in perceived school satisfaction.

An examination of race differences in school satisfaction by Huebner, Drane, and Valois (2000) reported negligible effect sizes, although it should be noted that this study was limited to only African American and Caucasian students and no data were collected on socioeconomic status (SES). Further studies should explore the relationship between student race and SES to more fully understand any demographic influences on school satisfaction (Huebner et al., 2000).

These conflicting results reflect the difficulty of using demographic variables, such as race or gender, to predict subjective experiences. From a developmental-ecological perspective on positive school adjustment, it may be more beneficial to examine the interaction of race or gender with specific school practices to influence developmental outcomes. For example, studying the interaction between race and culturally responsive teaching practices and school satisfaction may afford a more sensitive assessment than that between race and school satisfaction alone.

Student Academic Ability

To date, there have been few studies examining the relationship between children's academic abilities and their relationship with school satisfaction (Suldo, Riley, & Shaffer, 2006). Currently, schools utilize objective measures to determine student success, with less emphasis on subjective indicators such as school satisfaction. Similar to issues with demographic variables, it has been shown that objective indicators (e.g., grades, test scores) may not accurately reflect the degree to which students feel satisfied with their school experiences. As Epstein and McPartland (1976) reported, "high grades alone are not enough to make school experiences satisfying" (p. 20). In general, students' subjective appraisals of their own lives are not related strongly to their intellectual and academic abilities. For example, Huebner (1991) found that students' life satisfaction was not related to recent grades in school ($r = .12, p = .14$).

Recent research examined life satisfaction in high school students with mild mental disabilities (MMD) and those without MMD. These studies found that students with MMD reported higher

levels of school satisfaction but lower levels of friendship satisfaction, in comparison to peers in general education classrooms (Brantley, Huebner, & Nagle, 2002). Gifted and nongifted students do not appear to differ in their levels of school satisfaction, however, gifted students did attribute a greater portion of their overall life satisfaction to school satisfaction when compared to nongifted students (Ash & Huebner, 1998).

Although there has been minimal research suggesting a link between life satisfaction and academic achievement in American students, this relationship may vary based on cultural values. Suldo and colleagues (2006) suggest that school satisfaction may be more affected by school success in cultures that place a strong emphasis on academic achievement. For example, school satisfaction contributes more to life satisfaction for Korean students, who traditionally place a higher value on achievement, than for American adolescents (Park & Huebner, 2005). Given the few studies that have investigated the relationship between school satisfaction and cultural values that may place a different emphasis on school success, additional research is clearly needed.

Student Mental Health

Student mental health variables, including self-esteem, depression, and stress, have been explored as possible antecedents and determinants of school satisfaction. Previous studies have found an association between life satisfaction and self-esteem (Huebner & Alderman, 1993), locus of control (Huebner et al., 2001), extraversion vs. neuroticism (Huebner et al., 2001), depression and loneliness, externalizing and internalizing behavior problems (Huebner & Alderman, 1993). The relationship between self-esteem and school satisfaction has been equivocal. Early school satisfaction literature reported a small but statistically significant relationship between student self-esteem and school satisfaction (Epstein & McPartland, 1976). In this same study, those students that reported more anxiety towards school also reported less school satisfaction. Huebner and McCullough (2000) also found that higher academic self-efficacy indicated higher levels of school satisfaction ($r = .28$, $p < .01$). However, Baker (1998) found a negative relationship ($r = -0.17$, $p < .05$) between academic self-concept and school satisfaction among urban, low-income, African American students. Evidence suggests that the relationship between self-esteem and school satisfaction might vary for different groups of students (Huebner et al., 2001).

Suldo and Huebner (2006) examined specific characteristics among a large sample of adolescents to determine if there were consistent predictors of optimal well-being. Student's life satisfaction, behavior reports, self-efficacy, and social support were measured. Students with extremely high life satisfaction (i.e., those scoring in the top 10% of the school satisfaction distribution), reported the fewest number of symptoms for internalizing and externalizing behavior difficulties, in comparison to students reporting "average" and "low" levels of life satisfaction. Further, students in the highest life satisfaction group reported no scores that placed them in the clinical range for anxiety/depression, while 22.9% of the students in the low life satisfaction group reported scores that fell in the clinical range for anxiety/depression.

Personality variables and satisfaction appear to correlate at a low to moderate level. McKnight, Huebner, and Suldo (2002) found that 16% of the variance in life satisfaction was accounted for by personality variables. Adolescents who rated themselves as extraverts also reported higher levels of life satisfaction, whereas neuroticism was related to lower levels of life satisfaction. Students that reported greater daily stressors were more likely to report lower life satisfaction. In addition, increased levels of stressful events related to higher levels of externalizing and internalizing behaviors (McKnight et al., 2002). Ash and Huebner (2001) found that the relationship between life satisfaction and negative life events was mediated by the individual's locus of control.

Ecological Factors Associated with School Satisfaction

Although much research has focused on the individual, it is evident that a social and cultural context influence SWB (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). Related to school satisfaction, the school climate literature first focused on the “quality of school life” as a marker of effective schools (Epstein & McPartland, 1976). Children’s subjective appraisals of satisfaction with school were measured as an outcome of schooling. This early work focused on objective indicators of school quality, such as size, leadership style, cleanliness of the buildings, and teacher-child ratios. Typically, these indicators showed little correspondence to subjective appraisals of school quality. However, the school climate and school effectiveness literatures afford an ecological perspective on social contexts that might promote school satisfaction among children.

Positive school contexts are those that promote children’s well-being and socio-cultural adaptation. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2003) defined a healthy school environment as characterized by interpersonal warmth, equity, cooperation, and open communication. Healthy school environments permit active learning and creativity among learners and are free of violence at all levels. They bridge to students’ home communities and foster democratic involvement in decision making among all stakeholders. These aspects of a school environment should be associated with more outcomes that are positive for students.

In our work on school social climate, school satisfaction is consistently associated with warm, emotionally supportive interpersonal relationships between teachers and children, attitudes of trust among class members, and the perception that help would be offered if needed for learning (Baker, Maier, Viger, & Clark, 2007; Baker, Davis, Dilly, & Lacey, 2002). Children’s perception that the classroom is a psychologically safe environment directly affects school satisfaction among urban children in low-resource schools (Baker, 1998). Emotional and practical support provided by the teacher directly affects the trajectory of school satisfaction among elementary age students. Support from teachers was moderately related to increases in school satisfaction after controlling for growth over time and student characteristics in one recent study (Baker et al., 2007). Although the effect sizes in these studies are small to moderate, they provide some support for the notion that school satisfaction is associated with aspects of healthy social climates in classrooms.

In addition to social contexts within schools, classroom motivational structures, goals, and pedagogical practices are associated with positive school attitudes (Ames, 1992; Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998; Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006). Schoolwork that provides an appropriate academic challenge and fosters a sense that students can be competent and successful is associated with increased achievement motivation in young adolescents. Similarly, teaching practices that afford choice, that are interpersonally supportive, and that afford students the opportunities to develop self-regulated learning are associated with improved school attitudes. The degree of clarity of classroom rules and predictable structure afforded by the teacher and classroom routines positively affects school satisfaction among elementary school students to a moderate degree (Baker et al., 2003). In previous work in urban schools, we’ve noted an association between disciplinary practices and school satisfaction, with students expressing poor school satisfaction receiving three times as much punishment as those rating their school satisfaction highly (Baker, 1999).

Unfortunately, very little of the educational psychology literature has used school satisfaction as an outcome variable. Interestingly, literature on job satisfaction suggests some important parallels to this school literature. Workers are most satisfied when jobs provide variety and autonomy, in which there are clearly identified goals and informational feedback, and with work that they perceive as significant (Argyle, 2001). Of course, there are important distinctions between adult and school work. However, the nature of tasks and the manner in which they are presented seem to make an important difference in the attitudinal process. Classroom practices that afford students opportunities to feel competent and to exercise developmentally appropriate autonomy should be

associated with positive appraisals of school. Although these initial studies suggest an association between classroom practices and school satisfaction, much work remains to be done in this area.

Peers

As discussed earlier, the social context of the classroom is associated with school satisfaction at the elementary level (Baker et al., 2003). Classroom environments that are perceived as friendly, supportive, community-oriented, and free of harassment are strongly associated with school satisfaction (Davis, 2007).

There is other evidence that children's friendship status is associated with their school satisfaction. Friend and school satisfaction are correlated in the low to moderate range on a multi-componential life satisfaction scale (Ash & Huebner, 2001). Children with more friends and higher quality friendships score higher on measures of life satisfaction (Huebner & Alderman, 1993), possibly because an increase in friendships provides more opportunities for social support or opportunities to engage in positive extracurricular activities (Gilman, 2001).

Students' peer groups also influence their school satisfaction. Students whose peers have positive attitudes toward school have attitudes that are more positive toward school themselves (Epstein, 1981). In addition, Ladd, Kochenderfer, and Coleman (1996) reported that students, particularly boys, who were in conflict with their peers, had lower levels of school liking. Davis (2007) documented that children who perceive their classroom peers as hostile or antagonistic report lower levels of school satisfaction. In a recent study of overall life satisfaction, Martin and Huebner (2007) found that receiving positive friendship acts was strongly predictive of satisfaction while experiencing victimization decreased school satisfaction among middle school students. As in the classroom climate area, social contexts that are characterized by positive attributes and lack negative ones are associated with increased school satisfaction. From a developmental ecological perspective, positive peer relationships provide an avenue to meet students' developmental needs for connectedness to others, thus enhancing their positive adjustment at school.

Family Contexts

Few studies have examined the relationship between family variables and school satisfaction. While families are not immediately proximal to the school setting, it is important to include family variables in relationship to student school satisfaction because of their influence on children's development. Research has found that the quality of the home environment predicts positive changes in children's overall adjustment (Dubow & Ippolito, 1994) and predicts positive expectations for children in the future (Dubow, Arnett, Smith, & Ippolito, 2001). Scott-Jones (1995) suggests that families can influence positive school attitudes through a variety of means including modeling academic behaviors (reading activities), socializing achievement, expressing educational values, and structuring the home so that school tasks can be completed and accommodated. The active home-school involvement can provide continuity across these two important developmental settings and families can extend opportunities for learning outside of school (Christenson & Godber, 2001); therefore, the family may play an active role in predicting students' school satisfaction.

Few studies have examined this relationship, however they have found that families are an important contributor to children's school satisfaction. Baker (1998) found a relationship between the quality of family life and school satisfaction, specifically that high family quality life was associated with higher school satisfaction. Quality of family life was negatively correlated with child-reported psychological distress (Baker, 1998). Other researchers have examined family and parental satisfaction in relationship to life satisfaction. They found family and parental satisfaction to be one of

the strongest predictors of global life satisfaction (Huebner, 1991; Terry & Huebner, 1995). Family interactions have been found to moderately predict school satisfaction (Huebner & McCullough, 2000). Families are an important environmental influence on children's school satisfaction and can be used as a resource to promote satisfaction in the schools.

Culture

There is growing evidence of cultural distinctiveness in the overall subjective well-being literatures (Diener et al., 2003). For example, the correlation between school and global life satisfaction differs between Korean and American adolescents (Park & Huebner, 2005), with school satisfaction contributing more to life satisfaction for Korean students. This work demonstrates that cultural milieus may moderate subjective well-being outcomes. Previous analyses of the school satisfaction literature have shown few consistent racial or ethnic patterns between samples. This may be because race or ethnicity is too gross of a measure within this domain. Children's racial identity, their degree of cultural integration, and the degree of discrimination experienced by them are likely to be more sensitive measures of cultural distinctions in this area (Sam, 1998). Future research should include assessments that are more sensitive of cultural factors.

Implications for Research and Practice

Children's school satisfaction is an important indicator of positive well-being within the school environment. Further, children's school liking affects other aspects of their overall perceived quality of life. Consequently, attention should be paid to this variable when designing school environments that will support children's positive development. Additionally, the school satisfaction of individuals or school populations should be assessed when developing interventions within a positive psychology framework in schools. However, there is relatively little research to guide practice decisions in this area; both basic and applied research is needed regarding children's school satisfaction.

Little is known about the longitudinal course and nature of school satisfaction. Older children and adolescents typically report lesser satisfaction than do younger children. It is unclear if this results from greater developmental capacity of the older students to rate their attitudes more accurately or is a result of decreased liking of school across time. Similarly, studies directed explicitly at school- or classroom-level variables affecting school satisfaction are lacking. Whereas school satisfaction has been conceptualized as an outcome of schooling, and linear relationships with other variables have been noted, contemporary research recognizes that satisfaction may play a mediating or moderating role in contributing to other adaptive behavior. Its role as part of a cognitive pathway that shapes well-being is being investigated (Suldo et al., 2006; Suldo & Huebner, 2006). This contextual approach is a welcome addition to the field yet further elaboration of the domain of school satisfaction is needed. The trajectory of this developmental course, and moderating or mediating factors contributing to it, could be modeled in future research.

A positive psychology framework within schools necessitates attention be paid to promoting children's well-being early in their schooling experiences. A primary prevention approach is consistent with the need to assess children's status early, and to develop environments that prevent mental health problems from occurring. This creates challenges because children can't always provide accurate cognitive appraisals of their own life experiences. The beliefs of young children have been reliably assessed using individual assessment methods, primarily interviews, but these have not yet been developed within the school or life satisfaction literatures. In addition, a prevention orientation builds developmental assets with respect to children's home culture. Again, a contextual approach to studying life satisfaction that appreciates cultural distinctiveness is just emerging in the adult

literature. Further work is needed regarding cultural affects on school satisfaction with children. The practice implications of considering school satisfaction are similar to those from other areas within positive psychology. The development of children's well-being should be a central focus of schooling. As such, attention should be paid to attributes of well-being at the school- and classroom-population level as well as at the individual level. Screening for positive aspects of development, such as satisfaction, optimism, or hope, may help the school develop a more positive lens through which to view student behavior. As part of an overall screening model within a primary prevention framework, inclusion of positive psychology variables provides a definitive focus for the asset-building goals of an overall school plan. For individual children, attending to the positive aspects of their development will promote their adaptation and mental health development.

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Student Engagement and Positive School Adaptation

AMY-JANE GRIFFITHS, JILL D. SHARKEY, AND MICHAEL J. FURLONG

A substantial body of literature focuses on the topic of student engagement in the fields of health, education, psychology, and sociology. Mounting evidence demonstrates that student engagement is an essential protective factor and promotes students' positive educational and social outcomes (O'Farrell & Morrison, 2003). The importance of engagement has been emphasized by research linking it to increases in positive youth development and decreases in negative emotional, social, and behavioral outcomes for adolescents (Wingspread School Connectedness Conference, 2004). However, when used as a construct of research interest, student engagement is complex, informed by multiple theories, and formed within multiple contexts. Various "engagement" terms have been treated synonymously, while at the same time they have been used to represent a myriad of related concepts (Libbey, 2004). The use of numerous terms and definitions has caused confusion; hence, in this chapter we take a broad view of student engagement beginning with theoretical explanations of student engagement and subsequently incorporating elements that have valid empirical support. This chapter provides an orientation to student engagement including definitions, theories, contextual influences, outcomes, and measurement issues. Future directions and practical implications conclude the discussion.

Contemporary Definition of Student Engagement

Student engagement has been studied using a variety of terms including: school bonding, school connectedness, teacher support, school climate, school engagement, and student engagement (Blum & Libbey, 2004; O'Farrell & Morrison, 2003); thus, it has not had consistent terminology across extant literature. Although variability exists in the definition and measurement of student engagement and related concepts (O'Farrell & Morrison, 2003), researchers concur that the term represents a multidimensional construct encompassing a student's feelings, beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors related to the school context (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008). In recent literature, researchers have organized the conceptualization of engagement into three subtypes—behavioral, cognitive, and emotional or affective (Fredericks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Jimerson, Campos, & Grief, 2003). However, Appleton et al. (2008) made a convincing argument for four components of student engagement: academic, behavioral, cognitive, and psychological. These four components are

based on a comprehensive review of literature related to student engagement and particularly the work of Finn (1989), Connell (Connell, 1990; Connell & Wellbron, 1991), and McPartland (1994), in addition to information obtained from the implementation of a *Check and Connect* (Reschly & Christenson, 2006) intervention model.

Academic engagement includes variables such as credits earned, homework completion, and time on task in classroom activities. Appleton et al. (2008) included this subtype because (a) high rates of learning time are related to student achievement for students with and without disabilities (Fisher & Berliner, 1985); (b) it addressed the concerns of teachers as related to time on-task and work completion (Sinclair, Christenson, & Thurlow, 2005); and (c) it aligned with research examining engagement of students for specific academic tasks (Marks, 2000).

Behavioral engagement variables include attendance, suspensions, extra-curricular participation, and classroom participation (Appleton et al., 2008). Fredericks et al. (2004) described behavioral engagement in three ways. The first includes positive conduct defined as following rules of the school and adhering to norms, as well as the absence of disruptive behaviors. The second component involves the student's participation in learning and academic tasks, and the last component involves partaking in school-related activities.

Emotional engagement is the student's affective reactions at school that includes interest, boredom, happiness, sadness, and anxiety (Fredericks et al., 2004). Otherwise known as psychological engagement, this may include relationships with teachers and peers, as well as feelings of belonging (Appleton et al., 2008).

Cognitive engagement includes indicators such as self-regulation, personal goals, relevance of schoolwork to future goals, and the value of learning. The cognitive area requires the student to think or evaluate the quality of his or her relationships within the school. Fredericks et al. (2004) suggest cognitive engagement can be described as the students' investment in learning, self-regulation, and the use of strategies to gain knowledge and skills.

Conceptual Foundation of Student Engagement

The student engagement literature has its origins in delinquency research with the work of Hirschi (1969), who proposed a social bonding theory to explain antisocial behavior. He conceptualized *school bonding* as including four components of social bonds: attachment, commitment, involvement, and beliefs. He suggested that people follow rules and norms of society because of their bonds to people or institutions and, conversely, people commit crimes if they are not bonded socially. Hirschi argued that if children do not develop healthy attachments to their parents, peers, and to school, they are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) later revised this social control theory, to suggest that self-control mediated the relation between social bonding and delinquency. That is, students with low self-control—defined as impulsivity, insensitivity, high sensation seeking, and poor decision making ability—do not effectively socially bond with others, which can contribute to delinquent behavior. Gottfredson and Hirschi suggested that attachments to adults promote self-control through monitoring, reinforcement, and punishment.

Attachment Theory

Attachment is based on early interactions between infants and caregivers (Sroufe, 2005) and is considered to influence the formation and quality of future relationships. Individual attachment styles, though influenced by the external environment, generally remain stable and central to a particular child throughout development and into adulthood. Experiences with caregivers who provide consistent, sensitive, and responsive care are associated with positive developmental out-

comes and mental health (Mason, Platts, & Tyson 2005). Empirical research has found that school bonding has two distinct attachment dimensions, attachment to teachers and attachment to school as a social institution (e.g., Cernkovich & Giordano, 1992). When a student is “attached” to adults in the school, the adult is perceived by the student to be available and responsive to the student’s needs. Attachment to school may involve students’ perceptions of whether they like school or have fun at school (Newman, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992).

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory explains behavior as learned and maintained through reinforcement in the social environment (Bandura, 1977). When deviant behavior is more highly reinforced than non-deviant behavior, a person is more likely to act out behaviorally. Social learning focuses on reinforcement for involvement in school-related activities as important for student engagement, as opposed to social-control theory’s focus on individual self-control in the context of monitoring and discipline.

Developmental-Ecological Perspectives

Early conceptualizations of social bonding in the study of delinquency have expanded to integrate developmental, ecological, and transactional influences to enhance understanding of the underlying processes that influence student engagement. A social development model expands upon control and social learning theories by emphasizing that each developmental period provides various opportunities for social involvement in different contexts or “socializing forces” (Maddox & Prinz, 2003). A social ecology model provides further understanding by incorporating additional ecological influences in family, school, and individual domains such as family relationships and school climate (Maddox & Prinz 2003). An ecological-developmental perspective (Fraser, 1996) adds additional sophistication by noting the transactional nature of individual and contextual factors including opportunities for involvement—it is the student who engages, but they can only engage within a social context. Integrating these theoretical perspectives with control, attachment, and social learning theories provides a comprehensive conceptual foundation for student engagement.

Influences on Student Engagement

Given a comprehensive conceptual foundation for student engagement, numerous personal factors and environmental contexts may influence student engagement. These include both individual and contextual factors.

Individual Factors

Research has identified several individual characteristics that are related to student engagement. Student engagement is positively correlated with higher levels of career planning and expectations (Kenny, Blustein, Haase, Jackson, & Perry, 2006) and academic self-concept (Seaton & Taylor, 2003), and is negatively correlated with low expectations for success and low self-esteem (Jessor, Turbin, & Costa, 1998). Caraway, Tucker, Reinke, and Hall (2003) found that generalized self-efficacy and goal orientation were positively correlated with student engagement for high school students. Connell and colleagues (1995) found that student reports of self-efficacy in school, self-esteem, and perceived quality of relationships with others, positively influenced student engagement beyond the direct influence of parental support. Connell and Wellborn (1991) suggest that cognitive, social,

and motivational factors are involved in compelling a student to engage with and excel in a given environment. Taken together, these studies demonstrate that students' internal traits have an impact on their level of engagement in school.

Ethnic Minority Groups Improving engagement for students from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds is crucial. A key concern for minority students is that they are at increased risk of dropping out of school (Velez & Saenz, 2001). Minority students may have traits and experiences that influence their engagement within school contexts. For instance, Oyserman, Brickman, Bybee, and Celious (2006) studied high-risk Latino and African American males and how their physical appearance was associated with their connections to school in-groups. Hierarchical regression revealed that dark skin tone was a protective factor for African American boys, and feeling that one looks "Latin" was a protective factor for Latino American boys. These factors served to improve students' sense of belonging, as seen in the boys' academic grades, in-class behavior, and student engagement.

Level of acculturation and participation in the community may also be important for student engagement. In a study exploring school attachment in a group of Latino students, Diaz (2005) analyzed data from 159 surveys. Results indicated that both the frequency of attendance at community events and participation in extracurricular activities were related to increased levels of student engagement. Furthermore, high-risk behaviors decreased with greater levels of school attachment. Importantly, Latino students who were born outside of the United States were more attached to their school than Latino students born in the United States. Interventions need to consider cultural influences as well as the social contexts in which attachment occurs.

The relations found between student engagement and academic performance for European American students have also been reported for Latino American and other ethnic minority students (Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Tucker et al., 2002). However, there is some evidence that as Latino students progress from early- to late-elementary school, their engagement declines relative to European American students. For instance, among early elementary students, Latino English language learners were less engaged than English proficient students (Morrison, Cosden, O'Farrell, & Campos, 2003).

There are several social and cultural reasons why Latino students, and particularly English language learners, are more at-risk for school drop out. Velez and Saenz (2001) identified three influences that likely increase the Latino drop out rate. First, Latino students are more likely to receive an out-of-school suspension following a violation of school behavior norms. When suspended students are out of school, they fall behind in their schoolwork, increasing the likelihood that they will drop out. Second, being an immigrant is associated with high mobility and poverty. Adapting to unfamiliar surroundings and the loss of community and social support is stressful, thereby increasing vulnerability to school disengagement. Third, Latina adolescents are more likely to become pregnant and give birth than their non-Latina counterparts. Taking on adult roles in adolescence is associated with increased risk of leaving school before earning a diploma. These three influences result in increased stress for many Latino students, and point to the need for extra effort to improve school practices that prevent drop out and increase efforts to engage at-risk students.

Students with Disabilities Students with disabilities may be at-risk for lower levels of student engagement than youths not identified with a disability. Murray and Greenberg (2001) assessed students' relationships with teachers and bonds with school, as well as social and emotional adjustment. Students with disabilities had greater dissatisfaction with their relationships with teachers, fewer bonds with school, and perceived more danger at school than students without disabilities. In another study, Reschly and Christenson (2006) found that students with learning disabilities or emotional behavioral disorders reported lower engagement than their typically-achieving peers.

Student engagement variables were significant predictors of school drop out and completion for students with and without disabilities, indicating that students with disabilities are at higher risk of negative outcomes due to lower levels of engagement.

Contextual Influences

Transactional-ecological models point to the importance of contextual influences on youth development. Research has found that peer relationships, home influences, teacher interactions, and the school-wide context significantly impact student engagement.

Peer Relationships Students' peer relationships play an important role in student engagement and this influence varies developmentally. Furrer and Skinner (2003) found that a child's feelings of belonging with peers were predictive of later engagement. As students enter middle school, their social networks have an increasingly important social-emotional influence on their attitudes toward schooling and on their academic motivation and success (Furlong et al., 2003). The quality of peer relationships and individual social proficiency is related to students' emotional well-being, which, in turn, affects their academic outcomes (Wentzel, 1991). In addition, Wentzel (1998) reported that sixth graders with greater peer support were more likely to pursue socially responsible goals at school, such as doing what their teacher asked. Goodenow and Grady (1993) found that students with friends who have high academic values were more likely to be academically motivated, although these attributes may not necessarily indicate a high level of school bonding.

Whereas positive peer connections promote student engagement, peer rejection and negative peer treatment is related to disengagement from school. Research has demonstrated that a better established social network is associated with decreased vulnerability to bullying. Victimized students typically participate less and have more conduct problems in the classroom. Buhs (2005) found that peer rejection, victimization, and exclusions were negatively linked to children's self-concept, classroom engagement, and change in achievement. Analyses found direct effects from exclusion and victimization to academic self-competence and engagement, as well as from academic self-concept and engagement to improved academic achievement.

Home Influences Both elementary and secondary students' engagement is related to the strength of their family bonds (Wentzel, 1998). Students who report a supportive relationship with their parents are more likely to be interested in school and to show a positive orientation toward learning (Wentzel, 1998). The extent to which parents transmit high values for educational attainment and appropriate behavior is particularly important. Family involvement in education and educational expectations for their children were related to students' engagement in elementary and high school, even when controlling for prior achievement (Gutman & Midgley, 2000).

The impact of family connectedness on students' attitudes toward and connection to school is further bolstered by findings that student bonding has been improved by family interventions (Kumpfer, Alvarado, Tait, & Turner, 2002). In one investigation, Emmons, Comer, and Haynes (1996) improved children's social and academic functioning by involving parents as partners in their children's schooling. In another study, Connell, Halpern-Felsher, Clifford, Crichlow, and Usinger (1995) found that parent involvement in school predicted student engagement among 10- to 16-year-old Black students.

Teacher Interactions Supportive teachers are crucial for students' sense of belonging, social efficacy, and affective experience while at school. The extent to which teachers create a nurturing, supportive bond with students has been shown to enhance students' school success at all grade levels. Students

with positive, supportive connections to school staff are more successful, both academically and socially (Furlong, Pavelski, & Saxton, 2002). When students feel they have a supportive teacher, they report higher social efficacy with both teachers and peers (Ryan & Patrick, 2001). For example, social support from teachers is important in affective and behavioral engagement of at-risk Latino students, beyond the support provided by parents (Brewster & Bowen, 2004). Students' perceptions of teacher support independently predict interest in class, pursuit of goals, and following classroom rules and norms (Wentzel, 1998). Quality of the student-teacher relationships is positively associated with students' attitudes toward school and academic motivation (Eccles et al., 1993). Thus, teachers have a powerful influence on their students' engagement with school.

Studies indicate that the behavioral contingencies teachers establish, together with their level of involvement, influence students' engagement in school. Students whose teachers communicate clear expectations, provide consistent feedback, show positive interest in the students, provide both formal and informal evaluations of their work, and show respect for students by considering their opinions when making decisions, are more likely to have higher levels of engagement (Skinner, Wellborn, & Connell, 1990; Wentzel, 1998). Teacher criticism, encouragement, and long-term expectations for students are related to elementary students' engagement in school tasks and their involvement in discipline problems, even when controlling for previous achievement (Murdock, 1999). Collaborative instruction and a positive learning environment are also linked to higher student involvement and belonging (Willms, 2003). When it comes to fostering student success, involving students in meaningful learning activities appears to play a critical role.

Teachers may promote mutual respect in the classroom among peers and between the teacher and students. This mutual respect encourages affirmation of ideas without criticism. If the classroom environment allows the student to feel comfortable expressing opinions, sharing ideas, and taking risks answering questions, the classroom is more likely to be a positive environment in which students feel they belong. In their research, Patrick, Ryan, and Kaplan (2007) found that when students felt emotionally supported by their teacher, able to discuss their work, and academically supported by their peers, they were more likely to use self-regulatory strategies and engage in task-related interactions. An adaptive classroom environment may enhance students' focus on mastery and feelings of efficacy, which, in turn, facilitate student engagement.

Cooperative learning has developed into a positive approach to academic instruction that allows students to help each other learn and provides opportunities for children to practice prosocial skills such as shared responsibility, fairness, acting considerately, and being helpful (Watson, Solomon, Battistich, Schaps, & Soloman, 1989). Osterman (2000) suggests that there is a need to de-emphasize individualization and competition among students. Students who sense an emphasis on academic competition in the classroom are likely to feel self-conscious in the academic environment, experience increased anxiety, and have a decrease in the quality of academic performance (Roeser, Midgley, & Urdan, 1996). Cooperative learning has been linked to several education conditions that foster student engagement, such as increased motivation, positive classroom behaviors, academic improvement, and social networks (Furlong et al., 2003).

The School-Wide Context The school-wide context plays an important role in influencing the development and maintenance of students' engagement. In particular, school climate is a critical influence. School climate is affected by the structural (school size, ethnic diversity, student-teacher ratio) and regulatory mechanisms (organization, disciplinary beliefs, codes of conduct) that schools employ. Students at schools, with strong disciplinary climates and high expectations for student success, tend to be more engaged in school (Willms, 2003).

The decrease in student engagement as students enter middle school may be related to structural changes in middle school (Baker et al., 2001). These changes include the transition to less familiar,

more crowded, and less intimate surroundings, as well as the disruption of social relationships and supports. Rumberger (1995) recommended responding to youth vulnerable to these changes by educating parents about school practices and involving them more in their children's schooling.

Structural characteristics are particularly influential on the engagement of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, English language learners, and urban minority high school students (Finn & Voelkl, 1993). The racial and ethnic make up of a school can affect engagement. Students from minority groups may experience stereotype threat—internalize a negative stereotype of low achievement and respond by disengaging from the school through withdrawal and disidentification. Research suggests that minorities may not identify with European American teachers and peers and may consequently disengage from the learning process (Steele & Aronson, 1995). However, research in this area is not definitive and future investigations should focus on other factors in the minority youth's context that impact student engagement.

Poverty has been shown to have a negative relation with students' attitudes and motivation for school. However, students' perceptions of their schools as caring communities have been found to be positively associated with their school-related attitudes, motivation, and behavior. There is evidence that effective schools in low-SES communities are better able to ameliorate the negative effects of poverty on students' feelings about school by successfully creating caring communities (Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, & Schaps, 1995).

Finally, school size is associated with student engagement. Students and teachers report experiencing a stronger sense of community in moderately sized schools (Bryk & Thum, 1989; Finn & Voelkl, 1993; McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002). At the classroom level, smaller sizes were associated with higher levels of engagement. Districts with enrollment lower than 300 students tend to have less than optimal learning environments (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002), but attendance, an indicator of school participation, was higher in these schools (Lindsay, 1982).

Regulatory Mechanisms School discipline policies are a large component of the regulatory environment. Research indicates that well-organized schools with high expectations for students have a positive impact on student engagement. In contrast, strict and arbitrary discipline procedures (e.g., zero tolerance) disrupt the learning environment and have a negative impact on student engagement (Bryk & Thum, 1989). Rules that are rigid and harsh are perceived to be unfair and may lead students to view the environment as cold, uncaring, and unsupportive. These factors are associated with lower academic performance and low participation rates in extracurricular activities. For example, Skiba and Peterson (1999) noted that there is a negative association between harsh discipline policies and engagement, as well as an increase in drop out rates. Harsh discipline policies may send the message to students that they are not truly welcome at school, and do little to help the distressed student develop positive coping strategies (Morrison, Anthony, Storino, & Dillon, 2001).

Outcomes of Student Engagement

Student engagement is associated with the reduced risk of long-term negative outcomes such as substance abuse (Guo, Hawkins, Hill, & Abbott, 2001), depression (Mylant, Ide, Cuevas, & Meehan, 2002), and antisocial delinquent behavior (Morrison, Robertson, Laurie, & Kelly, 2002). In addition, students with positive school linkages have increased academic achievement (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Student engagement has been linked to a variety of life outcomes acting as a buffer against life challenges that may deter negative developmental outcomes (Maddox & Prinz, 2003). Existing literature describes student engagement as a positive construct that helps students follow the norms of school and society and aids in the prevention of deviant behavior. Finn (1989, 1993)

examined the construct of student engagement out of concern for students at-risk for academic failure and disengagement from school. He argued that as a student behaviorally engages in school activities he or she will become affectively involved and begin to feel a sense of belonging to school (Finn & Rock, 1997).

Student engagement has a significant relation to academic achievement. Chen (2005) researched the relations between (a) self-perceived academic support from teachers, parents, and peers; (b) academic achievement in adolescents; and (c) student engagement in terms of behaviors and feelings towards schooling, classroom conduct, seriousness about school, time expenditure, self-expectations, and self-evaluations. The relation between academic support and academic achievement was mediated by adolescent's self-perceived academic engagement. The relation between teacher support and academic achievement was strongest, with parental support closely following. Interestingly, even during adolescence when peers are of great importance, peer support had the smallest, yet still significant, indirect relation to academic achievement. Overall, student engagement showed the strongest associations with health promoting behaviors.

Carter, McGee, Taylor, and Williams (2007) examined the associations between connectedness to family and peers, and student engagement, as well as specified health promoting (e.g., physical activity, eating well, safe sexual practices, and use of safety equipment) and health compromising behaviors (e.g., smoking, drug use, sexual activity, and aggression) in adolescents. Researchers administered a web-based survey to a random sample of 652 New Zealand adolescents. Logistic regression examined how family, peer, and school variables were related to health behaviors. Student engagement was measured using three items: (a) feels cared for, (b) feels part of the school, and (c) feels treated fairly by teachers. Overall, student engagement showed the most pervasive associations with avoiding unhealthy behaviors and engages in health promoting behaviors.

Student engagement is also positively related to resiliency and negatively correlated with behavior difficulties. Battistich and Hom (1997) studied relations between students' sense of their school as a community and problem behaviors using a cross sectional design. Results indicated that schools with a higher average score on sense of community had lower rates of delinquent behavior and drug use. Battistich and Hom (1997) concluded that school context may moderate the relations between risk and protective factors for individual students. Schools experienced by students as "communities" may enhance students' resiliency. In a related study, Simons-Morton, Crump, Haynie, and Saylor (1999) found that school bonding was positively correlated with school adjustment and perceived school climate, and school bonding was negatively correlated with problem behavior.

Measuring Student Engagement

Libbey (2004) describes the terms and variables used to measure student and school relationships. She suggests that aspects of student connections (the term used by Libbey)—sense of belonging to the school, level of teacher supportiveness and caring, presence of a positive peer group in school, fair discipline, participation in extracurricular activities, and engagement in academic progress—are found in several measures. In one of the few studies to examine the cross-battery patterns of engagement instruments, O'Farrell and Morrison (2003) conducted a factor analysis exploring school bonding and related constructs among upper elementary students. This cross-battery analysis was conducted using selected survey items from various school bonding and related measures that have been used in engagement research (school belonging, social support, self-concept, class participation, future aspirations, and parent supervision). The analysis identified five factors (not labeled) that measured multiple dimensions of student engagement. Of interest, each of the factors derived items from more than one instrument, which suggested the need for more specific measures to access these dimensions with greater precision.

Appleton, Christenson, Kim, and Reschly (2006) reviewed literature related to student engagement and designed a self-report instrument to measure both cognitive and psychological elements of student engagement. The psychometric properties of *Student Engagement Instrument* (SEI) were evaluated using a sample of 1,931 ninth-grade students. They conducted exploratory factor analyses (EFA) with half the data, and confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) to examine model fit with the other half of the sample. The model with the best fit consisted of six factors that correlated with educational outcomes. The six-factor model of student engagement consisted of control and relevance of school work, teacher-student relationships, peer support for learning, commitment to and control over learning, family support for learning, and extrinsic motivation. Because the development of the SEI is in its early stages, future research is needed to further validate this promising instrument.

Measurement Issues

There are many variations in the types of measures used to understand engagement. Jimerson and colleagues (2003) reviewed engagement instruments and noted that some include questions about current engagement (e.g., participates in class), whereas others have questions that imply lack of disengagement (e.g., absence of disruptive behaviors). Authors note that a lack of disengagement does not necessarily mean that a student is actually engaged with school. Fredericks et al. (2004) extended the discussion to include measures of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. They noted that different types of engagement are sometimes measured separately, whereas at other times they are measured within one general scale. Furthermore, some items may be used as indicators of more than one type of engagement. Most measures do not determine the source of engagement, for example, students are not asked to provide specific information about why they like school. Current measures do not allow raters to identify the degree to which the student is engaged; thus, absolute level of the student's engagement is unknown. Also, if student engagement is a developmental process, most measures look at the student's engagement at a particular point in time, suggesting engagement functions as a state variable. In order to better understand the process of student engagement, future measures should be taken over time and consider developmental differences.

Next Steps in Measurement

To improve the assessment of student engagement, researchers must first agree upon its definition (Appleton et al., 2008). It is necessary to determine the components of engagement of interest and the contexts in which to measure it. Instruments may need to address the source and the intensity of student engagement. In addition, collecting longitudinal data would enhance an understanding of the process of engagement, across multiple raters (i.e., student, teacher, parents), and using multiple methods of data collection (i.e., observation, self-report). Finally, both positive characteristics and positive outcomes related to engagement should be explored further.

School-Based Intervention

Although contexts outside the school setting contribute to student engagement, schools still need to consider ways to engage students and avoid disengaging students. Fortunately, research indicates that alterable school-based assets influence student engagement for youth at all levels of family risk even when individual traits are considered (Sharkey, You, & Schnoebelen, 2008). Student engagement can be conceptualized as a set of behaviors along a continuum from high to low levels of school

involvement (Furlong et al., 2003). Thus, strategies to encourage student engagement can occur at multiple levels. Furlong and colleagues (2003) suggest that most students fall in the middle of this continuum and not all students need to be completely immersed in school activities; in fact, it would be of interest to know at what level engagement may act more like enmeshment. Sharkey et al. (2008) argue that schools are naturally oriented towards increasing academic, behavioral, and cognitive levels of engagement via behavioral and curricular strategies; however, they may need to be encouraged to focus on relationship building, school spirit, school safety, and school climate in order to promote positive outcomes. Providing youth with opportunities for meaningful school involvement and reinforcing this involvement can lead to the development of facilitative school bonds (Catalano, Kosterman, Hawkins, Newcomb, & Abbott, 1996).

Furlong et al. (2002) review five levels of engagement within the school environment. First, schools can conduct school-wide activities that *reaffirm* relationships with the majority of students who are not at-risk such as spirit days and the availability of clubs and sports. Second, schools can reach out to and *reconnect* with students who are marginally involved with school and may not respond to universal strategies. For example, schools may implement positive behavioral support strategies or involve at-risk youth in after school programs. Third, schools may need to *reconstruct* relationships with students who show more serious emotional and behavioral difficulties through intensive interventions such as family therapy or behavioral assessments and interventions. Fourth, for a small group of students schools will need to *repair* the relationships of students who have been victims of serious or chronic violence at school and need interventions to renew a sense of school safety and membership. For marginalized students, opportunities to repair bonds across social contexts may be of particular importance. If a student is significantly disengaged from school and possibly other environments (home and community), it may be necessary to use multiple agencies to intervene and create opportunities for attachment and the development of self-efficacy. Finally, schools will need to be vigilant in order to *protect* relationships with youth who are vulnerable to negative influences in other contexts, such as the home or community.

Morrison, Brown, D’Incau, O’Farrell, and Furlong (2006) suggest that student engagement may be conceptualized as a “protective possibility.” By nurturing students’ cognitive and affective bonds to school, it is possible to reduce the occurrence of negative developmental outcomes and enhance academic and social-emotional outcomes. After interviewing the student and determining her or his academic strengths (finding activities they enjoy at school), the student may be positively engaged in school by building on those particular strengths.

School environments should support students’ development of academic and efficacy beliefs needed to help them cope with challenges throughout their lifetime (Furlong et al., 2003). Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as person’s belief in their ability to perform a task within a specific domain. Mastery experiences, modeling, verbal persuasion, and physiological information (physical and emotional) assist individuals to develop self-efficacy. A positive school environment should nurture self-efficacy and thereby facilitate increased opportunities for open communication and opportunities for skill modeling and mastery.

Furlong et al. (2003) suggest that student engagement develops by providing opportunities for meaningful involvement, social skills training, and rewards for using these social skills. They offer a model that describes student engagement (how it occurs) and its outcome (the state of being personally connected to school) as a developmental process, which involves a complex interplay between the individual student’s characteristics and the school environments. Furlong et al. (2003) called their framework the PACM model. It suggests a chronological sequence of engagement conditions in which behavioral participation (P) contributes to the formation of emotional social attachments (A) at school. Engagement pre-conditions then lay the foundation on which students build a sense of personal commitment (C) to the school’s mission of learning and ultimately to

identifying as a member (M) of the school community. Some additional aspects of student engagement that need to be considered in future research include the fluctuations of student engagement from year-to-year and which school factors influence such changes over time.

School-Wide Interventions

Intervention programs may be an effective strategy to increase student engagement (Maddox & Prinz, 2003). These programs may help students bond with their schools and experience fewer negative outcomes. An example of such a program is Check & Connect (C&C), a targeted intervention used to facilitate student engagement and school completion. The C&C model includes the core elements of: relationship building, routine monitoring of alterable risk factors, individualized intervention, continuous monitoring of targeted students, teaching problem solving skills, building affiliation with school, and a persistent reinforcement of academic behaviors. Within this program, data are systematically used to guide intervention plans and improve the program at each school site. (Sinclair, Christenson, Lehr, Reschly, & Anderson, 2003). In an evaluation of C&C, 80 elementary and middle school students involved in the program served as participants. Results indicated that after accounting for student risks and prior attendance, intervention staff and student perceptions of the quality and closeness of their relationship were positively correlated with the behavioral engagement indicator of school attendance. The implementers' perception of their relationship with students was related to teacher-rated academic engagement, which includes being prepared for class, work completion, and persistence (Anderson, Christenson, Sinclair, Lehr, & Godber, 2004).

With another program, researchers examined the effects of a social development intervention on school bonding trajectories. The intervention consisted of a multi-component package of teacher training in classroom management, instruction methods, and a social competence curriculum, as well as parent training curricula. Using hierarchical linear modeling, results indicated that 13- to 18-year-old students who received the full intervention were significantly more bonded to school than the control group (Hawkins, Guo, Hill, Battin-Pearson, & Abbott, 2001).

Lee and Smith (1995) studied the impact of school restructuring on 10th-grade students' engagement and achievement. Restructuring included moving from bureaucratic approaches to communal practices, as well as other reforms such as interdisciplinary team teaching and involving community resources. Results indicated that students in a school with restructuring practices made significantly higher gains in achievement and engagement than did students in schools without reforms. Furthermore, more socially equitable achievement and engagement were associated with smaller high schools.

Classroom Environment

A variety of classroom variables have been found to increase a student's sense of belonging to a positive learning community and may lead to an increase in student engagement (Furlong et al., 2003). These factors include positive student-teacher relationships, use of a cooperative learning instructional strategy, and promoting mutual respect within the classroom. Reducing or eliminating visible academic competition among peers may improve engagement of students of varying academic achievement levels but for various reasons. For example, Wehlage and Rutter (1986) found that students who were average achieving and found their secondary schools to be interpersonally unsupportive and academically frustrating were more likely to drop out of school. By minimizing competition and privileges for honor roll students and high achievers, perceptions of frustration and defeat may be altered (Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). Recently, Morgan (2006) reviewed studies

that examined preference and choice-making as classroom interventions for increasing behavioral task engagement. These 15 reviewed studies supported the hypothesis that preference and choice-making improve the behavior and academic performance of students. Authors concluded that teachers who use preference assessment in addition to choice-making are more likely to improve the students' engagement than those using choice-making procedures alone.

Teaching techniques are crucial to increasing engagement. Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, and Barch (2004) examined the use of autonomy support in a teacher motivation style as a way to promote student engagement during instruction. Two aspects of engagement were measured, task involvement (attention, effort, verbal participation, persistence and positive emotion) and influence attempts (teacher and student verbal and nonverbal attempts to influence the behavior or decision of the other party in a constructive manner). Teachers trained in these techniques displayed more autonomy-supportive behaviors than teachers who were not trained. The more teachers used autonomy support the more the students were engaged.

When further examining relationships between students and their teachers, Hughes and Kwok (2007) investigated the influence of student-teacher and parent-teacher relationships on engagement and achievement. The model suggests that the quality of teacher's relationships with students and their parents explained the relation between students' background and classroom engagement. Classroom engagement, in turn, mediated the relations between student-teacher and parent-teacher relatedness and student achievement the following year. Results indicated that African American children and their parents had less supportive relationships with teachers when compared with Latino and European American children and their parents. Results suggest that schools should not only work on parental involvement in school, but also should develop the relationship between parents and teachers, particularly with the families of low income and minority students. Teachers may need training in how to build successful relationships with parents and how to create a supportive classroom environment.

Clinical Implications and Future Research

As discussed in this chapter, many terms have been used for the general construct of student engagement. These terms and definitions have caused some confusion among researchers because they overlap in some ways but not in others (Libbey, 2004)—the same term is operationalized in different ways and different terms may be operationalized in a similar way. To investigate student engagement, researchers must have an agreed upon definition and instrument to measure this construct (Appleton et al., 2008). Understanding student engagement within a consensus definition will be particularly helpful. Next steps include developing and validating measures that examine engagement and its links to indicators of thriving and well-being.

Furlong et al. (2003) proposed that the goal of engagement research and intervention is to promote social and academic competence; that is, it is important to develop youths' capacities to maintain the positive developmental influences of engagement over a long period. Engagement may effect the student's development of psychosocial involvement across numerous settings during the life span. Researchers may want to investigate student engagement as a developmental process that has both state and trait characteristics. Researchers need to conduct longitudinal studies in order to understand the development of student engagement, as well related short- and long-term outcomes. Historically, research on student context is particularly focused on students at risk for adverse outcomes such as substance abuse, delinquency, school drop out, and recidivism. Outcomes from these studies are often generalized to all students based on the premise that if poor engagement leads to poor outcomes, healthy engagement serves as a protective factor. It would be instructive to understand student engagement as a resilience enhancing process that improves developmental

outcomes across the lifespan. Future research may also investigate student engagement and its relation to other positive psychology constructs such as optimism and hope.

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17

The ClassMaps Survey

A Framework for Promoting Positive Classroom Environments

BETH DOLL, SARAH KURIEN, COURTNEY LECLAIR, ROBERT SPIES,
ALLISON CHAMPION, AND ALLISON OSBORN

Children's psychological wellness depends upon the strength of the important family, school, and community contexts in which they develop (Coie et al., 1993; Doll & Lyon, 1998; Masten, 2001). Schools represent a particularly significant context for children's development because students spend over 15,000 hours in schools during their formative years (Rutter & Maughan, 2002). Moreover, school attendance represents children's first opportunity to interact and achieve independent of their parents. Consequently, a primary goal of schools should be to enhance natural supports for psychological wellness in the school environments. Strong school environments not only enhance the social and emotional well-being of children, but maximize children's academic success by fostering increased attendance, attention to task, work completion, and work accuracy.

To create optimal classrooms for learning, schools must define effective classroom contexts; develop efficient, reliable, and valid measures of these classroom features; and identify intervention strategies that will reinstate essential classroom supports where they are lacking. This chapter describes a conceptual framework for effective classroom environments that is grounded in developmental research on resilience and educational research on effective instruction. Second, we propose the ClassMaps Survey as an operational measure of this framework. Third, we describe how the ClassMaps Survey has been used with problem-solving consultation to systematically strengthen positive classroom supports. The chapter closes with a discussion of the implications for the use of classroom and school strategies that promote positive psychology.

A Conceptual Framework of Effective Classrooms

Our framework for effective classroom environments has its foundation in developmental research on childhood resilience in the face of adversity. Between 1955 and the present, numerous prospective, longitudinal studies have examined the developmental competence of children exposed to multiple risk factors including poverty, limited parental education, family conflict, ineffective parenting, child maltreatment, poor physical health of the child or parents, and parental mental illness. Although initially focused on identifying variables that increased children's maladjustment, the researchers' attention subsequently turned to an even more important question: What made it possible for children to succeed in the face of adversity? Examples of these studies include:

1. the Kauai Longitudinal study (Werner & Smith, 2001) that began in 1955 and sought to identify the origins of developmental disabilities in young children;
2. the Newcastle Thousand Family study (Kolvin, Miller, & Fleeting, 1988), which investigated deprivation and its effects on criminality over 15 years;
3. the Isle of Wight study (Rutter et al., 1975), which investigated factors that increased the risk of psychiatric disorders for children;
4. and the Rochester Longitudinal study (Sameroff, Seifer, Baldwin, & Baldwin, 1993), which followed children of mothers with mental illness from early childhood through Grade 12.

Comprehensive reviews of these studies can be found in Coie et al. (1993), Doll and Lyon (1998), and Werner (2006).

These seminal studies were influential because of their rigorous longitudinal designs. Each included at least 100 participants who were followed over several years with low rates of attrition (Werner, 2006), which permitted comparison of children growing up in adverse and typical environments using developmentally appropriate measures. Although they were conducted on different samples by different researchers and often on different continents, the studies' findings were strikingly similar. This remarkable uniformity prompted Werner to suggest that resilience and risk may be universally present in the lives of children across age, ethnicity, and gender. Her analysis of the collected studies suggests that the same protective factors that are important for mitigating the risk of children growing up with adversity may also benefit advantaged children. Garcia Coll and her colleagues (1996) posit that these mechanisms operate in similar ways within culturally diverse families, although augmented by additional risk and protective factors that may be unique to the experience of minority children (e.g., risk factors such as racism, social oppression, and protective factors such as cultural legacies and extended family traditions.)

Developmental research has repeatedly demonstrated that resilience is interdependent with risk and both are systemic and dynamic mechanisms (Doll & Lyon, 1998). This system is characterized by both multifinality (the same risk or protective factors in childhood can result in different adult outcomes) and equifinality (the same adult outcomes can be reached by a variety of different risk or protective factors in childhood). The likelihood of positive adult outcomes increases geometrically with each additional protective factor, while the likelihood of poor outcomes increases geometrically with each additional risk factor. Furthermore, both risk and protective factors occur within inter-correlated clusters. For example, the risk factors of poverty, premature birth, parental mental illness, and maltreatment often co-occur, as do the protective factors of educational opportunity, financial stability, and competent adult role models. Further, the unique circumstances of minority children who encounter pervasive racism, classism, or cultural hegemony may interact to magnify the impact of risk factors, while extended family networks may act in ways to protect minority children from these hardships (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). As children develop, it becomes more difficult to disentangle the unique effect of any single risk or protective factor (Masten & Powell, 2003). The complexity of this dynamic risk and protective system is represented in Figure 17.1, which shows how rates of children's success are strongest when risks are low and supports are high whereas success rates are lowest when risks are high and supports are low.

Three systems of resilience have been identified that form a human adaptational system: individual attributes, family qualities, and supportive systems outside the family. For example, parental competence is a significant family factor in childhood resilience, as an early history of positive and supportive care allows children to successfully adapt in adulthood (Werner, 2006). The absence of maternal competence can lead to poor adult coping, as expressed in financial dependence, substance abuse, or dysfunctional relationships. Children with average or above average intelligence, low emotionality, and an internal locus of control are less vulnerable to family adversities than

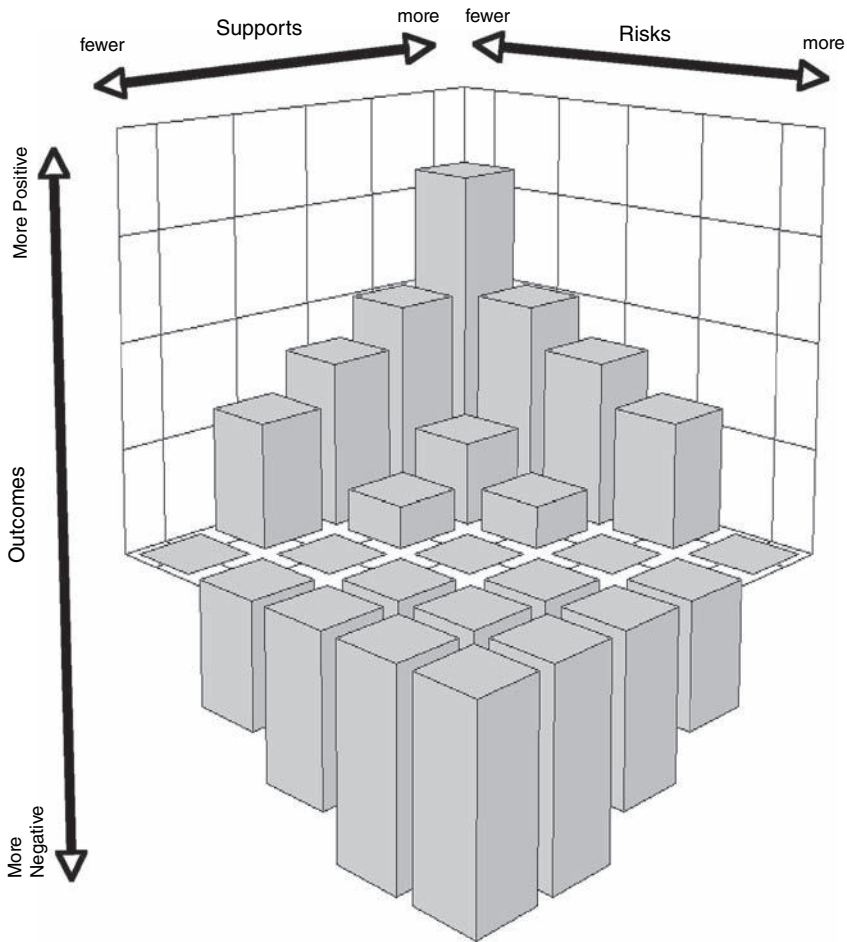


Figure 17.1 The dynamic risk and protective system

children without these individual characteristics of resilience. Moreover, children who are denied effective caretaking from parents can sometimes receive compensatory support from other people in their communities. Children who succeed despite serious adversities almost always have strong and caring relationships with siblings, extended family members, caregivers, teachers or peers. In fact, in a follow-up to the classic Kauai longitudinal study (Werner & Johnson, 2004), children of alcoholics who developed successful adult coping skills had relied heavily on social supports from their neighborhood, peers, churches, or schools. Thus, interventions that strengthen one or more of these systems have the potential to enhance children's opportunities for success.

Schools represent a critical supportive system outside the family. Importantly, almost half of children who grew into competent adults cited a supportive teacher as a positive role model in their youth. It is reassuring to realize that childhood resilience emerges out of such ordinary phenomena as a warm relationship with a teacher, close friendships with peers, or the mastery of self-regulatory skills, and that strengthening these can greatly increase the likelihood that even disadvantaged children can be successful. Schools are a significant protective presence in children's lives, and creating supportive school environments benefits all children, especially those at risk of negative life outcomes.

Depending upon the summary review that is consulted, the developmental research on risk and resilience identifies between 14 and 30 characteristics of individuals, families, and communities that promote resilience and foster success in children and adolescents (Coie et al., 1993; Doll & Lyon, 1998; Werner, 2006). Many of these factors describe relatively immutable characteristics of children or their families, such as level of intelligence or poverty status. Other factors are outside of the immediate influence of schools, such as child and parental physical and mental health. However, five factors were selected for our description of positive classroom environments because they were alterable and could be framed as features of classroom contexts. These include classroom practices that (a) foster caring and authentic relationships between adults and students (Teacher Student Relationships); (b) maximize opportunities for ongoing and rewarding friendships with peers (Peer Relationships); (c) foster students' self-identities as competent and effective learners (Academic Efficacy); (d) support opportunities for students to set and work towards ambitious, self-set goals (Self Determination); and (e) promote student self-control of their behavior so that their conduct is appropriate and adaptive (Behavioral Self-Control).

Next, because this was a framework for school settings, these five factors were compared against educational research describing predictors of academic success. Specifically, factors were retained within the framework if they had been empirically demonstrated to lower student dropout rates, enhance student engagement in scholastic and non-academic activities of schools and communities, improve student vocational success or academic performance, or enhance the inclusion of students with disabilities in general classrooms. All five factors were retained, and a sixth was added—classroom practices that strengthen home-school collaboration (Home-School Relationships)—because it too has been identified as a predictor of academic success in the educational research. The following descriptions briefly summarize the research demonstrating each factor's relationship to developmental competence and academic success.

Relational Features of Effective Classrooms

Teacher-Student Relationships

Of all the various school relationships that students are part of, teacher-student relationships are the most influential for students' academic success. Students' relationships with their teachers are dyadic, in that both contribute to the relationship. They are also asymmetrical, in that teachers have more power than students within the relationships (Pianta, 1999). Researchers have theorized that the teacher-student bond is similar to (albeit less intense than) the parent-child attachment (Kesner, 2000). In fact, many students spend *more* time with teachers than with their parents, and as they do with their parents, students find emotional security with their teachers and internalize teachers' values as their own (Pianta, 1999). Just as parents' relationship with one child can affect their relationships with their other children, teachers' relationship with any single student can color their relationships with all other students in a class. In this sense, teacher-student relationships are embedded within the social context of the classroom. This phenomenon is particularly important because negative interactions can occur between teachers and students that subsequently damage teachers' relationships with all other students who observe or are affected by these interactions.

Students feel stronger connections to teachers who are warm and authoritative. These effective teachers are helpful, fair, even-tempered, and honest, and they encourage their students to develop personal autonomy (Wentzel, 2002). Strong teacher-student bonds are particularly important for students at-risk of school failure because they serve as protective factors that moderate or even reverse the detrimental effects of other hardships (Hamre & Pianta, 2005). In the absence of warm and caring interactions with their teachers, students are less likely to fully engage in classroom activities. Conversely, teacher-student interactions can sometimes be characterized by damaging

conflict. The presence of such negativity is more destructive to students' learning than the absence of positive interactions (Ladd, Birch, & Buhs, 1999; Murray & Murray, 2004). Thus, reducing negative teacher-student interactions appears to be more important than increasing positive interactions for promoting students' academic success.

Peer Relationships

Like teacher-student relationships, peer relationships support the psychological wellness of children and are significantly related to active participation and interest in learning, and subsequent academic success (Malecki & Elliott, 2002; Wentzel & Caldwell, 1997; Wentzel & Watkins, 2002). Classmates provide each other with emotional support, companionship, amusement, and assistance (Doll, 1996). Within classrooms, strong peer relationships are demonstrated by high rates of peer friendships, effective management of conflicts, and low rates of bullying (Birch & Ladd, 1998). The development of strong peer relationships is influenced by individual students' social competence and the collective social environment of the school and classroom, such as a climate of acceptance and opportunities for students to have fun together. Fortunately, most children have three or more friends amongst their classmates, and these friends make school an inviting place to be (Doll, 1996).

Interpersonal conflict is an important part of classrooms' social environment as well, and is not necessarily destructive as long as there are classroom routines and practices that promote positive conflict management (Smith, Daunic, & Miller, 2002). Children experience conflict such as teasing and arguments as a normal part of friendships, and this conflict with friends only becomes troublesome when it is hurtful or persists to a point that it interrupts the friendship. Conflict with friends is distinct in important ways from peer bullying in that a bully is someone who is not a friend and who repeatedly and deliberately harms and intimidates the child (Olweus, 1993; Pellegrini & Bartini, 2001). By definition, children feel unable to defend themselves from bullying, and this power differential leaves children feeling worried and afraid. Consequently, within our framework for classroom learning environments, separate scales have been constructed for typical peer conflict and bullying.

Home-School Relationships

Children's academic success is strongest when their home and schools are supportive and effective partners in childrearing (Christenson & Anderson, 2002). There are three important aspects to these partnerships: parents' involvement in support of schooling, school support for family goals, and effective communication between home and school. Parents' support of children's learning occurs in multiple ways (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Traditional definitions of parental involvement include parents' volunteering at the child's school, participating in parent-teacher conferences, attending school events, and attending extracurricular activities. Recent, broader definitions also acknowledge the importance of parents' home activities with their children: providing effective discipline, overseeing homework, and providing other learning activities. Elaborated definitions of parental involvement include community activities of families, such as securing community resources in the service of the child or involvement in school policy development and decision making.

In acknowledging the partnership that must be present between families and schools, Christenson and Anderson (2002) explain that schools must also act in ways that support families. Schools do this by working to meet families' expectations for their children's achievement, and engaging in activities and practices that do not conflict with family values and beliefs. Family-friendly classrooms are approachable, welcoming, and provide parents with the sense that they can contribute in important ways to the work of the children and adults.

Clearly, strong home-school communication is often a key element of children's school success, and this communication is a shared responsibility of families and schools. As children's two most important caretaking settings, it is important that adults from both contexts provide children with consistent expectations and pragmatic supports so that these expectations can be realized. The support for home-school partnerships is also reflected in numerous national and local policies that promote collaboration and communication between home and school (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

Several positive academic outcomes are associated with effective home-school relationships. Students with involved parents have higher homework completion rates, test scores, and grades (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Fan, 2001; Hill et al., 2004). Parent involvement is correlated with better student attendance, lower suspension rates, higher rates of school completion, and higher educational and career aspirations (Anguiano, 2004; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Fan, 2001; Hill et al., 2004). Still, estimates of the strength of associations between home-school relationships and academic success vary widely due to a variety of methodological differences in the research (Fan, 2001).

Self-Regulatory Features of Effective Classrooms

Academic Efficacy

Academic efficacy refers to students' expectations that they will be successful in the classroom (Bandura, 1997). Academic efficacy describes a cycle that perpetuates a self-fulfilling prophesy: If students believe that they can succeed, they are more likely to develop skills and behave in ways that promote success, which in turn strengthens their expectations of success. Beliefs can be stronger predictors of achievement than individual ability because they result in different ways of behaving, thinking, and feeling (Pajares & Schunk, 2001; Schunk & Pajares, 2005). Students with high self-efficacy undertake more challenging tasks, persist longer, exert more effort, and are more likely to ask for help when they need it. Given this approach to learning, they develop self-regulatory skills such as goal setting, using appropriate academic strategies, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. As a result, they are less anxious and more confident when confronted with challenging tasks, and they perceive failures to be temporary setbacks (Pajares & Schunk, 2001). In contrast, students with low self-efficacy more often believe that tasks are too difficult for them, become anxious and stressed, identify fewer possible solutions for challenging problems, and attribute failure to their own lack of ability.

Schools provide some of the first opportunities for children to complete tasks, receive feedback, and experience success and failure, which lead, in turn, to the development of self-efficacy beliefs (Pastorelli et al., 2001). These opportunities promote high self-efficacy for learning if three kinds of experiences are present: students experience success in their daily class work, they vicariously observe their classmates' success, and they receive comments and praise from classmates and teachers that celebrate their achievements. Their daily success experiences are the most influential of these (Pajares & Shunk, 2001). Still, the beliefs that teachers and classmates convey about students' competence also strongly influence students' efficacy because students often adopt these beliefs as their own (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Gerbino, & Pastorelli, 2003).

Self-Determination

Students demonstrate self-determination when they have personal and purposeful goals for their own learning and take steps to reach these goals. Self-determination involves understanding the importance of learning and assuming responsibility for learning (Masten, 2001). For example, self-determined learners take ownership of their work, flexibly work to achieve their goals, and

strategically plan ways to reach them. They take credit for their successes, and react to temporary failures with revised goals, new action plans, or strengthened strategies for improvement.

Self-determined students select the knowledge that they will acquire and the skills that they will master. Self-determination can be encouraged by assigning work that is interesting to students and matters for their personal lives or future goals (Ladd et al., 1999). Meaningful learning creates intrinsically motivated students and allows the teacher's role to shift to that of a guide and mentor rather than an enforcer of extrinsic goals. Fortunately, learning that is initially extrinsic can become intrinsic if students come to understand the purpose of the learning and recognize its importance (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002). In particular, describing the relevance of classroom learning to children's lives outside the classroom prompts self-directed learning. In addition, students whose goal it is to "master" material (a mastery goal) tend to be more self-determined learners than students working to outperform classmates (a competitive goal; Pajares & Schunk, 2001). Learning is also more purposeful when classroom goals are *specific* (e.g., describing the number of problems to be completed), *proximal* (e.g., having deadlines of tomorrow or next week), and *attainable*. Finally, classroom strategies that engage students as partners in their learning will be more effective than those that do not. Even when choices about what to learn are not possible, students can be offered choices in how to learn or how to demonstrate mastery.

Behavioral Self-Control

Behavioral self-control is the degree to which students' behavior is self-regulated and appropriate (Doll, Zucker, & Brehm, 2004). Behavioral self-control is comprised of features internal to students, such as their desire to please and expectations of success, as well as ecological factors within students' environments, such as classroom routines and procedures.

Importantly, academic achievement and behavioral self-control are highly interdependent. Students who are attentive, regulated, and persistent in their work often earn higher grades, whereas those who lack behavioral self-control often underachieve academically (Doll et al., 2004). Limited behavioral self-control undermines academic achievement in the elementary years while academic failures in secondary schools contribute to increases in rule breaking behaviors (Hawkins et al., 2003). Fortunately, the reverse is also true; prevention programs that increase school success have the potential to reduce future behavior problems (Hawkins, Catalano, Kosterman, Abott, & Hill, 1999). Indeed, disciplined classroom behavior has been found to be a better predictor of students' grades than intellectual ability (McDermott, Mordell, & Stoltzfus, 2001).

The importance of behavioral self-control is also evidenced by the many interventions that exist to manage students' school behavior. Strategies can be either student-centered (as seen in the Caring School Community and Positive Behavior Supports programs) or teacher-centered (grounded in Watson's, Thorndike's, and Skinner's behavioral principles of learning; Bear, 2008; Watson & Battistich, 2006). They can also have different emphases, such as punishment and "zero tolerance" or, conversely, positive psychology and prevention (Bear, 2008). To be successful, school-wide behavioral interventions need components that develop self-discipline, prevent and correct behavior problems, and address serious and chronic behavior problems.

Summary of Effective Classroom Environments

The above characteristics represent an operational definition of effective classroom environments. Each element describes an aspect of developmental competence in children that is empirically linked to psychological wellness, academic success, and successful outcomes in adulthood. Taken together, they provide a coherent description of both self-regulatory elements of developmental competence

(academic efficacy, self-determination, and behavioral self-control) and relational aspects of mental health (peer relationships, teacher-student relationships and home-school relationships.) Within traditional perspectives, these characteristics have been considered to be important characteristics of the individual child. However, these can also be understood as attributes of the school environments within which children grow, develop and learn.

The ClassMaps Survey

A necessary first step towards creating systems that foster the classroom characteristics necessary to children's success is the development of measures that assess the presence and adequacy of each characteristic. This is the purpose of the ClassMaps Survey. Development of the ClassMaps Survey benefited from experience with the brief scholastic measures used in Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM; Deno, Fuchs, Marston & Shin, 2001). Because of their brevity, simplicity, reliability, and practical utility, CBM measures have prompted teacher-conducted action research to evaluate the impact of curricular and instructional interventions within daily school routines (Fuchs, Fuchs & Stecker, 1989; Deno et al., 2001). Likewise, the usefulness of the ClassMaps Survey requires that it be brief to administer, easy to code and analyze, easy to convert to graphic display so that teachers and students can plan from the information, and have good face-validity so that teachers and students respect the results as a measure of the elements. Moreover, it must have strong psychometric properties—internally consistent, related to other indices of academic success in the classroom, capable of repeated administrations without practice effects, and sensitive to changes in the elements that might occur in response to interventions.

Although there are existing measures for each of the six classroom elements, most are measures of individual children rather than classrooms and few meet a priori criteria for brevity or simplicity. Research on sociometric measures of children's competence suggests an alternative way to create brief measures of classroom characteristics. Sociometric measures were developed in the 1930s, used widely to describe the social climate of classrooms throughout the 1950s, and subsequently formed the basis for substantial research on children's peer relationships in the 1980s and 1990s (Barclay, 1992). Their validity, reliability, and stability as measures of peer acceptance and social competence is well-established (Hoza, Molina, Bukowski, & Sippola, 1995). Of particular interest are sociometric rating procedures, in which children rate each classmate in terms of specific characteristics (Parker & Asher, 1993). Sociometric research demonstrated that aggregated ratings across all students in a class were highly accurate, reliable, and stable over time (Coie & Kupersmidt, 1983).

Description of ClassMaps Survey

To adopt an aggregated rating strategy for the ClassMaps Survey, brief scales were developed that asked all students in a class to describe what it is like to be in their classroom. Individual student ratings were then aggregated across students in a class to represent a classroom measure. This strategy was used to create eight subscales assessing characteristics of the classroom environment. Three subscales assess the collective human agency of students in the class: *academic efficacy* (Believing in Me; BIM), *self-determination* (Taking Charge; TC), and *behavioral self-control* (Following Class Rules; FCR). For example, one BIM item reads, "I do not worry about hard work in this class because I know I can do it." An FCR item reads, "Most kids in this class pay attention when they are supposed to." Five subscales assess the classroom relationships: *teacher-student relationships* (My Teacher; MT), *home-school relationships* (Talking with My Parents; TWP), *peer friendships* (My Classmates; MC), *peer conflict* (Kids in this Class; KITC), and *concerns about bullying* (I Worry That; IWT). For example, one item from the MT subscale is, "My teacher likes having

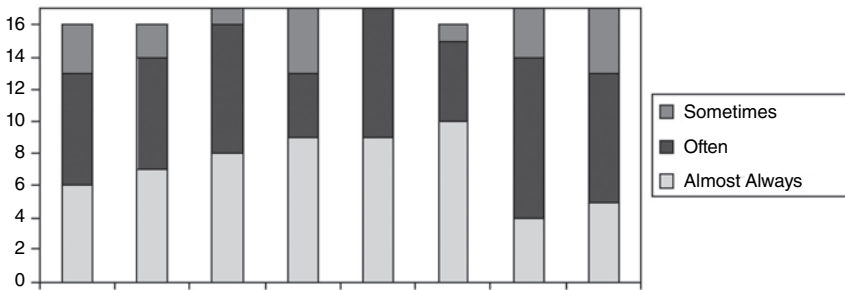


Figure 17.2 A graphic representation of results of the Believing In Me of the ClassMaps Survey (N = 17).

me in this class,” and an item from the My Classmates subscale reads, “I have a lot of fun with my friends in this class.” Items from the first six of these subscales were uniformly phrased in the positive, reinforcing the ClassMaps Survey’s use as a strength-based measure. Items from the last two subscales were worded in the negative and were reverse-coded so that higher scores reflected positive evaluations. Each of the eight subscales is brief, comprised of five to eight items, and the full survey is comprised of 55 items. Students select their response from a four-point Likert scale (never, sometimes, often, or almost always) ranging from “0” to “3.” The survey can be completed by a class in 15 to 25 minutes.

The ClassMaps Survey was designed to be developmentally appropriate for students in elementary and middle schools. Original items were first reviewed by classroom teachers for clarity and readability. Subsequently, child advisory groups suggested additional wording simplifications. Students also suggested keeping the surveys anonymous to elicit accurate responses. The ClassMaps Survey is most useful for prompting classroom change when results are graphed, providing quick visual feedback that is easy for teachers and students to understand. Figure 17.2 shows how the survey results convert naturally into bar graphs that represent the frequency of responses for each item.

Participants in the Development of the ClassMaps Survey

Results described here are based on ClassMaps Survey data for 420 students from 25 classrooms: 13 third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade classrooms from two Midwest schools, and 12 third- and fourth-grade classrooms from one East Coast school. Data were collected in the spring 2005 and fall 2006. Participating students included 208 males (50%) and 204 females (49%), with seven students not reporting gender; they included 270 third graders (64%), 100 fourth graders (24%), and 50 fifth graders (12%). Because the surveys were anonymous, precise demographic information on individual students is not available. Instead, Table 17.1 shows the participating schools’ demographic profiles including gender, ethnicity, proportions of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch, and proportions of students who were not proficient in the English language.

ClassMaps Survey Psychometric Properties

Results of the ClassMaps Survey were analyzed to describe means and standard deviations, internal consistency reliabilities, and the factor structure of the survey. First, careful examination of the data established that less than one percent of all data points were missing across all participants. Missing data were replaced with mean values of all other items in each scale. Then, mean student ratings were computed for the eight survey subscales and are shown in Table 17.2. Results demonstrated that four of the eight subscale means (BIM, TC, FCR, and MC) clustered closely around 2.0 (often),

Table 17.1 Demographics of participating schools

	Midwest 1	Midwest 2	East Coast 3	
Number of classrooms	6	7	4	8
Participating grades	3rd	3rd, 4th, 5th	3rd, 4th	3rd, 4th
Participating students	108	87	71	154
School enrollment	667	408	519	454
Free & reduced lunch	62.7%	66.6%	28.3%	30.4%
% English Learners	20.2%	20.3%	10.1%	10.6%
Gender				
Female	50.6%	48.5%	48.7%	48.0%
Male	49.4%	51.5%	51.3%	52.0%
Ethnicity				
Caucasian	68.1%	59.7%	47.6%	49.6%
African American	12.2%	7.6%	29.5%	32.6%
Native American	0.9%	3.6%	0	0
Asian American	11.3%	6%	4.4%	3.5%
Hispanic American	7.4%	23.3%	13.3%	14.3%

with a somewhat wider standard deviation observed for MC than the other three subscales. The highest mean was observed for the MT subscale, with students routinely giving high ratings for their teachers' ability to be fair, helpful, effective communicators, and to make the classroom an overall pleasant environment. In contrast, students gave their lowest mean ratings on the reverse-coded KITC subscale, describing the presence of verbal and physical conflict among classmates. A moderately high mean score was also observed for the reverse-coded IWT subscale, suggesting that most students worry only "sometimes" about aggression from classmates. A moderately low mean score was detected on the TWP subscale, indicating that students report less regular communication with their parents about their experiences in the classroom.

Comparisons of grade means show that third-grade students were significantly lower than fourth and fifth graders for all subscales except the IWT subscale ($p < .01$ for all third-fourth and third-fifth comparisons). Fourth and fifth graders reported somewhat higher academic efficacy,

Table 17.2 Mean ClassMaps Survey scores (and standard deviations) by grade and gender

Scale	All	Grade			Gender	
		3	4	5	Male	Female
BIM	1.99 (0.76)	1.82 (0.83)	2.29 (0.54)	2.25 (0.55)	1.94 (0.71)	2.05 (0.81)
TC	2.00 (0.73)	1.81 (0.79)	2.38 (0.43)	2.27 (0.43)	1.96 (0.66)	2.05 (0.78)
FCR	2.01 (0.73)	1.83 (0.80)	2.35 (0.44)	2.32 (0.35)	2.01 (0.69)	2.01 (0.76)
MT	2.24 (0.98)	1.97 (1.09)	2.69 (0.49)	2.80 (0.36)	2.22 (0.94)	2.28 (1.01)
MC	2.06 (0.95)	1.84 (1.02)	2.41 (0.71)	2.55 (0.41)	2.08 (0.90)	2.06 (0.99)
KITC	1.69 (0.90)	1.54 (0.91)	1.95 (0.85)	1.94 (0.75)	1.68 (0.92)	1.73 (0.88)
TWP	1.90 (0.90)	1.70 (0.96)	2.22 (0.65)	2.31 (0.63)	1.91 (0.85)	1.89 (0.94)
IWT	2.10 (0.80)	2.06 (0.80)	2.19 (0.82)	2.14 (0.75)	2.14 (0.75)	2.09 (0.83)

Note. BIM = Believing in Me, TC = Taking Charge, FCR = Following Class Rules, MT = My Teacher, MC = My Classmates, KITC = Kids in this Class; TWP = Talking with My Parents, IWT = I Worry That.

described more satisfying interactions with their classmates, reported more assistance from and communication with their parents, and had more positive interactions with their teachers.

Coefficient Alpha Reliability Estimates

Adequate reliability is vital for the ClassMaps Survey's widespread use in schools. Coefficient alpha is the most suitable measure of reliability for the survey because its subscales are relatively brief, there is no alternative form, and it has a four-item response format. Table 17.3 confirms that all subscales of the survey yielded coefficient alphas in a very acceptable range of the upper .80s to mid-.90s. The highest alpha levels were recorded for the MT subscale, and the lowest were observed for the BIM and TC subscales. Lower alpha coefficients were also observed for grade 4 ($n = 100$) and grade 5 ($n = 50$), but these scores may be statistical artifacts of differences in group heterogeneity or of the smaller sample sizes at these grades (Wainer, 2007). Coefficient alphas were routinely higher for females than for males, particularly in the BIM and TC subscales.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Validity Evidence

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to verify that the underlying factor structure of the ClassMaps Survey was consistent with its proposed conceptual framework. CFA results of an eight-factor model demonstrated that the 55 survey items accurately loaded on the predicted scales. Moreover, the eight-factor model was plausible with good model-data fit, because it met two of the three indexes suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999). The observed Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA; Steiger & Lind, 1980) value of .05 met the suggested criterion of less than .06, and the observed Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR; Bentler, 1995) value of .05 was well under the suggested criterion of .08. The Confirmatory Factor Index (CFI; Bentler, 1990) value of .913 was slightly less than the proposed criterion of .95. Overall, the eight-factor theoretical model of the ClassMaps Survey was supported.

Perhaps due to the process used to create the survey, students and teachers have openly accepted the face validity of this survey. More recently, studies have provided concurrent evidence of the scale's validity. Paul (2005) compared the ClassMaps Survey with the Yale School Climate Survey (High School Version; Haynes, Emmons, & Ben-Avie, 1997). She reported correlations ranging

Table 17.3 Reliability of the ClassMaps Survey subscales

Scale	Overall	Grade			Gender	
	(N = 420)	3 (n = 270)	4 (n = 100)	5 (n = 50)	Male (n = 208)	Female (n = 204)
BIM	0.86	0.87	0.71	0.79	0.82	0.89
TC	0.87	0.89	0.69	0.66	0.83	0.90
FCR	0.88	0.89	0.73	0.55	0.86	0.90
MT	0.96	0.97	0.87	0.80	0.95	0.97
MC-A	0.92	0.93	0.88	0.63	0.90	0.94
MC-B	0.87	0.88	0.85	0.81	0.86	0.88
TWP	0.89	0.91	0.75	0.82	0.88	0.90
IWT	0.90	0.90	0.91	0.91	0.87	0.92

Note. BIM = Believing in Me, TC = Taking Charge, FCR = Following Class Rules, MT = My Teacher, MC = My Classmates, KITC = Kids in this Class; KITC, TWP = Talking with My Parents, IWT = I Worry That.

from .473 to .586 between equivalent subscales of the two measures. Doll et al. (2006) reported correlation of .81 ($p < .01$) between the MC subscale of the ClassMaps Survey and the Friendship Features scale (Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1996) and a correlation of .28 ($p < .01$) between the KITC subscale and the Friendship Features scale.

Supporting Classroom Intervention with the ClassMaps Survey

With a convenient and dependable measure of the classroom environment, survey data can be used to support problem-solving consultation procedures that systematically strengthen classroom supports for learning. Informal efforts to foster positive psychological environments can occur through teachers' simple action research projects. For example, in one second-grade classroom, students completing the ClassMaps Survey described ambivalent relationships with their teacher. In response, the teacher made a point of smiling more often, injected more humor and learning games into the school day, and attended more closely to the students' descriptions of daily triumphs and hassles. Several months later, the same students completed the survey a second time, and their ratings showed strikingly stronger teacher-student relationships. In a separate instance, a group of eighth-grade students completed the survey and described substantial conflicts on the recess playground. Their teachers concurred, noting that they were worried about high rates of suspensions due to playground fights. In a meeting with their teachers, students suggested that the problems were primarily due to the barren and boring playground environment. Once more games were added to the lunchtime recess, the number of suspensions plummeted.

Alternatively, the ClassMaps Survey can be used to prompt classroom meetings between teachers and students with the goal of improving the classroom's environment. Murphy (2002) systematically examined the impact of survey-supported classroom meetings using an ABAB multiple baseline design with three fourth-grade classrooms. An early version of the My Classmates subscale was collected weekly for 9 weeks. During some of those weeks, the students and their teachers met to talk about the graphed survey data and used systematic problem solving steps to generate and plan solutions for identified problems. Results of the study showed that in two of the three classrooms, peer conflicts declined when the classroom meetings were in effect.

The ClassMaps Survey can also be used within a systematic consultation model in which the survey results are used to identify and provide baseline measures of weaknesses in the classroom environment. Classroom meetings are then used to involve students with the teacher in hypothesizing reasons for the weakness and devising systematic interventions to address these. Subsequently, classroom changes can be monitored through re-administration of one or more subscales of the survey, and interventions can be maintained or refined in the face of survey data. Nickolite and Doll (2007) used this systematic consultation strategy with two fourth-grade classrooms to plan and implement interventions to strengthen behavioral self-control. The authors then compared these to two fourth-grade control classrooms where survey data were collected but not examined by teachers or students. Results showed improvements in the consultation classrooms that were not evident in the control classrooms. When classroom problems are severe or intractable, manualized classroom interventions may be necessary. Brehm and Doll (2008) describe an array of manualized classroom interventions that discourage aggression and school violence, promote self-management, strengthen peer relationships, and increase prosocial behaviors.

Implications for Research and Educational Practice

This chapter shows how it is possible to use aggregated student data from the ClassMaps Survey as a first step towards data-based decision making about class-wide interventions. A critical contribu-

tion of survey data is to make essential features of classroom environments visible to teachers and their students, which is an important first step towards refining and strengthening these elements of the classrooms. Moreover, items on the ClassMaps Survey provide a clear and theoretically sound operationalization of the classroom characteristics that are essential to students' academic success. In particular, the content of survey items balances the importance of relational characteristics of effective classrooms with elements that strengthen students' autonomy and self-regulation. This operational definition extends the descriptions of effective classrooms beyond traditional emphases on teachers and instruction to include students' self-efficacy, self-determination, and self-control as important qualities of effective classrooms. This definition also acknowledges the importance of students' peer relationships for classroom success. In addition, survey items integrate parental participation into the definition of effective classrooms, reinforcing the place of families in the academic success of children. Finally, because most items are stated in the positive, the ClassMaps Survey predisposes teachers and their students to think about improving what is already positive in the classroom rather than remediating classroom weaknesses.

Problem solving that is predicated on student surveys gives students an essential voice in planning and implementing classroom change. Student perceptions are important in a number of respects: (a) students are integral to the system of the classroom, and their endorsement can contribute to the success of classroom changes; (b) their insights may provide teachers with new explanations for classroom problems and unanticipated suggestions for solutions; and (c) engaging them in classroom change efforts can distribute the work so that these efforts are more practical for busy classroom teachers. In this respect, the anonymity of the surveys is critical; privacy makes it possible for students to report impressions and experiences that they might not otherwise describe.

Use of the ClassMaps Survey capitalizes on the naturally-occurring reactivity of data. Examining data-based descriptions of their classroom implicitly impels teachers and their students towards refining and improving the classroom. Data-based problem solving strategies support teachers' change efforts, but do not displace teachers' status as the primary classroom decision-maker. The option of aggregating survey data across all students in a class makes it possible to shift intervention efforts towards a more ecological and class-wide approach. Finally, the convenience of survey data makes it possible to use it preventively, catching problems before they become serious, and formatively, recollecting data periodically to monitor impact and make corrective changes.

Conclusion

The development of the ClassMaps Survey, and of the classroom interventions that it supports, is an ongoing work. Additional evidence is needed to compare the survey against other direct measures of classroom relationships and self-regulation, and to examine the relations between these features of classrooms and students' academic engagement, such as the actual percentage of their completed assignments, observed time on task, and daily attendance. A specific priority in the future will be to evaluate the sensitivity of this survey to intervention and change. Nationally representative samples will be important to establish the means and standard deviations that are typical of successful versus less successful classrooms and to secure additional evidence of the scales' internal consistency with diverse classroom populations. Test-retest reliability estimates are needed that describe both the short- and long-term stability of this survey. With the use of the ClassMaps Survey and other measures of effective classroom environments, it is possible to systematically intervene to create positive supports for learning and development in individual classrooms. Within the framework of developmental risk and resilience, stronger classrooms have good potential to be effective protective factors that counteract adversities that are facing children in other aspects of their daily lives, and foster schools where all children truly can learn and succeed.

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18

Peer Relationships and Positive Adjustment at School

KATHRYN WENTZEL, SANDRA BAKER, AND SHANNON RUSSELL

Relationships with peers are of central importance to children throughout childhood and adolescence. They provide companionship and entertainment, help solve problems, provide personal validation and emotional support, and especially during adolescence, provide a foundation for identity development (Parker & Asher, 1993). In addition, positive peer interactions tend to promote the development of perspective-taking and empathic skills that serve as a basis for cooperative, prosocial, and nonaggressive types of behavior (e.g., Youniss & Smollar, 1989). Positive relationships with peers also have been related consistently to a range of academically-related accomplishments (Wentzel, 2005).

In light of this evidence that links children's adaptive functioning across social and academic domains, a central question that will be addressed in this chapter is how students' peer-related activities serve to promote social and academic competencies. Toward this end, we first review the literature relating peer relationships and activities to positive outcomes at school. Specifically, our focus will be on positive aspects of motivation in the form of students' pursuit of socially-valued goals, behavioral competence, and academic performance. Next we discuss the underlying reasons and mechanisms for why these relations might exist. In doing so, we provide general criteria for defining social competence that can be used to understand the contribution of students' peer relationships to the achievement of educational objectives. To guide our discussion, an ecological approach is proposed in which school-related competence is viewed as a highly context-specific outcome reflecting the degree to which students are able to meet the demands of the classroom environment and to achieve their own personal goals. Research on ways in which peers can support students' achievement of these dual sets of goals is then reviewed. We end with a discussion of ways in which classroom and school contexts can support the development of positive peer relationships, followed by suggestions for future work in this area.

Peer Activities and School-Related Competence

Researchers typically have studied children's involvement with peers at school in two ways, within the context of relationships (e.g., degree of peer acceptance by the larger peer group, membership in specific peer groups, and dyadic friendships), and within structured interactions related to

instruction (e.g., cooperative and collaborative learning). Each of these aspects of peer relationships and their correlates will be described in the following sections.

Peer Acceptance and Sociometric Status

An extensive body of work supports the notion that peer acceptance and peer sociometric status are related to children's motivational and academic functioning at school (Wentzel, 2005). Peer acceptance and sociometric status variables typically are based on unilateral assessments of a child's relative standing or reputation within the peer group. Scores reflect either a continuum of social preference ranging from well-accepted to rejected (e.g., How much do you like this person?), or assignment to a sociometric status group (i.e., popular, rejected, neglected, controversial, and average status; see Asher & Dodge, 1986).

Research indicates that sociometrically "popular" children (those who are well-liked and not disliked by peers) are academically proficient, whereas sociometrically "rejected" children (those who are not well-liked and highly disliked) experience academic difficulties; studies based on social preference scores yield highly similar findings (see Wentzel, 2005, for a review). Results are most consistent with respect to classroom grades, although peer acceptance has been related positively to standardized test scores as well as to IQ. These findings are robust for elementary-aged children as well as adolescents, and longitudinal studies document the stability of relations between peer acceptance and academic accomplishments over time. Sociometric status and peer acceptance also have been related to positive aspects of academic motivation, including pursuit of goals to learn, interest in school, and perceived academic competence.

An extensive body of work also has documented associations between peer acceptance and social behavioral outcomes. In general, when compared to their average status peers, popular students tend to be more prosocial and sociable and less aggressive, and rejected students less compliant, less self-assured, less sociable and more aggressive and withdrawn (Newcomb, Bukowski, & Pattee, 1993). Peer status also has been related to prosocial and socially responsible goal pursuit during middle school (Wentzel, 1991). For example, when compared with average status children, popular children tend to report more frequent pursuit of prosocial goals. Students who are "neglected" (i.e., neither well-liked nor highly disliked by their peers) also report more frequent pursuit of prosocial and social responsibility goals, whereas "controversial" students (i.e., highly well-liked by some and highly disliked by others) report less frequent pursuit of responsibility goals.

Peer Crowds and Groups

Students' membership in specific peer crowds and groups has been studied most frequently in American adolescent samples (see Brown, 1989). Typical adolescent crowds include "Populars," students who engage in positive forms of academic as well as social behavior but also in some delinquent activities; "Jocks," students characterized by athletic accomplishments but also relatively frequent alcohol use; more alienated groups (e.g., "Druggies") characterized by poor academic performance and engagement in delinquent and other illicit activities; and "Normals," who tend to be fairly average students who do not engage in delinquent activities. Research on peer group membership has been mostly descriptive, identifying the central norms and values that uniquely characterize adolescent crowds (e.g., Brown, Mory, & Kinney, 1994). Moreover, in contrast to sociometrically popular students who are typically characterized in positive terms, members of "Popular" crowds are often described in negative terms such as being dominant and exclusionary (Parkhurst & Hopmeyer, 1998).

The influence of peer crowds on adolescent functioning is illuminated in ethnographic studies

that describe how peer crowds facilitate the formation of students' identity and self-concept and structure their ongoing social interactions (Brown, 1989). With respect to identity formation, crowds are believed to provide adolescents with values, norms, and interaction styles that are sanctioned and commonly displayed. Behaviors that are characteristic of a crowd are modeled frequently so that they can be learned easily and adopted by individuals. In this manner, crowds provide prototypical examples of various identities for those who wish to "try out" different lifestyles, and in doing so, can affirm an adolescent's sense of self. The power of crowd influence also is reflected in relations between crowd membership and adolescents' attitudes toward academic achievement. Clasen and Brown (1985) found that adolescent peer groups differ in the degree to which they pressure members to become involved in academic activities, with "Jocks" and "Popular" groups providing significantly more pressure for academic involvement than other groups.

In addition, researchers who identify friendship-based peer groups using statistical procedures also have found relations between group membership and academic performance and academic engagement. Kindermann (1993; Kindermann, McCollam, & Gibson, 1996) reported that elementary-aged students tend to self-select into groups of peers that have motivational orientations to school similar to their own. Over the course of the school year, these orientations became stronger and more similar within groups (see also Berndt, Laychak, & Park, 1990). Friendship-based groups in middle school also have been related to changes over the course of the school year in the degree to which students perform academically (Ryan, 2001; Wentzel & Caldwell, 1997), although few have documented long-term relations between group membership and academic performance (e.g., Wentzel & Caldwell, 1997).

Friendships

Peer relationships also are studied with respect to dyadic friendships. In this case, students are asked to nominate their best friends at school; nominations are then matched to determine reciprocity, or best friendships. The central distinction between having friends and involvement with larger peer groups is that friendships reflect relatively private, egalitarian relationships often formed on the basis of idiosyncratic criteria. In contrast, peer groups are defined by publicly acknowledged and therefore easily identified and predictable characteristics that are valued by the group. In addition, whereas friendships are enduring aspects of children's peer relationships at all ages, peer groups and crowds emerge primarily during middle school, peak at the beginning of high school, and then diminish in prevalence as well as influence by the end of high school (Brown, 1989).

Friendships have been described most often with respect to their functions (Furman, 1989) and their qualities (Parker & Asher, 1993). However, simply having a friend at school appears to be related to a range of positive outcomes. Children with friends tend to be more sociable, cooperative, and self-confident when compared to their peers without friends; children with reciprocated friendships also tend to be more independent, emotionally supportive, altruistic and prosocial, and less aggressive than those who do not have such friendships (Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995).

Similar to other types of peer relationships, having friends also has been related positively to grades and test scores in elementary school and middle school (Berndt & Keefe, 1995; Wentzel, Barry, & Caldwell, 2004; Wentzel & Caldwell, 1997). In addition, having friends at school has been related to positive aspects of motivation and engagement in school-related activities (see Wentzel, 2005). In this regard, children entering kindergarten with existing friends, and those who make new friends quickly, appear to make better social and academic adjustments to school than those who do not (Ladd, 1990; Ladd & Price, 1987). Similar findings have been reported for students making the transition to middle school (Wentzel et al., 2004). During adolescence, friends are likely to support academic engagement in the form of studying and making plans for college (e.g.,

Berndt et al., 1990; Epstein, 1983). Finally, the quality of friendships has been related negatively to undesirable behavioral outcomes (Crosnoe & Needham, 2004), and friends' positive characteristics have been related to students' displays of prosocial behavior (Wentzel et al., 2004).

Cooperative and Collaborative Interactions

Research on peer interactions within cooperative and collaborative learning structures has been widespread. Experimental studies have documented that active discussion, problem solving, and elaborative feedback among peers are associated with advances in a range of cognitive competencies in samples ranging from preschool to high school (see Gauvain & Perez, 2007). For example, peer collaboration in mathematics and science has been found to improve problem solving and planning (Ginsburg-Block & Fantuzzo, 1998) and conceptual understanding (Golbeck, 1998). Of particular interest is that collaborating with friends rather than acquaintances tends to yield more predictable cognitive advances, presumably because friends have well-established interaction patterns and are sensitive to each others' interests and needs (e.g., Fonzi, Schneider, Tani, & Tomada, 1997). In contrast, however, results of classroom intervention studies have been less conclusive. Reviews of these studies indicate that dyadic peer interactions contribute most (albeit modestly) to learning outcomes for minority, urban-dwelling, and young children, and when dyads are homogeneous with respect to gender (e.g., Rohrbeck, Ginsburg-Block, Fantuzzo, & Miller, 2003).

Similarly, the effects of cooperative learning (i.e., peers working in larger groups) on social and academic outcomes are generally positive (Slavin, Hurley, & Chamberlain, 2003). Results of quasi-experimental and experimental studies suggest that the most successful cooperative learning activities are those that require positive interdependence among group members, individual accountability, face-to-face interactions among students, and learning social skills necessary to work cooperatively. Effects on academic achievement and cognitive outcomes are consistently positive when students work toward group goals while individual group members are simultaneously held accountable for progress (i.e., individual testing). Increases in intrinsic motivation, positive attitudes toward school, persistence, self-efficacy, and self-esteem also have been documented. Finally, positive group relations across ability levels and ethnic groups, and displays of prosocial behavior have been associated consistently with cooperative learning strategies. As with collaborative interactions, however, group learning also tends to be largely unsuccessful in producing cognitive gains when group members differ as a function of ability, race, ethnicity, and SES (Cohen, 1986).

Summary of Peer Activities

The literature on peer relationships and interactions provides strong and convincing evidence that peer-related activities predict a wide range of social and academic competencies at school, including frequent displays of prosocial behavior (e.g., helping, sharing, caring), relatively infrequent displays of antisocial and disruptive behavior, and some modicum of academic success. Many of these characteristics also are endorsed by adolescent peer groups, although less predictably. Collaborative and cooperative interactions also appear to be related to these same social and academic outcomes.

For the most part, this evidence is based on correlational studies lacking strong bases for drawing causal inferences. Similarly, experimental work often has not included important controls. Therefore, it is not clear whether positive social and academic outcomes are the result of intellectual gains or social skill development emanating directly from positive interactions with peers or, from the motivational, social, and behavioral benefits of having positive peer relationships. In fact, direct pathways from collaborative and cooperative forms of learning to cognitive gains rarely

have been established when accounting for the complex social and motivational aspects of peer interactions in groups. In either case, however, it is reasonable to assume that for many children, peers have the power to influence the development of social and academic competencies in positive ways. The following section will discuss multiple perspectives on why and how such influence might take place.

Perspectives on Peer Relationships and Social Competence

Based on the assumption that some causal influence does occur, how and why might students' relationships with peers be related to positive school-related accomplishments? Is it some aspect of the relationship itself that motivates academic accomplishments or, do social competencies that lead to social approval and acceptance among peers also contribute positively to academic functioning? Traditionally, theoretical explanations have focused on the broad notion that positive interactions with peers contribute directly to intellectual and social functioning. For example, Piaget (e.g., 1965) proposed that mutual discussion, perspective taking, and conflict resolution with peers can motivate the accommodation of new and more sophisticated cognitive approaches to problem solving, including problems in the social domain. For Piaget, development was contingent on the relatively symmetrical nature of same-aged peer interactions that allowed conflict resolution within the context of mutual reciprocity. Conversely, Vygotsky (1978) suggested that peers can contribute directly to the development of academic and social skills when competent students teach specific strategies and standards for performance to peers who are less skilled. In this case, asymmetrical interactions were believed to contribute to competent development, primarily by way of cooperative and collaborative exchange.

A more recent approach to answering these questions has been to consider the nature of social competence and how students' relationships with each other can provide access to critical supports that facilitate healthy adaptation to school. To describe this perspective more fully, we first present a definition of social competence derived from theoretical perspectives on person-environment fit and personal goal setting. This definition is then applied to the realm of schooling and students' relationships with peers. Ways in which peers provide school-based supports for competence development are then described.

Social Competence As Person-Environment Fit

In the social developmental literature, social competence has been described from a variety of perspectives, ranging from the development of individual skills to a more general adaptation within a particular setting. In these discussions, social competence frequently is associated with person-level outcomes such as effective behavioral repertoires, social problem-solving skills, positive beliefs about the self, achievement of social goals, and positive interpersonal relationships (see Rose-Krasnor, 1997). In addition, central to many definitions of social competence is the notion that contextual affordances and constraints contribute to and mold the development of these individual outcomes in ways that enable them to contribute to the social good (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). In this manner, social contexts are believed to play an integral role in providing opportunities for healthy social development as well as in defining the appropriate parameters of children's social accomplishments.

More specifically, Bronfenbrenner (1989) argued that competence can only be understood in terms of context-specific effectiveness, being a product of personal attributes such as goals, values, self-regulatory skills, and cognitive abilities, and of ways in which these attributes contribute to meeting situational requirements and demands. Bronfenbrenner further suggested that competence

is facilitated by contextual supports that provide opportunities for the growth and development of these personal attributes as well as for learning what is expected by the social group. Ford (1992) expanded on this notion by specifying dimensions of contextual support such that competence is achieved when: (a) information is provided concerning what is expected and valued in the classroom; (b) attempts to achieve these valued outcomes are met with help and instruction; (c) attempts to achieve outcomes can be made in a safe, non-threatening environment; and (d) individuals are made to feel like a valued member of the group.

Social Competence at School

The application of this perspective on social competence to the realm of schooling results in a multi-faceted description of children who are socially competent and well-adjusted. First, socially competent students achieve goals that are personally valued as well as those that are sanctioned by others. Second, the goals they pursue result in social integration as well as in positive developmental outcomes. Socially-integrative outcomes are those that promote the smooth functioning of social groups at school (e.g., cooperative behavior) and are reflected in levels of social approval and social acceptance; student-related outcomes reflect healthy development of the self (e.g., perceived competence, feelings of self-determination) and feelings of positive emotional well-being.

From this description it follows that social competence is achieved to the extent that students accomplish goals that have personal as well as social value in a manner that supports continued psychological and emotional well-being. In addition, the ability to be socially competent is contingent on opportunities and affordances of the school context that allow students to pursue personally valued and socially relevant goals. Applying Ford's (1992) dimensions of supportive contexts specifically to peer-related activities in classroom and school settings, this perspective implies that students will engage in the pursuit of adaptive goals in part, when their peers communicate expectations and standards for achieving multiple goals; provide direct assistance and help in achieving them; and create a climate of emotional support that facilitates positive engagement in socially-valued classroom activities, including protection from physical threats and harm. Findings relevant to these dimensions of peer support are described next.

Communicating Goals and Expectations for Performance

Research on the school-related goals that students value has not been frequent. However, pursuit of goals to be prosocial and socially responsible have been related consistently and positively to displays of prosocial and responsible behavior (Salmivelli, Ojanen, Haanpaa, & Peets, 2005; Wentzel, Filisetti, & Looney, 2007), and to peer acceptance (Wentzel, 1991, 1994). A limited number of studies also document that students do report trying to achieve positive social and academic outcomes. In an ethnographic study, Allen (1986) interviewed ninth-grade students about their school-related goals and found that two major goals were mentioned by almost all students, to socialize with peers, and to pass the course. Students believed these goals could be accomplished by trying to figure out what the teacher wants, having fun, minimizing work, reducing boredom, and staying out of trouble. In a separate study, when given a list of possible social and academic goals to pursue at school, high school students also have indicated trying to achieve social goals to have fun and to be dependable and responsible, in addition to task-related goals to learn new things and to get good grades (Wentzel, 1989).

Teachers and parents are obvious socializers of students' goals and values. Although not well documented, it also is reasonable to assume that students communicate to each other specific academic values and expectations for performance. During early adolescence, students report that

their classmates expect them to perform well academically at school. For example, approximately 80% of students from three predominantly middle-class middle schools reported that their peers strongly valued academic learning (Wentzel, Battle, & Looney, 2001). However, as students advance through their middle school and high school years, the degree to which their goals and values support positive academic accomplishments can become fairly attenuated. In samples of high school students, only 40% of adolescents report similar levels of peer academic expectations (Wentzel, Monzo, Williams, & Tomback, 2007).

In addition to general expectations concerning academic achievement, peers also provide proximal input concerning reasons for engaging in academic tasks. In support of this notion, students who perceive relatively high expectations for academic learning and engagement from their peers also report that they pursue goals to learn for intrinsic or internalized reasons (e.g., because it is important or fun; Wentzel, 2004). In the social domain, perceived expectations from peers for behaving prosocially also are significant predictors of internalized values for and displays of prosocial behavior (Wentzel et al., 2007). Therefore, students who see that their peers value and enjoy engaging in specific academic tasks and social interactions are likely to lead to form similar positive opinions and attitudes about those same tasks (Bandura, 1986).

Although children articulate sets of goals that they would like and expect each other to achieve, specific aspects of peer contexts that lead children to adopt these academic goals and values are not well understood. However, the larger peer group can be a source of behavioral standards, and group pressures can provide a mechanism whereby adherence to group standards is monitored and enforced. It should be noted that peer monitoring of behavior will contribute to the development of competencies valued by teachers and other adults only insofar as the peer group believes that adult standards for achievement and norms for conduct are important and legitimate. As children enter adolescence, however, they are less likely to acknowledge the legitimacy of adult-imposed norms (Smetana & Bitz, 1996) or automatically enforce classroom rules (Eccles & Midgley, 1989). Therefore, dependence on peer monitoring to enforce adult-generated rules might not be appropriate for many adolescent students.

Peers also can contribute to students' goals and expectations for performance by influencing perceptions of ability. This is important for understanding academic competence because students' efficacy beliefs are powerful predictors of academic performance (Schunk & Pajares, 2005). Children utilize their peers for comparative purposes as early as 4 years of age (Butler, 2005). As children work on academic tasks that require fairly specific skills and are evaluated with respect to clearly defined standards, they use each other to monitor and evaluate their own abilities. Experimental work also has shown that peers serve as powerful models that influence the development of academic self-efficacy (Schunk & Pajares, 2005), especially when children observe similar peers who demonstrate successful ways to cope with failure. These modeling effects are especially likely to occur when students are friends (Crockett, Losoff, & Petersen, 1984).

Providing Help and Assistance

Help giving is perhaps the most explicit and obvious way in which peers can have a direct influence on students' academic and social competence. Indeed, students who enjoy positive relationships with their peers will also have greater access to resources and information that can help them accomplish academic and social tasks than those who do not. These resources can take the form of information and advice, modeled behavior, or specific experiences that facilitate learning specific skills (e.g., Schunk, 1987). At least during adolescence, students report that their peers are as or more important sources of instrumental aid than their teachers (Lempers & Clark-Lempers, 1992).

Longitudinal studies of peer help giving are rare. However, findings on middle school students

making the transition into high school suggest that receiving academic help from familiar peers tends to increase over the course of the transition (Wentzel et al., 2007). One reason for this growing dependence on peers is that when adolescents enter high school, the relative uncertainty and ambiguity of having multiple teachers and different sets of classmates for each class, new instructional styles, and more complex class schedules necessitates that they turn to each other for social support, ways to cope, and academic help.

Providing Emotional Support

Feelings of emotional security and being socially connected are believed to facilitate both the adoption of goals and interests valued by others, and desires to contribute in positive ways to the overall functioning of the social group. For example, Connell and Wellborn (1991) argued that individuals engage in positive intellectual and social activities, and experience a positive sense of self and emotional well-being when contexts provide structure (e.g., clear and consistent expectations), autonomy support (e.g., opportunities for choice), and involvement (e.g., attention and caring). Social integration, therefore, depends in large part on feeling like one is an integral and valued part of the social group.

Support for this notion stems from an extensive literature relating positive academic outcomes to perceived emotional support from peers. Students who perceive that their peers support and care about them tend to be interested and engaged in academic pursuits, whereas students who do not perceive their relationships with peers as positive and supportive tend to be at risk for motivational and academic problems (Wentzel, 2005). Similarly, perceived social support also has been related to positive social outcomes. In particular, perceived social and emotional support from peers has been associated positively with prosocial outcomes in the classroom, such as helping, sharing, and cooperating, and related negatively to antisocial forms of behavior (e.g., Wentzel, 1994).

One reason for these findings is that exclusion from supportive peer relationships can result in negative outcomes in the form of emotional distress. Children without friends or who are socially rejected often report feeling lonely, emotionally distressed and depressed (e.g., Buhs & Ladd, 2001; Flook, Repetti, & Ullman, 2005; Wentzel & Caldwell, 1997). These negative forms of affect also are likely to result in negative attitudes toward school, academic performance, school avoidance, and low levels of classroom participation (Buhs & Ladd, 2001; Wentzel, Weinberger, Ford, & Feldman, 1990). Therefore, affective functioning is likely to mediate relations between peer activities and social and academic outcomes (e.g., Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2000).

Providing a Safe Environment

Of final interest is that students who are accepted by their peers and who have established friendships with classmates also are more likely to enjoy a relatively safe school environment and less likely to be the targets of peer-directed violence and harassment than their peers who do not have friends (Hodges, Boivin, Vitaro, & Bukowski, 1999; Schwartz, Dodge, Pettit, Bates, & The Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2000). In addition, young children who have friends who display prosocial behavior are less likely to respond in a hostile or impulsive manner in response to peer provocation or bullying behaviors than are children without highly prosocial friends (Lamarche et al., 2006). Presumably, this is because prosocial friends are able to provide instrumental help as well as model effective ways to decrease and defuse threats from peers.

The general effects of peer harassment on student motivation and academic competence have not been studied frequently. However, students who are frequently victimized tend to report higher levels of distress and depression than those who are not routinely victimized (e.g., Kochenderfer-Ladd

& Wardrop, 2001; Olweus, 1993). Few studies have identified pathways whereby peer victimization and harassment affect academic outcomes. However, as with perceived support, peer abuse and exclusion is likely to be associated with academic achievement by way of emotional distress (Buhs, 2005; Flook et al., 2005). Therefore, although indirect, having supportive peers in these negatively charged situations can have positive effects on a wide range of social, motivational, and academic outcomes.

Summary of Peer Relations and Social Competence

Social competence is defined in this chapter as the achievement of context-specific goals that result in positive outcomes for the self but also for others. In addition, our definition holds that contextual supports are crucial for the achievement of these multiple goals. In this regard, we have argued that peers can provide essential supports in the form of expectations and values, instrumental help, emotional support, and safety from physical threats and harm. In turn, these supports can facilitate the development of positive social and academic outcomes. Of additional interest, however, is that teachers and administrators are the primary architects of classroom and school contexts. In the following section, we describe the potential impact that teachers and the broader school context can have on students' ability to support each others' accomplishments at school.

Effects of Teachers and the School Context on Peer Relationships and Supports

In recent years research has begun to focus on the impact contextual factors may have on children's peer-related experiences. There is evidence that teachers' beliefs and behaviors, classroom organization, and school-wide structure, composition, and climate affects students' choice of friends and general propensity to make friends, as well as levels of peer acceptance and friendship networks in classrooms. In the following sections, research on teachers and classroom contexts, and then on school-level influences will be described.

Teachers and Classrooms

Teacher characteristics and instructional practices have been related to a number of peer-related outcomes. Teachers' perceptions and beliefs concerning students' aptitude and performance have been related to levels of peer acceptance and rejection. For example, young students appear to be aware of the ability and behavioral expectations their teachers hold for their fellow classmates, and tend to reject or accept their peers based on these perceived expectations (e.g., Donohue, Perry, & Weinstein, 2003). Further, students perceived to be intelligent by their teachers are consistently viewed in a more positive light by students, while those viewed by teachers as trouble makers are likely to be rejected (Hughes & Zhang, 2005). Moreover, teachers' verbal and nonverbal behavior toward certain children, especially when critical, also has been related to how these children are treated by their peers (Harper & McCluskey, 2003; White & Kistner, 1992).

The instructional approach that a teacher adopts also appears to have an impact on students' relationships with peers (Epstein, 1983). For example, students tend to have more close friends and a greater number of friends, and are less likely to experience peer rejection, when teachers use learner-centered practices (e.g., involving students in decision making) as opposed to teacher-centered practices (e.g., focusing on rote learning, norm-referenced evaluation; Donohue et al., 2003; Gadeyne, Ghesquière, & Onghena, 2006). Middle and high school students in classrooms where students are encouraged to talk to each other about class assignments, to work in small groups, and to move about while working on activities also are less likely to be socially isolated or

rejected by their classmates, enjoy greater numbers of friends, and experience more diversity and stability in their friendships (e.g., Epstein, 1983).

Variations in the social, academic, ethnic, and gender composition of classrooms also are known to influence friendship dynamics. Classrooms that are homogenous with respect to low levels of student ability and problem behavior can be deleterious to the formation and maintenance of positive, high quality, peer relationships over time (Barth, Dunlop, Dane, Lochman, & Wells, 2004). Presumably, this is because negative attitudes and behavior are more salient in these classrooms and therefore are more likely to be modeled, reinforced, and rewarded by students. In turn, these negative outcomes tend to promote less than adaptive peer interactions and relationships. The gender composition of a classroom also can influence the relationships students form with each other in that elementary-aged boys who transition to same-sex classrooms tend to develop more friendships than do girls (Barton & Cohen, 2004). Finally, the degree to which classrooms and schools are ethnically diverse also can influence the nature of adolescents' friendships, with greater diversity resulting in more positive outcomes (Jackson, Barth, Powell, & Lochman, 2006; Urberg, Degirmencioglu, Tolson, & Halliday-Scher, 1995).

The quality of students' relationships with teachers also is relevant for understanding school and classroom-level effects on peer relationships and achievement. Research indicates that preschool children who enjoy emotionally secure relationships with their teachers are more likely to demonstrate prosocial, gregarious, and complex play with peers and less likely to show hostile aggression and withdrawn behavior toward their peers (e.g., Howes & Hamilton, 1993). Moreover, the affective quality of teacher-student relationships predicts peer-related competencies up to 8 years later (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Although the nature of causal connections between teacher-student and peer relationships is unclear, it is likely that the development of positive relationships with peers is due in large part to systematic regulation of student behavior and the establishment of positive adult-child relationships in formal school settings.

School-Level Influences

Evidence of school-level influence on peer interactions and relationships has been less forthcoming. However, school-level norms can have a negative impact on ways in which students interact with each other and on subsequent academic motivation and achievement. This occurs most often when schools establish competitive academic standards and norm-referenced criteria for evaluating achievements that heighten social comparison among students. In turn, high levels of social comparison tend to result in students adopting orientations toward learning that focus on performance rather than mastery of subject matter, and in lowered levels of academic efficacy and aspirations for achievement especially among low ability students (Butler, 2005).

On a positive note, school-wide policies and programs that accentuate the importance of students' prosocial development can facilitate the development of positive peer relationships (Gresham, Van, & Cook, 2006). For example, social skills training programs can increase the prevalence of prosocial behaviors (e.g., sharing, cooperating) displayed by students in the classroom by teaching them how to recognize emotions more effectively, negotiate conflict resolutions, and control impulsive behaviors (Gresham et al., 2006). These programs also facilitate a reduction in the use of maladaptive social skills, thus enabling the formation of more functional relationships with peers (Ang & Hughes, 2001). In general, the best outcomes are observed when programs involve more than 30 hours of instruction over the course of several weeks, and use a variety of instructional methods and treatment approaches. Whole-school interventions also tend to be more effective than classroom-level or individual interventions (Hughes, Cavell, Meehan, Zhang, & Collie, 2005).

Other systematic efforts to enhance prosocial behavior and positive peer interactions are exempli-

fied by the Child Development Project (CDP; Developmental Studies Center). The CDP curriculum provides cooperative learning and class activities designed to reinforce positive behavioral and social norms of the classroom, foster cognitive and social problem-solving, and to build classroom unity and a sense of community. Evidence suggests that CDP schools out-perform comparison schools on a multitude of factors, including conflict resolution skills, concern for others, and altruism (e.g., Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, & Schaps, 1995). In addition, CDP students have shown increased levels of positive behavioral outcomes, lower levels of negative behaviors, and reported lower levels of undesirable behaviors in their friends. Similarly, the Fast Track Program (see Bierman et al., 1999), a school-based program designed in part to promote friendship building skills and social problem solving strategies, has documented improvements in the quality of elementary-aged students' peer relationships and social interactions (Lavalley, Bierman, & Nix, 2005).

Finally, although the literature on bullying implies that peers might be the primary source of threats to students' physical safety and well-being, of central importance is that teachers and school administrators can play a central role in creating schools that are free of peer harassment and in alleviating the negative effects of harassment once it has occurred. For example, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program focuses on improving peer relationships by creating and fostering a safe and positive school environment (Olweus, 1993). Interventions designed to offset the often negative influence of peer groups and gangs are especially successful if students have access to adults who provide them with warmth and strong guidance (Heath & McLaughlin, 1993).

Summary of Teacher, Classroom, and School Effects

The literature offers a range of practices that can facilitate the formation and maintenance of positive peer relationships at school. Heterogeneous classrooms and learner-centered instruction can facilitate positive peer interactions and friendship formation. Efforts to deter negative peer interactions such as bullying and harassment should include clear messages from administrators and teachers that such behavior is not condoned, consistent enforcement of rules when antisocial behavior occurs, and ongoing discussions that focus on the negative consequences of these interactions and how to combat them (see Olweus, 1993). Similarly, schools can implement strategies to promote the development of positive peer interactions, such as frequent communication of prosocial values, use of inductive discipline to promote empathy and interpersonal understanding, use of collaborative and cooperative activities for instruction, and encouragement of students to help each other (Battistich et al., 1995). Finally, students can be taught a range of friendship-making strategies (Wentzel & Erdley, 1993) and other specific peer interaction skills (see Gresham et al., 2006).

Remaining Issues and Future Directions

The underlying premise of this chapter is that having friends and establishing positive interactions with the larger peer group have the potential to support and facilitate the development of other positive social and academic competencies at school. Children who enjoy positive relationships with peers experience levels of emotional well-being, beliefs about the self, and values for prosocial forms of behavior and social interactions that are stronger and more adaptive than do children without positive peer relationships. Moreover, they also tend to be engaged in and even excel at academic tasks more than those who have peer relationship problems (Wentzel, 2005). Therefore, finding ways to facilitate the development of children's positive peer relationships remains a central and important challenge for educators.

Despite progress in understanding the positive contribution of peers to school-related outcomes, there are many unanswered questions concerning when and how peers exert their influence. For

example, an important question is whether there are critical periods during which peer relationships have more powerful effects. Some researchers have suggested that the cumulative experience of having friendships is more important to development than any one particular friendship at one point in time (Hartup & Stevens, 1997). From a developmental perspective, the role of peers in motivating academic and social accomplishments is likely to be especially critical during the middle and high school years. During this time, children exhibit increased interest in their peers, spend more time with them, and exhibit a growing psychological and emotional dependence on them for support and guidance as they make the transition into adolescence (Youniss & Smollar, 1989). Moreover, peer groups and crowds emerge primarily in the middle school years, peak at the beginning of high school, and then diminish in prevalence as well as influence by the end of high school (Brown, 1989). Therefore, efforts to understand the positive influence of peer relationships on school-related outcomes must be sensitive to the qualities and types of relationships that students form with each other at different points in their educational careers.

Additional questions concern the causal nature of peer relationships. For instance, do children have high quality friendships because they already possess the necessary skills to make friends, or do they develop positive social skills within the context of their friendships? Research that addresses this question is limited; longitudinal studies that assess the characteristics of both friends at multiple points in time are necessary to determine the nature and timing of change over the course of a friendship. However, studies that focus on mechanisms of influence support the notion that positive emotional attachments to friends promote healthy psychological functioning including positive feelings of self-worth and self-esteem. In turn, these levels of emotional well-being are likely to contribute to adaptive functioning in social as well as academic domains (Wentzel, 2005). Empirical findings also provide support for observational learning explanations of influence, whereby a friend or peer models behavior or motivational orientations that are subsequently adopted by a child (e.g., Wentzel et al., 2004). Finally, evidence supports theoretical propositions that positive interactions with peers contribute directly to intellectual development and functioning that in turn, can influence social as well as academic problem solving (e.g., Piaget, 1965; Vygotsky, 1978).

In conclusion, a full appreciation of how and why students thrive at school requires an understanding of a student's social interactions and personal relationships with their peers. These social aspects of students' lives have the potential to have a significant and positive impact on students' personal interests and goals, including motivation to achieve academically, adaptive behavioral skills and choices, and academic accomplishments. However, to fully realize the powerful and positive roles of peers at school, the "developmentally-instigating" properties (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) of the classroom that support and promote the development of positive interactions and relationships with peers must also be in place. In this regard, understanding ways in which teachers, classroom climates, and school-level policies contribute to these positive outcomes remains an important objective for future studies in this area. Peer relationship skills also might be especially important for adjustment in schools where peer cultures are particularly strong or where collaborative and cooperative learning is emphasized. Achieving a better understanding of such interactions deserves our full attention.

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Parent-Child Relationships

SHANNON M. SULDO

A positive psychology approach to parent-child relations involves a focus on what *to do* (as opposed to what *not to do*) to facilitate optimal development during youth. Drawing on this perspective, this chapter will highlight relatively malleable parenting practices that can be enhanced during the developmental stages of youth—practices that contribute to healthy adjustment in all children. Individual characteristics of parents (e.g., expectations of their child, personality, personal developmental history) and children (e.g., temperament, gender, physical appearance) unquestionably influence the parent-child relationship (see Luster & Okagaki, 2005). Although these associations are critical, this chapter intentionally focuses on parenting practices as predictors of parent-child relationships that school-based practitioners may be most likely to facilitate through prevention or intervention. After a review of effective parenting strategies, the literature on the relationship between parent-child relations and subjective well-being during youth is reviewed to illustrate the role of parenting in optimal development. This review will be followed by a discussion of the cognitive mechanisms by which parent-child relationships may influence child adjustment. Strategies for facilitating effective parenting practices via prevention, intervention, and psychoeducation conclude the chapter.

Positive Parent-Child Relationships During Infancy

Opportunities for positive interactions between parents and children are plentiful during infancy, the developmental period during which children are the most dependent on parents for survival. In addition to ensuring safety, a primary goal of parenting during infancy is to facilitate the development of a secure attachment (Lamb & Lewis, 2005). Particular ways parents relate to their children and their child-rearing beliefs predict positive interactions with, and development in, infants. Specific child characteristics affect the degree to which parents are able to demonstrate such behaviors, impacting parent-child relations.

Two often-studied dimensions of the parent-infant relationship during infancy are responsiveness and shared affection (warmth). Responsiveness involves prompt, reliable, and accurate attention to a baby's signals (Bornstein, 2002). Responsive caregiving is key to ensuring that an infant develops a secure attachment; parents' attempts to soothe their distressed child and respond to infant cues (e.g., cries, smiles) in a predictable manner contribute to the development of trust in their child. As empirical support, research using young toddlers (1-year-olds) finds that those with secure

attachments also tended to exhibit more harmonious interchanges and positive affect with their mother (Kochanska, 1998). Secure attachment, in turn, also is associated with positive social and cognitive outcomes later in development (Lamb & Lewis, 2005).

Parents who perceive high self-efficacy pertinent to their caregiving skills are generally more likely to be responsive to their infants' needs and display more positive parenting behaviors, such as empathy and appropriate developmental expectations (Bornstein, 2002). Confidence in one's parenting skills increases the likelihood that parents will attempt positive interactions with their children. This positive association may be specific to mothers who have accurate knowledge of infant development, as suggested by preliminary research with mothers of infants who were former patients in neonatal intensive care units (Hess, Teti, & Hussey-Gardner, 2004). This study found an inverse relationship between parenting self-efficacy and observed parenting competence (e.g., high visual and physical contact, sensitivity to child cues, contingent responding) in mothers with low knowledge of infant development (e.g., normative milestones; physical, linguistic, and cognitive development). Thus, interventions designed to increase parents' role in positive parent-child interactions should target their self-perceptions and knowledge relevant to parenting during infancy.

Although parenting practices and beliefs are indisputably influential in children's development, it is necessary to keep in mind the reciprocal flow of parent-child relations. For example, behavioral observations of infants displaying joy, fear, and anger reveal that the temperament of the child (particularly when he or she exhibits joy and fear) is differentially related to mother's and father's contributions to the parent-child relationship (e.g., parental responsiveness, shared positive affect) (Kochanska, Friesenborg, Lange, & Martel, 2004).

Positive Parent-Child Relationships During Early Childhood

Physical, cognitive, emotional, and social growth occurs rapidly between infancy and entry to school. As summarized by Edwards and Liu (2002), the primary tasks of toddlerhood are sixfold: increase independence in daily living, develop a self-concept, regulate emotions and impulses, learn empathy, identify with one's gender, and connect socially. The latter task, social competence, becomes increasingly salient during the preschool years (Lamb & Lewis, 2005). The critical influence of parent-child relationships on children's social functioning was recently verified through research with students at Head Start centers. Results found a positive, linear relationship between mothers' use of positive parenting practices (nurturance, responsiveness, consistency, and control) and their children's social skills (cooperation, self-control; Koblinsky, Kvalanka, & Randolph, 2006). This study also found an inverse relationship between positive parenting and children's mental health problems. Indeed, parenting practices were stronger predictors of internalizing and externalizing behavior problems than such traditional risk factors as maternal depression and family conflict.

Toddlers' self-recognition skills also are predicted by maternal responsiveness during infancy (Keller, Kartner, Borke, Yovsi, & Kleis, 2005). That is, after toddlers understand that they are separate beings with independent behaviors and thoughts, they are able to begin evaluating themselves in terms of their success and accomplishments, which is critical to the development of self-concept and self-regulatory behavior. Concrete forms of negative parental feedback regarding a toddler's performance are linked to negative self-evaluations (i.e., shame; Kelley, Brownell, & Campbell, 2000). Besides responsiveness and feedback, dimensions of parenting often examined in understanding parent-child dyads in this stage of development include various discipline strategies such as positive control (using techniques such as limit-setting and gentle guidance to control children's behavior) and negative control (using threats or physical discipline). A meta-analysis concluded that positive control is associated with greater compliance in preschool children, whereas negative control is related to less self-regulation (Karreman, van Tuijl, van Aken, & Dekovic, 2006).

Baumrind's (1989) groundbreaking research on parenting styles identified three styles of parenting in preschool-age families: *authoritarian* (controlling, detached), *permissive* (noncontrolling, warm), and *authoritative* (demanding, warm, and encouraging of children's independent striving). Children of authoritative parents were identified as the most self-reliant, content, adaptable, and cooperative. Relative to their authoritatively-reared counterparts, preschool boys and girls from authoritarian homes were more hostile and less independent, respectively, whereas children raised by permissive parents were less achievement-oriented (Baumrind, 1989).

Positive Parent-Child Relationships During Middle Childhood

Whereas parenting during infancy and early childhood involves ensuring children's basic needs are met through extensive hands-on caregiving, parenting during middle childhood (i.e., ages 5–12) involves monitoring children's increasingly independent attempts to become contributing members of social systems (e.g., families, teams, friendships) and to focus on academic achievement. This transfer of expectations for children to take control of their own behavior is a gradual process that continues to be marked by parental supervision and guidance. For example, an intervention aimed at increasing "involved/vigilant" parenting practices (i.e., high monitoring of children's whereabouts, use of inductive discipline, clear communication of expectations around risky behaviors, as well as proactive racial socialization) led to increased self-control in 11-year-old children, both directly and indirectly via increasing parental responsiveness/closeness to children (Brody et al., 2005).

Parenting issues particularly salient during the school age years include disciplining through more covert control strategies, engendering responsibility for one's actions, increasing social competence, and arranging positive experiences at school (Collins, Madsen, & Susman-Stillman, 2002). Regarding discipline, positive parenting in this stage moves from the concrete and sometimes physical/coercive nature of commands and punishments to a greater emphasis on reasoning and perspective-taking, a style marked by clear communication about the need for children to control their own behavior (Collins et al., 2002). Self-management and responsibility are promoted by parenting practices that provide positive models of prosocial behavior, provide opportunities for parents to reason with children about moral issues, and allow children to contribute to household tasks. Parenting that promotes social competence in school-age children is affectionate, accepting, and discourages aggression. Positive school experiences are more likely to occur in children of parents who hold high expectations for academic success, are involved with schooling both on-site and at home (e.g., assist with homework), reinforce school rules and routines, and demonstrate a general authoritative parenting style (Paulson, Marchant, & Rothlisberg, 1998).

Baumrind's (1989) extension of her research to elementary-age children revealed that the three styles identified in preschool children were present in families of older children, with an additional fourth parenting style labeled "unengaged" (nondemanding and nonresponsive; rejecting and/or neglectful). Similar to findings with younger children, children of parents who were both demanding (i.e., exerted firm control and restrictiveness) and responsive (i.e., exhibited warmth and noncoerciveness) were the most socially assertive and socially responsible. Authoritative parenting has also been linked to adaptive educational outcomes during the elementary school years (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989; Mattanah, 2005). For instance, Mattanah (2005) found that children's math and reading achievement at the end of Grade 1 was predicted by authoritative parenting behaviors (warmth and limit setting) 2 years earlier. A separate study of older elementary school children found optimal academic achievement and competence in the classroom were associated with two dimensions of authoritative parenting—*involvement* (high knowledge of the child's whereabouts, time spent with child, and enjoyment of the child) and *autonomy support* (inclusion of the child in decision-making and use of reasoning in discipline; Grolnick & Ryan, 1989).

Positive Parent-Child Relationships During Adolescence

Adolescence is the period in which children prepare for the transition from their families of origin to a more self-sufficient existence. The primary developmental tasks of adolescence involve adjusting to the biological changes associated with puberty, developing a firm self-identity, managing increased unsupervised time, and directing one's educational pursuits. Parents must adjust to adolescents' growing independence and anticipation of their futures while themselves managing the particular challenges of midlife, including reflection on one's life choices and mortality (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Although parent-child conflict is higher during adolescence than in middle childhood (McGue, Elkins, Walden, & Iacono, 2005), the stereotypic claim that parent-child relationships during this period are largely conflict-ridden is unfounded (Arnett, 1999).

A popular conceptualization of authoritative parenting views the emotional climate of the adolescent parent-child relationship in terms of the following dimensions: (a) acceptance/involvement, (b) behavioral control, and (c) psychological autonomy granting (Steinberg, 1990). All three dimensions of authoritative parenting uniquely predict academic competence during adolescence (Gray & Steinberg, 1999). Although warmth and supervision are important during younger stages of life, the unique focus on individuality during the teenage years makes graduated autonomy by parents particularly salient. Parental autonomy granting entails encouragement of their adolescent's independent decision-making and individual expression. Conversely, psychological control involves a coercive style marked by hostility in which parents use guilt induction to control their adolescent's behavior. High psychological control is associated with more internalizing mental health symptoms, whereas high autonomy granting co-occurs with high self-concepts (Silk, Morris, Kanaya, & Steinberg, 2003).

Parents should be cognizant of the role of their child's contributions to the parent-child relationship and should not get discouraged when inevitable conflicts arise. Research has found that characteristics of the adolescents better predict parent-child conflict than parents' provision of desirable parenting practices. Specifically, Dekovic (1999) reported that parent-child conflict co-occurred with adolescent impulsivity and sensation seeking more than low use of authoritative parenting practices, suggesting that a difficult child's temperament can undermine parents' attempts to be affectionate, responsive, and autonomy granting. Nevertheless, research on families with youth adjudicated for committing serious criminal offenses has found that authoritative parenting is associated the best levels of adolescent adjustment in terms of empathy, academic competence, and substance use (Steinberg, Blatt-Eisengart, & Cauffman, 2006).

Role of Ethnic and Economic Diversity in Optimal Parenting Practices

Some research has suggested that not all dimensions of authoritative parenting might be best for youth of ethnic minorities. For instance, use of physical discipline (associated with the most punitive style of parenting-authoritarian), which may be more frequent in African American families (Pinderhughes, Dodge, Bates, Pettit, & Zelli, 2000), has predicted poor outcomes in European American youth but fewer externalizing behavior problems in African American adolescents (Lansford, Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 2004). In contrast, other research supports the benefits of authoritative parenting in diverse families. Even during the preschool years, African American mothers' use of authoritative parenting behaviors (as compared to authoritarian and permissive parenting) was the strongest predictor of children's behavior problems; parents who reported using warmth, reasoning, and firm limit-setting during parent-child interactions also reported the fewest behavior problems in their children (Querido, Warner, & Eyberg, 2002). In adolescents, authoritative parenting is associated with higher school grades and self-reliance, as well as less psychological distress and delinquency, in families of various economic levels (work-

ing class, middle class) and ethnic backgrounds (Asian American, Hispanic American, African American, and Caucasian; Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn, & Dornbusch, 1991). Thus, although a contextual model of parenting has been advanced, empirical support is lacking (Spera, 2006), and a growing body of literature supports the notion that the positive relationship between authoritative parenting and children's functioning is invariant across demographic groups (Amato & Fowler, 2002; Radziszewska, Richardson, Dent, & Flay, 1996; Steinberg et al., 1991).

Parent-Child Relationships and Subjective Well-Being in Youth

Subjective well-being (SWB) is a key indicator of positive human experience (see Suldo, Huebner, Friedrich, & Gilman, chapter 3, this volume). Subjective well-being consists of a preponderance of positive emotions/affect relative to negative feelings, and high life satisfaction. Since judgments of SWB require one to competently evaluate and communicate his or her perceptions of the quality of his or her life (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2005), constraints associated with preoperational thinking and measurement limitations have precluded the study of SWB during infancy and early childhood.

Regarding studies of SWB in middle childhood, initial research suggests that positive affect in Grade 5 is associated with spending time with one's family (Larson & Richards, 1991). Nevertheless, few examinations of specific aspects of the parent-child relationship associated with SWB have been conducted. In a sample of Chinese 7- and 8-year-old children, parents' ratings of the warmth that they displayed to their children were significantly related to higher life satisfaction in children (Chang, McBride-Chang, Stewart, & Au, 2003). A study with American children failed to find an association between fourth-grade students' perceptions of attachment to their parents (high trust and communication, low alienation) and their life satisfaction, whereas a moderate, positive link was present in middle school students (Nickerson & Nagle, 2004). The salience of parent-child relationship to SWB in early adolescence is further illustrated by a study of Chinese seventh-grade students, which found that higher levels of child-rated maternal concern were moderately related to adolescents' concurrent life satisfaction as well as predicted greater life satisfaction 7 to 9 months later (Leung, McBride-Chang, & Lai, 2004).

In contrast to the dearth of research on positive subjective experiences associated with parenting in childhood, the parent-child relationship has strong empirical links with SWB during adolescence and beyond. For example, a longitudinal study of 17,000 European youth found that feeling close to one's mother at age 16 reliably predicted higher life satisfaction 25 years later (Flouri, 2004). Parent-child relationship factors associated with subjective well-being during youth include attachment (as aforementioned), parent-child conflict, and authoritative parenting characteristics, particularly support and acceptance. Regarding parent-child conflict, research with Chinese adolescents highlights the importance of harmonious family relations to high SWB. Specifically, higher levels of adolescent-father and adolescent-mother conflict are associated with diminished life satisfaction concurrently and longitudinally (1 year later; Shek, 1998).

Regarding parenting styles and adolescent SWB, initial research found that children who perceived authoritative parenting techniques during family decision-making times reported significantly higher overall subjective quality of life than children who perceived their parents to be unengaged (i.e., adolescents felt that they were responsible for making decisions; Petito & Cummins, 2000). Examinations of the dimensions of authoritative parenting (warmth, supervision, psychological autonomy promotion) found that while multiple dimensions are significantly related to life satisfaction among adolescence (Suldo & Huebner, 2004) and college students (Seibel & Johnson, 2001), parental warmth/support/acceptance is the strongest predictor. Indeed, adolescents reporting very high life satisfaction also reported the highest level of perceived social support from their parents (Suldo & Huebner, 2006). Emotional support is also crucial to the SWB

of youth experiencing significant stressors such as pregnancy (Stevenson, Maton, & Teti, 1999) and immigration (Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000). In fact, parental support is more strongly associated with positive SWB among such groups of at-risk youth than salient peer and environmental factors hypothesized to relate to psychological adjustment (Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000; Stevenson et al., 1999).

Positive Psychology Constructs that Link Parent-Child Relationships to Healthy Adjustment

The preceding literature review identified aspects of the parent-child relationship that are associated with important developmental tasks of youth (e.g., attachment bonds, academic achievement, social success, and good physical and mental health). The growing field of positive psychology calls attention to cognitive dispositions such as self-efficacy, hope, optimism, goal pursuits, and empathy that are linked with wellness (Snyder & Lopez, 2005). An emerging body of literature supports these positive protective factors as mediators of the relationship between parenting practices/styles and child outcomes, such that parenting influences students' cognitions, which, in turn, are directly linked to their outcomes. Thus, the pathway from parenting to child outcome appears indirect, mediated by the positive facilitating cognitive factors discussed next.

Goal Pursuits

Optimal performance is associated with personal goals that are difficult, specific, and accompanied by feedback about performance relative to standards (Locke, 2005). The goals people select reflect their inborn needs and acquired values. Thus, parents who model a general commitment to education and prosocial behavior are more likely to transmit values associated with adaptive functioning during youth. Preliminary research suggests that as adolescents mature, warm, supportive, and democratic parenting practices may be increasingly associated with a desirable goal orientation termed *learning or mastery motivation* (intrinsically value increasing knowledge and skills) over maintaining a positive appearance (referred to as performance motivation; Anderman & Anderman, chapter 13, this volume; see also Gonzalez, Doan Holbein, & Quilter, 2002; Spera, 2006). Specifically, authoritative parenting predicts higher pursuit of both learning and performance goals in middle school students (Spera, 2006), but only high mastery motivation in high school students (Gonzalez et al., 2002). In a study of high school youth, authoritarian (i.e., punitive discipline and an emphasis on obedience and conformity) and permissive (i.e., low control or involvement) styles of parenting were linked to more performance motivation (goals center around appearing competent), which can co-occur with withdrawal and setting lower goals (Gonzalez et al., 2002).

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy beliefs refer to one's perceived competence and confidence in his or her ability to perform behaviors needed to achieve a desired outcome (Bandura, 1977). These beliefs regarding the ability to enact a skill set contribute to one's decision to take action and persist; as such, self-efficacy beliefs are critical to one's healthy or problematic adjustment (Bandura, 1977). Such beliefs are facilitated by early and ongoing social environments that are responsive to children's attempts to control their surroundings so that children recognize their actions produce outcomes. In addition to being responsive, parents promote self-efficacy by emphasizing mastery goals (rather than performance goals) and arranging mastery experiences in which children are provided with challenging yet achievable tasks and then permitted to produce effects (Bandura, 1997; Friedel,

Cortina, Turner, & Midgley, 2007). Confidence in one's abilities to enact a skill set is domain-specific rather than generalized, and links environmental influences such as parenting practices to developmental tasks such as forming healthy, prosocial interpersonal relationships. For instance, the long-established relationship between parental involvement and low rates of substance use during adolescence is mediated by adolescents' resistance self-efficacy (Watkins, Howard-Barr, Moore, & Werch, 2006). Specifically, youth who report that their parents are affectionate, monitor their whereabouts, and communicate with them often feel more confident in their abilities to avoid using alcohol in social situations and, in turn, are less likely to actually consume alcohol (Watkins et al., 2006). In children, the significant influence of a strong child-father attachment (i.e., a relationship high in trust and communication, as well as low in anger and alienation) on children's positive peer relationships is fully mediated by children's perceptions of their self-efficacy in social situations (Coleman, 2003).

Hope

Modern academic definitions of hope include consideration of goals, pathways, and agency—"hopeful thought reflects the belief that one can find pathways to desired goals and become motivated to use those pathways" (p. 257, Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2005). In other words, pathways thinking refers to one's ability to generate feasible means to obtain one's goals whereas agency is the motivational component that ensures one will be able to begin and sustain the effort necessary to pursue a particular pathway (see Lopez, Rose, Robinson, Marques, & Pais-Ribeiro, chapter 4, this volume). Parents who are responsive, demonstrate environmental contingencies, promote psychological autonomy, and coach their children to set goals foster goal-directed hopeful thinking in their children, which is linked to improved academic and athletic performance, as well as better physical and mental health (Snyder et al., 2005). Initial research supports hope as a cognitive link between parenting practices, subsequent attachment relationships, and current psychological distress and wellness. Specifically, Shorey Snyder, Yang, and Lewin's (2003) study of college students' recollections of their parents' behavior found that the moderate correlations between authoritative parenting during childhood and mental health (anxiety, depression, positive affect) during adulthood were mediated fully by hopeful thinking and attachment during adulthood.

Optimism

Optimism (i.e., a generalized expectation that one's future outcomes will be good) is associated with resistance to depression and higher perceived quality of life in the face of adversity (Carver & Scheier, 2005). The parenting practices most highly associated with children's optimism likely include aspects of parental control. Specifically, Hasan and Power (2002) found that high psychological autonomy granting and moderate levels of behavioral control were associated with the greatest child-reported optimism in elementary school students, whereas parental support and structure/consistency within the home were unrelated to optimism. The parental warmth component of authoritative parenting may become more influential during adolescence, as suggested by research with high school students that identified moderate, positive relationships between adolescent optimism and concurrent perceptions of authoritative parenting (warmth and strictness) and emotional closeness to and positive communication with parents (Ben-Zur, 2003; Jackson, Pratt, Hunberger, & Pancer, 2005). These studies also demonstrate the functional role of optimism, which served as a pathway by which authoritative parenting and father-child relationships influenced adolescents' mental health (specifically, life satisfaction, negative affect, depression, and self-esteem).

Empathy

Empathy (i.e., an emotional awareness that someone else is in need; which includes emotions such as sympathy, compassion, and tenderness) motivates people to act in a prosocial manner in order to benefit another (Batson, Ahmad, Lishner, & Tsang, 2005; see also Spinrad & Eisenberg, chapter 10, this volume). Elementary school children's levels of empathy and prosocial behavior towards people in distress are linked to their mothers' own responsiveness to others' distress (i.e., sensitive reactions that model empathy and compassion and encourage the child to talk about troubles), but not to maternal warmth (i.e., expressed love and affection; Davidov & Grusec, 2006). In line with the salience of altruistic behaviors to maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships, empathy is linked to broad indicators of social functioning and actually mediates the relationship between parenting practices and child social adjustment. In particular, positive parent-child attachment (high trust and communication, low alienation), parental warmth, and expression of positive emotions are associated with greater child empathy, which, in turn, predicts fewer negative social behaviors such as aggression and acting out in children (Zhou et al., 2002) and adolescence (Laible, 2007).

Applications for School-Based Professionals: Prevention and Intervention

Positive parent-child relationships, as facilitated by advantageous parenting practices, are clearly related to a host of adaptive cognitive and behavioral outcomes throughout child and adolescent development. Thus, promoting wellness in school-aged youth necessitates family involvement. Psychologists in schools can advocate for and foster positive parenting practices among all families, or intervene when family functioning has gone awry. Prevention is at the forefront of a positive psychology approach to mental health service delivery (Seligman, 2002). The Triple P—Positive Parenting Program (Sanders, Markie-Dadds, Turner, & Brechman-Toussaint, 2000), a population approach to improving competent parenting practices, embodies the spirit of positive prevention applied to the family institution and thus will be described in detail.

The twofold aims of the Triple P model are to, “promote positive, caring relationships between parents and their children, and to help parents develop effective management strategies for dealing with a variety of childhood behavior problems and common developmental issues” (Sanders, Turner, & Markie-Dadds, 2002, p. 173). Parents are provided uniform information and individualized support based on their specific needs through five levels of programming. Level 1 is a universal parent information strategy in which information about common parenting issues and parenting resources is communicated to community members via a media campaign. Level 2 is a selective level intervention in which parents of children with minor behavior problems receive specific guidance via 1–2 sessions with a practitioner. Level 3 involves active skills training for parents of children with mild to moderate behavior problems. At Level 4, an intensive 8- to 10-session training program is provided to parents of children with multiple behavior concerns or disruptive behavior disorders. Level 5 is a supplementary 5- to 11-session behavioral family therapy approach for families with complex systemic issues such as parental psychopathology and stress.

Outcome research on the positive effects of the Triple P model is promising. At the universal level, support for Level 1 is provided by research showing that parents randomly assigned to watching the television media programming increased their parenting competence and reported declines in their children's disruptive behavior immediately after the intervention, gains that were maintained at 6-month follow-up (Sanders, Montgomery, & Brechman-Toussaint, 2000). Level 4 and 5 programming has resulted in improvements in parenting efficacy, parenting competence, and reductions in child disruptive behavior after an intervention involving preschool children who had behavior problems. These positive effects held for children from at-risk families recruited

from the community (Bor, Sanders, & Markie-Dadds, 2002) and when implemented as a worksite intervention for families in distress (Martin & Sanders, 2003).

Applications for School-Based Professionals: Psychoeducation

School-based professionals can also help to enhance positive parent-child relations via psychoeducation (i.e., a public health approach to disseminating the research literature) about parenting practices that promote positive outcomes in youth. In addition to communicating summaries of research through presentations to parents, practitioners can refer parents to reader-friendly books that translate results from empirical studies of effective parenting practices into easy-to-understand approaches to good parenting. For instance, Webster-Stratton's (2006) book provides general parenting strategies for young children that are designed to promote social-emotional competence and non-violent discipline techniques. Geared towards parents of children and adolescents, Steinberg's (2004) book communicates the importance of positive parenting behaviors such as warmth, involvement, limit setting, and autonomy promotion. Patterson and Forgatch (2005) summarize decades of research on family functioning in a book written specifically for parents of teenagers that covers parental monitoring, encouragement of growth, and age-appropriate discipline strategies.

Conclusion

The research findings reviewed in this chapter demonstrates the positive developmental outcomes associated with specific parenting practices, namely warmth and involvement, throughout each stage of child development. Parents who exude affection and emotional support while remaining actively aware of their children's needs and whereabouts are most likely to create the type of positive family institution that supports child competence. Notably, modern parenting involves raising children in such a manner in the face of the orthogonal demands of an increasingly fast-paced and results-oriented society. Demands on parents' times may contribute to reduced involvement and use of coercive discipline strategies that yield immediate results, parenting practices that may be inadvertently reinforced via such mechanisms as employers' praise for committed employees or friends' positive words about compliant children. Although a democratic approach to child-rearing may be more time-intensive on the front end, parents may be encouraged by awareness of the host of optimal outcomes (e.g., social competence, academic achievement, high subjective well-being, positive cognitive dispositions) that are exhibited most frequently by children reared by authoritative parents. School-based professionals can support positive parenting practices through universal prevention and intervention strategies. Such extensive applied efforts are justified by the myriad of positive child outcomes associated with healthy parent-child relationships.

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20

Parents as Essential Partners for Fostering Students' Learning Outcomes

AMY L. RESCHLY AND SANDRA L. CHRISTENSON

The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: families have a major influence on their children's achievement in school and through life ... When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.

(Henderson & Mapp, 2002, p. 7)

Years of research, and hundreds of studies, indicate the major role of families in promoting academic, social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes among youth (Barton & Coley, 2007; Hess & Holloway, 1984; Wahlberg, 1984; White, 1982). The desire to tap family involvement for the educative purposes of schools is not surprising, particularly in this era of accountability and the ubiquitous press for improved achievement among students in our schools. The national precedence given to family involvement in education is evidenced in legislation—No Child Left Behind (NCLB; cited in Epstein, 2005); the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA); initiatives such as the National Education Goals (Goals 1 and 8; National Education Goals Panel, 1999); countless policy and position statements put forth by such organizations as the National PTA (1998, 2000), National Association of School Psychologists (2005), and even accrediting bodies such as National Council for Accreditation on Teacher Education (NCATE, 2002, cited in Epstein & Sanders, 2006); and, although to a somewhat lesser extent, state educator licensing guidelines (Radcliffe, Malone, & Nathan, 1994). Very interesting are the findings of a recent study, “The Family: America’s Smallest School,” by the Educational Testing Service (ETS; Barton & Coley, 2007). These ETS researchers identified four variables that are out of the direct control of schools (single parent household, attendance, amount of daily reading at home, and amount of TV watching) that predicted student success on state reading standardized tests with impressive accuracy. When interviewed for the *New York Times* article (Winerip, 2007), Coley stated:

Kids start school from platforms of different heights and teachers don't have a magic wand they can wave to get kids on the same platform. If we're really interested in raising overall levels of achievement and in closing the achievement gap, we need to pay as much attention to the starting line as we do the finish line.

This statement aligns with the preventive nature of and need for family-school partnerships across grade levels; yet, they remain an unmet national educational priority (Barton & Coley, 2007; Carlson & Christenson, 2005). Students' adaptation to schooling depends in part on the degree of support, opportunity to learn, and resources available to the student; these come from home and school and must fit the specific developmental period.

The desire to utilize family involvement in order to improve student outcomes has outpaced educator pre-service and in-service training necessary to accomplish this aim. Pre-service training that addresses working or partnering with families has generally been limited to the areas of early childhood and special education (Chavkin & Williams, 1988), rather than all K-16 students and their families. Although there has been some progress in family involvement and/or partnerships in other pre-service coursework, educators are largely unprepared to carry out this expected and vital portion of their jobs (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). This lack of preparedness continues into practice. As such, there is a national need for in-service training in this area for educators and administrators (Jordan, Orzco, & Averett, 2001).

Similarly, national initiatives and the inclination to utilize family involvement have outstripped knowledge of effective implementation processes (Jordan et al., 2001) and evidence-based programs and practices (Carlson & Christenson, 2005). Much of the research and publications to date have been correlational, descriptive, and/or policy focused. Currently, however, the field has begun to delineate effective programs and practices (e.g., Carlson & Christenson). Furthermore, articles and literature reviews published in the recent years have detailed the methodological issues in research, delineated areas of promise and greatest need, and outlined necessary research agendas to move the field forward (e.g., Carlson & Christenson, 2005; Jordan et al., 2001; Sheridan, 2005).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the literature related to partnering with families to promote child competence. First, the theoretical foundation of this work-systems ecological theory-is described, along with implications of systems theory for work in education. The next section describes how this theoretical framework has influenced several recent changes in the field, including definitions of families, involvement, and partnerships and the role of the meso-systemic relationship for promoting competence. The focus of current inquiry in family-school relationships to promote positive outcomes is on questions of *how* and *what works*. These questions are addressed in the last sections of the chapter, followed by future directions for research.

An Evolving Field

Theoretical Foundation

A number of studies and policies related to involving or working with families were developed in the absence of a theoretical framework, a step necessary to advance research and guide practice in the field (Jordan et al., 2001). Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992) provides the theoretical foundation for working across families and schools to promote student success. Bronfenbrenner stressed understanding child development in context, noting the importance of immediate or proximal settings (family, school, community) and those more distal in nature, such as parents' workplace, legislation, cultural norms, and so forth. In this view, children are embedded within contexts. There are reciprocal interactions or relationships among these contexts over time, rather than a unidirectional influence of a setting, such as family or school, on student outcomes.

There are several implications of this theory for work in education. First, child competence cannot be understood as a function of home or school inputs (for reviews of the literature regarding home, school, and teaching influences related to student outcomes, see Christenson & Buerkle, 1999, Bickel, 1999, and Brophy & Good, 1986, respectively) but rather must be considered part of the entire system, e.g., child, family, school, community, and peer contexts. Furthermore, of chief

importance for promoting competence are relationships, particularly the relationship between the two primary socializing contexts, home and school (Pianta & Walsh, 1996). As such, child competence is best understood as a result of co-action, or as the dynamic influence of relationships among systems.

This theoretical framework also affects how risk is conceptualized. Risk is not located within the student, home or school systems, but rather is distributed across systems and represented in the interactions among these systems. Thus, high-risk circumstances are those in which there is a lack of congruence in messages and poor relationships between home and school. Low-risk conditions are those in which family and school systems are well-functioning and there is a positive relationship between these two major socializing influences, promoting congruence and shared responsibility (Pianta & Walsh, 1996). In other words, relationships among these contexts (e.g., home-school) and subsystems (e.g., teacher-student, parent-child) represent a social system that enhances or thwarts students' learning across school levels (Christenson & Anderson, 2002).

Manifestation of Theory: Current Thinking about Families and Schools

Current thinking about families, research, and future directions is reflective of this system's ecological theoretical framework. Although not exhaustive, some of the more substantive changes and status of the field are described briefly in the paragraphs that follow. These changes include changing definitions of families, acknowledgement of the role of context and purpose of involvement initiatives, a reduced focus on school-determined activity-based involvement, and recognition of the importance of the family-school relationship.

One of the signature developments in recent years is the changing conceptualization and purpose of involvement. *Parent Involvement* has given way to a broader view of families and *Family Involvement*, recognizing the many configurations of families and diversity of roles in which relatives and close friends may have in raising children and adolescents. Furthermore, there is no single definition of family involvement; rather, families take part in a wide-range of participatory and support behaviors across settings (school, home, community; Jordan et al., 2001). Hence, the predominant emphasis on school-defined involvement, which is reflective of the school's priorities, is insufficient to capture how families support learning, may inhibit involvement of some families, and preclude the development of constructive relationships with others. There is variation in both the definition and purpose of family involvement initiatives, which may include (a) a focus on increasing or improving family involvement in schooling (e.g., Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, & Apostleris, 1997); (b) enhancing the interactions between home and school with a goal of improving student learning; or (c) establishing partnerships between families and schools to create the most favorable conditions possible for enhancing student learning and competence (Christenson, 2004). Our preference is a focus on the creation of partnerships between families and schools with the goal of facilitating optimal student learning across academic, social, behavioral, and emotional domains of competence.

Furthermore, partnerships imply engaged relationships, one wherein teachers are engaged with students, parents are engaged with their children's learning and lives, and parents, educators, and students are actively engaged with each other toward the shared goal of promoting students' success and schooling experiences. An effective parent-school engagement process is based in problem-solving approaches (e.g., sharing of information, data, suggestions; listening, co-construction of concerns, intervention plans, and so forth) that provide parents, educators, and students *access* (right to inclusion), *voice* (feeling that they were heard and listened to throughout the process), and *ownership* (agree with and are committed to any plan concerning them) during shared decision making to address referral concerns (Osher, 1997).

Another shift that has occurred in this field is a reduced focus on activities. Much of the initial work in both academic and practitioner venues related to family involvement at school was activity focused, providing ideas or lists of activities for family involvement. These lists, while useful to some extent, have yielded to the greater appreciation of context inherent in a systems ecological theoretical framework for family-school relationships. Any number of activities may accomplish a specific goal or outcome, such as communication (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006), but it is not the activity per se that matters (although these must occur), but rather the activity must match the desired goal or outcome within a given context. Effective practices for engaging and partnering with families vary across sites, depending on the unique needs of families, students, and schools and the resources available to families, schools, and communities. Furthermore, particular programs or strategies may have different effects at different ages (Jordan et al., 2001). For example, a family literacy program that is effective for improving the reading performance kindergarten and first grade students may not be appropriate for high school students in a language arts class. Similarly, the content of the partnership effort may be coordinated home learning activities for elementary students, but shift to more motivational home support for learning such as discussion about student interests, parental expectations, and planning for postsecondary enrollment options for adolescents (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). In short, *context matters*.

Focus on the Mesosystem

According to Bronfenbrenner's seminal theory (1979, 1992), the mesosystem refers to interactions among the contexts in which the child directly participates, typically home, school, and community. The relationship between home and school, the primary socializing agents for children and adolescents, is part of the mesosystem. There has been a gradual deconstruction of the notion that families and schools have separate responsibilities for student learning. Rather, the learning environment for students is comprised of home, school, and home-school relationship components (Ysseldyke & Christenson, 2002). The meso-systemic home-school relationship is increasingly recognized as being imperative to student success (Barton & Coley, 2007; Kreider, Caspe, Kennedy, & Weiss, 2007). Recognition of the importance of the home-school relationship for promoting students' academic, behavioral, social, and emotional competence orients educators and researchers to the *quality of the home-school relationship*, importance of *congruence* and consideration of the power of *out of school time*.

Relationship Quality

Previous research and applied work in the field of family involvement in schooling was dominated by the aforementioned focus on activities and typologies of family involvement. The most influential of these typologies is Epstein's six types: Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Enhancing Learning at Home, Decision Making, and Collaborating with the Community. These types of involvement were the basis for the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs (National PTA, 1998) and provide a structure for school action teams who desired to implement family-involvement programs (Epstein, 1995; Epstein et al., 2002). However, as definitions of families and the ways in which families support learning have expanded, paired with an increased focus on the meso-systemic relationship between home and school, so too has attention to other types and dimensions of involvement and relationships. For example, it has been recognized that in addition to quantity, the *quality* of contact between home and school must be examined (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001); it may also be important to distinguish between school and parent-initiated contact (Jordan et al., 2001; Kohl, Lengua, & McMahan, 2000). Kohl and colleagues (2000) have

offered an expanded typology that reflects both behavioral and affective/relational components of family involvement in education: parent involvement at school, parent involvement at home, parent-teacher contact, quality of the parent-teacher relationship, teacher perception of the parent, and parent endorsement of school.

Congruence in Messages

The meso-systemic home-school relationship promotes positive outcomes for students when there is congruence in terms of expectations, interactions, and so forth, and a positive relationship among these socializing agents. For example, Hansen (1986) found greater achievement gains for third- and fifth-graders who experienced congruence in rules and interaction styles across home and school. In addition, interventions have been found to be more effective when both home and school components are utilized (e.g., Heller & Fantuzzo, 1993; Ramey & Ramey, 1998; Sheridan, Kratochwill, & Elliott, 1990) and when joint problem-solving sessions between parents/guardians and educators are conducted (Galloway & Sheridan, 1994). Establishing congruence is also a key component in the delivery of efficacious mental health interventions (Dishion & Stromshak, 2006).

The significance of home-school relationships and congruence between these systems is buttressed by empirical work that suggests analogous home and school predictors of achievement and learning. As noted by Chall (2000), “The processes and characteristics that enhance academic achievement are essentially the same—whether found in the home or in the school” (p. 159). Home predictors of school learning—work habits of the home, academic guidance and support, stimulation to explore and discuss ideas and events, language environment, and academic aspirations and expectations—are comparable to school factors that enhance achievement (Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez, & Bloom, 1993).

Similarly, a comprehensive review of more than 200 studies on home, school, and community influences related to student learning revealed a common set of factors that promote learning across contexts: *Standards and Expectations* (the level of expected performance held by key adults for youth); *Structure* (overall routine and monitoring provided by key adults); *Opportunity to Learn* (variety of learning options and resources available to youth in the home, school, and community); *Support* (guidance provided by, communication between, and interest shown by adults to facilitate student progress in school); *Climate and Relationships* (amount of warmth, friendliness; praise and recognition; and degree to which adult-youth relationships are positive and respectful); and *Modeling* (how adults demonstrate desired behaviors and commitment/value toward learning and working hard). These factors highlight the complementary nature of family, school, and community influences for student success (Christenson & Peterson, 2006). Data gathered directly from students supported the validity of these factors for student learning and success. Students characterized by their teachers as *consistent learners* rated the importance of each factor to their learning more highly than those who were described as *inconsistent learners*. The home and school influences related to student success were more frequent and systematically present for consistent learners, which suggested a cumulative effect of home and school systems on achievement (Christenson & Anderson, 2002). These components, for families or schools, may be characterized as the extent to which the environment is a learning environment; the curriculum of the home or the school (Walberg, 1984). Other family-school interventions are focused on interventions that connect families to the curriculum at school.

Out of School Time

Consideration of the effects that home, school, and the home-school relationship have on student achievement necessitates consideration of the places in which learning may occur, which are not

limited to schools. Indeed, Walberg (1984) estimated that from birth to the age of 18, students spend more than 90% of their time outside of schools. Efforts to improve student achievement, and close the achievement gap among various groups of students (e.g., those in poverty, racial/ethnic groups, English learners), must take into account the power of out-of-school time (Weiss, Little, & Bouffard, 2005).

How students spend time outside of school is related to academic, as well as social and behavioral outcomes (see Barber, Abbott, Blomfield, & Eccles, chapter 21, this book). For example, constructive use of time and participation in structured (supervised) activities are associated with positive outcomes, across domains, for students (e.g., Benson, 1997; Doll & Lyon, 1998). Furthermore, out of school time may be one factor related to educational disparities for students in our schools. A study by Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson (2001) found that during the academic year, students of different socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds made similar academic gains; however, during the summer, higher-SES students continued to grow while low-SES children did not, creating an ever-increasing gap in performance across years. Recent meta-analyses of the literature on the effects of summer-school and after-school programs implemented with at-risk students found positive academic effects (Cooper, Charlton, Valentine, & Muhlenbruck, 2000; Lauer et al., 2006). Finally, families play a primary role in socializing students as learners by making school work a priority among competing activities, helping students learn from their mistakes, and recognizing that ongoing persistence on academic tasks is necessary to reach goals (Bempechat, Graham, & Jimenez, 1999).

Defining Partnerships: Congruence and Shared Responsibility

Partnerships that do not define a common mission are rarely able to sustain the long-term collaborative relationship and sharing of resources necessary to accomplishing substantive goals. (Jordan et al., 2001, p. 14)

The influence of systems ecological theory—and focus on congruence, out of school time, and quality of relationships as part of the mesosystem—is reflected broadly in definitions and descriptions of partnerships. For example, Jordan, Averett, Elder, Orozco, and Rudo define family-school collaboration in terms of joint goals and priorities and shared responsibility for success (cited in Jordan et al., 2001). A similar definition is offered by Fantuzzo and colleagues in which partnerships are comprised of shared goals, shared contributions, and shared accountability (Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000). Okagaki's (2001) model of minority student achievement, which is comprised of perceived function and form of the school, cultural norms and beliefs of families about education and intellectual development, and child characteristics, also underscores the importance of systems theory for understanding educational outcomes and the mutual influence of home and school. She aptly showed that a focus on only one aspect narrows the ability of educators to assess and design interventions to enhance the school performance of students, especially those from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Christenson and Sheridan's (2001) description of school-family partnerships also highlights congruence and shared responsibility, as well as problem-solving. According to Christenson and Sheridan (2001), the following are characteristics of school-family partnerships:

1. A *student-focused philosophy* wherein educators and families cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate to enhance learning opportunities, educational progress, and school success for students in academic, social, emotional, and behavioral domains.
2. A belief in shared responsibility for educating and socializing children—both families and educators are essential and provide resources for student's learning and progress in school.

3. An emphasis on the quality of the interface and ongoing connection between families and schools. Creating a constructive relationship (how families and educators work together in meaningful ways) to execute their respective roles in promoting the academic and social development of children and youth is most important.
4. A preventive, solution-oriented focus, one where families and educators strive to create conditions that facilitate student learning, engagement, and development.

Their work also highlights the changing purpose of involvement and school-family partnerships. These partnerships are not established to involve families in school activities; rather, partnerships are founded to enhance student learning as well as social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes for youth (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001).

In summary, there is great impetus toward school-family collaboration and partnerships to facilitate student learning and development. Several changes in the field, such as the expanded definitions of families, recognition of the many ways in which families are involved in supporting students' education, appreciation of the importance of context in guiding partnerships and activities, and emphasis on the meso-systemic home-school relationship were guided by systems theory. Other changes in this field are indicative of a shift in focus away from "why" educators should work with families. The influence of and rationale for family involvement in education are well-established; rather, of chief importance in current work are questions of *how* and *what works*. The next section addresses these questions, providing a description of current recommendations regarding process (the "how"), evidence-based practices ("what works") and the role of school-family partnerships in school reform as well as universal and targeted interventions.

Engaging All Families

Process Variables: Relationships and Conditions

It has been recognized that at the core of successful partnerships is relationships (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Jordan et al., 2001). In the words of Blue-Banning, Summers, Frankland, Nelson, and Beegle (2004), "... the central problem in the development of partnerships is failure to establish collaborative, trusting, empowering relationships between families and educators that support effective service delivery" (p. 169). Process and relationship variables are areas that require additional research to provide firm guidelines for practice; however, the literature is informative for formulating initial considerations in these areas. These considerations are described in terms of relationship dimensions and behaviors; and establishing the conditions, or groundwork, for successful collaborations and partnerships to develop.

Relationships

The literature is clear that close relationships between youth and competent, caring adults promotes resiliency (Masten & Reed, 2002); so too, however, do constructive, positive relationships among primary socializing influences in students' lives—home, school, and community. The descriptions of risk—high- and low-risk circumstances—drawn from theoretical work in school-family partnerships support the notion that relationships may be protective and facilitate student development and learning. Alternately, when these relationships are poor (e.g., contentious, lack congruence), they hinder student learning and development, placing students at higher risk for poor school outcomes (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Pianta & Walsh, 1996). Unfortunately, recognizing the importance of relationships for promoting student outcomes does not translate easily into knowledge of *how* to develop positive relationships. Indeed, authors have likened studying relationships to the story of blind mice exploring an elephant (e.g., Christenson & Sheridan, 2001).

A study by Blue-Banning and colleagues (2004) provides some guidance in terms of school-family relationship dimensions and behaviors that are facilitative of fostering partnerships. Blue-Banning et al. (2004) conducted focus groups with service professionals and diverse groups of families: those who had children with disabilities, those whose children did not have disabilities, and those who were non-English speaking. These focus groups led to the identification of six dimensions and behaviors facilitative of partnerships: communication, commitment, equality, skills, trust, and respect. These dimensions, or *partnership components* as the authors describe them, and indicators may be viewed as essential elements for establishing collaborative partnerships. Furthermore, these dimensions are similar to the underlying characteristics of family-centered services developed by early interventionists and espoused in early childhood as best practice: family orientation, positivity, sensitivity, responsiveness, friendliness, and child and family community skills (McWilliam, Tocci, & Harbin, 1998). These six dimensions of family-centered services underscore the importance of sharing information and resources that are perceived by the family as relevant and necessary. Addressing the need for information and resources has been the cornerstone of effective programs that empower parents to address learning gaps (Rodriquez-Brown, 2004).

Essential Conditions

Relationships are at the nucleus of school-family partnerships; climate, behavior, and attitudes create the conditions for relationships and partnerships to develop. Christenson and Sheridan (2001) provided a useful heuristic, the 4 A's, for conceptualizing conditions and actions related to establishing these partnerships. This heuristic has been adopted by the Futures Task Force on School Family Partnerships. The 4 A's refer to Approach, Attitudes, Atmosphere, and Actions. *Approach* is the framework for interactions between families and educators. It is reflected in the expectations for family involvement and recognition that families may be involved in a variety of ways, development and learning occur both inside *and* outside of school, and positive relationships and congruent messages between home and school facilitate student success. *Attitudes* reveal the values and perceptions held about family-school relationships (e.g., family involvement is essential rather than desirable; shared perspective-taking and mutual respect; non-blaming, problem-solving interactions). *Atmosphere* is the school climate for interaction between families and educators. Finally, *Actions* are the strategies or behaviors that facilitate and support family-school relationships, such as increasing problem-solving across home and school, identifying and managing conflict, garnering administrative support, acting as a systems advocate, implementing family-school teams, supporting families to be engaged, and helping teachers communicate and build relationships with families. Actions link the socializing systems for students to develop an identity as learners who work hard in the face of challenges and strive to improve their learning outcomes. These conditions—*Approach, Attitudes, Atmosphere*—set the stage or become the host environments for partnerships and must be attended to prior to initiating broad actions and the various supportive activities such as workshops, newsletters, conferences, and so on (see Figure 20.1).

Diversity and All Families

Inherent in a true partnership, one in which the relationship and process (Approach, Attitudes, Atmosphere) elements are present and actions are tailored to context, are trusting, non-blaming, and respectful interactions among schools and families. However, it should be emphasized that these are essential partnership elements for *all* families and schools. It is not uncommon that educators want to “fix” students and families, placing the blame for student behavior or performance squarely in one realm or system; a situation that appears to occur more often with families who are

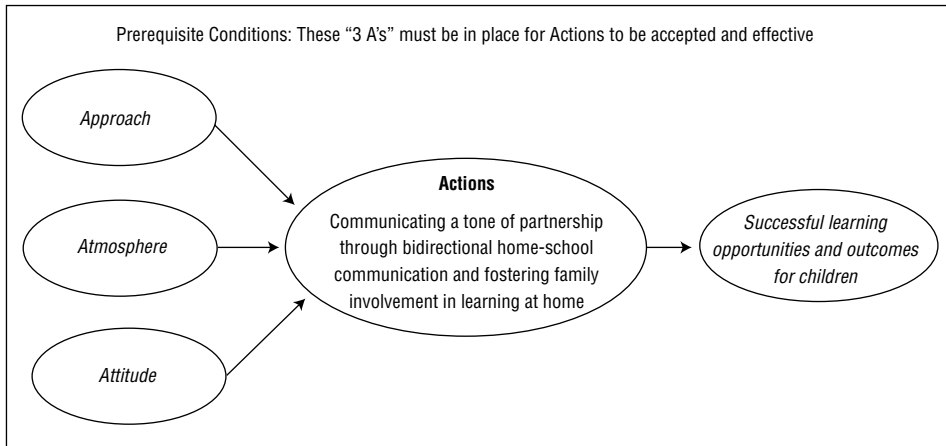


Figure 20.1 Developing pathways to partnerships: Prerequisite conditions. Sheridan and Kratochwill: *Conjoint behavioral consultation*, 2nd edition (2007), page 13. Reprinted with permission of Springer Science + Business Media.

non-White or from other than middle-class backgrounds. This deficit model lens (Boethel, 2003; Montemayor & Romero, 2000 cited in Jordan et al., 2001), or one in which the not good families are fixed to be like the good ones, may reinforce racial, ethnic, and social class biases. Furthermore, this view of families is antithetical to establishing partnerships that promote student learning and desirable outcomes.

The distinction between *status* (e.g., race, SES, single-parent) and *process* variables (i.e., what families do) is important to consider for the design and implementation of partnership programs to improve student achievement outcomes. Family process variables account for a much greater portion of the variance in achievement (60%) than those related to status (25%; Kellaghan et al., 1993). A recent qualitative study of high-achieving students from low-SES families provides additional support for the notion that process is more important than status or structure. Milne and Plourd (2006) found that *educational resources and influences* were prevalent among low-SES families who had high-achieving students. This theme referred to having materials available, a regular time set aside to do academic work and limiting the amount of television children were allowed to watch. Other themes included, *Relationships*, which referred to spending time with and talking with their child, and *Causes of Success*. When asked about their role in promoting student success, the parents spoke about providing support and guidance, as well as boundaries and expectations for their children, and the consistent message that education is important. These findings corroborate those of Clark (1983); however, some families appear uninvolved or apathetic because they are unclear about the role they should play or lack knowledge about how to be engaged to address a school or parent based concern (Abdul-Adil & Farmer Jr., 2006). Note also the similarity of these factors to those that emerged from the extensive review of the correlational literature on school, home, and community influences related to positive student outcomes: Standards and Expectations, Structure, Opportunity to Learn, Support, Climate and Relationships, and Modeling (Christenson & Peterson, 2006).

Masten (2001) once noted that resiliency is not a rare quality inherent in some children, but rather it is a product of the ordinary processes or “everyday magic” and is embedded within systems of development—children, families, schools, and communities. Similarly, family factors that promote positive outcomes among youth do so for all youth, regardless of socioeconomic background or race. An interesting finding from the research synthesis completed by Boethel (2003) is that low

income and non-White families are more involved in their children's learning at home than involved at school; however, they may be less intensely involved than White or Asian families. Adopting a health promotion focus by connecting with families early and systematically about what can be done to support a positive home learning environment is promising strategy.

One challenge in current work is creating partnership programs that engage *all* families, not just those who were already involved (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). Partnerships require engaged, active communication and congruence among educators and families. Schools and educators have been successful in engaging families from a variety of backgrounds. According to Henderson and Mapp (2002), key practices for engaging families of diverse backgrounds include:

1. establishing trusting, collaborative relationships among teachers, families and within communities;
2. being aware and respectful of racial/ethnic and social differences and address family needs; and
3. creating a partnership philosophy focused on shared power and responsibility.

School-Family Partnerships, School Reform, and Interventions

One of the goals of this chapter is to highlight the necessity of adopting a systemic-ecological orientation for educating all students. This moves beyond the three big traditional roles for parents—homework helper, volunteer, and fund raiser—to focus on meaningful roles for parents at home, namely bi-directional communication and fostering academic and motivational home support for learning. Many studies, dating back almost two decades (e.g., Lindle, 1989) have reported that parents want suggestions for how to help their children in school, provide information they view as important for educators, and to be informed early about any learning concerns. As such, this chapter is grounded in the meso-systemic partnership between home and school, which includes variables such as congruence, quality of the home-school relationship, and value of meso-systemic interventions for promoting child competence. We have not elected to review all evidence-based interventions; for this information, readers are referred to Carlson and Christenson (2005) and Henderson and Mapp (2002). In general, however, effective family-school interventions are those that emphasize two-way communication, joint monitoring of school performance, and consultation; therefore, we contend a shared or joint problem solving approach may provide the best avenue for promoting child competence. In this section, the role of family-school involvement and partnerships in school reform is described with particular attention to the promise of school-family partnerships in the Response to Intervention reform initiative.

A recent trend in education is to conceptualize and depict numbers of students, resources, and the intensity of interventions as tiers of intervention or in the graphic form of a pyramid (e.g., Donovan & Cross, 2002; Ysseldyke et al., 2006). Tier 1, or universal level, applies to all students; Tier 2, or targeted level, refers to a smaller group of students who are in need of more intensive support for academic or behavioral concerns. Tier 3, intensive level, applies to an even smaller group of students, representing the most rigorous level of services. The percentages of students expected to succeed at each level are 80%–90%, 5%–15%, and 1%–7% across Tiers 1 through 3, respectively.

Family-school partnerships and interventions fit well into a conceptualization of tiered service delivery. It should be emphasized, however, that communication and quality relationships between families and schools must be initiated and established prior to signs of student difficulty, at the first tier of services. The conditions for partnerships—approach, atmosphere, attitudes—should be in place for the families of all students. Consider the “co-roles” for families and educators delineated

by the U.S. Department of Education (Moles, 1993): Co-communicators, co-supporters, co-learners, co-teachers, and co-decision makers. Each subsequent role requires greater participation and commitment on the part of families and educators. Conceptually, these roles fit well with tiers of intervention. Each respective tier represents a greater intensity of intervention and more frequent data collection; these should also represent greater communication, problem-solving and intensity of partnerships with schools and families. The promotion of student competence is the focus of school-family partnerships within and across tiers of intervention.

Intervention Programs

A movement toward scientifically supported or evidence based practices is evident in recent legislation (e.g., NCLB, IDEA) and within applied fields, such as psychology and education (Kratochwill & Shernoff, 2004). The same may be said of family-school involvement and partnership programs. This field is currently focused on delineating what works, for whom, and under what conditions (Carlson & Christenson, 2005; Sheridan, 2005). Many of the family-school intervention programs and strategies fit into the tiers or levels of intervention; there are programs aimed at all students (universal) and those that are targeted to smaller groups of students and families.

Family involvement and partnerships are an integral part of school reform programs (e.g., Comer, 2005). However, it is difficult to disentangle the effects of family involvement components from other aspects of reform (e.g., reading curricula, staff development, intensive behavioral and/or academic interventions; Christenson & Carlson, 2005; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). Two widely known examples of programs that include school-family partnerships at the universal level are the Comer School Development Program (Haynes, 1998) and Epstein's Action Plan for School, Family and community partnerships (Epstein et al., 2002). Interestingly, both of these programs are grounded in problem-solving, through a school-family team or group that works meet the needs of all students who attend the school.

In addition to universal interventions—those aimed at entire schools or classrooms—there are numerous examples of strategies and programs designed for smaller, more targeted groups of students and families, such as Conjoint Behavioral Consultation (Sheridan, Kratochwill, & Bergan, 1996) or Dishion and Stromshak's EcoFit Model (2006) for child and family interventions.

Small group and individualized interventions for students and families require frequent communication, congruence, and structured problem-solving. Recently, the Parent and Family Intervention domain of the Task Force on Evidence Based Interventions in School Psychology undertook a comprehensive review and analysis of the effectiveness of parent and family interventions for addressing behavior and learning difficulties of children at school (Carlson & Christenson, 2005). The Task Force reviewed and coded intervention studies in the areas of parent training and therapy, consultation, involvement, and family-focused early childhood interventions. The number of intervention studies was small in comparison to the number of studies that were descriptive in nature. However, results indicated the most effective interventions were those with a systems orientation, including collaborative interventions that stress two-way communication, monitoring, and dialogue; parent education programs focused on specific behavioral and/or learning outcomes; parent involvement programs emphasizing the role of parents as tutors in specific subjects; and parent consultation (Christenson & Carlson, 2005).

A recent meta-analysis of the effects of parent involvement programs on academic performance of elementary students found overall positive, statistically significant effects (Nye, Turner, & Schwartz, 2007). The most frequently assessed outcome was the area of reading, with a stable (across studies) moderate effect size. Mathematics outcomes were also significant and moderate in size but more variable across intervention studies. Moderator analyses revealed the large effect for intervention

programs in which parents provided some reward or incentive for student performance, followed by those with parent education/training components.

Family-School Partnerships and Special Education Reform

One current, large-scale reform movement, Response to Intervention (RtI), is tied in part to the passage and reauthorization of NCLB and IDEA, respectively, as well as research reports and policy statements compiled by national panels and commissions (e.g., Learning Disabilities Summit, Bradley, Danielson, & Hallahan, 2002; Donovan & Cross, 2002; President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002; Reschly, 2008; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The recent popularity of tiers of intervention and the pyramid conceptualization is due at least in part to changes in the reauthorization of IDEA, which allowed for an RtI approach to eligibility determination for learning disabilities, the largest special education category.

Rather than limiting its use to special education, some argue that RtI is promising as a means improving educational outcomes for all students in general, remedial, and special education (e.g., Jimerson, Burns, & VanDerHeyden, 2007). It is a service-delivery model oriented toward prevention and early intervention with academic and behavioral difficulties, evidence-based instruction and interventions, and frequent data collection. RtI is often represented with a pyramid divided into three levels or tiers. Decisions regarding students, who is in need of intensive interventions and determining the effectiveness of programs, are driven by their own response to instruction and interventions at each level.

RtI represents significant reorganization and reform of educational service delivery. One complaint driving RtI reform is the delay in the initiation of intervention services, often referred to as a “wait to fail” model, and corresponding severity academic or behavioral difficulties must reach prior to initiating interventions, which in many cases is placement in special education programs. At its worst, family involvement was not invited because it was not required until the point of special education eligibility determination, which is often represented by consent; many families are passive through the remainder of that process (Harry, 1992). As one school psychologist noted, “Parent attendance does not equal parent participation” (Barbour, personal communication December 15, 2007). In this view, placement was the intervention, rather than an intensive level of intervention on a continuum of services provided to students based on need and responsiveness to other high-quality interventions. Harry's (1992) contention that a change in parent-educator discourse occurs by changing parental roles to achieve equal power and an equalitarian relationship—something she refers to as a posture of cultural reciprocity—offers promise for designing coordinated home-school interventions to address students' learning needs. She operationalizes the meaningful roles for parents as: parents as assessors, presenters of reports, policy makers, and advocates and peer supports.

The cornerstone of RtI is structured problem-solving (Marston, Reschly, Lau, Canter, & Muyskens, 2007). Problem-solving is a logical, data-driven process. It provides an occasion to invite and engage families around students' education at the first sign of difficulty. Problem-solving from a school-family partnership perspective involves shared responsibility in the creation of problem definitions, data collection, intervention design, and decision-making processes within and across levels of intervention. Families are viewed as essential from the first step, Problem Identification, to the last, Problem Solution (see Bergan, 1977; Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990; and Deno, 1989, for further information regarding problem solving). Further, involving families as essential partners in the problem-solving process capitalizes on evidence based practices in working across families and schools. The Task Force review of this literature concluded that the most effective school-family interventions were those that had specific intervention targets; emphasized the roles of parents as

teachers, school-family dialogue, and shared communication/monitoring of student progress; and parent consultation (Carlson & Christenson, 2005).

Research and Practice

The field has recently begun the process of identifying effective programs and practices and has delineated a course of action for future research; part of this future research agenda includes information regarding process—the *how* of creating partnerships rather than the *why* (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Jordan et al., 2001). There are also numerous future directions, including clearer links from theory to research (Jordan et al., 2001) and research to practice (Sheridan, 2005), measurement and methodological issues to be addressed, and a need for greater rigor and new methodology in research and intervention work (Christenson & Carlson, 2005; Jordan et al., 2001; Sheridan, 2005).

In terms of clarifying research and intervention outcomes, it is necessary to more precisely define what is meant by family involvement (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jordan et al., 2001; Nye et al., 2007). This is important given that different conceptualizations of involvement assuredly lead to different outcomes (Boethel, 2003; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). These outcomes also require greater differentiation. Hence, there is a need for greater measurement precision for the definition and outcomes of involvement (Jordan et al., 2001). As noted by Jordan and colleagues (2001) in their summary of needed research, attention should be paid to differentiating outcomes for students and schools, as well as examining indirect effects and mediating variables (e.g., parenting styles) of parent involvement initiatives and intervention programs. In particular, which family and community involvement activities affect specific outcomes (e.g., academic, attitudinal) for which school levels and groups of students (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006)?

There is also a great need for additional research on students and families from diverse backgrounds (Sheridan, 2005), including involvement in nontraditional families, and a closer examination of family involvement or school-family partnerships during times of transition (e.g., elementary to middle school) and in students' post-secondary plans (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). Epstein and Sheldon (2006) described the need for longitudinal data to answer the question, "How do school practices to involve families affect parents' behaviors and the change or continuity of student achievements and behaviors?" Finally, an important direction for researchers and stakeholders is the inclusion of family-school initiatives and partnerships in comprehensive school reform models, including RtI, and interventions that aim to improve student achievement, behavior, and wellness.

Conclusion

There is a desire and strong justification to involve or engage families in education to improve students' academic, social, behavioral, and emotional learning outcomes. Ecological systems theory provides the theoretical foundation for working across families and schools to positively affect student outcomes. Major themes for the home-school relationship and meso-systemic interventions include congruence, shared responsibility, and high-quality relationships between home and school (e.g., respect, communication, friendliness, competence). The field has moved beyond the rationale and established need for family involvement to the implementation and delineation of effective programs and practices. Implementation must be based on components of effective interventions; however, implementation also requires attention to (a) the context—there is no efficacious one-size-fits-all program or strategy—and (b) conditions necessary to establish productive relationships and partner with families to promote student achievement and well-being.

The conditions of Atmosphere, Attitudes, and Approach are essential to the success of specific actions (and interventions). The critical consideration, then, is the question of which actions bring together the primary socializing agents—home and school—to address student difficulties and promote well-being. Although there is currently no precise prescription for how to proceed, there are guidelines regarding process variables and implementation of school-family partnership programs and a compelling theoretical foundation and a consistent literature base that point to the rationale, need, and promise of establishing school-family partnerships for the purpose of promoting student competence.

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21

Secrets of Their Success

Activity Participation and Positive Youth Development

**BONNIE L. BARBER, BREE D. ABBOTT, COREY J. BLOMFIELD,
AND JACQUELYNNE S. ECCLES¹**

When adolescents are asked about how they use their leisure time, most report some involvement in organized structured activities—sports, performing arts, clubs, service activities and church youth groups. For example, 70% of students in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health reported participating in at least one school-based activity (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). Sports are the most commonly reported activities, followed by performing arts (Eccles, & Barber, 1999; Feldman & Matjasko, 2007; Zill, Nord, & Loomis, 1995). Voluntary community service is also reported by between one-third and one-half of all youth (Metz, McLellan, & Youniss, 2003; Youniss et al., 2002). Girls tend to participate in more types of activities, whereas boys are most likely to play sports (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Feldman & Matjasko, 2007; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). Given the prevalence of extracurricular activities in the daily lives of youth, it is important to understand their role in successful development and healthy adjustment.

Interest in the benefits afforded by activity participation among youth has grown recently, driven by recognition of the possible role of such activities in both promoting achievement and preventing risk behavior and school disengagement (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003). Although activities may help to reduce risks for students, Pittman reminds us that being problem-free is not the same as being fully prepared (Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem, & Ferber, 2002). As noted by Lerner (2001), positive development among young people is more than simply avoiding delinquency and substance use. Students need opportunities to meet challenges as well as help to resolve issues of identity, develop increasing autonomy, and acquire educational and other experiences needed for adult work roles. This chapter focuses on the role of adolescent activity participation in the accomplishment of a range of developmental tasks.

Scholars, youth workers, policy makers, national organizations, and funding agencies advocate a better understanding of the influence of participation in organized activities on the developmental pathways of young people. However, recent reviewers have observed that the scientific research base pertaining to school and community-based activity participation is limited (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). There has been far less research on the developmentally facilitative processes one might find in constructive leisure activities than on those manifest in other contexts such as family and school. Nevertheless, it is becoming clear that structured organized activities

are important, with mounting evidence that school and community-based activity participation facilitates healthy development, including achievement, self-esteem, ability to overcome adversity, willingness to help others, leadership qualities, physical health, educational and occupational attainment, and civic involvement (e.g., Eccles & Barber, 1999; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Holland & Andre, 1987; Larson, 2000; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Youniss & Yates, 1997).

This chapter summarizes research on structured organized activities and their connection to positive youth development. First, an overview of the conceptual approaches to operationalizing such activities is presented. Second, the role of structured organized activities in the psychological, academic, and psychosocial development of youth is examined. The strengths and limitations of existing research in these areas are briefly considered. Empirically-based interventions applied in schools are described, and the chapter concludes with suggestions for further research.

How Have Meaningful Activities Been Defined and Studied?

Most of the American research on the role of participation in meaningful activities has focused on organized, adult-supervised activities. It is to be noted that “meaningfulness” has been defined in terms of the structure of the activity itself—not in terms of its psychological meaningfulness to the participants. This focus reflects the relative ease of gathering information on participation in organized activities and also reflects the practical social policies needed to justify spending tax dollars on such activities in times of financial constraint. In keeping with this focus, this chapter draws on research on extracurricular activity participation in the following contexts: (a) school (e.g., academic clubs, service clubs, student government, drama and music, and school spirit-associated activities); (b) organized sports programs both in and out of school; (c) service- and faith-based activities in the community; (d) organized community-based activities at such places as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Girls Inc., 4-H centers, and other such organizations; and (e) community-based music, drama, and art activities.

Until quite recently, most researchers interested in activity participation compared participants to non-participants on a range of positive development indicators, seeking between-group differences. As evidence has grown for the benefits of activities, the research has begun to focus on questions of dosage and content, seeking to explain when and why participation yielded positive results. Dosage of activity participation has been operationalized in terms of the number, duration, and perceived intensity of the activities. In terms of content or process, researchers attempt to determine the nature and quality of experiences in these types of activities, to assess more specific theoretical questions about the causal mechanisms underlying the influence of participation on development. We briefly summarize the general nature of the findings related to dosage below before turning to how the content of some activities may influence specific developmental outcomes.

Generally, there is a positive relation between *the frequency of activity participation* and a wide range of developmental outcomes for adolescents (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). Furthermore, the absolute number of different activities predicts better developmental outcomes, even when prior levels of the specific developmental outcomes are controlled (Barber & Eccles, 1997). Moreover, studies on the stability or *duration* of involvement provide evidence that greater continuity of participation across several years predicts more positive development, including better grades, psychological resilience, and school belonging (Darling, 2005; Eccles et al., 2003; and for duration of school club participation, but not sports—Fredericks & Eccles, 2006a), and higher educational attainment in young adulthood (e.g., Mahoney, Cairns, & Farmer, 2003; Zaff, Moore, Papillo, & Williams, 2003).

In spite of these consistent and positive findings, some scholars and child advocates have raised concerns that too much participation in organized activities robs adolescents of the time they need

to be creative and to be with their families (see Mahoney, Harris, & Eccles, 2006). These scholars are also concerned about the stress some youth report from excessive parental pressure to “do it all.” Nevertheless, research investigating the *intensity* of involvement—or total amount of time spent participating—has found that students reporting greater intensity in activities also report higher achievement, stronger school connections, and better school adjustment (Cooper, Valentine, Nye, & Lindsay 1999; Mahoney et al., 2006). More time spent in an activity also predicts higher self-concept and fewer problem behaviors, even after controlling for prior levels of these indicators (Roth, Linver, Gardner, & Brooks-Gunn, 2007). A few studies have found diminishing benefits at the highest levels of participation (Cooper et al., 1999; Zill et al., 1995); but even so, there remains a developmental advantage to the highest-level participants compared to those students who did not participate at all.

There has been a recent call for researchers to consider the *patterns* or *profiles* of participation, that is, ways that students combine multiple activities (Bartko & Eccles, 2003; Feldman & Matjasko, 2007). For example, some students play on a sport team or two, while others spend their time in academic clubs, and still others participate in a combination of different activities. Using the nationally representative Add Health data set, Feldman and Matjasko (2007) found that multiple activity portfolios were the most common profiles of participation, with 43% of students engaged in more than one type of activity, with one or more sports activities being the most common. This study also highlighted the challenge to researchers examining the effects of distinct activity combinations, as they identified 26 different combinations consisting of 2, 3, 4, and 5 different activity types.

An innovative approach that combines both metric and activity content measures is a *breadth index*, which measures the degree of eclectic participation. We have found that the extent of participation across a broad range of activity domains (number of different types of activities) such as music, art, sports, leadership, and community service predicted greater school attachment, higher GPA, greater likelihood of college attendance, and more years of education completed, even after controlling for math and verbal aptitude (Barber & Eccles, 1997; Barber, Stone, & Eccles, 2005; Fredericks & Eccles, 2006a, b).

Activities as Developmental Assets for Individual Psychological Development

If adolescents are often bored and unmotivated (Larson, 2000), then they need something in which to become engaged. Organized activities provide a forum in which to explore and express one’s identity, talents, and passion, and to gain a sense that one “matters” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Kleiber, 1999). Adolescents likely choose activities that reflect core aspects of their self-beliefs, and that participation can, in turn, both reinforce and channel both the way that youth think about themselves and how they behave. In the process, positive development in a range of domains can be facilitated, including identity, body image, initiative, life satisfaction, and conduct. We examine each of these areas below.

Self-System

The opportunity to both express and refine one’s identity is a key aspect of socio-emotional development during adolescence, and activity participation offers a meaningful and constructive domain for such work. From general, more global self-assessment to specific content areas related to participation, activities afford multiple opportunities to reflect on who one is, what one can do, and where one fits in. Voluntary participation in discretionary activities fosters assessment and clarification of one’s talents, values, and motivations (Erikson, 1963). This context is unique because other areas of an adolescent’s life such as school, work, and church, are more rigidly

structured and may provide less freedom to explore and express identity options than discretionary activities. Therefore, voluntary participation in extracurricular activities provides an opportunity for adolescents to be personally expressive and to communicate to both themselves and others that “this is who I am” (Barber, Stone, Hunt, & Eccles, 2005; Coatsworth et al., 2005). Eccles and her colleagues (1983) refer to this quality of activities as attainment value, or the value of an activity to demonstrate that one is the kind of person one most hopes to be. In support of this idea, Coatsworth and his colleagues (2005) reported that youth consider a broad range of activities to be “self-defining,” including organized activities such as sports, performing arts, religious, and altruistic activities. Within those activities, it appears that greater personal expressiveness of activities predicts lower delinquency (Palen & Coatsworth, 2007) and helps to explain the link between activity participation and adolescent wellness (Coatsworth, Palen, Sharpe, & Ferrer-Wreder, 2006). Thus, the more congruent an activity is with an adolescent’s self-perspective, the greater the potential benefits.

In addition to reinforcing one’s personal identity, activity participation offers an opportunity to explore a range of social identities, such as where one fits in the leisure context, peer culture, and the community. According to Youniss and Smollar (1985), adolescents develop a social sense of self in addition to an individual sense of self as they participate in activities. Further support for this contention comes from the work of Brown and colleagues (Brown, Mory, & Kinney, 1994; Stone & Brown, 1998), who suggested that adolescents develop socially construed representations of their peer or “crowd” identities. Participating in a particular activity type provides the opportunity for adolescents to associate themselves with an activity-based peer culture, with their self-identity influenced by the meaning attached to that activity (Eccles et al., 2003). The process is readily evident in sports. Engaging in sports allows one to demonstrate that one is an athlete or “jock” and to explore whether assuming this identity is important to the adolescent. To the extent that one both develops a jock identity and engages in sports, one is likely to pick up other characteristics associated with the athletic peer culture. We have explored these connections and have found clear links between high school social identities and specific activities (Barber, Stone, Hunt, & Eccles, 2005; Eccles & Barber, 1999).

We have found that the consistency between one’s identity and one’s activities predicts better psychological and academic functioning than when the activity is not congruent with the identity. For example, adolescents who were self-perceived as jocks but who were not involved in school sports had lower grade point averages (GPAs) and felt more socially isolated than those who were involved in school sports (Barber, Stone, Hunt, & Eccles, 2005). Similarly, dropping out of sports lessens school attachments particularly for those who highly value sports (Barber, Stone, Hunt, & Eccles, 2005).

Service activities, in particular, offer the opportunity for a community-based social identity to be explored (Youniss & Yates, 1997). Adolescents are prepared for civic responsibility through meaningful experiences in settings such as Scouts, 4-H, and Boys and Girls Clubs (Youniss et al., 2002). Volunteering and service learning provide a platform from which youth can integrate their work to address social problems into their self-concepts of ability to contribute to the community (Hart, Donnelly, & Youniss, 2007).

Body Image

Body image also has been shown to be positively influenced by voluntary activity participation. A major contributing factor to body dissatisfaction is the discrepancy between one’s body and the culturally ideal body. Western societies tend to compare male bodies to a muscular ideal and females to an ultra-thin ideal. The process of puberty in males moves adolescent boys closer to this cultural ideal (broader shoulders, increased height and muscle mass), and females further away

(weight gain around the waist, hips, buttocks, and thighs) contributing to higher body dissatisfaction among adolescent females.

Western societies tend to objectify and sexualize the female body—females are socialized to view their body as an object to be viewed and evaluated by others for its aesthetic appeal rather than for its function (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Williams, Ricciardelli, McCabe, Waqa, & Bavadra, 2006). This focus on body form rather than body function may be a leading factor in body image becoming a major concern in the lives of many adolescent females. Female adolescents, who place a higher value on and invest more in their body as an aesthetic object, are less satisfied with this aspect of their body (Abbott & Barber, 2008). Conversely, the more value and investment that is placed on the functional aspects of the body, the more satisfied both male and female adolescents are with their bodies' function and form (Abbott & Barber, 2008). In addition, Kelly, Wall, Eisenberg, Story, and Neumark-Sztainer (2005) reported that girls who displayed a high level of body satisfaction valued their health and fitness (function) more than girls displaying lower body satisfaction, who focused on weight (form).

Extracurricular activities that focus on function over form have a positive impact on the development of a healthy body image among adolescents—particularly among adolescent girls. Brady (1998, 2005) suggested that sports programs have the potential to deliver healthy messages to females and encourage an identity and body image that is based upon physical skill and potential rather than looks and sexuality. Sports tend to challenge feminine cultural stereotypes and body objectification in females by allowing girls to experience their body as an instrumental tool rather than as an aesthetic object. Female sports programs also provide an opportunity for society (particularly males) to see the female body in an instrumental or functional role rather than in a sexualized one (Brady, 1998).

Team sports in particular are associated with a more positive body image (Jaffe & Lutter, 1995) and higher athletic competence for adolescent girls (Ference & College, 2004) than are general physical activities. This finding suggests that the experiences occurring during team sports (such as social comparisons and peer reinforcements) differ from those occurring in general physical activity, and that physical activity alone is insufficient for increasing body satisfaction for females.

Sports also reinforce the masculine cultural stereotype and muscular body ideal for male participants. Males are socialized to focus on the functional aspects of their body and participation in sports, and physical activity may therefore reinforce this process. Adolescent males who participate in sports or physical activity report higher body satisfaction than those who do not (Frost & McKelvie, 2005), particularly in the areas of muscle power in the shoulders and chest and the upper body in general (Aşçi, Gökmen, Tiryaki, & Aşçi, 1997). However, sports participation in young males may increase the pressure to conform to a masculine body ideal, especially for boys who are over- or under-weight. As a result, such individuals may resort to unhealthy measures, such as using anabolic steroids or adopting poor dietary habits to obtain the culturally ideal masculine body.

Initiative

Larson (2000) proposed that participation in certain types of organized activities is vital to the development of *initiative*. Initiative is defined as the capacity to achieve specific goals through the use of skills such as planning, time management, problem solving, and contingency thinking over a period of time (Larson, Hansen, & Walker, 2005). However, adolescents are rarely given the opportunity to engage in activities that require them to use these skills. Organized leisure activities provide an alternative context where adolescents can become intrinsically motivated and voluntarily establish self-directed attention, control, and self-discipline (Kleiber, 1999; Larson, 2000). For example, when asked about why basketball was his favorite activity, one boy noted, “it requires

more skill, more focused teamwork and concentration” (Abbott & Barber, 2007). The aspects of activities that facilitate the development of initiative, such as challenge and skill enhancement, also make them enjoyable pursuits.

Structured extracurricular activities provide youth with more experiences that promote the development of initiative than do activities such as school classes or hanging out with friends (Abbott & Barber, 2007; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006). According to Larson et al. (2006), adolescents reported that arts and sports activities, in particular, allowed them to exercise more initiative than involvement in other organized activities, but all organized activities examined offered more opportunities for taking initiative than core school classes alone.

It should be noted that the experience of initiative is not confined to structured leisure contexts. Some unstructured leisure activities, such as self-directed hobbies and participating in pick-up games may share similar characteristics that expand initiative. Indeed, some of these activities (although not others, such as watching television, text messaging, or talking on the telephone) have also been found to provide adolescents with opportunities to set and strive towards productive goals (Abbott & Barber, 2007). Further research is needed to determine how adolescents who are unable to participate in extracurricular activities (due to low SES or working part-time) can benefit from alternative meaningful leisure choices.

Life Satisfaction

Given the multiple personal and intrapersonal benefits that have been linked to adolescent activity participation, it is not surprising that Maton's (1990) research investigating older adolescents' involvement in “meaningful instrumental activities” found such participation to be positively associated with life satisfaction. This link was further established on a second sample of “at-risk” adolescents. The at-risk sample consisted of both urban Black male and pregnant female adolescents, of whom approximately one-half had dropped out of school. Participation in meaningful activities was again positively associated with life satisfaction. In both samples, this positive relationship was independent of the adolescents' perceptions of peer and parent support.

However, it appears that the relation between extracurricular activity participation and life satisfaction may be somewhat contingent on the arena of life satisfaction examined, as well as on the level of activity participation. Some research has found that highly involved adolescents report greater school satisfaction, but not greater family or friend satisfaction, than their peers who have little to no activity participation (Gilman, 2001). The connection between activity participation and school satisfaction is consistent with a large body of evidence linking activity participation and achievement, school attachment, and educational attainment. For example, Blomfield (2006) found that 88% of activity participants responded affirmatively when asked if their activity made school more enjoyable, with comments such as, “It stops you stressing out about tests, school in general, so when you are at school you have a calmer mind,” “I am not constantly focused on my study. I can have a break” and “Because it makes me feel accepted.” These comments are consistent with previous research that found that activity participants feel a greater sense of school belonging than non-participants (Darling, Cadwell, & Smith, 2005), and that involvement in sports, arts, clubs, or service activities predicts greater liking of school (Eccles & Barber, 1999).

Previous research also has shown that adolescents' positive daily experiences create the strongest sense of life satisfaction, above and beyond any influence of positive and negative major life events (McCullough, Huebner, & Laughlin, 2000). Such positive daily experiences, of both a personal and interpersonal nature, also occur during extracurricular activity participation (Hansen et al., 2003; Larson et al., 2006). Thus, positive experiences represent one possible mechanism underlying the association between activity participation and life satisfaction.

Risk Taking and Problem Behavior

Activity participation is associated with lower levels of problem behavior in adolescence (Elliott & Voss, 1974; Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, & Lord, 2005). Feldman and Matjasko's (2005) comprehensive review evaluated the evidence for the protective role of participation and highlighted a number of studies linking participation to less delinquency. Mahoney (2000) reported a significant link between extended participation in extracurricular activities during high school, and reduced rates of criminal offending, particularly for high risk youth.

The evidence for extracurricular participation to protect against substance use is more equivocal than that for delinquency. Participation in community service activities predicts lower rates of drinking and drug use in adolescence (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Youniss, McLellan, Su, & Yates, 1999) and young adulthood (Barber et al., 2001). Furthermore, participation generally predicts less marijuana and other drug use, as well as less smoking and drinking (Darling, 2005; Mahoney et al., 2006; Zill et al., 1995). There is some evidence, however, that not all types of activities provide equal protection. For example, some studies have found that sports participation predicts greater substance use (Barber et al., 2001; Fauth, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2007). This connection between sports and alcohol can be attributed, at least in part, to the peer associations formed with other athletes, who themselves are also likely to drink (Blomfield & Barber, 2008; Eccles & Barber, 1999).

Activity participation is also related to lower rates of dropping out of school (Zill et al., 1995). For example, participation was shown to predict a lower likelihood of school dropout and more years of school completed, particularly for low achieving students (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Holland & Andre, 1987; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; McNeal, 1995). A likely mechanism that keeps participants from dropping out of school is attachment to an activity that is based at school. We explore these connections in the next section.

Activities as Developmental Assets for Academic Development

School-sponsored activities such as sports and performing arts are important contexts that can support or undermine academic developmental goals (Barber et al., 2001). Research suggests that school activities link students to the larger society of the school (Entwisle, 1990), and that these experiences are positively related to adolescents' feelings of personal competence, efficacy, and academic achievement (Holland & Andre, 1987; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). Research consistently reports a positive relationship between activity participation and higher academic focus (Broh, 2002; Darling et al., 2005; Guest & Schneider, 2003; Marsh, 1992; Videon, 2002), and a reduced likelihood of dropping out of school (Mahoney, 2000; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; McNeal, 1995). School-based activities also offer opportunities that regular classroom activities may not, including the exercise of initiative, identity work, and engagement (Dworkin et al., 2003; Larson, 2000; Larson et al., 2006), increasing the likelihood that students will feel connected to their school (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). It should not be surprising, therefore, that participation predicts academic achievement and educational attainment.

School Connection and Involvement

We have argued that although a sense of belonging at school can result from a number of personal and social contextual factors, extracurricular activities are an especially likely path to school attachment, particularly for youth who do not excel academically (Eccles et al., 2003). Participation in extracurricular activities can facilitate connections in the school context that satisfy adolescents' developmental need for social relatedness, competence, and autonomy. For example, Fredericks and Eccles (2006a, 2007) have documented positive linear relationships between the number of

activities and school belonging, grades, educational expectations, and adjustment. Activities also contribute to one's identity as a valued member of the school community. In turn, a strong attachment to one's school can facilitate the internalization of other aspects of the school's agenda, such as those related to academics. In support of this idea, research has documented the connections between activity participation and higher achievement and aspirations (e.g., Barber et al., 2001; Cooper et al., 1999; Darling et al., 2005; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; Mahoney et al., 2003; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

Academic Achievement

Participation in organized activities has been shown to be positively related to academic performance, with students who participate in activities such as sports, performing arts, service learning, and academic clubs receiving better grades than their non-participating peers (Broh, 2002; Crosnoe, 2001; Eccles et al., 2003; Fredericks & Eccles, 2006b; Guest & Schneider, 2003; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). These relations generally hold up even when key variables are controlled, including family background, prior achievement, and scores on standardized aptitude tests. Several researchers have documented an especially pronounced benefit from sports involvement (e.g., Barber et al., 2001; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). For example, in National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS) data, sport participation was related to numerous positive academic indicators (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002, 2003), and the number of sports teams on which a student played also predicted increased likelihood of college attendance and a higher GPA, with higher levels of athletic participation associated with greater benefits.

Educational and Occupational Attainment

A long research tradition in sociology has focused on the beneficial link between adolescents' extracurricular activities and their future educational attainment, occupation, and income (Hanks & Eckland, 1976; Holland & Andre, 1987; Otto, 1975, 1976; Otto & Alwin, 1977). In our research, we have found that participation in sports, school-based leadership and spirit activities, and academic clubs predicted an increased likelihood of being enrolled full-time in college at age 21 (Eccles et al., 2003). Participation in extracurricular and service learning activities has also been linked to better job quality, more active participation in the political process and other types of volunteer activities, and better mental health during young adulthood (Barber et al., 2001; Marsh, 1992; Youniss et al., 1999).

Activities as Facilitators of Social Development

As noted above, there is increasing and convincing evidence to indicate that activities are important assets for intrapersonal and academic development, with many benefits identified for participants. An area that remains to be explored is the importance of activities for the development of interpersonal relationships and social connections. Evidence is accruing that activity participation is significantly related to more positive relationships with adults and friendships with more prosocial peers. These two social networks will be briefly reviewed below.

The Role of Adult Leaders in Facilitating Developmental Experiences

A key characteristic of structured activities is the guidance and monitoring provided by an adult during the activity. However, the amount of guidance provided by adult leaders should be tailored to the skills and competence of the participants. Adolescents may require initial direction from a

more competent adult or peer, but assistance should gradually decrease as the competence of the adolescents increases (Vygotsky, 1978).

Larson, Walker, and Pearce (2005) compared the benefits and limitations of both adult-driven and youth-driven activities. The adult-driven approach to activities appears to be more beneficial for activities that require adolescents to master a specific skill or knowledge base (e.g., performing arts or sports). Activities that are adult-driven also provide youth with more beneficial experiences, especially when adult leaders instruct participants in a way that builds upon, and is sensitive to the skills, competencies and talents of the participants. However, if adult leaders are insensitive to the competencies of their participants, or provide either too much guidance (which may be interpreted by youth as condescending) or too little guidance, either may result in the participant losing interest in the activity or dropping out altogether (Dworkin & Larson, 2006).

Youth-driven activities (such as student council committees, protest rallies) are those that encourage youth to become involved in higher levels of decision making and planning (Larson, Walker, & Pearce, 2005). Although these activities may be supervised by an adult facilitator, youth take responsibility for their own progress and learning and as a result experience a sense of empowerment and ownership. However, adolescents may lack the skills required to maintain focus and keep track of long-term goals. Therefore, for both youth-driven and adult-driven activities to be beneficial and facilitative, any adult involvement needs to be adaptive, monitored and guiding, keeping youth on track, while at the same time allowing youth to maintain their own self-direction and explore their own capabilities and limits (Larson, Walker, & Pearce, 2005; Larson, Hansen, & Walker, 2005).

Connections with Adults

Structured extracurricular activities provide adolescents with access to caring non-familial adults, who are often teachers or counselors acting as coaches and leaders. Coaches, club advisors, and other involved adults often invest a great deal of time and attention to participants, acting as teachers, mentors, friends, and problem solvers (e.g., Youniss & Yates, 1997). This investment provides adolescents with a range of social developmental opportunities, establishes supportive networks of adults and adolescents, integrates adolescents into adult-sponsored culture, and allows them to achieve positive recognition (e.g., Eccles et al., 2003; Fletcher & Shaw, 2000; Youniss, Yates, & Su, 1997). Links to competent supportive adults can also contribute to psychological well-being. For example, Mahoney, Schweder, and Stattin (2002) found that participation in after-school activities predicted lower levels of depressed affect, primarily for those youth who perceived high social support from their activity leader.

Friendship Networks and Peer Groups

Participation in organized activities facilitates achievement of a primary developmental task of adolescence—namely, meaningful connections to peers. In many organized activities, that connection is made to a group of peers likely to encourage academic success and avoid risk behaviors (e.g., Barber, Stone, Hunt, & Eccles, 2005). Involvement in a sport, club, performing art, or service activity provides shared opportunities and challenges with such prosocial peers, and can reinforce friendships. To the extent that one spends a lot of time in these activity settings with the other participants, it is likely that one's friends will be drawn from among the other participants. For example, adolescents who play on teams together or work on projects or performances are likely to spend a substantial amount of time together, develop new friendships; share experiences; discuss values, goals, and aspirations; and co-construct activity-based peer cultures and identities. It is also likely that the collective behaviors of such peer groups will influence the behaviors of each

member. Thus, some of the behavioral differences associated with activity participation appear to be a consequence of the behavioral expectations and influence of the peer groups (Barber et al., in press; Eccles et al., 2003; Fredericks & Eccles, 2005; Mahoney, 2000).

We have found significant relations between friendship network characteristics and activity participation (Barber, Stone, Hunt & Eccles, 2005; Blomfield & Barber, 2008; Fredericks & Eccles, 2005). Adolescents engaged in extracurricular activities generally have more academically-oriented friends and fewer friends who skip school and use drugs than do adolescents who do not participate in activities (Eccles & Barber, 1999). In turn, having more studious and fewer risky friends predicts other positive outcomes for adolescents (Fredericks & Eccles, 2005).

Conversely, being part of a peer network that includes a high proportion of youth who engage in and encourage risky behaviors predicts increased involvement in such conduct and a decreased likelihood of completing high school and going to college. Patterson and colleagues (Patterson, Dishion, & Yoerger, 2000) have documented a pattern wherein early involvement with deviant peers is associated with more “mature” forms of deviance, such as risky sexual behavior, substance abuse, and crime. Such a dynamic makes it imperative to understand how some activities facilitate membership in positive peer networks, whereas others facilitate membership in more problematic peer networks (Blomfield & Barber, 2008; Dishion, Poulin, & Burraston, 2001; Stattin, Kerr, Mahoney, Persson, & Magnusson, 2005). The critical mediating and moderating roles of peer affiliations in the link between activity settings and youth outcomes has been documented by a number of scholars, including Eder and Parker (1987), Kinney (1993), Mahoney (2000), and Youniss et al. (1999).

Methodological Issues

The research summarized to this point documents statistical relationships between activity participation and positive youth development. However, the causal inferences we can draw from these data are quite limited. The growing evidence for the benefits of participation in organized activities has been encouraging, with a major caveat—we often do not know to what extent the “effects” are attributable to the characteristics of the youth who nominate for and stay in the programs. One of the major challenges to those studying extracurricular activities is, thus, the issue of “selection effects” (for a detailed discussion of the characteristics of youth, their families, and their communities that predict initial and continued participation in various types of organized activities, see Barber et al., in press). Scholars interested in the effects of activities (as well as those who study other potentially beneficial experiences) have pointed out that activity participation may not be a cause of positive adaptation, but rather a result or marker of pre-existing positive characteristics and developmental assets (Mahoney, 2000). It is clear that more motivated, competent, and socially advantaged youth are more likely to select opportunities to participate in activities, and to choose to continue their participation. To what then, should we attribute good “outcomes” for extracurricular activity participants?

Activities: “Markers” or Promoters of Well-Being?

The importance of the issue of selection effects is related to both practical concerns and to basic theoretical and methodological challenges. When interpreting apparent effects in research, it is important not to overestimate the effects of activities. Numerous sources of differences between participants are evident in the literature on extracurricular activity participation. Youth characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status background, and earlier participation history have been shown to have an impact on participation in school-based activities (Antshel

& Anderman, 2000; Videon, 2002). More “psychological” individual attributes (e.g., motivation, self-concept, aptitude, personality, and more positive feelings about one’s family context) have also been shown to predict which leisure activities adolescents choose, and whether they persist (e.g., Eccles, Barber, & Jozefowicz, 1998; Persson, Kerr, & Stattin, 2004; Stone, Barber, & Eccles, 2001). Youths with substantial pre-existing assets are likely to experience positive outcomes with or without activities. Therefore, we should not credit positive development of asset-rich youths who participate as resulting from their participation. Furthermore, some of the same factors that predict activity participation also predict positive outcomes (e.g., parental support and involvement).

This theoretical and practical challenge is made more complicated by the tendency for resources and risk factors to occur in correlated “packages” of “developmental constraints” (Cairns, 1996). This phenomenon can be illustrated by the example of a student from an advantaged background whose intelligence and supportive family are coupled with private tutoring, relationships with peers who encourage academic engagement, constructive experiences in the school math club, and a positive identity based on her achievements. Because such developmental assets are not independent, numerous researchers and theorists have suggested that development must be viewed “organismically,” such that any one asset can only be seen to have an effect in the context of its relationship and its bi-directional transactions with other asset and risk systems (Barber et al., in press; Barber, Stone, Hunt, & Eccles, 2005; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cairns & Cairns, 1994, 1996; Ford & Lerner, 1992; Mahoney, 2000).

Risk factors may be seen to collaborate against the numerous young people who do not have the coherent system of social capital enjoyed by the hypothetical student in our example. However, as the research reviewed in the previous sections of this chapter suggests, activity participation might forestall the effects of correlated risks. Disadvantaged participants may be most likely to benefit from youth programs because they have few other supports (e.g., Mahoney, 2000; Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

One way to address these methodological issues and probe the causal links between activity participation and youth outcomes is to conduct longitudinal studies that examine whether change in activity involvement predicts change in youth outcomes. Such an approach does not eliminate selection issues, however. An even more compelling method is to try to experimentally change activity involvement and test whether those changes result in enhanced youth development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Such experiments have not been conducted for the majority of organized activities (such as sports, band, and student council) that we have described in this chapter—such activities have long been part of most school extra-curricula, and do not therefore lend themselves to manipulation or random assignment. However, some opportunities for participation have been the focus of evaluation research, and these are described below.

Empirically Based Interventions that Have Been Applied in Schools

Most of the school-based programs that were experimentally evaluated have had a prevention focus. They are generally based on providing opportunities for service, along with guided discussions about the service experiences. We briefly review two of the best such programs.

Teen Outreach Program (TOP)

The Teen Outreach Program (TOP; Philliber & Allen, 1992; Allen, Philliber, & Hoggson, 1990; Allen, Kuperminc, Philliber, & Herr, 1994; Allen, Philliber, Herrling, & Kuperminc, 1997) is a national volunteer service program designed to help adolescents understand and evaluate their future life options and to develop life skills and autonomy in a context featuring strong social ties

to adult mentors. Interestingly, even though its primary stated goal is prevention of teen pregnancy and risky sexual activity, neither of these outcomes is an explicit part of the programming. For example, less than 15% of the “official” curriculum deals with sexuality and even these materials are often not used because of overlap with information offered in the school or because of conflicts with community values.

The three program components are supervised community service, classroom-based discussions of service experiences, and classroom-based discussion and activities related to social-developmental tasks of adolescence. Participants choose their volunteer activities with the assistance of trained staff who help match the individual’s interests and skills with community needs. Examples of volunteer activities include working as aides in hospitals and nursing homes, participating in walkathons, and peer tutoring. The TOP sites offer a minimum of 20 hours per year of volunteer service for each participant. In the evaluated programs, participants averaged 45.8 hours of volunteer service during their 9 months of involvement.

TOP provides a framework for classroom meetings that includes structured discussions, group exercises, role playing exercises, guest speakers, and informational presentations. These discussions are designed to help students prepare for, and learn from, their service experiences by dealing with topics such as lack of self-confidence, social skills, assertiveness and self-discipline. Trained facilitators lead discussions of such topics as values clarification, managing family relationships, and handling close relationships. Participants are encouraged to discuss their feelings and attitudes.

Several evaluation studies have been done on TOP (e.g., Philliber & Allen, 1992; Allen et al., 1990, 1994, 1997). Although little direct attention is given to the program goals, the desired results of reduction in the rates of pregnancy, school failure, and school suspension were achieved in all evaluations. We can only guess at the reasons for the program’s success; however, community service appears to be a key component. Those students who performed more volunteer service were at lower risk for school failure while they were involved in the program. Also, the implementation quality of the TOPS curriculum did not significantly influence program outcomes (Allen et al., 1990), suggesting that it is the community service and possibly the mentoring components that are most important.

Cross-Age Tutoring

Cross-age tutoring involves an older student teaching a younger student under a teacher’s guidance. The model provides an authentic task for the tutors to practice the skill being taught and thus improve their own performance. As early as 1978, Cognition and Sprinthall reported the benefits of tutoring on the tutor as well as the tutored. They found that high school students who tutored seventh- and eighth-grade students reported improvements in self-worth, communication skills, and sensitivity toward others. A meta-analysis by Cohen, Kulik, and Kulik (1982) reported improvement in tutors’ math and reading achievement, self-concept, and attitudes toward the subject matter. Furthermore, evidence suggests that cross-age tutoring benefits those who need it most—at-risk students. In their evaluation of the Valued Youth Program, described below, Cardenas and colleagues (1992) found that at-risk tutors had enhanced reading and math achievement, self-esteem, and attitudes toward school, with an attendant decline in dropout rates, truancy, and tardiness.

One of the best known cross-age tutoring programs is The Valued Youth Partnership Program. The program trains at-risk middle school students to tutor elementary school students. Three years is the minimum age and grade difference between tutor and tutee. In weekly training sessions, the tutors, or “valued youth,” learn how to design instructional materials and be successful tutors. Training sessions focus on communication skills, child development theory, and effective teaching. The tutors work with their tutees at least 4 hours per week, participate in two annual field

trips to places of cultural and economic importance and attend presentations by community role models. The student tutors are recognized for their achievements with stipends and rewards, such as a banquet and T-shirts. The reported effects of the program on tutors include improvements in reading grades, positive self-concept, positive attitudes toward school, and decreased school dropout rates.

An important aspect of this program is the focus on implementation evaluation. The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) collects data on perceived self-concept, language proficiency, aspirations, feelings of belonging in school, and relationships with family using surveys, formal observations, and in-depth interviews. The structured implementation component of the evaluation ensures that the program is being delivered appropriately, and if it is not, assists in getting implementation on track.

Conclusion

The positive results provided by these evaluations add to the larger evidence base on the salutary effects of organized activities. A great deal has been learned about the key attributes to consider in determining the quality of experiences adolescents gain from activities. Larson (2000) stressed the importance of activities being voluntary and requiring concerted engagement over time so that participants can learn the skills associated with taking initiative. Eccles and Gootman (2002), in their report on community-based activities for youth, sponsored by the National Research Council, reiterated these criteria and added the following characteristics:

1. opportunities to do things that really matter to the organization and the community in which the adolescents live (e.g., service activities and leadership activities);
2. opportunities to learn quite specific cognitive, social, and cultural skills;
3. opportunities to form close social relationships with non-familial adults;
4. clear and consistently reinforced positive social norms and rules; and
5. practices that both respect the adolescents' growing maturity and expertise and foster strong bonding of the adolescents with prosocial community institutions.

Hansen and Larson (2007) articulate several amplifiers of developmental experiences in activities: amount of time spent in the activity, involvement in a leadership role, and ratio of adults to youth. Future research needs to consider more of these attributes in attempting to explain the benefits of some activities, and the ineffectiveness of others. We are hopeful that more comprehensive investigations of these aspects of participation will further improve our understanding of the impact of activities as one of the secrets of youths' success.

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IV

School-Based Applications for Positive Student Development

22

Positive Psychology and School-Based Interventions

DAVID N. MILLER, AMANDA B. NICKERSON,
AND SHANE R. JIMERSON

This chapter discusses the applications of positive psychology in school-based interventions within the context of a public health framework, including universal (also known as primary) interventions for all students, selected (also known as secondary) interventions for at-risk groups of students, and targeted (also known as tertiary) interventions for students exhibiting emotional, behavioral, social, and/or academic problems. The first section provides a brief review of conceptual foundations and highlights the value of incorporating both positive psychology and a public health framework within school-based intervention initiatives. The second section emphasizes how school-wide positive behavior support and creating positive school environments help to promote healthy, adaptive, and prosocial behaviors for all students. The third section describes direct interventions for students at high-risk for developing or currently exhibiting externalizing or internalizing problems, emphasizing applications of positive psychology in their treatment.

Conceptual Foundations and Value of Positive Psychology and Public Health Perspectives

The contemporary zeitgeist in the field of psychology reflects both positive psychology (Linley, Joseph, Harrington, & Wood, 2006; Peterson, 2006; Snyder & Lopez, 2007) and a public health framework (Hunter, 2003; Merrell & Buchanan, 2006; Strein, Hoagwood, & Cohn, 2003). Positive psychology emphasizes that wellness is more than the absence of disease symptoms (Huebner & Gilman, 2003; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and advocates a change from a preoccupation with addressing deficits to also promoting mental health and well-being (Miller, Gilman, & Martens, 2008). The public health framework emphasizes the collective well-being of populations, including the social aspects of health and preventive education. Thus, within a public health framework, both risk and protective factors of populations are nested within community levels and interact with individual factors to influence risk for or protection from deleterious outcomes (Strein et al., 2003). The intersection of positive psychology and public health frameworks is reflected in the increasing focus on the promotion of health and wellness, in contrast to an exclusive focus on the reduction of disease (Mason & Linnenberg, 1999; Masten, 2001; Miller et al., 2008).

Positive Psychology and School Psychology

Positive psychology has received increasing attention from a variety of applied psychological disciplines, including school psychology (e.g., Clonan, Chafouleas, McDougal, & Riley-Tillman, 2004; Huebner & Gilman, 2003; Jimerson, Sharkey, Nyborg, & Furlong, 2004; Miller & Nickerson, 2007). School psychologists have increasingly recognized alternatives to a historical deficit-based perspective regarding assessment, practice, and research (Terjesen, Jacofsky, Froh, & DiGiuseppe, 2004). There has also been an emerging emphasis on promoting “developmental assets,” which includes a focus on the strengths of youths, families, and communities (Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000). Developmental assets have been described as “the positive relationships, opportunities, competencies, values, and self-perceptions that youth need to succeed” (Scales & Leffert, 1999, p. 1), and there has been both an increasing awareness and emphasis on this perspective among school psychology researchers and practitioners (Baker, Dilly, Aupperlee, & Patil, 2003; Chafouleas & Bray, 2004; Doll & Lyon, 1998).

Wieck, Rapp, Sullivan, and Kisthardt (1989) coined the term “strengths perspective” as a framework to view youths and families with greater emphasis on their strengths and competencies. The use of this approach is increasing in many disciplines and practices (Rapp, 1997; Seligman, 2002b; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). For instance, a strength-based approach has emerged in the mental health field (e.g., constructive therapies; Hoyt, 1996), medical field (e.g., wellness vs. illness), and prevention and education research (e.g., resilience and hardiness; see Kaplan, 1999; Rutter, 2000). Amidst an increasing emphasis on ecological influences on development (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1989), the importance of considering contextual strengths is increasingly salient to school psychologists.

Public Health Perspective and School Psychology

Schools are clearly public health settings, as most children participate in school activities on a daily basis. Moreover, most children begin at an early age and attend school for approximately 12 years. Thus, there is ample opportunity for schools to facilitate students’ healthy development and adjustment. Strein and colleagues (2003) delineate specific aspects of the public health model that have particular relevance to school psychology, including: (a) applying scientifically derived evidence to the delivery of psychological services, (b) strengthening positive behavior versus focusing only on decreasing problem-behavior, (c) placing a strong focus on prevention as well as treatment, (d) accenting community collaboration and linked services, and (e) using research strategies that may improve the knowledge base of school psychology and provide an effective framework for evaluating school psychological services (p. 27). Strein and colleagues (2003) also describe implications for practice, research, and training when applying a public health perspective to school psychology (see Table 22.1). The basic principles can be interwoven with the considerations related to positive psychology described above, and are also reflected in the development and evaluation of school-based intervention services.

Conceptual Heuristic for School-Based Interventions

Walker and colleagues (1996) developed a triangle as the graphic representation for considering prevention and intervention planning logic within a comprehensive, multi-tier framework. The three overlapping tiers represent a continuum of interventions that increase in intensity (i.e., effort, individualization, specialization) to address the needs of students and promote healthy, adaptive, and prosocial behaviors. This heuristic helps to clarify that the universal intervention strategies provides a foundation for subsequent individualized strategies aimed at targeting the specific needs

Table 22.1 Implications for practice, research, and training under a public health conceptualization of school psychology

Under Current Typical Models	Under Public Health Conceptual Model
<i>Professional practice and evaluation of services</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual as client • Work focuses on individuals • Major focus on conducting individual assessments • Nearly sole focus on students in special education or who may be “nearly eligible” for special education • Intervention activity (when done at all) focused on individually referred children (indicated interventions) • Little, if any, involvement in integrated services for children and youth • Evaluation of services is case-focused (either enumerative or outcome-based) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population (classroom, school building, school system) as “client” • Work focused at building or systems level • Greatly reduced focus on conducting individual assessments • School psychologist for the whole school • Greater focus on school-wide interventions or intervention for “at-risk” students (universal and selective interventions) • Greater involvement collaborating with school–community agency partnerships • Greater emphasis on population parameters (e.g., school-wide achievement, disciplinary referrals, etc.) as outcome-based evaluation
<i>Research</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on instrument development and evaluation, and clinical-personality issues • Methodological emphasis on experimental or correlational traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater focus on large scale data or investigating phenomena at classroom, school, or systems levels • More inclusion of non-experimental methodologies, such as program evaluation, context-sensitive methods, qualitative methods
<i>Professional preparation</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little emphasis on organizational psychology or systems theory • Primary emphasis on skills for individual or small group assessment and interventions • Primary emphasis on research methodology using inferential statistics and “experimental design” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater emphasis on organizational psychology and systems theory • Greater emphasis on systems-level (classroom, school) consultation skills, and program development competencies • Greater training emphasis on program evaluation methodologies

Note. From Strein, Hoagwood, and Cohn (2003), reprinted with permission from Elsevier Science.

of a relatively small portion of the student population (see Figure 22.1). Moreover, this heuristic is consistent with a public health perspective in that it places an emphasis on school-wide interventions as the foundation for addressing the needs of all students. The following section discusses the promotion of prosocial behaviors by using positive behavior supports at the universal level (i.e., school-wide or class-wide).

Positive Psychology and Universal School-Based Interventions

Although there is increasing empirical support for the effectiveness of interventions derived from positive psychology (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005), the literature on applications of positive psychology to school-based interventions is limited (Miller & Nickerson, 2007), particularly at the universal level. There are clearly some examples of positive psychological interventions that could be implemented at this level, but this has typically not been the case in schools. One universal intervention that has been implemented in schools, however, is School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS). Although not typically associated with the positive psychology literature, SWPBS is an intervention model that clearly fits within this framework (Carr, 2007; Sawka-Miller & Miller, 2007), especially in the area of creating psychologically healthy educational environments (Baker et al., 2003; Doll, Zucker, & Brehm, 2004) and positive schools (Snyder & Lopez, 2007). In

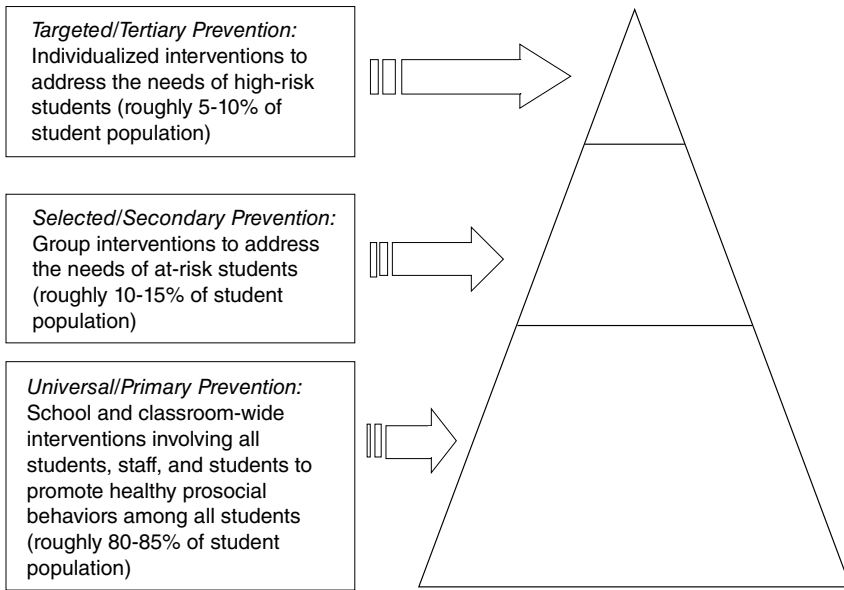


Figure 22.1 Graphic representation for considering the prevention and intervention planning logic (adapted from Walker et al., 1996).

particular, both positive psychology and SWPBS have a common goal: to promote optimal human functioning and enhance quality of life.

The Conceptual Basis of SWPBS

Developed at the University of Oregon and the National Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (Sprague & Horner, 2006), SWPBS has been defined as “a process through which schools improve services for *all* students by creating systems wherein intervention and management decisions are informed by local data and guided by intervention research” (Ervin, Schaughency, Matthews, Goodman, & McGlinchey, 2007, p. 7). SWPBS is an outgrowth of Positive Behavior Support (PBS), the scientific and research origins of which are in behavioral theory and, by extension, applied behavior analysis. In particular, just as applied behavior analysis extends behaviorism by emphasizing the application of behavioral principles to problems of social significance, SWPBS expands the applications of behavior analysis to consider the larger contexts (e.g., schools) of children’s environments (Sugai, 2007). Although behaviorism played a significant role in the development of PBS, other philosophical, values-based influences were equally important, including an emphasis on inclusion, person-centered planning, strength-building, and quality of life (Bambara, 2005). Further, although the PBS technology was originally specified and applied with students with severe developmental disabilities, more recently the application of PBS principles, practices, and interventions have expanded to address the social behavior needs of all students (Sugai, 2007).

The goal of SWPBS is to facilitate the academic achievement and healthy prosocial development of children and youth in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning (Sprague & Horner, 2006). Designed initially to prevent disruptive, antisocial behavior problems in schools, SWPBS is a proactive program that emphasizes direct intervention approaches (e.g., teaching expectations, monitoring student performance, providing specific and immediate feedback) across multiple settings (e.g., classrooms, cafeteria, buses, hallways) within a school (Sugai & Horner, 2002). SWPBS

has four key features, including a focus on student outcomes, the use of research-validated practices, an emphasis on the systems needed to sustain effective practices, and the active collection and use of data for purposes of decision-making (Horner, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer, 2005).

The Effectiveness of SWPBS

Studies indicate that SWPBS has led to reductions in students' office discipline referrals (ODRs) of up to 50% a year after implementation, and to continued improvement in appropriate behaviors over a 3-year period (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004). Research suggests that SWPBS is effective for decreasing antisocial behavior in suburban (Metzler, Biglan, Rusby, & Sprague, 2001), urban (McCurdy, Mannella, & Norris, 2003), and alternative schools (Miller, George, & Fogt, 2005) as well as in non-classroom settings, such as during bus rides (Putnam, Handler, Ramirez-Platt, & Luiselli, 2003), recess, (Todd, Haugen, Anderson, & Spriggs, 2002), and hallway transitions (Lewis, Sugai, & Colvin, 1998). Studies employing SWPBS components have documented reductions in student vandalism, aggression, and delinquency, as well as alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use (Sprague & Horner, 2006).

Moreover, academic achievement and student-reported school engagement have also been found following implementation of SWPBS (Sprague & Horner, 2006), and it may be a potentially useful component in preventing child and adolescent depression (Herman, Merrell, & Reinke, 2004). In general, research suggests that SWPBS can lead to a variety of positive outcomes for students, particularly when used in conjunction with effective antecedent strategies (Kern & Clemens, 2007) and evidence-based academic interventions, such as (a) matching the curriculum to students' individual instructional levels and monitoring their progress, (b) modifying curriculum by making it more stimulating and relevant, (c) increasing students' active engaged time and active responding, (d) teaching children differently as their skills improve, (e) rewarding success and setting high but reasonable goals, and (f) training teachers and staff to recognize that effective behavior support and effective academic instruction are reciprocally and integrally connected (Martens & Witt, 2004; Miller et al., 2005). Additionally, SWPBS may benefit school personnel as well as students; research suggests that school staff members who implement SWPBS show greater satisfaction with their work than those who do not (Sprague & Horner, 2006).

The Implementation of SWPBS

Horner et al. (2004) described seven key features inherent within the SWPBS intervention:

1. define 3 to 5 school-wide expectations for appropriate behavior;
2. actively teach the school-wide behavioral expectations to all students;
3. monitor and acknowledge students for engaging in behavioral expectations;
4. correct problem behaviors using a consistently administered continuum of behavioral consequences;
5. gather and use information about student behavior to evaluate and guide decision making;
6. obtain leadership of school-wide practices from an administrator committed to providing adequate support and resources; and
7. procure district-level support.

Although these features appear fairly straightforward, for SWPBS to be properly implemented and sustained requires time, resources, and the concerted efforts of a variety of school personnel. Sprague and Horner (2006) described three strategies for improving the likelihood of sustained

implementation of SWPBS, including (a) developing training materials at each year of implementation to make it easier to implement year to year; (b) creating explicit policies and procedures for training and using SWPBS and reporting student data; and (c) training district-level “coaches” who are available to provide “booster” training for SWPBS teams, conduct initial training for new members, and assist with problem solving. In-service training alone will typically be insufficient to meet these goals; training in SWPBS is more likely to be effective if active training models are used in combination with consultative support and follow-up (Sawka, McCurdy, & Mannella, 2002).

It has been suggested that at least 80% of school staff members must agree to and commit to SWPBS implementation (Horner et al., 2005). Although a large percentage of teachers and school personnel will need to have adequate “buy in” for SWPBS to be implemented properly, some suggest that somewhat less than an 80% commitment by staff may be acceptable—at least in the early stages of implementation (Handler et al., 2007). Prior to implementing SWPBS, however, school personnel need to address a number of practical and systemic factors, including those associated with the *leadership team* (e.g., establishing a team, specific leadership-team activities, planning for team attrition, communication between the leadership team and school administration), *staff* (e.g., resources for staff training, communication between the leadership team and staff, assessment of staff “buy in” and resistance), *administrators* (e.g., administrators’ knowledge of systems change and PBS principles, administrators’ attendance and participation at leadership-team meetings), and *school district* (e.g., district readiness, district financial commitment, previous initiatives in district, other current and competing district initiatives; Handler et al., 2007). In particular, for SWPBS to be effectively implemented and sustained, it is critical that strong, effective leadership occur and that leaders collaborate with staff to develop a shared and clear vision of the need for change and how to accomplish it (George, White, & Schlafler, 2007). A strong rationale and vision “allow for clearly articulated terminal goals, coordination among school staff to achieve the goals, standards against which to judge future success, and a plan for the dispersal of resources” (George et al., 2007, p. 47).

These and other issues will need to be addressed, including organizational restructuring (George et al., 2007), treatment integrity and program evaluation (Miller & Sawka-Miller, in press), and possible barriers to implementation and how to overcome them (Lohrmann, Forman, Martin, & Palmieri, in press). Patience is warranted, given that effective implementation of SWPBS requires sustained commitments and efforts of school personnel for multiple years (Sugai, Horner, & Gresham, 2002). Readers interested in a more detailed discussion of research and implementation issues in SWPBS are encouraged to review the sources cited herein, particularly George et al. (2007), Handler et al. (2007), Sprague & Walker (2005), and Sugai & Horner (2002).

Finally, although frequently not acknowledged explicitly in the SWPBS literature, the use of teachers’ verbal praise of students and the subsequent enhancement of positive relationships between these two groups are critical elements in the successful implementation of SWPBS (Sawka-Miller & Miller, 2007). Maag (2001) has described how rates of verbal praise and other forms of positive reinforcement provided by teachers to students steadily decrease as children grow older. Research suggests, however, that teachers should maintain at least a 5:1 ratio between positive and negative or neutral statements toward students to create a highly disciplined, supportive, and effective classroom environment (Flora, 2000). Interestingly, a similar ratio has been empirically demonstrated to greatly increase the likelihood of happy marriages and decrease the probability of divorce among adults (Gottman, 1994). Creating a positive school environment is a critical element in reducing the “sea of negativity” (Jenson, Olympia, Farley, & Clark, 2004, p. 67) and excessively punitive practices often observed in schools (Maag, 2001). This emphasis on creating stronger, healthier, more positive relationships is an integral component of SWPBS as well as an important variable for promoting positive psychology in the schools (Sawka-Miller & Miller, 2007).

Positive Psychology and Selected and Targeted Interventions

A public health framework recognizes that even with universal interventions, selected interventions are needed for the 5%–15% of students at-risk for emotional and behavioral problems, and targeted interventions are necessary for the additional 1%–7% of students who experience chronic emotional and behavioral problems (Sprague & Walker, 2005). For purposes of brevity, this section describes interventions that may be used for students at both intervention tiers, although it should be noted that the intensity of the intervention depends on the unique needs of the student. The following section describes interventions consistent with a positive psychological framework for externalizing problems, followed by a summary of selected areas from positive psychology that can be incorporated into treatment for children and adolescents with internalizing problems.

Interventions for Externalizing Problems

Externalizing behaviors are acting-out behaviors, such as aggression and noncompliance (Gresham, Lane, MacMillan, & Bocian, 1999). Although the typical response to these behaviors is the application of sanctions (e.g., reprimands, suspensions, expulsions; Maag, 2001), there has been increased interest in positive- as opposed to punitive-behavior management strategies. One strategy is the Good Behavior Game (Sprague & Walker, 2005), which involves having the teacher ask students to describe behaviors that could lead to an effective learning environment as well as those that could interfere with desirable outcomes (i.e., “fouls”). The teacher divides the class into two teams that play the game for a specified interval of instruction. The team that has the fewest fouls or, alternatively, each team that has less than a predetermined numbers of fouls during the interval, wins a brief activity prize. The Good Behavior Game may be used in general or special education classrooms as well as with particular groups of students, and has been shown to be effective with children exhibiting externalizing behavior problems (Embry, 2002).

Because many students with emotional and behavioral disorders become disengaged from school and eventually drop out, interventions have been developed to enhance the connection that children and adolescents have with school (Jimerson, Reschly, & Hess, 2008; Sinclair, Christenson, Lehr, & Anderson, 2003). For instance, Check & Connect is a comprehensive intervention designed to promote school engagement through relationship building, problem solving, and persistence (Anderson, Christenson, Sinclair, & Lehr, 2004; Sinclair et al., 2003). In this program, school “monitors” work with a caseload of 40 to 48 students at-risk for dropping out due to poor attendance and behavioral concerns. The core elements of the program include having the monitors (a) build a relationship with the student, family, and school staff; (b) teach problem-solving skills to the student; (c) increase the student’s affiliation with the school through extracurricular activities; and (d) routinely monitor and use data to guide the intervention (Sinclair et al., 2003). Persistence is an essential element of the program, and monitors are involved with students for a minimum of two years, even if the student changes schools within the district or county (Sinclair et al., 2003). Students assigned to Check & Connect have been found to be more likely to attend school, stay on-track to graduate, and be rated as more competent by teachers than students in control groups (Anderson et al., 2004; Sinclair et al., 2003).

Students exhibiting chronic externalizing behaviors are in need of intensive interventions that are individualized, focus on developing desirable behaviors, and maximize environmental supports. Functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and the behavioral intervention plans (BIPs) generated from FBAs are consistent with these goals. FBAs and BIPs have demonstrated substantial treatment utility (Kratochwill & McGivern, 1996), particularly for externalizing, acting-out behavior problems (Watson & Steege, 2003). Conducting an FBA involves gathering information about antecedents, behaviors, and consequences to determine the function (reason) of behavior. Once the function of

behavior is identified, interventions such as manipulating antecedents, altering consequences, and teaching alternative skills using behavioral principles are implemented in a BIP (Watson & Steege, 2003). This approach has garnered increased support; in fact, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) recommends FBAs and BIPs for all children with severe behavior problems, and requires them if a child is suspended for more than 10 days in a school year.

Another evidence-based intervention for children and adolescents with externalizing problems that is highly consistent with positive psychology principles is Multisystemic Therapy (MST; Henggeler, Schoenwald, Rowland, & Cunningham, 2002). MST works with the systems in a child's life, such as the family and peer group, to develop the relationships that potentially serve as protective factors. A critical factor in achieving long-term outcomes is empowering caregivers by having them identify factors that interfere with their ability to provide the necessary nurturance, monitoring, and discipline for their child. The MST team then draws on the strengths of the caregiver (e.g., supportive extended family, social skills) to address these factors and facilitate the implementation of planned interventions (Henggeler et al., 2002). MST has been found to be successful in reducing problem behaviors, residential placement, and re-arrest rates for students with chronic and severe behavior problems (Henggeler et al., 2002), as well as increasing family cohesion, adaptability, and interactions (Bourduin et al., 1995).

Interventions for Internalizing Problems

Internalizing behavior problems are characterized by subjective distress and typically inhibited responses to stimuli that may reflect social withdrawal, depression, or anxiety (Gresham et al., 1999). Although a number of positive psychology constructs can be targeted for enhancement in school-based psychotherapy (see Miller & Nickerson, 2007), the following section discusses hope, optimism, and mindfulness, due to their particular relevance for the treatment of internalizing problems in children and youth.

Hope and optimism are highly similar constructs and their overlap is considerable. Both correlate highly with mental health and happiness, cause better resistance to depression following negative or aversive events, and lead to improved physical health (see Lopez, Rose, Robinson, Marques, & Pais-Ribeiro, chapter 4, this volume). In addition, higher levels of hope can protect against early school dropout among adolescents (Worrell & Hale, 2001) and provide a buffer against negative life events (Valle, Huebner, & Suldo, 2006).

Hope therapy attempts to help individuals conceptualize clear goals, see numerous paths to these goals, and garner the energy and commitment to reach them (Snyder, Lopez, Shorey, Rand, & Feldman, 2003). Hope has been used as an intervention with both children and adults in individual and group contexts (Snyder et al., 2003; Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2002). Working with clients in therapy to enhance their hopeful thinking has been found to lead to decreased depression and anxiety as well as increased coping skills and level of well-being (Keyes & Lopez, 2002). Similar to hope, optimism can be learned, modified, and strengthened (Seligman, 1998). People who attribute negative events to external, unstable, and specific causes are generally optimistic, whereas those who exhibit internal, stable, and global causes are generally pessimistic (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Research has suggested that building optimism by recognizing and disputing pessimistic, irrational thoughts can reduce stress and increase satisfaction with work and play (Seligman, 2002a).

Seligman and his colleagues (Seligman, Reivich, Jaycox, & Gillham, 1995; Seligman, 1998) have developed an approach for teaching optimism to children that has been shown to prevent depression and increase optimism, with impressive long-term outcomes. The Penn Optimism Program (POP; Shatté, Gillham, & Reivich, 2000) is a 12-week school-based group intervention curriculum that is an outgrowth of Seligman's work. The cognitive component of POP introduces participants

to the relationships between underlying beliefs and inaccurate ways of thinking. It also teaches children to dispute irrational beliefs and generate worst case, best case, and most likely scenarios to situations, thereby expanding the arena of possible solutions for the purpose of maximizing hopefulness. The skills training component of POP involves teaching assertiveness and negotiation, countering procrastination, decision making skills, and combining these skills with more hopeful thinking in a comprehensive problem-solving model (Shatté et al., 2000).

POP has been found to significantly reduce depressive symptoms and improve classroom behavior for children at-risk for depression in a treatment group as compared to a control group (Jaycox, Reivich, Gillham, & Seligman, 1994). In a 2-year follow-up study, Gillham, Reivich, Jaycox, and Seligman (1995) found that POP produced enduring relief of depressive symptoms, an effect which grew over time. In addition, POP improved the level of optimism of those in the treatment group compared to a control group. Now known as the Penn Resiliency Program (Gillham & Reivich, 2004), subsequent research has continued to support its efficacy for promoting hope and optimism among children and youth (Gillham, Hamilton, Freres, Patton, & Gallop, 2006; Winder & Seligman, 2006).

Another positive psychology construct that has direct relevance to psychotherapy for children and adolescents with internalizing problems is mindfulness, or being consciously aware of and experiencing the present moment. Psychotherapists have increasingly begun teaching mindfulness exercises to their clients in therapy. Mindfulness exercises have three key and interdependent elements: (a) awareness of (b) present experience (c) with acceptance (Germer, 2005). Segal et al. (2002) used mindfulness-based cognitive therapy as a procedure for treating adult depression for clients who initially benefited from cognitive therapy but later required further psychotherapeutic intervention to prevent relapse. One method they used was the “Three Minute Breathing Space,” which involves (a) acknowledging and registering one’s experience, even if it is unwelcome; (b) gently redirecting one’s full attention to breathing as a method for focusing on the present moment; and (c) expanding the field of awareness around one’s breathing so that it includes a sense of the body as a whole. Mindfulness training has been used to successfully treat a variety of disorders and problems in psychotherapy (Germer, Siegel, & Fulton, 2005), particularly adult depression (Morgan, 2005; Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002), anxiety (Brantley, 2003; Hayes, Follette, & Linehan, 2004), and self-injury (Walsh, 2006). Although research examining the use of mindfulness with children and adolescents is limited, when used in conjunction with relaxation training it could be potentially beneficial for children with or at-risk for developing internalizing problems such as depression or anxiety (Miller & Nickerson, 2007).

Conclusion

Positive psychology is an emerging applied science that is just beginning to have a significant impact on schools and school-based interventions. In this chapter, the application of positive psychology in school-based interventions was described within the context of a public health perspective, in which interventions are provided to students at multiple levels depending on their specific needs. When evidence-based interventions are applied with appropriate levels of treatment integrity and intensity, incorporating applications of positive psychology within a public health framework can potentially lead to enhanced levels of academic, emotional, and behavioral functioning for all students.

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The Positive in Positive Models of Discipline

GEORGE G. BEAR

During the past decade, it has become increasingly popular to use the term *positive* in reference to one's approach to classroom management and school discipline. Indeed, among the multiple models of classroom management and school discipline (see Charles, 2007), the term appears in the title of two popular, and perhaps *the* most popular, models: *Positive Discipline* (Nelsen, Lott, & Glenn, 2000) and *Assertive Discipline: Positive Behavior Management for Today's Classroom* (Canter & Canter, 2001). Positive also is the central concept of the rapidly growing School Wide Positive Behavioral Supports (SWPBS) movement (Horner, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer, 2005; Sprague & Horner, 2006; also see www.pbis.org), which shares with Assertive Discipline many of the same behavioral techniques. Unfortunately, as will be seen in this chapter, other than arguing that their programs either eliminate or minimize the use of punishment, the authors of these programs devote very little attention to how or why their goals and techniques are necessarily positive, or any more positive than those of other school discipline programs of the past and present. Indeed, as discussed in this chapter, educators who are more concerned about the long-term aim of developing self-discipline than about the short-term aim of attaining compliance, and about adopting evidence-based practices to achieve that aim, are likely to resist whole scale adoption of either of these positive models of school discipline.

The purposes of this chapter are to (a) briefly review the goals and techniques of *Positive Discipline* and *Assertive Discipline: Positive Behavior Management for Today's Classroom*, with an emphasis on those that the authors present as being particularly positive; and (b) critique the goals and techniques of those programs within the framework of positive psychology. Recommendations also are offered to help guide schools in implementing empirically-based goals and techniques of school discipline that are consistent with the basic principles of positive psychology.

Positive discipline and assertive discipline were chosen not only because of their popularity and claims of being positive, but also because they present goals and techniques based on two very different, and classic, philosophical approaches to school discipline. Positive discipline is based on the Adlerian/Dreikurs approach to school discipline with its emphasis on fostering student self-determination. Assertive Discipline is grounded in a behavior modification/applied behavior analysis approach to school discipline with its emphasis on managing or governing student behavior. Most modern-day models of school discipline can be traced to one of these classic approaches (Bear, 2005) as well as to William Glasser's Reality Therapy (Glasser, 1965, 1969). Likewise, there

are very few, if any, basic techniques of classroom management used in today's schools that are not presented in one of these models.

The Positive in Positive Discipline

According to its Web site, over 2 million teachers and parents have been trained in positive discipline. Its philosophy and techniques draw heavily from the writings of Rudolph Dreikurs (Dreikurs, 1968; Dreikurs & Cassel, 1972; Dreikurs & Grey, 1968), a psychotherapist and director of the Alfred Adler Institute of Chicago. Dreikurs did not refer to his model as *positive discipline* (generally preferring the term *democratic*). It is in Nelsen et al.'s (2001) model of positive discipline that the following core principles of Dreikurs' philosophy are framed within the context of being positive.

A Positive Approach to School Discipline Is Student-Centered, Responsive to the Individual Needs and Goals of Students

Drawing directly from Dreikurs, positive discipline asserts that although the classroom environment, especially the classroom teacher, clearly influences student behavior, behavior is determined primarily by an individual student's needs, goals, values, and beliefs. Social belonging is viewed as the foremost need and goal, the primary motivator of behavior, and as central to self-esteem, happiness, and success in all areas of life. Accordingly, it is asserted that school discipline must strengthen, rather than harm, self-esteem, happiness, and social belonging. A core concept underlying the Positive Discipline model, drawn directly from Dreikurs, is that nearly all behavior problems can be directly linked to "four mistaken goals of behavior" or "hidden reasons" (Nelsen et al., 2000, p. 94) and that an understanding of these goals should guide how teachers respond to behavior problems. The four mistaken goals or hidden reasons are: (a) to gain undue *attention*, (b) to experience a sense of misguided *power* over others, (c) to seek *revenge*, and (d) to socially *withdraw* or convey inadequacy. To improve a student's behavior, a teacher must target those goals in both lessons and during disciplinary encounters, and thus change the student's beliefs, perceptions, and reasoning.

The Foremost Aim of Discipline is the Development of Self-Discipline

Dreikurs defined self-discipline as "discipline without imposed authority by any individual, but imposed by the individual himself and by that of the group; the development of intelligent self-control rather than blind obedience because of fear" (Dreikurs & Cassel, 1972, p. 22). He argued that all individuals cherish a sense of autonomy, or self-determination, and that self-discipline is necessary for one to function successfully in a democratic society. In developing self-discipline, Dreikurs recognized that schools must teach, both directly and indirectly, not only specific positive behaviors such as kindness, respect, and democratic decision making, but also develop emotions and thoughts that support prosocial and democratic behaviors. Nelsen et al. (2000) share this perspective, prescribing three "empowering" self-perceptions and four "essential skills" that teachers are to develop in all children in order to prevent a wide range of social, emotional, and behavioral problems. The three self-perceptions concern personal competence, social belonging, and autonomy. The four essential skills encompass intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, judgment skills, and systemic skills (e.g., responsibility, responding to consequences).

A Positive Approach is Democratic and Caring, with Emphases on a Positive Classroom Climate, Encouragement, and Classroom Meetings

Democratic and Caring Climate Both Dreikurs (1968; Dreikurs & Cassel, 1972) and Nelsen et al. (2000) highlight the importance of a democratic classroom climate in which teacher-student and student-student relations are supportive, caring, and mutually respectful. Dreikurs believed that a democratic and caring classroom is characterized by the following teacher qualities and skills: warmth and friendliness; sense of humor; sincere interest in each child and recognition of their effort; self-confidence in teaching and discipline; excellent classroom management and organizational skills; respect toward all students; impartiality and absence of favoritism; fostering democratic decision-making through group discussions and active participation of students in important classroom decisions and responsibilities; and encouragement (Dreikurs & Cassel, 1972). Positive discipline recognizes the importance of those teacher qualities and skills, while adding mutual respect, firmness, dignity, and communication skills, and placing greatest emphasis on encouragement.

Encouragement Following Dreikurs, *encouragement* is viewed as the “foundation” of positive discipline (Nelsen et al., 2000, p. 161) and a key to motivating learning, enhancing self-esteem, developing positive teacher-teacher relations, and preventing social, emotional, and behavior problems. As noted by Dreikurs and Cassel (1972), “When children feel encouraged (belonging and significance), their need to misbehave will disappear” (p. 72). Dreikurs defined encouragement as unconditional love—as the process of accepting “the child as worthwhile, regardless of any deficiency”—and assisting the child in “developing his capacity and potentialities” (Dreikurs & Grey, 1968, p. 56). Dreikurs and Nelsen et al. (2000) go to great lengths to try to distinguish encouragement from praise, arguing that only the former should be used in schools.

Class Meetings A core element of a democratic, caring, and encouraging classroom climate is class meetings. Dreikurs (Dreikurs & Cassel, 1972) believed that discussions among peers are much more effective in changing a student’s values than are teacher-student discussions and that class meetings are invaluable in teaching and practicing democracy as well as in preventing and correcting misbehavior. Positive discipline devotes greater attention to class meetings than to any other strategy or technique. In class meetings, students are to address behavior problems that affect the class while demonstrating group problem solving, mutual respect, caring, and shared responsibility. Class meetings not only serve to prevent and correct misbehavior but also to foster the empowering self-perceptions and the four essential skills noted previously.

A Positive Approach to School Discipline Does Not Use Punishment, Rewards, and Praise

Punishment, rewards, and praise are perceived as being detrimental to developing self-discipline and teacher-student relations, and as a primary source of misbehavior. With respect to the use of punishment, Dreikurs and Cassel (1972) asserted the following: “*Punishment is only effective for those who don’t need it....Punishment does not influence behavior or ‘teach’ anything today*” (p. 60). Nelsen et al. (2000) add that “*Any form of punishment or permissiveness is both disrespectful and discouraging*” and that “*Punishment has no place in the positive discipline classroom*” (p. 117, italics added). They argue that educators use punishment to make students feel worse, to intimidate and control students, and to retaliate against their misbehavior.

Rewards and praise are viewed nearly as harshly as punishment. Nelsen et al. (2000) argue that rewards and punishment encourage teachers, not students, to be responsible for student behavior;

foster long-term negative effects, such as “rebellion, the negative use of power, or thoughtless compliance;” and fail to teach self-discipline “or any other important characteristics and skills for success in life” (p. 20). Praise is viewed similarly to punishment and rewards, with both Dreikurs (Dreikurs & Cassel, 1972) and Nelsen et al. (2000) claiming that it fosters dependency on adults and thus is ineffective.

Positive Discipline Classroom Management Tools Are Necessary for Correcting Misbehavior

Misbehavior, or what Nelsen et al. (2000) refer to as “mistakes,” are viewed as excellent opportunities for students to learn appropriate behavior and to develop the three self-perceptions and four essential skills cited earlier. The primary role of the teacher in correcting misbehavior is to use encouragement, either in the context of class meetings or disciplinary encounters with individual students. Teachers are to encourage students to apply their strengths and skills, but they also are to provide the necessary supports to help students be successful. When encouragement is not sufficient, however, teachers are to use *natural consequences*, *logical consequences*, and *solutions*, as well as a variety of additional positive discipline management tools, as noted below.

Natural Consequences, Logical Consequences, and Solutions Natural consequences are consequences not controlled by teachers but the direct or natural result of the student’s own actions (e.g., hurting oneself by running in the hall, being rejected by peers for bullying). Logical consequences are consequences imposed by teachers and logically related to the behavior being corrected (Dreikurs & Grey, 1968). Instead of “logical consequences,” Nelsen et al. (2000) prefer the term *solutions* (although they continue to use the term *logical consequences* in their books), or ways to solve a problem. During disciplinary encounters and class meetings teachers are advised to have children brainstorm solutions while evaluating their consequences.

Positive Time-Out Positive discipline’s use of time-out differs greatly from that recommended in most other models of school discipline in which time-out refers to removal from reinforcement for the purpose of decreasing the behavior and its reoccurrence (i.e., a form of punishment). According to Nelson et al. (2000), time-out, as commonly used in the schools, is “punitive and humiliating” (p. 176). In positive discipline the purpose of positive time-out is not to punish students but to encourage them to calm down, reflect upon their behavior, and “feel better” (p. 212). They give an example of a high school positive time-out area, a section of the classroom decorated in Hawaiian style (e.g., relaxing beach chairs, stuffed dolphin, sea shells, and mural of the ocean, beach, and palm trees). Students may take a “listening buddy” with them to the positive time-out area to help them calm down and feel better.

Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences When behavior problems continue to occur, despite the use of the techniques above, teachers are advised to hold a conference with parents. Unlike typical teacher-parent conferences, however, the student is to attend and to be actively involved. The focus of the conference is to be on the positive: to help students “manage their weaknesses and soar with their strengths” (Nelsen et al., 2000, p. 214) by arranging increased encouragement and supports.

Additional Positive Discipline Management Tools Although the above techniques receive the greatest attention in positive discipline, several additional *positive discipline management tools* also are recommended. It is recommended that these techniques and tools match students’ underlying mistaken goals. For example, if the goal is to gain undue attention, the teacher is to redirect verbally or nonverbally, not to argue, to ignore the misbehavior, and to attend to positive behaviors. How-

ever, teachers are advised to employ certain positive techniques when responding to misbehavior irrespective of the identified goal. They include: be kind, don't argue, don't use punishment, be firm, discuss the disciplinary issue in a class meeting, and adhere to follow classroom routines.

Many additional discipline management tools are recommended. Most are techniques commonly seen among effective classroom managers (Brophy & McCaslin, 1992), including: offering limited choices, encouraging problem solving and self-reflection, redirecting behavior, and fostering individual and group responsibility.

The Positive in Assertive Discipline

Assertive Discipline was first introduced in 1976 with the subtitle *A Take Charge Approach for Today's Educator* (Canter, 1976). Since then, over 2 million copies of *Assertive Discipline* have been sold and over 1.5 million teachers have been trained in the model (Canter & Canter, 2001). Like Dreikurs, Canter claimed to offer teachers a model of school discipline for restoring order and civility in American schools. However, in stark contrast to the student-centered approach of positive discipline, Canter's approach was, and continues to be, teacher-centered. The assertive teacher was one who was "prepared to back up her words with actions" (Canter & Canter, 1976, p. 30) and who "lets the child know that she means what she says and says what she means" (p. 9). What appealed to educators at the time (and to many today) was a simple, cookbook-like system for implementing behavior modification techniques within the context of teacher assertion and control of student behavior.

Since 1976, two newer, and much less strident, versions of the assertive discipline have been published (Canter & Canter, 1992, 2001), with each placing increased emphasis on the use of *positive* techniques, especially the use of positive reinforcement and the importance of supportive teacher-student relations, and less emphasis on the use of *negative* techniques, particularly punishment. Reflecting this change, the assertive teacher now is "one who clearly and positively communicates her behavioral expectations to her students" while "providing warmth and support to students for their appropriate behavior" (Canter & Canter, 2001, p. 7). Techniques used for these purposes are highlighted below within the context of what Canter and Canter (2001) present as positive principles inherent in the model.

A Positive Approach is Teacher-Centered, with the Teacher Providing a Balance Between Structure and Caring

As noted above, the 1976 version of *assertive discipline* was designed to meet the needs of teachers, not their students. Assertiveness, control, and structure were more important than caring. Although assertive discipline continues to be teacher-centered and structured, it now stresses the importance of teachers demonstrating warmth and caring in order to develop and maintain positive teacher-student relations. Canter and Canter (2001) argue that both structure and caring are critical components of an effective and proactive *classroom discipline plan*. Reflecting an emphasis on structure, each teacher's classroom discipline plan is to be posted in the classroom and sent home to parents. It also is to be directly taught in lessons, beginning the first day of school. The plan has three parts: *supportive feedback, rules, and corrective actions*.

Supportive Feedback Canter and Canter (2001) define supportive feedback as "the sincere and meaningful attention you give a student for behaving according to your expectations" (p. 41). It consists of recognizing and reinforcing appropriate behavior, and avoiding the "trap of negativity" by "planning to be positive each day" (p. 45). They argue that teachers should devote more time to

supportive feedback than any other component of their discipline plan because it fosters desired behavior, positive teacher-student relations, and student self-esteem; helps prevent undesired behavior; and creates a positive learning environment. Recommended techniques of supportive feedback are verbal recognition of positive behavior (they prefer not to use “praise”), positive notes or phone calls to a student’s parents (with or without follow-up privilege or rewards at home), special privileges, behavior rewards (e.g., certificates), and tangible rewards (e.g., stickers, popcorn).

The above practices are recommended not only with individual students, but also class-wide. When so used, a tracking system (e.g., “Positive Behavior Bulletin Board” and “Marbles in a Jar” also should be employed.

Rules Behavioral expectations, or classroom rules, are to be clear and few in number (3 to 5). They are to include only observable behaviors and apply throughout the entire school day. As in positive discipline, teachers are encouraged to solicit suggested rules from their students, but in assertive discipline the rules are taught primarily by the teacher explaining them and the students listening. Students are given the rules, asked if they understand them, and are to role play how to follow them.

Corrective Actions Teachers are to develop a hierarchy of *corrective actions*, and communicate those actions clearly to all students. Corrective actions include use of a variety of non-corporal and non-humiliating forms of punishment, ranging from a verbal warning to school suspension. Corrective actions are not viewed as punishment, however, as punishment is presented as “criticism, humiliation, or even physical pain” (Canter & Canter, 2001, p. 63) and as generating resentment and poor self-esteem. Teachers are strongly encouraged to use the mildest forms of corrective actions necessary or appropriate, and to avoid severe ones. The following discipline hierarchy is recommended:

1. *First offense*: Remind the student of the respective rule or expectation.
2. *Second or third offense*: Immediately provide a corrective action that is easy to use, such as requiring the student to wait 1 minute after class, changing the student’s seat, sending the student to time-out, or writing about the misbehavior in a behavior log or journal in which the student explains why he misbehaved and what alternative actions he will take in the future.
3. *Fourth offense*: Call the parents or send a note home.
4. *Fifth offense*: Send the student to the principal, which should result in counseling, a parent conference, or suspension.

For serious misbehavior, such as fighting and severe class disruption, the hierarchy is invoked but the student is immediately removed from the classroom. In correcting misbehavior, regardless of the severity, teachers are advised to be consistent (to correct the misbehavior every time it occurs, regardless of circumstances), to remain calm yet firm, not to argue, and to always combine correction with recognition of positive behavior. As in the use of rewards, teachers are advised to monitor and record their use of corrective actions by recording in a log or clipboard the names of students who break a rule. For individual students who continue to misbehave, teachers are to develop an individualized behavior plan that specifies the behavioral expectations and a course of action, while demonstrating empathy and concern, exploring possible functions of or reasons for the behavior problem, and offering support. Finally, teachers are advised to seek assistance and support from parents, a discipline team, and/or administrators when needed. Parents are to be contacted when a behavior first becomes problematic.

Students Learn Self-Discipline from Supportive Feedback, Rules, and Corrective Actions

In assertive discipline, self-discipline, or what is referred to as responsible behavior or self-management of behavior, consists of being responsible and making the right choices. Essentially, it means obeying the rules. Responsible behavior is viewed as important because it leads to positive outcomes, particularly rewards and the avoidance of punishment, but also because it leads to increased self-esteem. Consistent with a behavioral model of learning, in assertive discipline it is understood that nearly all behavior is learned, with direct instruction, positive reinforcement, and punishment explaining the bulk of the learning process. Rules, direct instruction, supportive feedback, and corrective actions are the primary methods of teaching specific responsible behaviors. Upon being taught a targeted responsible behavior, supportive feedback is to be provided to motivate the student to comply with the given rules and routines. According to Canter and Canter (2001), supportive feedback, rules, direct instruction, and corrective actions are used not only to bring compliance but also to achieve the goal of self-discipline. Corrective actions are seen as “fundamental for self-management” because they teach “students to understand if they *choose* to misbehave, certain actions will occur” (p. 63). As posited by Canter and Canter (2001): “Over time, however, the student will internalize the rules and no longer need your supportive feedback to comply. He will have learned to manage his behavior on his own” (p. 115).

A Positive Approach Entails the Prevention of Behavior Problems

This would include building a supportive relationship with students by demonstrating care and interest using techniques of direct instruction (e.g., teaching rules) and supportive feedback (e.g., reinforcing desired behaviors). Canter and Canter (2001) also endorse other techniques for preventing behavior problems that commonly appear in the classroom management literature, such as scanning and circulating about the classroom, redirection, physical proximity, eye contact, hand gestures, “I messages,” and verbal warnings.

What’s Positive in Positive Models of Discipline?**Defining features of Positive Psychology**

In answering this question, defining features of positive psychology are first delineated, followed by a brief critique of the extent to which the goals and techniques of Positive discipline and assertive discipline are consistent with each feature.

The Foremost Aim of Positive Classroom Development is Self-Discipline

Traditionally, two aims of school discipline have been consistent with the meaning of the term *discipline*, as commonly defined in dictionaries: to *use discipline* to correct misbehavior and to *develop self-discipline* (Bear, 2005). Self-discipline refers to students inhibiting inappropriate behavior and exhibiting prosocial behavior under their own volition, reflecting the internalization of values, standards, beliefs, and attitudes of their parents, teachers, peers and others in society. Often used interchangeably with the terms autonomy, self-determination, responsibility, self-regulation, and self-control, when used within the context of school discipline *self-discipline* highlights the need for schools to view the development of *self-discipline* as their primary aim (Bear & Watkins, 2006).

Unfortunately, in most schools, the primary focus of school discipline is not the development of self-discipline but the correction of misbehavior, which consists primarily of punishing misbehavior in order to bring about compliance to rules and to those in positions of authority. In such schools, self-discipline may or may not be a secondary aim, and when it is, too often correction is

viewed as a primary means for achieving it. A primary emphasis on punishment and compliance is seen in extensive school codes of conduct that specify rules and their consequences and constant adult supervision (e.g., surveillance cameras), conveying a zero tolerance approach to all types of misbehavior regardless of its severity or circumstances involved (Skiba & Noam, 2002). However, a focus on compliance also often is seen in more “positive” programs that rely upon the systematic use of positive reinforcement, especially tokens or points exchanged for tangible rewards given contingent upon good behavior, to achieve the same outcome—compliance. This is seen in assertive discipline as well as in most other teacher-centered programs grounded in behavior modification or applied behavioral analysis and designed to manage or govern student behavior. This would include many SWPBS programs. As noted by Horner (2000), “There is no difference in theory or science between positive behavior support and behavior modification. These are the same approach with different names” (p. 99). In SWPBS programs “positive” refers primarily to a greater use of positive reinforcement than punishment and to the use of preventive techniques. This consists largely of reinforcing positive behavior (e.g., distributing tokens school-wide), directly teaching lessons about rules and posting clear behavioral expectations throughout the building. The aim is to *prevent* teachers from having to correct misbehavior, as seen in few office referrals—the most common outcome measure in SWPBS research. This aim is short-term and teacher-centered. As discussed below, it also is inconsistent with the primary aim of school discipline from the perspective of positive psychology.

From the perspective of positive psychology, the primary aim of school discipline is the development of character strengths and virtues, reflecting self-discipline, which minimizes the need for the external regulation of behavior. To be sure, compliance with rules and authority, especially in childhood, is viewed as an important part of self-discipline, but the long-term aim of educators is not to bring about what is referred to as *situational* (Kochanska, 2002) or *grudging* compliance (Brophy, 1996), motivated by the systematic use of external rewards and punishment to govern or control student behavior. Instead, the primary aim is bring about *committed* (Kochanska, 2002) or *willing* compliance (Brophy, 1996), motivated by a sense of pride and autonomy. Willing or committed compliance is most evident when students choose to comply with rules and assume responsibility for their actions even in the absence of adult supervision, external rewards, sanctions, and the likelihood of punishment.

Among the character strengths and virtues identified in positive psychology as being central to mental health and emotional well-being (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), the following would be most directly related to committed or willing compliance and to self-discipline:

1. *self-regulation*—regulating one’s emotions and behavior;
2. *social intelligence*—awareness of the motives and feelings of self and others;
3. *citizenship*—social responsibility, loyalty, and teamwork;
4. *fairness*—applying principles of justice and caring in relations with others;
5. *authenticity*—being genuine and speaking the truth; and
6. *kindness*—helping others.

Each of these character strengths and virtues is viewed not as situationally specific social skills that are learned via principles of operant learning and modeling and exhibited to earn external rewards. Instead, they are viewed as global personality traits that generalize across situations and reflect an integration of an individual’s thoughts, feelings, and actions. Each character strength and virtue has been found to help buffer individuals from behavior problems and to be associated with various positive personal and social outcomes (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Research shows that character strengths associated with self-discipline are related to more supportive relations

with teachers and peers, largely define schools perceived to be positive in climate, foster academic achievement, and promote self-worth and overall emotional well-being (Bear, Manning, & Izard, 2003). However, it is important to note that each character strength and virtue also has traditionally been “morally valued in its own right, even in the absence of obvious beneficial outcomes” (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 19). Indeed, irrespective of research demonstrating that they are associated with office referrals, suspensions, bullying, or academic achievement, it is difficult to argue that kindness, fairness, or subjective well-being (happiness) should not be highly valued and developed in all children.

With respect to developing character strengths and virtues, the goals and techniques of positive discipline are much more congruent with positive psychology than those of assertive discipline and other programs grounded in behavior modification or applied behavior analysis. Positive discipline aims to develop a range of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors directly related to the above character strengths and virtues. These include intrapersonal, interpersonal, systemic, and judgment skills highlighted in the model. In contrast, in assertive discipline teachers are to directly teach and reinforce specific behaviors or social skills, particularly those that demonstrate compliance with teacher expectations and classroom rules and lead to external recognition or external rewards. Teachers are simply told that over time self-discipline will automatically emerge. They are provided no guidance as to how this occurs or how to facilitate it beyond the use of supportive feedback, rules, and corrective actions. As noted in reviews of assertive discipline, the model has never been about teaching self-discipline and related character strengths and virtues (Kohn, 1996; Render, Padilla, & Krank, 1989). This applies to most other behaviorally oriented programs that emphasize compliance, including those claiming to be positive.

Although the student-centered approach of positive discipline clearly emphasizes self-discipline more so than does the teacher-centered approach of assertive discipline, it too has many shortcomings with respect to providing educators with sufficient understanding and guidance in developing self-discipline. The program is overly ambitious in its goals, and seriously lacking in drawing from recent research and theory to help educators achieve them. For example, in the preface of their book for teachers, Neslen et al. (2000) state that their goals are to develop character, emotional intelligence, responsible citizenship, positive self-perceptions, social skills, and safe and caring schools. Nowhere do they discuss what character is. Indeed, the word character is difficult, if not impossible, to find elsewhere in the book. Likewise, no recent research and theory in the above areas are cited, including the growing body of literature in character development and education (see Berkowitz & Bier, 2004; Berkowitz & Schwartz, 2006).

Children's Basic Needs of Competence, Belongingness, and Autonomy Must Be Met

In positive psychology, the needs for competence, belongingness, and autonomy are viewed as critical to self-determination and intrinsic motivation. It is understood that unless those needs are met, an individual will not experience personal and social well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). As basic needs, their influence on behavior, including in school, is pervasive. Indeed, it is difficult for students to experience self-discipline when they perceive themselves as incompetent, socially rejected, or as having no personal choice. A wealth of research shows that each of those needs is related to important personal and social outcomes (see Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2006; Ryan, Deci, Grolnick, & LaGuardia, 2006).

The need of competence, belongingness, and autonomy are related to many of the above character strengths and virtues. They build upon and support one another. For example, kindness and authenticity enhance meeting the need of social belonging (and feeling liked and accepted by others increases the likelihood of being kind and truthful to others), self-regulation enhances meeting the

need of autonomy (and perceptions of autonomy and self-efficacy influence self-regulation), and social intelligence enhances competence (particularly social competence). Similarly, the three needs are interrelated. For example, perceptions of autonomy enhance competence and vice versa.

Whereas positive discipline recognizes the importance of each of those basic needs, particularly the need of social belonging, assertive discipline does not. As noted by Render et al. (1989), “The Canters ignore children’s needs and do not discuss how to balance the teacher’s need for control with the child’s need for independence, nor how to encourage children’s participation in decision making” (p. 622). With few exceptions, students are expected to play a passive role in school discipline. Although student participation in one-to-one problem solving conferences with the teacher is recommended to plan ways to improve behavior, the role of the student is unclear beyond demonstrating how rule-compliant behavior will be exhibited in the future. Other than encouraging teachers to gain insight as to why a student might misbehave, reasoning or other aspects of cognition and emotion receive little, if any, attention. The focus is on rule-compliant behaviors that the teacher can readily observe, and not on children’s need of autonomy. This also applies to the needs of competence and of social belonging. To be fair, however, the above comment by Render et al. also applies to positive discipline, in that it fails to adequately address the teacher’s need for control, when necessary and appropriate.

As recognized in positive discipline, self-perceptions of autonomy, competence, and social belonging are closely related to children’s overall self-worth or self-esteem. Both programs, but especially positive discipline, highlight the importance of self-esteem. In positive discipline, encouragement is seen as the key to enhancing self-esteem, whereas in assertive discipline it is supportive feedback. To be sure, encouragement and supportive feedback from teachers, parents, and peers influence self-esteem, but the influence often is mediated by other thought processes. Educators should be cognizant of these and other determinants of self-concept and target them in interventions (e.g., social comparison, self-perceptions of competence in specific domains of self-concept; see Manning, Bear, & Minke, 2006).

Whereas assertive discipline gives too little attention to self-esteem and related constructs of self-perceptions of social belonging, competence, and autonomy, perhaps positive discipline devotes too much attention to the role of self-esteem in school discipline. This is seen in its advice to educators not to use punishment and rewards because they harm self-esteem and to make time-out an attractive place for students in order for them to feel better. School discipline programs that follow a positive psychology framework, while focusing primarily on personal happiness, run the risk of doing the same. That is, it is likely that an emphasis on positive emotions will be misinterpreted by some educators as meaning that self-esteem and happiness should be of primary importance in school discipline and especially in developing self-discipline. To be sure, self-esteem and happiness are important in their own right, but there is a lack of research supporting the above advice in positive discipline or showing that schools should emphasize self-esteem in developing self-discipline and in preventing and correcting misbehavior. For example, in a comprehensive review of the self-esteem literature, Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, and Vohs (2003) concluded that “self-esteem per se is not the social panacea that many people once hoped it was” (p. 38). Indeed, their review found little relationship between self-esteem and behavior problems or risky health-related behaviors. Studies in this area also have shown that aggressive children tend to have inflated and idealized self-perceptions of their competencies (Hughes, Cavell, & Grossman, 1997) and that many bullies often are not lacking in self-esteem (Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Kaistaniemi, & Lagerspetz, 1999).

The potential problem of overemphasizing self-esteem and happiness in school discipline can largely be avoided by placing self-esteem and happiness within the context of developing character strengths and virtues. By developing these strengths and virtues, self-esteem and happiness are

likely to follow. That is, students come to perceive themselves highly and feel happy about their lives not necessarily because teachers emphasize or reinforce such feelings. Instead, self-esteem evolves from developing a sense of self with moral identity at its core. Programs that emphasize character education, such as the active involvement of students in service learning activities are much more likely to foster a moral identity, and related self-esteem, than those that emphasize the value of accumulating a large number of tokens or rewards. This is supported by recent research and theory in the areas of moral identity (see Hardy & Carlo, 2005) and service learning (see Hart, Atkins, & Donnelly, 2006).

Behaviors, Thoughts, and Emotions Must Be Targeted

Developing character strengths and virtues requires much more than teaching students to recognize and discriminate between good and bad behaviors, while exhibiting those behaviors that are rewarded and inhibiting those that might lead to punishment (if one is caught). From the perspective of positive psychology, learning *why* and *how* with respect to behavior—how to decide and choose what one should do, and the reasons *why*—is of equal, if not greater, importance than learning *what* to do. This includes understanding why rules are important (other than for self-centered reasons); decide right from wrong or what one ought to do, and why, especially in the absence of rules or adult guidance; and acting in accordance with one's values when faced with peer pressure and other obstacles. Students should learn that in a given social context *not* following rules can reflect a character strength and that “good” behavior is not necessarily that which is rewarded.

Several robust areas of research and theory have identified a variety of cognitive processes and emotional mechanisms that mediate, support, enhance, or augment anti-social and prosocial behavior (see Bandura, 2001; Dodge & Pettit, 2003). Chief among them are the research areas of moral reasoning, emotions, social information processing, and social cognitive learning. For example, research in the area of moral reasoning (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2001; Manning & Bear, 2002; Stams et al., 2006) shows that when asked why one should not engage in behaviors that harm others, aggressive and antisocial children, including bullies and juvenile delinquents, are much more likely to respond with self-centered reasons such as: “You might get caught” or “You’ll get in trouble.” In comparison, those with few if any behavior problems are more likely to focus on the impact of their behavior on others and issues of fairness (e.g., “It would harm others” “It’s not fair, and you wouldn’t want them to do that to you”). It is important to note that the former reasons are those taught in compliance and rule-oriented programs, even though they are the reasons most commonly voiced by aggressive and antisocial children.

Research in the area of emotions also has demonstrated that aggressive children tend to have difficulty regulating their emotions, particularly anger that is reactive (as opposed to proactive) in function (Hubbard et al., 2002). Research also shows that empathy and guilt serve to inhibit antisocial behavior and promote prosocial behavior (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006; Hoffman, 2000). Indeed, research shows that the lack of empathy and guilt and a strong desire to obtain personal rewards are two common characteristics of “cold and callous” youth who exhibit the most serious conduct problems (Pardini, 2006). Similar research in the area of social cognitive learning has found that individuals, especially those who engage in frequent moral transgressions, are able to escape feelings of responsibility and guilt and to justify their actions by using common mechanisms of disengagement or cognitive distortions, such as blame shifting and moral or social justification (Bandura, 2002).

Finally, research in the area of social information processing, which incorporates research in the above areas into the context of how children process social information, has identified a number of deficiencies and distortions of thinking associated with multiple negative outcomes, especially

aggression and social rejection (see Dodge, Coie, & Lynam, 2006, and Dodge & Pettit, 2003, for reviews).

Neither positive psychology nor assertive discipline references any of the above recent research on children's cognitions and emotions. In this sense, both models are woefully outdated and inadequate. To be sure, in emphasizing the critical importance of cognitions and emotions throughout the model, positive discipline fits much more within the framework of positive discipline than does assertive discipline. However, its advice and recommended strategies often are overly simplistic and inconsistent with the wealth of research cited above showing that a much wider range of cognition and emotions (as well as additional individual, home, peer, school, and community factors) influence behavior. Assertive discipline and other behaviorally oriented programs provide even less understanding and guidance as to the role of cognitions and emotions in behavior. They generally disregard the importance of cognition and emotion, limiting their focus to observable behaviors.

Positive Techniques Are Necessary to Develop and Strengthen Character and Virtues, Help Meet Children's Needs, and Prevent Problem Behaviors

Each of the above guiding principles concerns the primary *aims* of positive psychology. The principle here, and the one that follows, concerns the *means* for attaining the above aims. Just as the above aims are viewed as positive, so too should be the means for achieving them. However, as discussed below, this should not rule out the use of punishment, where necessary and appropriate, and especially when used in combination with positive techniques. It does mean, however, that emphasis should be on the use of strategies and techniques for developing, strengthening, or increasing what is desired (e.g., character strengths) and preventing what is not desired. As noted by Peterson and Seligman (2004) "...the absence of a weakness is not in and of itself a strength" (p. 22). Punishment may decrease misbehavior, but do little to teach replacement behavior and to prevent the misbehavior from recurring.

As is true with most behaviorally-oriented school discipline programs, assertive discipline focuses on the means, or techniques for achieving the aim of short-term compliance. Little attention is given to the value of that aim in developing self-discipline and how those techniques are effective in achieving it. Nevertheless, both assertive discipline and positive discipline share many of the same strategies and techniques for preventing and correcting behavior problems. For example, consistent with positive psychology, and supported by empirical research, both models emphasize teacher-student relations, teacher-parent communication, motivating instruction, and a variety of specific techniques for preventing and correcting misbehavior. Although different terms are used to describe those techniques, none of their strategies or techniques is new to classroom management or unique to either program.

As discussed briefly below, the greatest disagreement between the two programs concerns the use of punishment and the use of rewards and praise for preventing and correcting. Whereas positive discipline strongly opposes these techniques, they are the mainstay of assertive discipline.

Use of Punishment Although both programs criticize the use of punishment, both use it. That is, punishment is typically defined in psychology as anything that reduces the frequency of a behavior. It is generally viewed as aversive by the individual to whom it is applied. As such, punishment includes natural and logical consequences in positive discipline and corrective actions in assertive discipline. Consistent with the framework of positive psychology, as well as research demonstrating the advantages of positive reinforcement over punishment in learning (Alberto & Troutman, 2006), in both programs it is strongly recommended that instead of punishment schools should emphasize the use of more positive techniques for preventing misbehavior and increasing desired behavior (e.g.,

modeling, positive reinforcement, etc.). Both programs, but especially positive discipline, clearly recognize the many limitations to punishment: (a) it teaches students what *not* to do, and not desired behaviors; (b) its effects often are short term; (c) it teaches children to punish or aggress toward others; (d) it fails to address the multiple factors that typically contribute to a student's misbehavior; (e) it is likely to produce undesirable side effects; (f) its frequent use creates a negative classroom and school climate; and (g) it can be reinforcing (i.e., negative reinforcement) (Bear, 2005).

From the framework of positive psychology, although educators certainly must be responsive to the limitations of punishment and clearly emphasize the use of other positive techniques, they should not disregard the effectiveness of punishment. As emphasized by Seligman, Steen, Park, and Peterson (2005), the intent of positive psychology is not to replace effective practices for addressing individual weaknesses. Even the most effective classroom managers understand that punishment is necessary and effective, and they use it in combination with positive techniques for increasing desired behavior (Brophy, 1996; Brophy & McCaslin, 1992). In light of a wealth of research demonstrating the effectiveness of techniques of applied behavior analysis, including punishment, in changing behavior (Alberto & Troutman, 2006), nearly all researchers in classroom management and school discipline recognize that punishment is a critical component of effective classroom management (Landrum & Kauffman, 2006). Likewise, at the school wide level, research shows that unambiguous sanctions, including the use of punishment, are likely to be effective both short-term and long-term, serving as a deterrent of misbehavior and promoting safety and learning (Arum, 2003; Gottfredson, 2001; Mayer & Leone, 1999).

Clearly, an emphasis on punishment does not develop positive character traits and positive emotions. Thus, from the framework of positive psychology, schools should not emphasize its use. When used, punishment should be responsive to its limitations. It should always be fair, administered wisely and judiciously (not out of anger and with due process rights followed, where appropriate), and should not be physical, abusive, or overly harsh. The principle of minimal sufficiency should be followed: the mildest form of punishment necessary to bring about compliance should be used (Lepper & Greene, 1978). To be sure, punishment should never be the primary technique of classroom discipline, but as argued by Baumrind (1996) with respect to parenting, replacing all forms of punishment with more “positive” techniques is idealistic and utopian. The same applies with respect to classroom discipline.

Rewards and Praise As in the use of punishment, educators should be aware of limitations to the use of rewards and praise—the focus of much recent debate among researchers (see Akin-Little, Eckert, Lovett, & Little, 2004; Cameron, 2001; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999, 2001). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to cover that debate. However, it should be emphasized that whereas research shows that praise and rewards are generally effective in increasing desired behavior (Cameron, 2001; Stage & Quiroz, 1997), they are likely to be detrimental to intrinsic motivation when used in a controlling (rather than informational) manner. This is especially true when used to get students to engage in behaviors that they already enjoy doing (e.g., when teachers distribute tokens for following rules to students who already do so for reasons other than to gain extrinsic rewards; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001). The important message to educators from this debate is that praise and rewards should be used strategically, with consideration of factors that determine how and when they might be effective or detrimental.

Programs and Techniques for Positive School Discipline Should Be Based on Theory and Empirical Evidence as to their Effectiveness

In the field of mental health many “positive” therapies and interventions have been proposed and implemented with the intended purpose of enhancing personal well-being and happiness and

were later found to be ineffective (Petersen & Seligman, 2004). The same holds true with respect to many positive-oriented programs in education designed to develop character strengths and reduce behavior problems. Noteworthy among them are values clarification (Raths, Harmin, & Simon, 1966), which was popular in the 1960s and 1970s, and the self-esteem movement, which was popular in the early 1990s (California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility, 1990). Educators readily embraced those programs, as well as the “get tough” philosophy of assertive discipline (Canter, 1976). Later, each was shown to be ineffective. To avoid this from happening in the new field of positive psychology, its leaders strongly recommend that interventions be supported by theory and empirical research, especially research on the study of positive emotions, positive character, and positive institutions (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Unfortunately, there are very few studies demonstrating the effectiveness of either positive discipline or assertive discipline, especially published studies comparing either of those programs to other programs. What little research has been reported is lacking in rigorous research design (e.g., random assignment to program) and fails to demonstrate lasting effects on any important outcome. According to positive discipline’s Web site (www.posdis.org), despite being developed over decade ago, evaluation of the model is “just beginning.” Although the Web site presents evidence it claims to support its techniques, no published evidence is presented showing that the model has been implemented successfully and led to favorable outcomes. Instead, the authors refer to unpublished research studies of positive discipline and to published studies of other programs with similar practices. (Interestingly, in support of their model the authors cite research on the Good Behavior Game, which is based on the systematic use of rewards to gain compliance with rules.) Although a greater number of studies have been published on the effectiveness of assertive discipline, it too has been found lacking with respect to the adequacy or rigor of the research. Those that have been published have tended to yield mixed findings, with most showing no effects on student behavior and attitudes (Render et al., 1989).

To be fair, however, the authors of both programs are correct in claiming that research supports many of their techniques. This includes research demonstrating the importance and effectiveness of clear rules, procedures, and routines; a wide range of behavioral interventions for increasing and decreasing behavior (including positive reinforcement, response cost, time-out); close teacher-student relationships; teacher characteristics of effective classroom management (e.g., frequent monitoring, focus on prevention, communication with parents); and student responsibility for management of behavior, or self-discipline (see Marzano, 2003, for a review). Likewise, there is empirical research supporting programs similar in philosophy and design to these two programs. For example, a considerable number of studies support the Caring School Community program (previously referred to as the Child Development Project; see Watson, & Battistich, 2006; also see www.devstu.org) and Responsive Classrooms (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004), which have many features in common with positive discipline, including an emphasis on use of classroom meetings. Support for assertive discipline, especially its emphasis on monitoring and rewarding good behavior, can be found in research on the Good Behavior Game (Van Lier, Vuijk, & Crijnen, 2005).

Conclusion

Positive discipline (Nelsen et al., 200) and assertive discipline (Canter & Canter, 2001) present two contrasting models, each claiming to be a positive model. Positive discipline is student-centered, emphasizing the development of self-discipline and related cognitions and emotions and recognizing the importance of meeting children’s needs of autonomy, competence, and social belonging. It strongly opposes the use of rewards, praise, and punishment, and relies heavily on close

teacher-student relations and class meetings to prevent behavior problems. Assertive discipline is teacher-centered, emphasizing the teaching of rules and corrective actions within the context of supportive feedback from the teacher. Rewards, praise, and punishment (i.e., corrective actions) are critical components of the model and are viewed as serving not only to correct behavior problems but also as preventing them and helping to develop self-discipline. If one's goal is to bring about short-term compliance—which should not necessarily be dismissed as of little importance in classroom management—one should prefer assertive discipline. If one's goal is the long-term development of self-discipline, then one should prefer positive discipline.

Although positive discipline fits within the framework of positive psychology much more so than does assertive discipline, it has many of the same shortcomings as assertive discipline. There are three major ones. First, both programs fail to draw from recent research and theory in the areas of positive emotions, positive character, and positive institutions. Second, they lack evidence demonstrating that they can be implemented with integrity and lead to positive outcomes. Third, they fail to provide a truly comprehensive model of classroom discipline that addresses developing self-discipline, preventing misbehavior, and correcting misbehavior (whereas assertive discipline lacks the first component, positive discipline lacks in the third component). In light of these serious limitations, educators striving to implement a school discipline program consistent with the framework of positive psychology should consider adopting more evidence-based models, practices, and techniques of school discipline. These include the Caring Schools Community model and other evidence-based models, practices, and techniques in the areas of character education and social and emotional learning (see Berkowitz & Schwartz, 2006; Berkowitz, Sherblom, Bier, & Battistich, 2006; Zins & Elias, 2006; see Web sites for the Character Education Partnership, www.character.org and the Collaborative for Social and Emotional Learning, www.casel.org).

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Positive Psychology and the Prevention of School-Based Victimization

KRIS VARJAS, JOEL MEYERS, BARBARA MEYERS, SAMUEL KIM,
CHRISTOPHER C. HENRICH, AND LAURA SUBBIAH TENEBBAUM

Bullying is a problem that affects all children. Typically, bullying is defined as an intentional effort to repeatedly harm others in the context of a relationship in which the bully is perceived as having greater power than the victim (Olweus, 1991, 1993). Nansel and colleagues (2001) reported that 30% of a national sample of sixth- through tenth-grade public and private school students were involved in bullying either as a bully, victim or bully/victim. According to the most recent National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) data, 24% of public schools indicated that bullying was a daily or weekly problem, with middle schools reporting the highest incidences. Further, 28% of students ages 12 to 18 reported being bullied in the previous 6 months (Dinkes, Cataldi, & Lin-Kelly, 2007). These statistics underscore the critical need for continued and systematic examination of school-based bullying.

Recently there has been a notable increase in research on bullying in the United States (e.g., Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Jimerson & Furlong, 2006; Mahan et al., 2006; Marshall, Varjas, Meyers, Skoczylas, & Graybill, in press). Although more is now known about the (a) characteristics of bullies and victims, (b) prevalence and frequency of victimization, (c) destructive outcomes for bullies and victims, and (d) reasons for victimization (e.g., Dinkes, Cataldi, & Lin-Kelly, 2007; Espelage & Swearer; Holt, Finkelhor, & Kantor, 2007; Jimerson & Furlong, 2006; Marshall et al., in press ; Nansel et al., 2001), less attention has been devoted to assessing programs designed to prevent and/or reduce the impact of bullying and victimization (e.g., Espelage & Swearer; Leff, 2007; Power, 2007; Varjas et al., 2006).

There has been a primary reliance on deficit models to explain negative consequences of bullying rather than a consideration of positive variables such as resiliency (e.g., Masten, 2001). This problem-focused orientation (e.g., Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Sheldon & King, 2001) may have restricted our understanding of bullying, and this particularly is evident in intervention research examining negative outcomes of victimization in the areas of emotional development, social behavior, and/or academic performance. The purpose of this chapter is to counter this trend by presenting one systemic applied research project on bullying that is in line with principles of positive psychology, with the aim of nurturing healthy development by cultivating resiliency and teaching coping skills.

Resiliency and Bullying

Dimensions of the construct of resilience have been studied for over 40 years (e.g., Garmezy, 1974, 1978, 1981; Garmezy, Masten, & Tellegen, 1984; Masten, 2001; Rutter, 1979; Tiet & Huizinga, 2002; Werner, 1995). Resiliency has been conceptualized as the hallmark of “high-risk individuals [who] defy unfavorable outcomes” (Tiet & Huizinga, 2002, p. 260). Resilient children demonstrate success in the face of adversity, overcome psychosocial risks, and function competently within their environments (Schofield & Beek, 2005). Nurturing resiliency in vulnerable children is likely to help them display positive developmental patterns in social, emotional, and academic domains (e.g., Masten, 2001).

Bullying is one form of adversity among an array of potential environmental risks including low socioeconomic status, single parent families, abusive and neglectful situations, family histories of psychopathology, and prenatal stress (Werner, 1995, 1996). Children who are exposed to bullying experience stress in school (e.g., Varjas et al., 2006); victims become concerned for their personal safety, and are at greater risk for developing health, education, and mental health problems (e.g., Meyers & Meyers, 2003; Varjas et al., 2006). Intervention programs have the potential to enhance protective factors such as familial support, positive relationships with teachers, peer support, supportive classroom environment, and coping abilities (e.g., Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2002; Davidson & Demaray, 2007; Leff, Power, Costigan, & Manz, 2003; Power, 2007). Considering that competence and social support emerged as protective factors of resilient children, adding these protective factors to a vulnerable child’s repertoire may help them learn to counter stressors and “defy” bullying (Lothe & Heggen, 2003; Meyers & Meyers, 2003; Werner, 1996).

By redirecting professional efforts from a treatment orientation (addressing negative outcomes through intervention once they have already transpired) to one of primary prevention, it may be possible to provide children with the skills to overcome problems *before* they occur (e.g., Meyers, 1989, 1998). This basic tenet of prevention has the potential to strengthen children’s capacities as they proceed through developmental, cultural, and societal milestones.

Recently it has been suggested that psychology be re-envisioned as a positive science, grounded in wellness, not pathology (e.g., Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In this conceptualization, one aims to fortify strengths rather than ameliorate deficits. Pairing the proactive tenets of prevention with those of positive psychology is a promising theoretical collaboration, but one requiring a different paradigm to formulate research questions and methodologies for solving problems, such as bullying.

A Model Integrating Positive Psychology and Primary Prevention

When psychologists use primary prevention approaches, they maximize the provision of mental health services (Albee, 1968; Caplan, 1964; Cowen, 1977, 1983; Meyers & Nastasi, 1999). Albee (1988) and Meyers & Nastasi (1999) include schematics to illustrate how the theory of prevention can be applied in practice and promote greater understanding of the etiology of pathology. These are presented as equations depicting factors that contribute to psychopathology and learning problems. The authors assumed that factors in the numerator lead to disorders (predispositions of the individual, stress, and exploitation), and that factors in the denominator support resilience (competence, self-esteem, and environmental supports, see Figure 24.1).

Despite a long-standing prevention movement, there has been insufficient progress capitalizing on its potential to benefit children’s social/emotional development in research and practice (Meyers, 1998). Similarly, the inclusion of preventative efforts to address school-based bullying in the literature has been limited (Leff, 2007). An inclination toward identifying a problem or deficit within the child combined with the mindset of remediation and “fixing” the child may have con-

Panel a	Meyers and Nastasi's Modification of Albee's Prevention Formula
Mental Health Disorder =	Individual + Stress + Exploitation + (Educational, Health Predisposition)
	Self Esteem + Competence + (Educational Social or Medical Supports)
Panel b	Revised Prevention Formula Based on Positive Psychology
Learning Adjustment, Positive Development, =	Subjective Well-being + Competence + (Educational, Social, Medical Supports)
and Wellness	Individual + Stress + Exploitation Predisposition

Figure 24.1 Meyers and Nastasi's modification of Albee's prevention formula. (© 2003 by the American Psychological Association. Reproduced with permission. "Bi-directional influences between positive psychology and primary prevention" by J. Meyers and B. Meyers, 2003, *School Psychology Quarterly*, 18, p. 224. The use of APA information does not imply endorsement by APA.)

tributed to the limited focus on prevention. The infusion of constructs from positive psychology may help to reorient and strengthen such initiatives. It is our belief that primary prevention and positive psychology can be mutually beneficial frameworks for generating theory, research, and practice regarding bullying in schools (Meyers & Meyers, 2003).

Examples of the Bi-directional Influences of Prevention and Positive Psychology

The potential beneficial relationship between prevention and positive psychology is reflected in a new prevention formula (see Figure 24.1). Meyers and Meyers (2003) transposed the equation, emphasizing prevention factors in accord with positive psychology (Seligman, 2002). The outcome of this re-formularization is *well-being* rather than illness. Components of resilience (i.e., subjective well-being, competence, and environmental supports) are now located in the numerator of the equation, whereas factors that may inhibit positive growth and development are in the denominator (i.e., *individual pre-dispositions* [anxiety, depression, low motivation, neurological predispositions]; *stressors* [death, divorce, mobility]; and *variables associated with exploitation* [SES, gender, and race]).

The principles of positive psychology can be used to redefine prevention constructs, which are explored in other chapters in this volume. For example, the numerator as illustrated in Table 24.1 includes: *subjective well-being*, *competence*, and *supports* each of which has been derived directly from positive psychology. A focus on self-concept (Bracken & Lamprecht, 2003), life satisfaction

Table 24.1 How positive psychology defines and expands the numerator of the prevention formula

Subjective Well-Being	Competence	Supports
• Self-concept	• Emotional competence	• School organization
• Life satisfaction	• Social cognition	• School climate
• Hope theory	• Flow	• Class structure/goals & Practices (e.g., scaffolding, culturally responsive teaching)
	• Social competence	• Teacher & Peer acceptance
	• Moral emotions	• Peer contexts

(Gilman & Huebner, 2003) and hope theory (Snyder, Lopez, Shorey, Rand, & Feldman, 2003) lead to the construct of subjective well-being. *Competence* is derived from social cognition and moral emotions (Bear, Manning, & Izard, 2003), emotional competence (Buckley, Storino, & Saarni, 2003) and Flow Theory (Shenoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider, & Shernoff., 2003). Finally, *supports* subsumes the impact of the environment on positive adjustment (e.g., school climate, classroom structure, goals and practices, peers, and family; Baker, Dilly, Aupperlee, & Patil, 2003).

The revised model emphasizes the collective positive impact that these variables can have on the learning, social adjustment, and wellness of the developing child. By enhancing the facilitative variables in the numerator and reducing the impact of the variables in the denominator, preventive interventions are likely to follow.

Participatory Culture-Specific Interventions

When developing preventive interventions based on this formula, it is also important to recognize interactions between key characteristics of the individual and their ecological contexts (Meyers & Nastasi, 1999; Trickett, 1984; Trickett & Berman, 1989). For example, interventions created to build social competence through curricula that teach a range of social skills are most likely to be effective and sustained when used in conjunction with supportive environmental modifications (e.g., Meyers & Nastasi, 1999; Shure, 1988; Shure & Spivack, 1988). The bullying prevention program presented in this chapter will be described in a manner that underscores how components of this formula were used to develop this intervention.

Effective approaches to prevention and the application of positive psychology must be designed with careful and respectful attention paid to demographic changes in schools and other community settings (Meyers & Meyers, 2003). It is imperative to develop prevention programs and research that are specific to the local cultural setting and that seek input from all stakeholder groups (e.g., Meyers, Dowdy, & Paterson, 2000; Meyers & Meyers, 2003; Meyers, Truscott, Meyers, Varjas, & Collins, 2007; Nastasi, Moore, & Varjas, 2004; Varjas et al., 2006). Researchers need to examine culturally specific pathways to wellness so that the most relevant and effective methods are implemented, thereby inhibiting the negative effects of stress and exploitation (see Table 24.1). One approach, the Participatory Culture-Specific Intervention Model (PCSIM; Nastasi et al., 2004; Varjas et al., 2006), is described in the following section.

Reducing Bullying in an Urban School District (RBUSD) Project

The authors have worked for 4 years with an urban school district to reduce bullying and its negative effects (see Varjas et al., 2006). The RBUSD project utilizes PCSIM (Nastasi et al., 2004) to guide formative research as well as prevention and intervention efforts. PCSIM requires participation from key stakeholders from data collection and interpretation to intervention development, implementation, and evaluation (Nastasi et al., 2004). Nastasi and colleagues (2004) posit that active participation of stakeholders combined with the recursive nature of data collection and interpretation enhances intervention acceptability, validity, treatment fidelity, efficacy, sustainability, and institutionalization. An essential component of this model is the focus on culture and culture specificity. Culture is defined as the shared language, ideas, beliefs, values, and behavioral norms of its members (Nastasi, Varjas, Sarkar, & Jayasena, 1998). Culture-specificity is the incorporation of the culture of the targeted group, in this case, within the intervention (Nastasi et al., 1998, 2004; Varjas et al., 2006).

RBUSD formative research efforts incorporated mixed methods data collection procedures. The qualitative strand included in-depth interviews with stakeholders, including students (Varjas,

Mahan, et al., 2006; Varjas, Meyers, Bellmoff, et al., 2008), support personnel (Mahan et al., 2006; Varjas et al., 2007), and teachers (Marshall et al., in press) regarding perceptions of bullying (e.g., definition, prevalence, characteristics of bullies and victims, strategies to reduce bullying). The quantitative strand included a needs assessment conducted with middle school students (Varjas, Henrich, & Meyers, in press). Our most recent formative research included interviews with high school students regarding cyber bullying and a needs assessment conducted with fourth through eighth graders. We are in the third year of intervention work with students in grades 4 and 5 and with middle schools that include the implementation of a pilot project assessing the impact of an individualized counseling intervention with bullies.

The RBSUD project incorporates the Ecological-Developmental Model of Mental Health (EDMMH; see Nastasi et al., 2005, for further description) and positive psychology tenets as the theoretical framework for intervention development utilized by the authors in previous research studies investigating peer victimization (Varjas et al., 2006). The EDMMH establishes a conceptual framework to investigate the individual (e.g., personal resources, competencies) and cultural factors (e.g., community supports), related to the mental health of the identified student within an ecological context (e.g., family, school, community). The appraisal of individual and community risk and protective factors, stress and coping, and personal-social competence would all be important components of this approach. Thus, the EDMMH conceptual framework theoretically fits well with the Meyers and Meyers (2003) revised prevention formula based on positive psychology principles.

Implementing a Bullying Prevention Program Based in Positive Psychology Principles

The bully intervention program presented in this chapter illustrates the application of positive psychology constructs and is designed to prevent peer victimization and its negative effects via enhanced resilience to bullying that are based in building coping abilities and individual competencies (Varjas et al., 2006).

Bullying Prevention Research Implementation

Target School Context The target school housed fourth- and fifth-grade students in a small urban school district in the Southeast. The school's had 365 students during 2006–2007 with the following racial breakdown: 45.5% African American, 45.5% Caucasian, 4% multi-racial, and 5% unknown. Approximately 37% of the students in this school qualified for free and reduced-priced lunch.

Group Members The group members were identified by school personnel and parents/guardians as perceived victims of bullying. The school counselor contacted each parent/guardian to discuss the project and request parent/guardian permission for his or her child to participate in the intervention. Sixteen students were identified to participate in the intervention and provided his or her assent. Two groups were established and separated based on gender. Of the participating students, 60% were fourth graders and 40% were fifth graders. Half of the group members were female and half were male. Of the participating students 57.1% were Caucasian and 42.9% were Black.

Group Facilitators Six group facilitators participated in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the intervention. The facilitators were school psychology graduate students (two male and four female). Of the participating group facilitators, 1 was African American, 1 was Korean American, and 4 were Caucasian. The group facilitators participated in a 12-hour training program with the primary investigators and consultants to discuss group process, behavior management, crisis intervention, group facilitation techniques, and the bullying prevention curriculum. Facilitators

tors also participated in weekly meetings to monitor progress of the project and to share successes and struggles about facilitation and/or implementation of the intervention.

The principal investigators (PIs) assigned three facilitators per group. Two facilitators led the group sessions, while one facilitator was responsible for process recording. Assignments rotated each session. Process recorders documented information regarding each student (e.g., behavior, language), the group process (e.g., student engagement, student interactions with peers and facilitators), and facilitation (e.g., accomplished objectives of the session, facilitator techniques).

Bullying Prevention Curriculum

A culture-specific curriculum was developed for this target school incorporating data from the formative research. The curriculum teaches children coping skills, facilitates awareness of available resources/supports within the school environment, reviews problem solving strategies, and helps students recognize their individual strengths to cope with bullying (Varjas, Meyers, Bellmoff et al., 2007; see Table 24.2). The curriculum promotes the use of preventative strategies based on tenets from EDMMH and positive psychology to help victims of bullying learn how to succeed despite the stress within their environment.

Table 24.2 Session title, objectives, and skills

Session	Objectives	Skills
1. Group Rules and Icebreakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build rapport among group members and leaders • To establish group rules and expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy • Respecting privacy • Consensus building • Tolerance • Self-disclosure • Problem-solving
2. Students' Perception of Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore students' perceptions regarding bullying behavior • To help students engage in self-reflection • To help students practice empathy • To help students practice problem-solving skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy • Self-reflection • Identifying coping resources • Problem-solving
3. Emotion-focused Coping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help students understand empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy • Recognizing nonverbal cues related to empathy • Problem-solving
4. Culturally Valued Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recognize and increase awareness of positive feelings, likes, and competencies • To increase awareness of others' opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify feelings about self • Identify likes/dislikes • Identify competencies • Self-image
5. Problem-focused Coping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide the students with the skills to identify bullying situations and apply problem-solving skills to those situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-solving • Problem-focused coping • Empathy
6. Identifying Social-cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify safe and unsafe or high-risk areas in the school • To discuss students' perceptions regarding safe and unsafe places • To identify ways to increase feelings of safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of which places are and are not safe • Recognition of how to keep self safe • Identification of people that can help maintain/increase feelings of safety

The intervention curriculum consisted of six 35-min sessions that were implemented during the last 9 weeks of the academic year. The group sessions occurred after school. Each session is comprised of eight basic components: (a) session objectives, (b) module skills, (c) general timeline to provide a framework to the session's progression, (d) a supply list, (e) specific instructions for the facilitators to guide the activities, (f) wrap up, (g) an integrity checklist, and (h) student and facilitator evaluation.

Session 1 The session objectives were (a) to begin to build rapport with the facilitators and students and among the students themselves and (b) to establish group rules and expectations. Building rapport among students and facilitators is essential when attempting to create a sense of connectedness among group members (Baker et al., 2003). The activity for the generation of rules and expectations was designed so that students established standards for contributing and effective group member behavior. This participatory process (i.e., consensus building) helps the students to focus on the importance of group citizenship rather than the student as an individual (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The activity allows the students to determine what rules they believe are important and relevant within this particular cultural context, rather than the facilitators imposing adult-generated rules. The intent of the session also was to create a setting that encouraged developmentally appropriate choices and self-direction within the agreed upon group structure (Baker et al., 2003).

Session 2 The objectives of this session were to help students to (a) explore perception of bullying, (b) engage in self-reflection, (c) practice empathy, and (d) practice problem-solving skills. The students participated in a semi-structured interview including questions such as "How would you explain to someone what bullying is?" and "What's the difference between bullying and teasing?"

Session 3 Understanding empathy was the objective of this session. The activity included a student-driven discussion on defining empathy from a culturally and developmentally appropriate perspective. This discussion was followed by a facial expression game that provided an opportunity for students to recognize non-verbal cues and attach names to expressions. The ability to accurately perceive and express emotions comes from a variety of sources that include facial expressions, tone of voice, and language (Salovey, Mayer, & Caruso, 2002). Constructive feedback among the students regarding individual expressions of feelings was an important part of this activity.

Session 4 In this session students engaged in a body mapping activity designed to increase students' self-concepts by identifying positive feelings, likes, and competencies (Bracken & Lamprecht, 2003). Students identified personal strengths, resources, and competencies as well as the strengths of other members in the group. This approach was consistent with the mental health component of the EDMMH conceptual framework (Nastasi et al., 2005) and Meyers and Nastasi's modification of Albee's prevention formula (2003).

Session 5 The objective of this session was to provide students with skills needed to identify bullying situations and to apply the Second Step problem-solving steps (Committee for Children, 1977). Using an age and culturally appropriate stimulus (e.g., a popular children's cartoon, a student-generated scenario), a bullying dilemma was presented to the students as stimulus for them to apply and evaluate the problem solving steps. Students were taught skills similar to the components of hope theory (Snyder, Lopez, Shorey, Rand, & Feldman, 2003), which included understanding goals, creating strategies to attain goals, and the motivation to follow through with achieving those goals.

Session 6 Similar to the positive psychology orientation of the earlier sessions, the final session included concepts of connectedness and self-direction (Baker et al., 2003). Learning about school climate and in particular, the “bullying culture” in which these children are targeted was an emphasis for this session. The objectives of this session were (a) to identify safe and unsafe or high-risk areas in the school, (b) to discuss students’ perceptions regarding safe and unsafe places, and (c) to identify ways to increase feelings of safety. Sharing this information and working together to brainstorm ideas to make themselves and the school safer provided students with an opportunity to increase their sense of control. Students also identified and built upon personal and school supports while generating solutions to increase personal and school safety.

Assessing Program Outcomes

The use of mixed methods to evaluate interventions is consistent with PCSIM. In this study, mixed methods involved the use of multiple data collection techniques and sources to evaluate acceptability, integrity, and efficacy. Mixed methods also were utilized to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the intervention findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Acceptability Measures

Perceptions of intervention acceptability was measured during each session through group member and facilitator evaluation/reflection forms, session process recordings, and facilitator post-session e-mails to the PIs. The group member evaluation forms posed two questions assessing students’ feelings associated with the session and two questions addressing what they liked and disliked (i.e., acceptability) about the session activities. The facilitator evaluation form had six questions with two questions specifically addressing acceptability. The facilitator evaluation form also included a self-evaluation component regarding the individual’s implementation of the session and assessment of intervention acceptability. Session process recordings, described earlier in the “group facilitators” section, provided further information about treatment acceptability.

Integrity Measures

Traditionally, intervention integrity is monitored for two purposes. First, data are collected to assess if the intervention was implemented as planned (Gresham, Gansle, Noell, & Cohen, 1993). Second, data are evaluated to determine if modifications need to be made to increase intervention effectiveness (Power et al., 2005). In this project, integrity data were collected to document the essential components of the program and culturally appropriate modifications (Nastasi et al., 2004; Power et al., 2005; Varjas, Nastasi, Berstein Moore, & Jayasena, 2005). That is, the documentation of culture-specific adaptations made to the intervention considering the individual and contextual variation while not dispensing with integrity (Nastasi et al., 2004). In fact, the concept of adaptations incorporates flexibility for the facilitators within the curriculum without sacrificing rigor (Nastasi et al., 2004).

Intervention integrity data were collected for each session from multiple sources (students, facilitators, process recorders) utilizing multiple methods. These methods included a session activity integrity checklist, process recordings, audiotapes of particular sessions, weekly facilitator interviews, and weekly post-session e-mails by facilitators to principal investigators, facilitator evaluation forms, and student products. The use of multiple methods and sources provided researchers an opportunity to collect content (adherence to critical components, exposure, program differentiation) and process (e.g., quality of delivery, participant responsiveness) integrity data as suggested by Dane and Schneider (1998) and consistent with PCSIM and best practices.

Efficacy Measures

Fourteen group members completed two pretest and posttest measures, the Behavior Assessment System for Children, Second Edition (BASC-2; Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2004) and the revised version of the Child Self-Report Post Traumatic Stress Reaction Index (CPTS-RI; Pynoos et al., 1993). Pretest measures were administered individually within two weeks prior to the start of the intervention and posttests were administered individually within one week after the completion of the intervention.

The BASC-2 is a self-report measure designed to assess emotions, behaviors, and self-perceptions. It has high internal consistency and test-retest reliability (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2004). For the purposes of this study, the BASC-2's internalizing problems, school problems, and personal adjustment composite *T* scores were used. A *T* score of 70 or above is considered clinically significant.

The CPTS-RI is a self-report scale designed to assess stress reaction symptoms in school-aged children and adolescents after exposure to a range of traumatic events (Pynoos et al., 1993; Rousos et al., 2005). A sum score of 38 has been used in prior research as the cutoff for clinically high levels of post-traumatic stress symptoms (Pynoos et al., 1993). The scale is highly reliable (Roussos et al., 2005). In the current study, the pretest internal consistency was $\alpha = .86$ and posttest internal consistency was $\alpha = .91$.

Results of Bullying Prevention Implementation

Consistent with PCSIM, a mixed-method approach to data analysis was utilized. Pre-test and posttest scores from the BASC-2 and CPTS-RI were used to evaluate change in student social/emotional/behavioral functioning following participation in the intervention. For this chapter, qualitative data regarding integrity and acceptability were reviewed by a team of researchers using an inductive-deductive approach to data analysis and interpretation by a team of researchers after the completion of the intervention (e.g., Varjas et al., 2005). Independent trained coders reviewed data sources for evidence of intervention acceptability, integrity, and efficacy. Coders compared categorizations to establish inter-rater agreement (Bakeman & Gottman, 1986). Disagreements were discussed and resolved establishing 100% consensus. Findings are presented separately for acceptability, integrity, and efficacy.

Acceptability of Prevention Program

Group members, process recorders, and facilitators provided input relevant to intervention acceptability. Findings will be reported separately for the three data sources.

Group Members

Student participants consistently provided positive feedback on the group member evaluation forms. As was found in previous implementations of this program (Varjas et al., 2006), students reported relief of knowing that they were “not the only one going through things.” Students liked having opportunities “to talk to new friends” and “to be around people that care.” Students were provided opportunities to suggest changes for the session activities. The overall consensus from students regarding improving or changing the program was “pretty much nothing. It’s so cool that it doesn’t need to be changed.” Students commented on the session activities and created products. One male student who had completed the Body Map Activity reported “it helps to write things down cause it makes you feel better about yourself [it is] like talking to a therapist.” A female student

stated that “showing you [facilitators] who the people [are that] we can talk to” was important in regards to her liking the session.

Facilitators

As found in the past, the facilitators were more judgmental of the program than the group members. Facilitator acceptability increased or decreased based on the individual’s assessment of his or her performance as a group leader. Many facilitators commented on the level of students’ engagement and the quality of the information or products produced by the students. For example, in regard to student engagement, “the girls seemed to be really enthusiastic and cooperated well” and “they [the girls] seemed eager to tell us about their experiences and followed the group rules well.” A facilitator of the boys group after Session 1 indicated that he or she was “... marginally pleased. I felt like we came up with some good rules. The students came up with most of them. I am not sure we developed group cohesiveness.”

A developmental modification to the curriculum was to include choices for facilitators in regard to high movement versus low movement activities. In these particular sessions, the objective remained the same but how it was accomplished varied (Nastasi et al., 2000). One boy’s group facilitator indicated that, “the high movement activity worked really well with the boys.” A developmental and cultural adaptation included using a popular cartoon as part of the decision-making session. In a post-session e-mail, a boys’ group facilitator commented, “I think the video clip was a good choice. Some of the boys were already familiar with the episode and knew how it ended but they were still able to generate solutions.”

Process Recorders

Process recorders documented observations related to student engagement (“hands shoot up before the question is finished”) and approval (“Students liked having her body drawn and writing things about themselves”) of the intervention. Recorder comments regarding the comprehension of the activity also were important. For instance, the girls’ group process recorder reflected students’ difficulty in comprehending the task. “There seems to be much confusion of what floor each page corresponds to ...” This process recorder continued to indicate the efforts of the facilitators in this session to intervene. “Much redirection is needed to explain this task.” Finally, a developmental and cultural adaptation (i.e., popular cartoon) was included in the problem solving session. The process recorder commented that the “girls were excited to watch [the cartoon] and laughing at the show, some had seen it before and were saying the lines.”

Integrity of the Prevention Program

Data generated by the facilitators (e.g., evaluations, checklists, process recordings, weekly post-session e-mails) and students (i.e., session products) provided information regarding intervention integrity. The findings will be presented by content and process of the intervention (e.g., Dane & Schneider, 1998).

Content

The facilitators and process recorders completed an integrity checklist to document if the specific program objectives were met (i.e., adherence). Checklist results indicated that the program objectives were met 90% of the time. Facilitators often commented that when program objectives were

not met it was because they felt there was not enough time being allocated per session. One group met in the library until a classroom space was available. This transition often led to facilitator comments regarding integrity. “Not especially pleased. It was difficult losing momentum as we had to move from the library to the class.” Facilitators also commented on his or her adherence to the specific program objectives and the essential components of the program. “I was pleased and I thought I did a better job of facilitation and being cognizant of the time.”

Process

The facilitators often mentioned their perception of their performance related to the quality of instruction (“very comfortable with keeping control and reinforcing what we were learning”) and adaptation of the curriculum activities (“Facilitator makes a game by having the girls race between maps, write something until everyone’s done, then race to the next map. Being careful to allow enough time to think of things to write.”). Another important process component related to the students’ understanding of the tasks. “The students have trouble understanding the task. We encouraged them to color code and have a key.”

Efficacy of Prevention Program

Quantitative analyses investigated the amount of change from pretest to posttest on the BASC composite scores for school problems, internalizing problems and personal adjustment, as well as change in symptoms of posttraumatic stress. Descriptive statistics for the four variables are presented in Table 24.3.

Paired-sample *t*-tests examined the following one-tailed hypotheses: As a result of the intervention, mental health problems would decrease from pretest to posttest and personal adjustment would increase. Results of the hypothesis tests are presented in Table 24.4. There was no change from pretest to posttest in school problems, but there was a significant decrease in internalizing problems and a significant increase in personal adjustment. There was also a trend-level decrease in posttraumatic stress symptoms ($p = .054$). Estimates of effect size indicated that all changes from pretest to posttest were large (Cohen, 1988).

Table 24.3 Means and standard deviations of psychological adjustment variables

	Pretest		Posttest		N
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
BASC-2 school problems	48.21	10.57	48.21	9.55	14
BASC-2 internalizing problems	52.29	5.55	49.36	5.85	14
BASC-2 personal adjustment	48.86	10.98	52.14	9.63	14
CPTS-RI post-traumatic stress	31.55	14.01	22.27	9.59	11

Table 24.4 Pretest-posttest mean changes in psychological adjustment

	Mean Change	SD	t	df	p (one-tail)	Cohen’s d
BASC-2 school problems	0.00	4.95	0.00	13	1.000	.00
BASC-2 internalizing problems	-2.93	3.17	3.45	13	.002	.92
BASC-2 personal adjustment	3.29	4.62	2.66	13	.010	.71
CPTS-RI post-traumatic stress	9.27	17.42	1.77	10	.054	.53

Assessing the Bullying Prevention Intervention through a Positive Psychology Lens

This project was presented to illustrate the potential importance of positive psychology, primary prevention, and culture in developing effective approaches in response to school-based bullying. In particular, this preventive intervention illustrates how the Participatory Culture Specific Intervention Model (PCSIM; Nastasi et al., 2004) considers culture when developing preventive-intervention strategies that target constructs from Positive Psychology (e.g., subjective well-being) and are tailored to the local cultural context. Moreover, we documented how this model reframes the dilemma of bullying by integrating principles from ecological theory, mental health, prevention, and positive psychology. This approach offers a way to design effective preventive interventions targeting school-based bullying and its negative effects.

Conclusions Regarding the Intervention

As noted throughout the description of the intervention, the curriculum for our victim support groups was designed to promote variables related to positive psychology, such as social competence. In this way, the prevention project illustrates our integrative framework. The PCSIM, with its emphasis on assessment of local needs was essential in assuring that positive psychology principles were embedded in the intervention design. By collecting information from teachers, counselors, and community service providers regarding the nature of bullying in the context of these specific classrooms and schools (e.g., Mahan et al., 2006; Marshall et al., in press; Varjas et al., 2007), we were able to obtain information that led to strategies that were congruent with positive psychology. For example, we used empathy training and social problem-solving training derived from the *Second Step* curriculum (Committee for Children, 1997) to promote social competence in victims of bullying and to connect our efforts to a program that was already being used by the school. Furthermore, our use of needs assessment data (Varjas, Henrich, & Meyers, in press) enhanced cooperation and perceptions of treatment acceptability on the part of the educators in the target schools.

In addition, our use of the PCSIM model resulted in input from the participating students that helped to shape this intervention to better meet their needs and this enhanced its focus on variables related to positive psychology. For example, the support group was designed to obtain student input regarding their self-perceptions and views of school bullying. This included group interviews about bullying, its causes and relevant interventions, a session on body maps that provided information about self-perceptions, and a school map exercise that highlighted student views about safety in various parts of the school environment. PCSIM enabled the nurturing of students' perceptions of self-efficacy by reinforcing their coping strategies to prevent bullying and support a safer school setting.

Conclusions Regarding the Outcomes

A range of variables measured in this bully prevention project was relevant to positive psychology and primary prevention. Although most of the outcomes that were investigated in this study involved important student characteristics, some were concerned with the school as a system (i.e., identification of safe and unsafe places).

Some of the child outcomes included systematic pre-post decreases in a range of internalizing dimensions measured by the internalizing composite from the BASC-2 as well as the survey of symptoms of post-traumatic stress. These observed outcomes suggest that this victim support group had positive effects on variables such as anxiety, depression, sense of inadequacy, and social stress. These findings may indicate that components of the developed curriculum specifically addressing these variables (e.g., reducing social stress and a sense of inadequacy; see Table 24.2) were indeed

effective. In addition, the participants often reported that group participation helped to reduce their feelings of isolation based on the support they perceived from their fellow students who reported similar problems and concerns.

Significant positive gains also were attained for the Personal Adjustment composite from the BASC-2. This composite includes positive psychology variables such as self-esteem, self-reliance, and interpersonal relationships. For example, self-reliance reflects confidence in one's ability to solve problems and a belief in one's dependability and decisiveness. One activity may have contributed to this outcome as students were asked to identify places in the school environment where they felt safe and unsafe. Then students developed ideas about steps that they could take to enhance safety in the building. The resulting decision by the school to place staff in strategic positions to enhance safety is a good example of a school outcome that may have also strengthened feelings of self-efficacy in these students. Because of these outcomes, our research team increased the focus on self-efficacy in subsequent versions of the victim support group curriculum (Varjas, Meyers, Bellmoff et al., 2007). In addition, a measure was developed assessing self-efficacy related to bullying situations that will be used as a pre-post measure in future investigations of this bullying intervention (Kim, Varjas, Meyers, & Henrich, 2008).

In contrast to the outcomes referred to above, there was no significant change over time in the BASC-2 composite on School Problems, which reflects attitudes toward teachers and schools. This finding is understandable because it is consistent with the observed discrepancies in views of bullying that we have found from the teachers and students in this school. Although teachers in this school have reported that they respond systematically to bullying when it occurs, students generally report that teachers do not intervene effectively, if at all, when bullying occurs. Nevertheless, an important goal of preventive interventions concerning bullying should be to improve school climate and strengthen the attitudes and interpersonal relationships between students and teachers. This may become a more specific goal in future efforts to use the victim support group curriculum and it will also be a goal as we implement systemic, school-wide preventive efforts targeting all students and teachers in an effort to reduce bullying.

Emergent Conclusions Regarding Acceptability and Integrity in Bullying Research

One potentially important finding from this research was that group facilitators perceived integrity and acceptability as intertwined constructs. When facilitators were asked to discuss treatment integrity, they also reported information about acceptability. The responses to questions directly posed regarding integrity were influenced by the perceived acceptability of the activity. Prior research has been based on a framework where acceptability and integrity are two unique constructs, with acceptability viewed as a prerequisite for integrity (e.g., Eckhart & Hintze, 2000; Noell et al., 2005). However, the current findings indicate that these constructs may not be separate. As integrated concepts, they may need to be assessed simultaneously, rather than using two separate instruments. These tentative findings should be treated with caution until future research is designed to clarify these constructs.

Suggestions to Focus Future Research on Resilience and Prevention

Several limitations of the current investigation need attention in future research on the prevention of bullying and its negative effects. First, the victim support group was the primary intervention discussed in this research. It was focused on a subgroup of students who had been identified as victims of bullying. As a result, this was secondary prevention (or risk reduction; Meyers & Nastasi, 1999) not primary prevention. Although some of the outcomes discussed have implications for primary prevention (i.e., the redeployment of school staff to enhance safety throughout the

building), there is a need for systematic use of primary prevention strategies that target the entire school population when seeking to prevent bullying. Systematic implementation of primary prevention would have strengthened and expanded the positive results observed for this support group, which is a goal of our future work.

Second, the evaluation presented in this chapter was not a field experiment with a control group, and the pretest and posttest measures did not assess whether the intervention actually prevents peer victimization or strengthens students' resilience to bullying. Furthermore, although the evaluation did examine some variables related to positive psychology (e.g., personal adjustment) it was not designed to assess quantitatively whether there were gains in coping and individual competencies tied specifically to bullying. Much of the remaining pre-post measurement targeted mental health problems rather than positive psychology or resilience. Most notable were the internalizing composite of the BASC-2 and the symptoms of post-traumatic stress that were measured. Although it is important to show reductions in these mental health problems subsequent to the support group intervention, this research would have been strengthened by focusing explicitly on a wider range of positive psychology variables (e.g., subjective well-being, bullying self-efficacy) as well as behaviors needed to cope with bullying. This is recommended as a focus of future research on preventive interventions that target bullying.

The quantitative findings presented here should be interpreted with caution because the sample size was small and the changes we detected may be difficult to replicate, particularly with randomized field experiments. However, it is important to note that the efficacy findings in this study play a potentially critical role within PCSIM by providing evidence to stakeholders that bullying intervention efforts can be effective. In PCSIM, this phase of intervention work is described as capacity building. The goal of capacity building is to engage stakeholders in continued efforts to address challenges around bullying and to foster successful functioning and well-being for all children (Nastasi et al., 2004). Achieving capacity building would provide opportunities for larger, more sophisticated evaluation from a positive psychology framework and would, hopefully, lead to an increased emphasis on primary prevention that could, in turn, help transform the school culture towards a safer environment.

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Promoting Positive Adaptation During the Early Childhood Years

KATHLEEN H. ARMSTRONG, KRISTEN N. MISSALL,
EMILY I. SHAFFER, AND ROBIN L. HOJNOSKI

Mental health has been proposed as a complete state of being, consisting not just of the absence of distress or disorder but also the presence of positive factors such as happiness, self-esteem, and resilience (Ryff & Singer, 1998; Sigerist, 1941). The basic premise of the positive psychology movement is that one should pay more attention to what people do well, rather than concentrate on their flaws and inadequacies (Linley & Joseph, 2004). Positive psychology assumes that each individual has the capacity to develop skills that can increase life satisfaction, even under adverse life circumstances (Seligman, 2004). As such, the framework of positive psychology is parceled into three pillars: (a) *positive subjective experiences*, including happiness, pleasure, fulfillment; (b) *positive individual traits*, including strengths of character, talents, interests, values; and (c) *positive institutions* including families, schools, and communities (Peterson, 2006). Positive institutions are thought to facilitate the development of positive traits, which in turn facilitate the development of positive subjective experiences (Park & Peterson, 2003). Although research efforts over the past 10 years have gathered support for these notions underlying positive psychology, the majority of assessments and interventions aimed at increasing wellness maintain an adult or older child focus (Linley, Joseph, Harrington, & Wood, 2006; Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005).

This chapter aims to align the tenets of positive psychology with current best practices that are recommended to promote healthy growth and development and help young children build social and learning competencies. For the purposes of this chapter, early childhood refers to the period from birth to age 5, during which time children develop the foundations needed for learning and adjustment (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). In addition to remarkable motor, language, and cognitive gains made by children during the first five years of life, dramatic development in social, emotional, regulatory, and moral capacities is accomplished.

These aspects of early development are interconnected and fostered both through the attention provided by caregivers and from early experiences (Brazelton, 1992; Center on Developing Child at Harvard University, 2007; Greenspan, 1989). Young children thrive within the context of safe, loving, and dependable relationships, which encourage their responsive interactions and exploration of environments and set the stage for development of self-esteem and self-efficacy, productivity, connectiveness, and intimacy. As reflected by Seligman (2002), a primary focus in raising children should be identifying, nurturing, and molding their strengths, rather than “fixing what’s wrong.”

As such, primary health care professionals, child care providers, nurses, school psychologists, and school counselors are in the frontline in prevention and early recognition efforts to improve outcomes for young children.

Conceptual Frameworks in Early Childhood Learning and Development

The conceptual roots of early childhood are grounded in a variety of disciplines, frameworks, and fields, and include developmental, behavioral, ecological, and public health approaches. Early developmental theorists attempted to explain changes over the course of development as products of biological maturation, in combination with world experiences. For example, Gesell (1925, 1929; Gesell & Ilg, 1943) believed that child development was directed by neurological maturation that proceeded sequentially—although rates of growth might vary individually. Piaget considered biological concepts as important, but believed that children themselves constructed their thinking through processes of assimilation (taking in information), accommodation (making changes in existing structures), and organization (building ideas into systems). Erikson (1950, 1963) offered a perspective of emotional development built upon earlier psychoanalytic theory, which suggested that key relationships facilitated the inner, maturational timetable and development of the self.

Early behavioral theorists challenged developmental theories, proposing that all behaviors are determined by the outside environment. For example, Watson (1928) proposed that emotions were learned through a process of conditioning, which was later supported by Skinner (1953, 1969), who demonstrated through rigorous scientific testing that both adaptive and maladaptive behavior can be taught through environmental design. Social learning theorists such as Bandura (1962, 1967, 1977) extended the behavioral paradigm by contending that learning is acquired and reinforced through imitative learning, in which children learn through observation and practice. Positive behavior interventions, classroom management techniques, and functional behavior analysis are other examples of the evolution of behavior theory, utilized to promote development and learning, and address the needs of children at-risk (Sugai et al., 1999; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995). Specific to early childhood, the application of behavioral theory to behavioral and social difficulties has led to a number of publications documenting its efficacy, including decreased withdrawal, aggression, and non-compliance (Strain & Timm, 2001); increased friendships and sharing (Denham & Burton, 1996); and increased self-control (Webster-Stratton, 1990).

Ecological theorists, on the other hand, view child development in more dynamic terms, as influenced by both the effects of nature (individual child factors) and nurture (experiences, reinforcement, and environment). In this model, children are believed to present with unique temperaments and behavioral styles, which are thought to influence and be influenced by their multiple environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Children are raised within multiple and nested contexts, including their family, childcare settings, communities, schools, and society, each of which is embedded in the values, practices, and beliefs of the surrounding culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Finally, the public health approach focuses on a systematic promotion of competencies and prevention of problems, using a tiered model of universal, secondary, and tertiary supports (World Health Organization, 2002). From this model, one may understand and address the needs of early child development through the multiple levels targeted to risk and improve protective factors within child, family, and school/community levels (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkin, 2004).

Regardless of one's theoretical orientation, relationships and experiences are regarded as a critical component in the development of social and learning skills, and to the development of positive traits. Relationships shared with adults support children in learning important skills, developing confidence, and functioning within multiple environments, including school. In short, virtually

every aspect of early human development, from the brain's evolving circuitry to a child's capacity to demonstrate empathy, is affected by the multiple relationships and experiences that are encountered (Gunnar, Tout, de Haan, Pierce, & Stansbury, 1997). In this regard, positive relationships contribute to development and actually modify biology, meaning that each child's individual capacities may be limited or broadened by life circumstances (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Early childhood interventions of high quality have shown lasting effects upon learning and motivation (Heckman, 2000). The extent to which children are prepared to begin school has an enduring impact upon school success in later years (Ladd, 1990; Pianta & Cox, 1999).

As noted previously, positive psychology focuses on building adaptive, satisfying, and healthy lives for all children, which is a natural link to the notion of early intervention and prevention of problems at an early age (Park & Peterson, 2003). The concept of well-being in particular, with its emphasis on factors that contribute to positive institutions, is relevant in this case, although the majority of research in this area has been conducted with adults and adolescents. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the delineation of well-being across three broad dimensions noted in these older developmental stages: emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being (Keyes, 2007), can be extended to younger populations as well. As such, families, and later in development, schools, play a key role in promoting the positive development of young children and setting the stage for a lifetime of enhanced well-being. The crucial roles played by schools and families to ensure that young children grow, develop, and learn in a way that enhances their social and emotional development and sets the stage for school success will be highlighted in the next sections.

Families and Well-Being

Each family presents a unique history and background that has significant influence on the developing child and his or her well-being. The family's culture, socioeconomic status (SES), use of language, parental roles and parenting styles affect parent-child interactions and management of challenging behaviors (Forehand & Kotchick, 1996). Birth through age five is a critical time for children to develop the cognitive, social, and emotional skills that drive the acquisition of language, problem-solving skills, and formation of healthy relationships with peers and adults, and of course, prepare children for a successful school experience (Park & Peterson, 2003). However, children do not develop these critical skills in isolation. Rather, they develop skills within the many environments where young children live and learn and are modeled and reinforced by the adults interacting with the children.

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds often lack environments that promote school readiness skills, such as language and literacy exposure (Hart & Risely, 1995; High, LaGasse, Becker, Ahlgren, & Gardner, 2000). Furthermore, the effects of dysfunctional parenting (e.g., inconsistent styles, coercive disciplinary practices, maltreatment) are well documented and result in health, educational, social, and mental health consequences (Azar, 1997; Kazdin, 1997; Patterson, 1982; Sanders & Cann, 2002). The consequences of dysfunctional parenting continue throughout childhood and adolescence and can negatively impact children's well-being. In fact, aspects of parent-child relationships are among the strongest predictors of happiness during youth (Huebner, Suldo, & Gilman, 2006). Recent research with early adolescents has demonstrated an association between parental support and warmth and children's happiness at every stage of development (Suldo & Huebner, 2004). Moreover, the strength of this relationship has shown consistency even in the face of stressful life events in later adolescence such as high school dropout (Zimmerman, Salem, & Maton, 1995) and teenage pregnancy (Stevenson, Maton, & Teti, 1999). This research underscores the importance of establishing supportive parent-child relationships from an early age. In

response to this need, a number of parent education programs have been developed to help parents develop skills which improve relationships by increasing positive interactions, thereby promoting development. Among parent education efforts gaining empirical evidence for addressing the needs of young children are *Reach Out and Read* (ROR; Klass, Needlman, & Zuckerman, 1999), *The Incredible Years* (Webster-Stratton, 1992, 2001), *First Steps to Success* (Walker et al., 1998); *Triple P Parenting Program* (Sanders & Cann, 2002), and *Helping Our Toddlers, Developing Our Children's Skills* (Armstrong, Lilly, & Curtiss, 2006), each of which will be briefly reviewed.

Parent Education Programs

Reach Out and Read (ROR; Klass et al., 1999) is an early literacy program, designed for use as part of well-child visits, during which pediatricians and staff offer parents guidance and advice about the importance of reading aloud and provide them with developmentally appropriate books to take home. Numerous studies have provided data that ROR increases frequency of literary activities/interactions in the home, improvements in children's receptive and expressive language, and a greater enjoyment and enthusiasm for reading (Golova, Alario, Vivier, Rodriguez, & High, 1999).

The Incredible Years (Webster-Stratton, 1992, 2001), *First Steps to Success* (Walker et al., 1998), *Triple P Parenting* (Sanders & Cann, 2002), and *Helping Our Toddlers, Developing Our Children's Skills* (Armstrong, Lilly, & Curtiss, 2006) are examples of empirically supported, behaviorally based parenting programs which utilize professionals to teach caregivers the basics in behavioral principles and behavior management techniques, which then can be applied to their children to reduce the development and persistence of problem behavior and improve the quality of parent-child interactions (Armstrong et al., 2006; Gross et al., 2003; Maughan, Christiansen, Jenson, Olympia, & Clark, 2005; McMahan & Forehand, 2003). Common to these approaches are the following four components: a) based upon an operant model; b) provide detailed information on effective and appropriate use of time out procedures; c) focus on antecedent control instead of punitive consequences; and d) program for generalization from the training setting to the natural setting (Feinfeld & Baker, 2004).

The Incredible Years (Webster-Stratton, 1992, 2001) offers three integrated training curriculum (parents, teachers, and children) designed to promote social competence and reduce behavior problems in 3- to 8-year-old children via the implementation of effective parenting and teaching practices. Evaluation of *The Incredible Years* has documented benefits, such as improved parenting and children's behavior for diverse groups of families (Reid, Webster-Stratton, & Beauchaine, 2001; Scott, 2005).

First Steps to Success (Walker et al., 1998) includes three components: (a) universal screenings to identify at-risk kindergarten children, (b) a classroom intervention that teaches social skills, and a (c) home intervention program to teach parenting skills. *First Steps* has been replicated and validated in several sites. Results of the evaluation studies document improved academic engaged time, improved social behaviors, and program satisfaction (Walker, Golly, McLane, & Kimmich, 2005).

Triple P Parenting (Sanders & Cann, 2002) likewise offers multiple levels of support for prevention and intervention for children 3- to 8-years-old, and subsequent evaluation results have documented significant reductions in conduct and disruptive behavior problems, reductions in maltreatment, and improvement in functioning (Sanders, Turner, & Markie-Dadds, 2002). Further, *Triple P Parenting* has documented improvements in marital functioning (therefore child benefits) and program satisfaction. This approach has been successful when applied with multiple cultures outside of the United States.

Helping Our Toddlers, Developing Our Children's Skills (HOT DOCS; Armstrong, Lilly, & Curtiss,

2006), the most recent of these approaches to be developed and evaluated, uses positive behavior support strategies to teach caregivers to problem-solve and address developmental issues in children ages 18 months to 6 years, including those with disabilities. In addition, HOT DOCS includes a module dedicated to parental stress/anger reduction. Preliminary results with over 300 families indicated improved child behavioral functioning, increased sense of parental competence and confidence, and participant satisfaction (Armstrong, Hornbeck, Beam, Mack, & Popkave, 2006; Williams, 2007).

Assessment of Positive Adaptation and Well-Being Among Young Children

The role of the family is also critical in reporting the degree to which young children are well-adjusted and exhibit positive traits and behaviors. Although several assessments of positive psychology constructs such as life satisfaction and character strengths have been developed and validated for use with elementary school children (c.f., Huebner, 1994; Park & Peterson, 2005), these measures are not practical with young children who still lack necessary cognitive and academic skills. Thus, parents serve as the primary informant for their young children.

To date, one empirical study has examined the utility of assessing positive psychology traits among young children via parent report (Park & Peterson, 2006). Specifically, 680 parents of children between the ages of three and nine were asked to provide qualitative descriptions of their child following an instructional prompt. From these free-response descriptions, the researchers identified all of the same character strengths included on measures validated for older children (e.g., kindness, curiosity, leadership), although some traits requiring higher levels of cognitive maturation were mentioned at lower rates (e.g., forgiveness, modesty). In addition, a conceptualization of each child's well-being level could be coded from the parent reports.

Future research should continue to identify the strengths most prevalent in young children and whether these strengths persist over time; such research validates the notion of positive development beginning from the very early years. Identification of early manifestations of character strengths and happiness in young children is important in promoting healthy development from an early intervention and prevention standpoint. Parents and caregivers can then learn to capitalize on a child's identified strengths from the beginning of their development, thus bolstering well-being at a young age.

School Readiness, Early School Experiences, and Well-Being

Families, caregivers, and neighborhoods exert tremendous influence on development. Recent perspectives on school readiness have emphasized the importance of critical skill development prior to kindergarten to properly position a child for school success upon and after kindergarten entrance (Ladd, Herald, & Cochel, 2006; Lonigan, 2006; Pianta & Cox, 1999).

Long before children enter the doors of formal schooling for the first time in kindergarten they begin to develop social and learning skills critical to their success in school settings (Graue, 1999; Ladd, 1996). From birth through age five or six, these social and learning skills exert reciprocal influence and become complexly entwined as they define a child's level of school readiness (McConnell & Missall, 2004; Meisels, 1999). As children regularly engage in school settings starting with kindergarten, their early school adjustment, or "the extent to which they are meeting the academic and behavioral demands of the educational environment" (Missall, 2002, p. 15) becomes critical for determining optimal functioning and school-related well-being.

Children who engage in maladaptive social and task-related patterns and who have negative school experiences in preschool and kindergarten are more likely to experience difficulties over

time in school with learning and social challenges that result in negative outcomes (Hinshaw, 1992; Ladd & Coleman, 1997; Masten et al., 1995). Specifically, negative behaviors inhibit the development of positive and resilient skills and tend to result in stable behavior patterns resistant to intervention by 8 years of age (Walker et al., 1995) and problems during adolescence and adulthood (Moffit & Caspi, 2001; Parker & Asher, 1987). Thus, it is critically important that children enter kindergarten with well-developed and adaptive social and academic skill patterns in order to increase the likelihood of experiencing positive school adjustment and school success in subsequent months and years. Moreover, because a child's school readiness and early school adjustment is defined significantly by their academic and behavioral skills, several important developmental markers indicate the extent to which a child is adjusted to school. Namely, skills within the areas of learning-related skills, academic achievement, peer-related social skills, and adult-related social skills, help to index early school success.

Learning-Related Skills

As children learn to respond to the formal structure of kindergarten, they draw on their learning-related skills, which are essential for task completion. Learning-related skills have academic and social implications and include listening and following directions (Agostin & Bain, 1997; Foulks & Morrow, 1989; McClelland, Morrison, & Holmes, 2000). Children with a high level of learning-related skills participate in groups appropriately, demonstrate on-task behavior, and organize their work materials (McClelland & Morrison, 2003). In addition, they are assertive, exert initiative, display an absence of disruptive and hostile-aggressive behaviors (Gresham, 1997), and utilize appropriate negotiation skills (Piaget, 1926). Other learning-related skills required for positive school adaptation include task-oriented conversation, compliance with teacher demands, self-regulation, and independence (Reynolds, 1991).

Preschool and kindergarten teachers have rated learning-related skills such as listening to the teacher and complying with teacher demands among the skills most important for success in kindergarten (Foulks & Morrow, 1989; Rimm-Kaufmann, Pianta, & Cox, 2000). Kindergarten children with low teacher ratings of learning-related skills have been found to be at increased risk for identification with behavioral problems, referral for special education, and school failure by first grade (Cooper & Farran, 1988; Cooper & Speece, 1988). Recently, a longitudinal study determined that learning-related skills in kindergarten uniquely predicted performance in reading, mathematics, vocabulary, general information, and alphabet skills through the end of second grade, and predicted academic achievement beyond IQ, amount of preschool experience, parent education level, and home literacy environment (McClelland et al., 2000).

Academic Skills

In addition to the learning-related skills that drive and support many academic tasks, kindergarten-aged children also need to acquire specific academic skills. Kindergarten marks the beginning of learning to read, write, and utilize mathematical concepts (even though foundational concepts start to develop long before). In reading, children in kindergarten need to master the specific early literacy and pre-reading concepts that develop directly from language skills and stores of knowledge (Hart & Risley, 1995). These concepts include phonological awareness, concepts about print, letter naming, letter sounds, use of language, vocabulary and awareness of grammatical structure, and also include phonological memory, rapid naming, and print motivation (Adams, 1990; Sénéchal, LeFevre, Smith-Chant, & Colton, 2001; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

To develop early writing skills, kindergartners must connect the early literacy concepts of phonological awareness, alphabetic skills, print conventions, and knowledge of alphabetic symbols to spelling (Ball & Blachman, 1991; Lombardino, Bedford, Fortier, Carter, & Brandi, 1997; Richgels, 1995). In mathematics, critical concepts include the acquisition and application of skills such as counting, comparing, ordering, grouping, simple addition and subtraction, shapes, measurement, and mathematical problem solving (Aunola, Leskinen, Lerkkanen, & Nurmi, 2004; Clements, 2004; Ginsburg, Klein, & Starkey, 1998). These specific academic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics set the stage for successful reading of connected text, beginning written communication, and basic manipulation of numbers in calculation and measurement in first grade and beyond, which set the tone and trajectory for academic success in remaining grades.

Peer-Related Social Skills

The degree to which children are able to develop competent peer-related social skills in interactions with same-age children (as determined by mutual friendships, popularity, observation of specific social skills) hinges largely on initiation and maintenance in interaction, sharing, and showing respect (McClelland & Morrison, 2003). At a very young age—including periods before, during, and after kindergarten—children are aware of the number and quality of their peer relationships and the influence of those relationships on their adjustment to school (Ladd, 1990; Ladd & Coleman, 1997). Moreover, there is evidence that children with prosocial peer interaction skills also tend to demonstrate a higher level of learning-related skills (e.g., following directions, on-task behavior, and appropriate self-regulation; Ladd, Birch, & Buhs, 1999), thereby influencing early school adjustment on multiple levels.

Children in kindergarten who report low levels of peer acceptance also tend to report a general dislike toward school (Ladd & Coleman, 1997). More specifically, a strong correlation exists between the number of positive initiations children make toward peers and the number they receive from peers (McConnell et al., 1984). Likewise, there is a pattern across kindergarten in the number and types of friendships formed (Ladd & Coleman, 1997). Kindergarten children with prosocial interaction skills tend to develop a higher number of mutual friends and higher levels of acceptance from classmates than do children with antisocial skills (Ladd et al., 1999). The formation of positive relationships at school from an early age increases the likelihood that students will continue to feel a sense of belonging in later childhood. These positive relationships are important not only for children's satisfaction with their school life, but also their overall well-being. Specifically, recent research has demonstrated an association between feelings of school alienation (disregard for and dislike of school), and school distress (negative impact of attending school) are associated with decreased well-being during adolescence (Natvig, Albreksten, & Qvarnstrom, 2003). Thus, fostering school adjustment and sense of belonging among students is an important aspect of wellness promotion, and should begin in the early years with supportive classroom environments and positive peer-student and teacher-student relationships.

Adult-Related Social Skills

In school settings, children rely on their adult-related social skills to help establish relationships with their teachers; however, children start to develop adult-related social skills at home. Because parents and other caregivers are the primary socialization agents in a child's early years, early interaction patterns teach children how to interact with adults. Parents and caregivers who model proactive teaching strategies, calm discussion as part of discipline, and appropriate and non-aversive conflict resolution skills are more likely to have children who are well-adjusted to the demands of

school (Brotman, Gouley, O'Neal, & Klein, 2004; Pettit, Bates, & Dodge, 1997). Warm and open relationships at home will also likely help children to develop peer social skills, mutual friendships, good work habits, and independence in the classroom (Clark & Ladd, 2000; Pianta, Nimetz, & Bennett, 1997), all of which are valued highly by kindergarten teachers (Rimm-Kaufmann et al., 2000). Moreover, kindergarten-aged children who are able to regulate their emotions, work independently, and engage in prosocial behaviors, are most likely to develop appropriate and positive relationships with their teachers (Pianta et al., 1997). Children who have appropriate relationships with their teachers are also more likely to have more mutual friendships, high levels of peer acceptance, and higher academic achievement (Clark & Ladd, 2000; DeMulder, Denham, Schmidt, & Mitchell, 2000). Strong teacher-student relationships can impact children's overall happiness with their lives as they continue through elementary, middle, and high school (Natvig et al., 2003; Suldo & Huebner, 2004).

The Role of Early Educators in the Promotion of School Readiness Skills and Well-Being

Kindergarten-aged children are expected to acquire important foundational learning-related skills, academic achievement, peer-related social skills, and adult-related social skills in order to experience school success. However, when children transition to kindergarten the expectations are new and often markedly different from those of previous settings. Particularly for children with no prior experience in congregate or structured care or education, the transition can be difficult (Rimm-Kaufmann et al., 2000). As a result, the school readiness literature has debated for quite some time the issue of whether children should be ready for school or whether schools should be ready for children (see Pianta & Cox, 1999).

Schools need to be prepared to support a diverse group of children with a range of cognitive and behavioral skills. Yet increasingly, schools in general and kindergarten teachers specifically, are expecting most children to arrive at school ready to learn. This expectation stems from two pressing phenomenon. First, an impressive literature base on the long-term impact of early onset risk and problem behaviors (Walker et al., 1995), as well as the importance of early academic development (Geary, Hamson, & Hoard, 2000; Hart & Risley, 1995; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) commands attention to early intervention. Second, social and academic expectations and accountability in grades 1–12 have risen so sharply that educators of kindergarten-aged children have no choice but to respond. One obvious trend to support the desire for better-prepared kindergartners is legislation nation-wide toward universal preschool.

Nonetheless, because early educators exert academic influence, are aware of the classroom behavior of individual children, value socially competent behavior, and spend time teaching children how to behave and act responsibly (Walker & McConnell, 1995; Wentzel, 1991), they play a critical role in monitoring children's early school adjustment. Furthermore, given that early school adjustment sets the stage for later school experiences (Taylor & Machida, 1994), it is critically important to identify children who may be experiencing poor school adjustment or any maladaptive behaviors that might negatively influence well-being, and intervene on their behalf (see Mize & Ladd, 1990). Early educators play a key role in making sure that children enter and exit kindergarten with the critical skills they need to be on a path toward school success. Moreover, success in school is highly related to school satisfaction, one of the central components of global well-being as young children progress into their elementary years (Huebner, 1994).

Significant adults in a young child's environment play critical roles in fostering strengths, assets, and adaptive traits from a very early age. Children who experience high levels of love and support from parents, caregivers, and teachers are primed to enjoy a happier and more fulfilling life. Positive early relationships make possible the development of trust, hope, self-esteem, and

happiness. It is within safe and nurturing relationships that children are able to learn to regulate their emotions and develop relationships with others, including peers. Most children are eager learners, if they are instructed in ways that are right for their development, and if they are taught by understanding and enthusiastic teachers. Whether children grow up to be optimists or pessimists, industrious or apathetic, compassionate or uncaring, playful or solemn depends largely upon on the attitudes of the individuals responsible for their care during the early years of life and the experiences they offer.

Thus, the need for early identification and intervention of children at-risk for poor developmental outcomes is critical for healthy and positive outcomes. Communities realizing the significance of the early childhood years must find ways to engage parents, child care providers, and teachers and offer necessary resources to make sure that all children receive the attention they need for healthy emotional development and ultimately, to prepare them for schooling. Parents who have not been so lucky in their own lives may lack the skills or knowledge needed to provide a different experience for their children. Early child care providers are among the poorest paid and least educated workers, and may not comprehend how important their role is to the developing child. Teachers face the daunting task of meeting the needs of increasingly diverse children, and at the same time, pressures to document academic achievement. As such, they may have less energy to devote to children presenting with poor school adjustment or maladaptive behaviors. In all cases, communities invested in children's futures must find ways to provide information, support and guidance to those essential individuals.

School psychologists, along with other providers, are in a key position to offer information, support, and guidance to families, schools, and childcare settings. Potential implications for practice are summarized in Table 25.1, and may offer ideas to practitioners wishing to promote positive adaptation during the early childhood years. A priority should be placed on developing better relationships and experiences that foster good mental health and openness to learning from each of these settings. Facilitating wellness in these crucial adult caregivers will go a long way in assuring that young children's strengths are identified and nourished. It is because of these earliest relationships that children learn to trust others, be comfortable with themselves, take pride in their accomplishments, become motivated to do well in school, and develop values. Healthy development is reliant upon positive interactions between children and their caregivers.

Table 25.1 Implications for practice: Promoting positive adaptation during the early years

Source of support	Implications
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower parents with information about child development, proactive discipline, and early learning. • Offer parents support groups that take into account cultural competency. • Encourage parents to take an active and involved role in the lives of their children. • Teach parents how to read to their children. • Facilitate connections with community providers that may address individual child/family needs.
Schools & Child Care Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support teachers & providers in efforts to provide a caring, encouraging environment. • Promote a school climate which holds high expectations for all children. • Support the provision of social skills instruction within classroom daily routines. • Provide teachers and providers with information about effective instructional strategies to facilitate early learning. • Help design and monitor effective interventions to address individual student needs.
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify values, needs, and resources available to support early childhood development and families. • Develop a system to integrate resources that promote healthy development. • Build collaborative partnerships across systems of care committed to advancing prevention efforts.

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26

Listening to Students

Moving from Resilience Research to Youth Development Practice and School Connectedness

BONNIE BENARD AND SEAN SLADE

Last year a young man returned to the center for students with severe emotional and behavioral disorders where I work to talk with the principal. Mike had last seen this young man as he dove head first through a window into the waiting arms of police officers. He had been on a rampage in the school and had locked himself in Mike's office. Mike had wondered over the years where the youth had gone after his release from a juvenile justice program. Now, at age 23, the student returned to discuss the last incident he had had at the school and to express his gratitude to Mike for always taking time to listen. This young man just wanted Mike to know how much that had meant to him. He also told Mike that he was in college and doing well.

(Rockwell, 1998, 16)

This vignette is illustrative of a powerful body of evidence that undergirds and informs the field of positive psychology: research on human resilience in the face of risk, adversity, and challenge. These prospective, longitudinal and developmental studies have followed children, often from birth to adulthood, who were living in high-stress conditions such as poverty and community violence; family disruption and abuse; and parental alcoholism, mental illness, and incarceration (Clausen, 1993; Furstenberg, Cook, Eccles, Elder & Sameroff, 1999; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Rutter & Sroufe, 2000; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997; Werner & Smith, 1982, 2001, 2005; Wilkes, 2002; Vaillant, 2002; Zucker, Wong, Puttler, & Fitzgerald, 2003). The consistent and amazing finding is that most—usually around 70%–75% of these young people—are able to experience life success. These studies inform strengths-based movements such as positive psychology, strengths-based social work practice, youth development, health promotion, and multiple intelligences. The studies identify: (a) resilience as a natural capacity all youth have for healthy development and learning (Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992); (b) the personal strengths that are the manifestations of engaging this innate resilience (Benard, 1991, 2004; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Werner & Smith 2001); (c) the characteristics or protective factors of families, schools, programs, and communities that engage innate resilience

(Benard, 1991, 2004; Goldstein & Brooks, 2005 ; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992, 2001, 2005); and (d) adult/caregiver beliefs (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Higgins, 1994 ; Luthar & Burak, 2000; Werner & Smith, 1992) as the locus of change.

This chapter focuses on the role of schools in this turnaround process. It illustrates how we have facilitated schools moving from a deficit perspective to a position of resilience using youth development as a practice that partners with students in improving their schools. This approach makes optimal use of strengths-based survey data grounded in resilience theory and research, resilience and data-use training, and partnering with students for program improvement (Benard, 2004; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Masten, 2001). We also highlight how the resiliency framework is effective in interactions with all students and not only those deemed by some to be “at-risk” (Luthar & Burak, 2000; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Werner, 2005; Benard, 1991; Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). The underlying theme is that everyone harbors resilience and is able to learn and develop the skills and understandings associated with resilience theory. When this approach is taken, everyone benefits—the individual, the school setting, and the community.

Youth Development Process: Resilience in Action

Resilience research supports a developmental theory of change (Bowlby, 1969; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Erikson, 1963; Rogoff, 2003; see Figure 26.1). When young people experience home, school, and community environments rich in the proven *developmental supports and opportunities* (also called *external assets* or *protective factors*) of caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for meaningful participation and contribution, they are much more likely to meet their developmental needs or drives for love, belonging, respect, identity, power, mastery, challenge, and meaning (Benard, 2004; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Werner & Smith, 1992).

Resilience can be viewed as a natural developmental wisdom that intrinsically motivates humans to meet their various needs (Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Werner & Smith, 1982). In turn, the *internal assets* that define healthy development—social competence, problem solv-

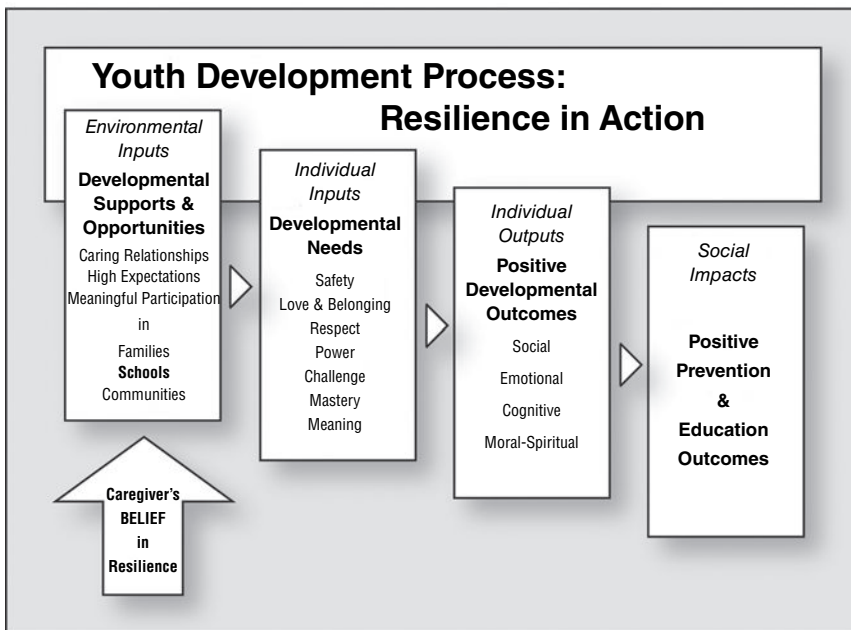


Figure 26.1 Youth development framework.

ing, autonomy and identity, and sense of purpose and future—are tapped and nurtured in young people. These internal assets are the natural developmental outcomes for youth who experience homes, schools, communities, and peer groups rich in the three basic developmental supports and opportunities. Moreover, these individual characteristics protect against involvement in health-risk behaviors such as alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and violence—in addition to promoting successful learning (Benard, 2004; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Scales & Leffert, 1999; Snyder & Lopez, 2002; Werner & Smith, 2001). *School connectedness* is a term often used to describe the phenomenon of this development process within the school environment (Akey, 2006; Hanson, Austin, & Lee-Bayha, 2003; National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2004; Resnick et al., 1997).

The resilience or youth development approach sees the locus of change as the environment, in this case, the teachers and other school staff, so that they will be encouraged and supported in providing these critical supports and opportunities, in becoming the “turnaround” people—and, thereby, schools, “turnaround” places. Turnaround teachers model and create the nurturing and empowering climates that in turn engage young people’s innate resilience. Such climates aid students in developing their capacities for positive developmental outcomes, including their connectedness to school.

Specifically, interventions that tap and nurture student resilience must target teachers and other school staff members’ *belief* in the innate resilience of not only the young people they serve but their own resilience (Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1994; Rimm-Kaufman, Storm, Sawyer, Pianta, & LaParo, 2006). Such belief enables teachers and staff to tap into and model the resilience strengths of caring and empathy (*social competence*), insight and imagination (*problem-solving*), self-efficacy and self-awareness (*autonomy*), and hope (*sense of purpose and future*).

Resilience research is supported and reinforced by findings from the social, health, and behavioral sciences that document the significance of caring relationships, high expectation messages, and opportunities for meaningful participation to influence positive health and life outcomes (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Bowlby, 1969; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Deci, 1995; Eccles, & Gootman, 2002; Felner, 2000; Harris, 1998; Herman, 1997; McLaughlin et al., 1994; Noddings, 1992; Putnam, 2000; Rogoff, 2003; Sarason, 1990; Steinberg, 2000; Weinstein, 2002). In fact, after reviewing this broad spectrum of research, Benard (2004) concluded that, “Successful development in any human system is dependent on the quality of the relationships, beliefs, and opportunities for participation in that system” (p. 48). In essence, it may be more important to pay attention to *how* teachers implement services than to the actual curriculum, content, or program.

Furthermore, education, prevention, and intervention practices that attempt to promote individual improvements in learning or behavior by direct teaching approaches that do *not* attend to these environmental protective factors—the quality of relationships, messages, and opportunities for participation—do not have positive long-term academic or behavioral change outcomes (Kohn, 1997). This is in contrast to environmental school change approaches like cooperative learning, small group process, adventure learning, arts experience, peer helping, mentoring, and service learning (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2004). These latter approaches create opportunities in the context of relationships for young people to achieve academically *and* learn positive life skills and attitudes through direct and ongoing experiences that meet their developmental needs (Benard, 2004).

The Resilience & Youth Development Module of the California Healthy Kids Survey: A Strengths-Based Survey

The movement towards a resilience paradigm and youth development practice in California has been aided by the commitment of the Safe and Healthy Kids Program Office at the California

Department of Education (CDE) to this effort. In 1999, this Office funded WestEd, an educational research and development nonprofit agency, to add an optional Resilience and Youth Development Module (RYDM) to the existing California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), a health-risk behavior survey required by CDE of students in grades 5, 7, 9, and 11 (see www.wested.org/hks).

The RYDM is based on the framework in Figure 26.1, which is described previously in this chapter. The module asks students about the presence of *external assets* (caring relationships, high expectation messages, and opportunities for participation and contribution in their families, schools, communities, and with their peers) as well as six *internal assets* (empathy, cooperation and communication, problem solving, self-efficacy, self-awareness, and goals and aspirations). In 2003, the California Department of Education mandated that all schools in grades 7, 9, and 11 complete at least the school and community assets section of this survey. As of the end of the 2006 school year, over two and a half million students have completed this survey.

Figure 26.2 provides a summary of the percentage of California students who reported “very much true” and “pretty much true” that at their school they have caring teachers, receive high expectation messages, and have opportunities for meaningful participation.

As is clear from this chart, the percentages of which have remained quite consistent over the 6 years of the survey, California schools are falling short in providing students with the key developmental supports and opportunities critical to their healthy development and school and life success. This observation is also consistent with other research on adolescent development that has identified a decrease in developmental supports and opportunities for youth in their adolescent years across American society (Carnegie Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents, 1989; Carnegie Taskforce on Youth Development and Community Programs, 1992; National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2004).

The results of this neglect is driven home by CHKS researchers who have found that low levels

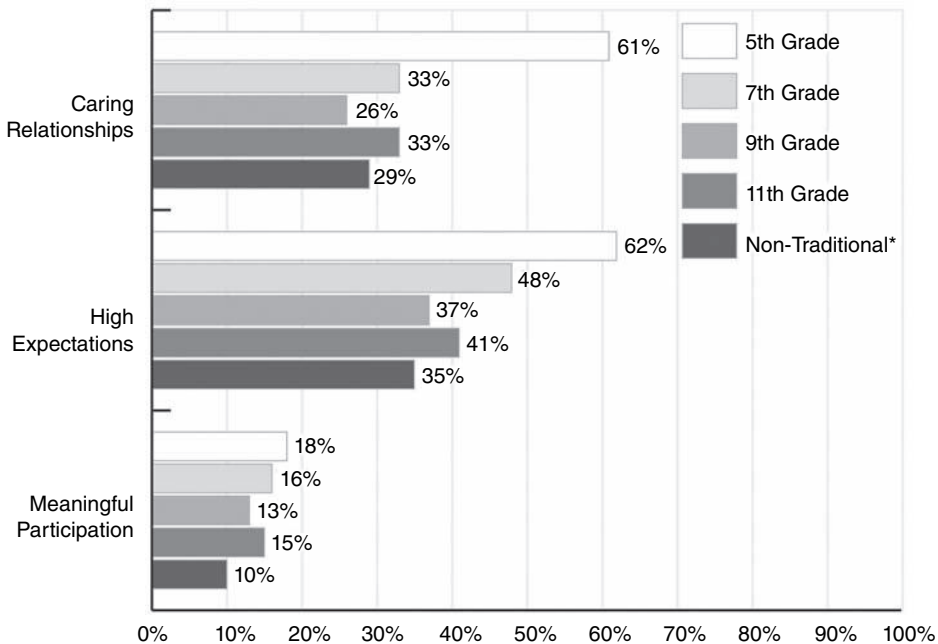


Figure 26.2 How California students rate protective factors in their schools. Percentages based on weighted state aggregate of Fall 2004 to Spring 2006 California Healthy Kids Survey (www.wested.org/chks). N = 838,676. (* Non-Traditional includes students grades 9–12 in Court, Community Day, and other Alternative School Settings.)

of these supports and opportunities in schools are associated with students' greater involvement in health risk behaviors such as binge drinking, marijuana use, bullying behavior, depression, and gang involvement (Hanson, Austin, & Lee-Bayha, 2003; WestEd, 1999). However, the converse is also true—the higher the reported levels of these protective factors, the less students report involvement in risk behaviors. Even more salient and compelling to schools is the remarkable finding that the presence of these protective factors (caring relationships and high expectations in the school and opportunities for meaningful involvement in the community) are also causally related to students scoring higher on California's statewide standardized test (Hanson et al., 2003).

Given the pressure schools throughout the United States are under to address No Child Left Behind mandates and pass statewide standardized tests, educators must demonstrate to their respective school communities that educational practice informed by resiliency and youth development increases student's connectedness to schools and, thereby impacts *both* students' healthy development and school and life success.

The next section provides an example of how data from a strengths-based survey, such as the RYDM, can be a catalyst for helping school staff raise awareness about the power they have to make a difference in young people's lives through their relationships, beliefs, and willingness to listen and share power with their students.

Using RYDM Data and Listening to Students: Off of the Shelf and into the School

Bonnie Benard and her colleague, Carol Burgoa, were charged by the California Department of Education with the task of helping schools and districts across California to *use* their California Healthy Kids Survey's RYDM data. It became apparent that giving schools, their districts and community organizations lists of strategies they could use to promote caring, for example, would become just another burdensome "to-do" list for already overworked and over-committed teachers, schools, and youth workers.

In viewing the video "Student-Led Focus Groups" in the Laboratory Network Project's *Listening to Student Voices Toolkit* (2001), Benard and Burgoa realized that ultimately, the only effective approach to improving schools' and communities' provision of these protective factors was to ask the youth themselves how *they* knew if an adult at school or in their community cared about them and believed in them, as well as what opportunities they had for meaningful participation (e.g., make decisions and to do things that made a difference in their school and community). The action-oriented Listening to Students Circle was developed by Benard and Burgoa, building on the strategies in the toolkit. The circle strategies were honed over time based on the experiences gained.

The Student Circle uses a "fishbowl" structure in which school staff and other concerned community partners sit in a larger circle around an inner circle of students. Both groups have agreements (see Figure 26.3) they commit to honoring during this strengths-based listening process (adapted from Appreciative Inquiry-grounded Listening Process; Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999).

In the Listening to Students Circle, the reversal of formal roles, in which students speak and school staff listen, makes a strong impression on youth and adults alike. Both students and school staff learn what young people really think. All participants are motivated to work in partnership to develop strategies for change in the planning process that follows the circle. The benefits for students, adults, and the community of this process include the following:

Students...

1. experience a process that embodies the protective factors of caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation;

Students agree to:	Adults agree to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Turn off cell phones ➤ Focus on what you do like, want, and need ➤ Only use names for positive comments ➤ Be respectful of each other ➤ Speak on at a time ➤ Remember time limitations ➤ Speak your truth! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Turn off cell phones ➤ Stay for the entire focus group ➤ Be silent during focus group ➤ Keep the comments offered by students anonymous (except for mandatory reporting) ➤ Commit to a plan of action that reflects the students' perspectives

Figure 26.3 Listening to students circle agreements.

2. contribute to policy and program changes based on their needs, experiences, and interests;
3. learn that young people from different backgrounds have very similar perspectives on important questions; and
4. develop greater respect for similarities and differences across different groups, cliques, and even gangs.

Adults...

1. learn young people understand a great deal about how their school and community operates and that they value adults who genuinely want to help them;
2. appreciate knowing the “little things” that are within their power to do to make a difference in the lives of youth; and
3. develop an understanding of resilience and youth development and a remembering of why they became teachers or other adults in service to young people.

The school community...

1. experiences a strengthening of adult-/staff-youth relationships;
2. generates action plans and activities that youth feel make a difference and that they have ownership in; and
3. increases protective factors positively associated with students’ decreased health-risk behaviors and improved student performance.

The evaluations and feedback from both youth and adult participants have been uniformly positive concerning the more than 100 Circles conducted. In evaluating the Circle, students often state that they feel like they were provided the very assets they were asked about: caring relationships, high expectation messages, and opportunities for meaningful participation and contribution. When the Listening to Students Circles have been done as a research tool to shed light on CHKS/RYDM findings, the workshop evaluations consistently find that most of the participants are committed to using this process back in their own schools and districts and to taking on the responsibility of following up on the recommendations generated by the students.

What Students Tell Us: Tapping the Wisdom Within

So what do students tell us in these Circles? The following summary of Circle focus group responses was assembled from 25 focus groups conducted across California from 2003 through 2006. Students were randomly selected and were not necessarily leaders in their schools or communities. In fact, groups were assembled to elicit a range of responses across the student body with outreach especially to students in alternative schools. Although each circle evolved in its own way, every Circle also had a common core set of discussion questions, which are summarized in the next section. Overall, the student responses were simple, realistic, altruistic, and quite profound.

Caring Relationships “Get To Know Our Stories”

To the question, “How do you know a teacher or other adult in your school cares about you?” students overwhelmingly responded that the facial expressions and simple actions that a teacher makes convince them that the staff member cares about them. Words helped but actions won out. It was less about praising the students and more about treating the students as friends and knowing about them outside the confines of the classroom: “When I’m bothered, they help me by listening and encouraging me ... they talk to me as a person and friend—not just as a student.”

Essentially, students highlighted simple acts as ways they knew their teachers cared. They identified actions that take place in many classrooms across the state and nation everyday—actions that should take place in every classroom everyday. These include acting friendly, smiling, saying hello (especially outside of class), taking an interest in the student, and noticing when the student was troubled. Students advise teachers to do the following:

1. Develop friendships with students, and ask, “How was your weekend?”
2. Listen and give eye contact.
3. Greet us and ask, “How are you doing?”
4. Take time to say hello.
5. Know our names.
6. Get to know our stories.

Many students also described how their teacher “pushed” them in their schoolwork and that the students understood that by doing this they cared about both the student and what the student is achieving and can achieve: “They push me to do better—they have side conversations with you, pull you aside and listen...they nag me toward my goals and help me reach them.”

High Expectations “See You In The Future”

Personal interactions also scored high in response to the question, “How do you know when an adult believes in you?” The difference here was that words mattered as much as actions:

1. They say, “I believe in you”; it’s as simple as that..
2. They say, “You can succeed in life.”
3. They brag about you.
4. Encouragement is key; they say, “You can do better.”
5. They see you after class and say, “See you in the future.”

Actions, however, were still considered important, and one can hypothesize that they give meaning and emphasis to the words and encouragement. The actions that were highlighted by the

array of students once again included such simple acts as showing trust and respect—actions that students read, understood and interpreted as “belief” in them:

1. They give you the benefit of the doubt when you tell a story.
2. They will understand my stress and give me a chance.
3. When they give me a second chance on a test or paper, I know they believe in me.
4. They give me responsibilities, which shows confidence in me.

As with caring, a teacher who “pushes” students to do better, to excel, is frequently viewed as a teacher who “believes” in the students: “When they push me to try to do more and work hard. Like in band last year, Mr. K. saw my potential and encouraged me ... when they give you challenging work, indicating they want you to go further.”

However, several students also pointed out that a teacher who pushes them unreasonably or without an underlying sense of caring or trust will not be seen as believing in them but rather as “picking” on them: “They give you some slack, like help you to calm down so you can focus on learning ... They’re not on me, asking me why I didn’t do something or holding me to the fire.”

As with many of these supports, the line between caring and believing is often blurred. Teachers who care want them to succeed and teachers who believe trust that they will succeed: “They understand me and trust me and believe I will be successful ... Caring and believing go together; if you care about someone, you believe in them.”

Opportunities for Meaningful Participation “Hands On Learning ... Make Learning Fun”

Although the previous two questions were refreshing and clarifying, the responses to the question—“What would make school more fun and interesting for you and your friends?”—were probably the most intriguing. Student responses mapped well to what research says are effective pedagogical approaches associated with student success: *small learning groups, group work, project-based learning, mentoring, peer interactivity, smaller classes, hands on work, learning games, field trips to colleges, inter-curricula projects, career electives, and learning through discussion*. These were all phrases mentioned by students that appear in many current research articles (Daggett, 2004; Huebner et al., 2006; Walcott, Owens-West, & Makkonen, 2005; National High School Alliance, 2005; Lambert, Lowry, Copland, Gallucci, & Wallach, 2004).

In a recent WestEd-Gates Foundation collaboration, *Rethinking High School* (Huebner et al., 2004), all of these approaches were cited as examples of effective strategies for engaging students and producing positive educational outcomes. The publication’s finding that a key premise of effective schools is “strong interpersonal (i.e., supportive/nurturing) relationships between students and staff” (p. 8) is not surprising to practitioners of a resiliency approach.

The responses by students in the Circle focus groups highlighted several common areas that would make learning “fun” and more enjoyable, which included the following:

1. A variety of classroom activities—Students stated that classes that taught them in different ways, with a variety of activities and forums were interesting:
 - In class don’t just do bookwork but do activities. Active learning, and more discussions. Make it more visual. Show me how to do it.
 - We do “Tea & Talk” with English teachers outside of class. Science is also really fun; we do Science nights with a telescope.
2. Group-work—Group-work, pair-work, and group project-based learning were all suggestions elicited by a vast number of students. These cooperative learning approaches allow students

to interact, assist each other, pool resources, and as one student noted “improve our social skills”:

- Get the fun into class! Do group projects. Work in groups—we can share ideas and opens you up to new ones.
 - Work in groups—we’re in cubbyholes that feel like a “juvenile” hall or prison cell.
3. Hands-on activities. Activities where students get to manipulate, learn through action, and create something were also highlighted as “fun and enjoyable” ways of learning.

If we combine the responses from all the above—interesting class activities, group-work, and hands-on activities—they were by far the most prevalent response overall (22%).

“Kids Choose”

In responding to the question, “What kinds of decisions do you make or would you like to make in your classrooms and about your school,” students mentioned many aspects of school life. However, overall they just wanted “choice.” They wanted to have a voice and choice in many and various areas that ranged from subject choice, to uniforms, to food available, and timetabling. Essentially, all issues matter but having the power to choose is what appears to matter most. Students are clearly in need of choice, control and some degree of ownership in their schools. Given that the development of psychological autonomy is a major developmental task as well as critical resilience strength, it becomes imperative that schools, as a major arena for young people’s development, provide them this opportunity.

Several broad categories did emerge from the variety of student responses to this issue. These arenas provide an insight into areas that can easily incorporate more student involvement and ownership, which include the following:

1. School lunches (times, type of food available)—We have a closed campus to be safe but that forces us to eat the food here, which is going to kill us.
2. Class rules—I would want to have input in school rules. I would like the administration to ask our opinions.
3. Homework (amount and schedules)—Teachers should coordinate the amount of homework and days for tests.
4. Restroom issues (accessibility and condition)—No escorts to the bathroom and have a clean school and restrooms.

“Kids Helping Kids”

Subsequently the students in the circle are asked how they can make a difference, “What kinds of things could you do at school and in your community that would help others? Improve your school or community?” The responses to these questions were the most affirming. Students exude a high level of altruism and a desire to help their fellow peers, their schools and their community.

1. *Peer helping.* Overwhelmingly (42% of responses), students were eager to help other students—be they new, younger, older, same-age, dealing with issues or just in need of tutoring:
 - I’d like to help start a sports club or be a coach for younger kids.
 - I want to help tutor little kids in reading and math after school.
 - I’m bilingual and I could go into both English and Spanish classes and help.

2. *Community service.* Many also mentioned that they would like to volunteer at a senior citizen center in their community:
 - I'm volunteering at the Helping Hands retirement home. I like to do this because it makes us feel we're making progress and it improves our community...I'd like to help elderly people in our community.
 - Other community suggestions included but were not limited to, such activities as charity work, volunteering at day care center/ animal shelters, and hurricane and other disaster fundraising.
3. *School beautification.* Many also highlighted they'd like to help clean, beautify, and decorate the school:
 - I could put soap in restrooms.
 - We should have a one-day cleanup so students would understand how much work we make for janitors.

Overall the suggestions were engaging, empowering and altruistic—and most were do-able. They also reflected the deep need our young people have for community in their schools and their willingness to work to make this happen:

1. School is a community; it's not a building but about people.
2. We need to change our attitude towards our community—it's so much easier to be negative than positive ... we need to come together as people, not roles.

Summing Up: "Be There" and "Guide Us"

The final content question asked, "Is there anything else you need from the adults in your school to help you achieve your goals and dreams?" There were two general responses to this question across the board. One was an action, the other an activity.

Not surprisingly the action that adults can do is to "be there." Being there was the underlying theme that echoed throughout all the Circle focus groups and all series of questions. Be there when students need help, be there when they need structure, be there when they need advice, be there when they need to be pushed, be there when they need guidance, be there when they need more space and time, and be there when something's wrong and they don't know what to do. "Being there" encapsulates a relationship, a friendship—someone who knows your name and knows "your story." It encompasses caring, and believing you will succeed. In its most simple form it consists of physically "being there"—being present and making time.

1. We need understanding. Be there for us; you're our second parents.
2. Be there for us and believe in us so we can count on you.
3. I need an adult to believe in me.

The second response theme was an activity and something that students believe is essential in order to reach their dreams—advice on career and college. Just under half of all respondents cited their need for guidance toward a career or college—courses required, scholarships, job shadowing, internships, and knowledge about careers that would work for them:

1. I would like to discuss my strengths and what careers match them.
2. I need to know more about college and what classes I need to take.
3. We need people that are experts in a variety of fields who can help us with prerequisites so we can do things right.

Connectedness in Action: “I Think Our Voices Counted Today”

The results of these listening circles clearly demonstrate that students are hungry to have teachers and other adults in their schools that will help connect them to each other as well as to a bright future. Using the RYDM data as a catalyst, this listening process provides further first-hand contextualized information on what is needed and what can be done to improve local schools for local students. Furthermore, this process serves as a resilience-based intervention that helps build this connectedness, trust, and these relationships among students using a youth development empowerment practice that puts the students front and center. The students’ responses to the question “How was it to participate in the group?” illustrate this point:

1. Shows us that adults do care about us.
2. I liked the fact that we got to teach the teachers!
3. I think our voices counted today.
4. School can be a prison, but it can also be like therapy.
5. I am sad often and hide my feelings, but I love it when teachers ask how I’m doing or what’s going on.

When we asked the teachers and other adult staff how they experienced this process, their comments reflect the power of this listening approach to effect their positive beliefs in their students, to either move their paradigms from a deficit to a strengths perspective or to validate the strengths perspective they already have:

1. I had forgotten how smart our students really are—and that sometimes all they need is to have us listen.
2. It was very powerful for our staff to hear the kids say “don’t give up on me” and to “push me to do my best.”
3. At the continuation school, many of our students have a hard time demonstrating the fact that they have brilliant minds. In this process they weren’t afraid to show their intelligence and strength, vulnerability and resilience.

Putting It into Practice

After processing the student and adult listening circle reflections, the students pull their chairs from the inner circle into the larger circle of adults—a movement both physical and symbolic—for a dialog and an action-planning process we call “youth development partnership planning.” During this time, the students and their teachers and other school staff plan together for changes they can make together in their school that are based on the students’ recommendations in the listening circle. Adult follow-up on the students’ suggestions is imperative, otherwise, this intervention risks becoming yet another instance of adults failing students and consequently further disconnecting and de-motivating them. Such imperative is the reason adult follow-up is one of the Listening to Students Circle Agreements (see Figure 25.3).

The following are three examples of how school staff have used their student data (the RYDM and the Circle focus groups) to make changes to their settings. Though each setting was different and each had its own set of strengths and issues, the general themes from students and the reactions from staff were similar. Student comments and adult reactions were consistently about developing more caring relationships and providing more meaningful participation. Some of the suggested changes were small and could be implemented immediately; others would take more time, planning and, of course, student input. The main purpose of highlighting these cases is to show that little steps are simple, quite possible, very necessary, and meaningful to students.

Laytonville High School

In May of 2006, Benard and Burgoa hosted a Listening Circle at Laytonville (Mendocino County, California) with the help of the Prevention and After School Programs Coordinator for Mendocino County Office of Education. Issues that arose through the Circle included lack of student empowerment, frustration at decisions being made by adults, and a general feeling that student voices were not being heard.

The Principal at the high school was present at this event and the following day began to put three of the Circle's suggestions into effect.

1. Students said they often have multiple tests scheduled on the same day or large assignments from various classes due at the same time. This caused confusion and long hours of work. Students mentioned that teachers should talk to each other and stagger the homework/testing days. A staggered schedule was developed the following week.
2. Students also discussed the lack of greenery around their school and indicated that they wanted to be part of the beautifying process. A staff-student landscaping committee was formed which has already changed the physical appearance of the school.
3. Several students also noted that if any of them wished to see the school counselor they had to enter via the Administration office in full view of the Principal, Assistant Principal, and often, other students. They requested that an alternate door be provided at the rear of the office so their anonymity can be maintained. This solution was quickly implemented.

A year later, the principal reported the following:

The students were very positive about all the changes we made ... They were especially enthusiastic about the landscaping, so much so that a Landscape Club has been started by one of the students themselves and it continues to this day ... The attitude of the students in general and the interactions with the staff have been great ... However, we know that to maintain these positive feelings, we have to keep doing things and making things better for our students. (May 9, 2007)

These positive changes were also reflected in Laytonville's RYDM data from the 2006–07 school year. Increases in Caring Relationships, High Expectations, and Meaningful Participation were reported for both grades 9 and 11. Especially significant were the grade 11 scores with Caring Relationships (from 18% to 60%), High Expectations (29% to 53%), and Meaningful Participation (16% to 32%) doubling or even tripling.

Partners in Health and Safety

At the beginning of 2007, the Butte County (California) Office of Education's Partners in Health and Safety conducted an in-service with district schools to look over their RYDM and prior Circle focus group data. This student data were also compared to that from staff that had completed the School Climate Survey (SCS)—a California Department of Education staff survey of school connectedness completed at the same time as the CHKS/RYDM.

Issues that arose from the staff SCS and the discussion were not atypical of a high school district and included student issues such as lack of respect, pride, and/or ownership of the school; appropriate communication skills; issues of violence; and lack of academic motivation goals and skills. Staff also commented that there was a general lack of unity and cohesion among staff members and a general lack of support for teachers from other teachers.

What emerged from the in-service was a list of steps, some simple and some complex, that the staff could take and work towards. In general, the ideas aimed for ways to meet the identified needs of the students and to connect, reconnect, and engage the students in the daily life of the school. The steps included changing the school paint color, involving the students in renovation/landscaping projects, adding permanent tables and benches, developing school-wide projects, reinstating advisory/home room periods, and allowing students to provide the morning announcements.

The staff also came to the realization that moving forward with an agenda to reconnect and re-empower students required them to first focus on reconnecting themselves. This is a critical but often overlooked point: If one wishes to improve school connectedness, one needs to take into consideration all partners in the school—students, staff, administration, parents, and the community. The Butte facilitator noted that she was “amazed at the direction the staff went in terms of their focus on the need to be more positively connected with themselves before they could be more positive with students. I was touched by the staff comments about how staff used to do things to connect more and were sad that those opportunities were now missing.”

Since this in-service took place in early 2007, some proposals have been acted upon, some are being planned, and others are still under discussion. An immediate result was that teachers started talking to students more when they entered classes, staff expanded and made more visible the student positive recognition program, teachers made a greater effort to be out on campus, and staff are following through in their desire to become a more connected faculty, the crucial step in reconnecting the students.

San Gabriel High School and the Alhambra City High School District

In October 2004, the Alhambra City High School District (Los Angeles County, California) used both the RYDM data and the Circle focus group as the vehicles to look at increasing student connectedness in San Gabriel High School. Discussions with both staff and students were framed from a strengths perspective; that is, according to the District’s Instruction Specialist “talking about what’s right.”

What surfaced was a series of student-led programs and projects to enhance the relationships between students and staff, and students and their school. These included:

1. *Culture Club*—a twice-monthly staff-student club that looks at the ethos or culture of the school and aims to highlight what is positive about the school culturally.
2. *Mentors*—the school also established a student-adult mentoring program where students were able to choose their mentor. This effort included not just staff but all custodian, food services, and auxiliary personnel. It not only provided the student with a mentor with whom they had a connection, but it intentionally engaged many of the non-teaching staff in roles they had not previously formally experienced at their school. To these adults it was an especially empowering, complimentary, and inclusive experience.
3. *Bathroom Project*—this is a student-led and organized project in which students take ownership of the bathrooms assisting janitorial staff in maintaining their condition, appearance, and accessibility.
4. *Eye Project*—a student project spawned from the Culture Club that highlighted the diversity of the school population—staff and students. The project combined photographs of staff and students’ eyes with quotes expressing their desires and goals.
5. *Positive Quotes*—positive quotes in hallways and on walls decorate the school .

The impact of intentionally focusing on and creating caring relationships and the use of data to

drive this has not only been adopted by San Gabriel High School but has been a key focus of the Alhambra City High School District and their District Superintendent. Schools across the district have made a concerted effort to increase student connectedness by building caring relationships between staff and students. Over the last few years district schools have not only seen a reduction in the student dropout rate but, over the last 4 years, have seen several schools exceed their Academic Performance Index growth targets (a school-level comparative measure for California's high-stakes test).

Conclusion

Resilience research has established that *listening* is a simple but powerful “turnaround” practice that adults can do in families, schools, programs, and communities to support and empower young people. Attentive listening incorporates all three protective factors—caring for, believing in, and inviting the participation and contribution of the one listened to. Moreover, the categories of resilience strengths mentioned earlier in this chapter (social competence, problem solving, autonomy/identity, and sense of purpose and future)—as well as others discussed in this book—are engaged and nurtured in the one listened to.

A small but growing number of educational researchers have also turned their attention to the subject of listening to students. Poplin and her colleagues' seminal study, *Voices from the Inside* (Bane, 1992), found that the act of adults listening to students in focus groups was actually transformative in motivating and connecting the students to their schools and in actually improving the climate for learning. Sonya Nieto's research on successful students from a wide variety of ethnic, racial, linguistic, and social-class backgrounds identified listening to students as the key strategy for educational change, one which is too often ignored: “Student perspectives are for the most part missing in discussions concerning strategies for confronting education problems. In addition, the voices of students are rarely heard in the debates about school failure and success, and the perspectives of students from disempowered and dominated communities are even more invisible” (Nieto, 1994, p. 396). Fullan, one of the leading writers on school change, has also argued for the student perspective:

Educational change, above all, is a people-related phenomenon for each and every individual. Students, even little ones, are people too. Unless they have some meaningful (to them) role in the enterprise, most educational change, indeed most education, will fail. I ask the reader not to think of students as running the school, but to entertain the following question: What would happen if we treated the student as someone whose opinion mattered in the introduction and implementation of reform in schools? (Fullan, 1991, p. 170)

More recently, Fine and her colleagues at the Graduate Center at the City University of New York see student voice and choice as an essential path for closing the achievement gap and reducing dropout rates (Black, 2006). They are proponents of “participatory action research with students” as a strategy for creating meaningful student participation and contribution in their schools in New York City and other urban communities.

Cook-Sather, a leader in the emerging field of researching students' perspectives on education, argued that giving students greater voice and agency in their own educational processes is essential if schooling is to be meaningful and effective (2002). Cook-Sather's conclusion that the twin challenges to “authorizing student perspective” are changing the minds of adults and changing the structure of schools parallel our own. Specifically, we see these challenges as educators' deficit beliefs about students' capacities and the deficit-based national education policy context that

denies both students and teachers a voice in the power structure by the imposition of top-down “evidence-based programs,” standardized curricula, and high-stakes testing.

The Role of Positive (School) Psychologists

We suggest that positive psychologists working in and with schools can play a significant role in addressing these two challenges. School psychologists are in a unique position to educate their school communities in resilience and school connectedness research and youth development practice and to serve both students and teachers by creating the opportunities for listening, dialogue, and partnership. Facilitating a Listening to Students Circle Process such as the one described in this chapter provides one way school psychologists can help to create a safe place for students to be listened to and heard, for both students and their teachers to talk, and for teachers and other school staff to change power structures by actually working in partnership with their students.

In the absence of state-wide resilience or youth development surveys and assessments, school psychologists can gather local school data by working in partnership with students themselves, using a participatory action research process such as that described in the Laboratory Network Project's *Listening to Student Voices Toolkit* (2001). Following up the student circle by facilitating a listening to *staff* circle process would go even farther in helping to change beliefs and address power dynamics. If a recent greeting card is right, “What everyone needs is a good listening to!”

In doing this work, positive psychologists are joining a growing national and international movement towards a more strengths-based, human, responsive, whole child-centered educational policy that embraces the voices of young people. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child—signed by every country except the United States and Somalia—states that children and young people have a right to be informed about, involved in, and consulted about all activities that impact their lives (www.unicef.org/crc). It is our hope that positive psychologists working in schools will use this intentional listening process as a catalyst for incorporating listening, dialog, and partnership on an ongoing basis for all their students and staff. Ultimately, it is only when the people in schools themselves work together in community to meet the developmental needs of students and staff that schools will change and disparity of wellbeing (as well as the achievement gap) will close. It is not hard to do and the effects are simultaneously empowering and powerful. All that needs to be done is to stop, take a step back, and listen.

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Positive Psychology and Students with Intellectual Disabilities

H. THOMPSON PROUT

The history of services to and treatment of persons with intellectual disabilities could hardly be perceived as “positive.” Pervasive maltreatment and misunderstanding of persons with intellectual deficits (e.g., see Bierne-Smith, Patton, & Kim, 2006; Braddock, 2002) was dominant. Persons with intellectual disabilities were often viewed as deviant and undesirable, and even demonized. Historically, isolation from the community and institutionalization were the primary modes of treatment. Persons with mental retardation were often in long-term institutional settings, often with horrific living situations. Blatt and Kaplan’s (1966) classic *Christmas in Purgatory*, a collection of photographs from a state institution for persons with mental retardation, dramatically portrayed the inhumane and harsh conditions of a large state institution. Children with intellectual disabilities were often denied school entrance. If they were provided a school program, it was often in a “special school” located away from other school buildings or in segregated classrooms. There was little interaction with their non-disabled peers. A final introductory note is that “Intellectual Disabilities” is now the preferred term for mental retardation. The American Association on Mental Retardation was re-named the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in 2007. The two terms will be used interchangeably throughout this chapter.

A paradigm shift began in the 1960s that led to today’s more inclusive and positive approach to treatment, education, and planning for students with intellectual disabilities. It is well known that the Kennedy family has had a longstanding interest in mental retardation. At the beginning of President John F. Kennedy’s term, he formed the President’s Panel on Mental Retardation, which developed suggestions for policy revisions in the field. These guidelines pointed to the need for a much wider array of social, medical, and educational services, particularly within the community. The shift was toward more community-centered, community-based services and away from institutional care. This essentially began the deinstitutionalization movement.

Several years later, the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) filed a suit against the state of Pennsylvania (*PARC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 1971) around the issue of exclusion of students with disabilities from public education. The result of this lawsuit was that school districts in the state could no longer exclude students with disabilities from public education and that students with disabilities had the right to a free and appropriate education. The ramifications of this suit soon spread to other states and provided a precedent for other suits. This court based precedent was soon embedded in Public Law 94–142, Education of All Handicapped

Children Act, which mandated public education services for students with disabilities nationally and also introduced the concept of least restrictive environment. The concept promotes the integration of children with disabilities in programs with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent possible and encourages access for these students to general education, extra curricular activities, and any other school-related activities provided for the general student population. Subsequent versions of 94–142, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, placed even more emphasis on inclusion and provision of services in the context of general education. The summative effect of these court cases and laws was fundamental to a positive shift in education of students with intellectual disabilities.

Other chapters in this book delineate more general issues on the basic tenets of positive psychology and the associated increased emphasis on this perspective in the schools. Clearly, this viewpoint includes components of prevention, competency building, life satisfaction, happiness, changes in the natural environment, quality of life, etc. (Chafouleas & Bray, 2004; Clonan, Chafouleas, McDougal, & Riley-Tillman, 2004; Huebner, Suldo, Smith, & McKnight, 2004) and represents a broader view of schooling with less emphasis on deficits and psychopathology. Dykens (2006) in a thoughtful essay and analysis, “Toward a Positive Psychology of Mental Retardation,” argues that the field of mental retardation should embrace the positive psychology perspective. Noting that mental retardation “... is a diagnosis based on negatives—on what people do not have” (p. 186), Dykens proposed a shift in both research and practice “... based on *positive internal states* including happiness, contentment, hope, engagement, and strengths” (p. 186).

Dykens (2006) cites four major movements that interface with positive psychology and mental retardation:

1. *Quality of Life*—This includes emotional, physical, and material well-being, interpersonal relationships, self-determination, inclusion, and individual rights.
2. *Dual Diagnosis*—Dual diagnosis refers to the co-occurrence of mental retardation with psychiatric disorders. It is well-established that persons with intellectual disabilities have higher rates (estimated to be 35%–40%) of psychiatric disorders than the general population. Dykens posits that more emphasis should be placed on increasing happiness and hopefulness, and less on associated behavior problems such as aggression, self-injury, and depression.
3. *Personality/Motivation*—Dykens notes that persons with mental retardation have distinct personalities and motivational patterns, but the development of more positive patterns is often hampered by a series of failure experiences. Shifting to a success and mastery approach can positively impact internalized motivation.
4. *Families*—Historically, having a child with mental retardation was perceived as yielding loss, sorrow, and mourning, particularly for mothers. Siblings were also thought to be negatively impacted by having a brother or sister with mental retardation. Dykens argues for a stress-and-coping model rather than a psychopathological model of family functioning. In 2005, Dykens offered more detail on this perspective. She notes that many families and siblings report positive aspects of having a family member with mental retardation. Some families report positive transformations because of associated adaptations and that others report a different perspective on the value of life. Dykens advocates for research to go beyond the typically investigated negative impact on families and to investigate factors related to coping and the positive effects that may make families thrive and have a richer experience.

To some extent, it appears that there has been some progress in moving the research in the field toward a more positive psychology perspective. Shogren, Wehmeyer, Buchanan, and Lopez (2006) examined 30 years (1975–2004) of journal articles in five major journals in the field of intellectual

disability. They conducted a content analysis to assess the degree to which journals were focusing on some of the newer conceptualizations in the field consistent with positive psychology (e.g., self-determination, inclusion). Their analysis indicated that there had been a consistent emphasis on research on the capacities of persons with disabilities, with most of the research focusing on intellectual capacities. A modest shift was noted away from deficit focused studies to more studies focusing on strengths. Over the three decades, there were steady increases in articles devoted to positive psychology constructs and/or self-determination, although these studies remained in the minority of the overall research trends. Nevertheless, the authors concluded that the newer conceptualizations have impacted research with greater emphasis on adaptive behavior, health, social roles, participation, and interaction. This chapter will focus on several of Dykens' points, but will also examine other issues of the newer conceptualizations in the field. Specifically, aspects of normalization and inclusion, self-determination, quality of life, happiness, and dual diagnosis will be discussed.

Normalization and Inclusion

The principle of normalization was the precursor of programs emphasizing inclusive approaches. Basing his conceptualization on services in Scandinavian countries, Wolfensberger (1972) introduced the concept to Canada and the United States in the classic monograph, *The Principle of Normalization in Human Services*. The principle became the primary guide for planning and conducting services for persons with developmental disabilities. The principle, and its various iterations, remain the basis of these services today. Normalization, in part, was a reaction to the prevailing pattern of providing services in large institutional settings away from natural environments and communities. Normalization principles focus on having persons with mental retardation live their lives as close to normal as possible; i.e., having a life like ordinary people. This involved living, working, and recreating in community settings, maintaining schedules typical of non-disabled persons, and having a valued role in society. The principle examined a variety of both objective and subjective indices of normalization. This included types of living and work/day settings, attitudes of caregivers, treatment of persons in an age appropriate manner. It also focused on whether individuals were allowed to make choices in their lives and to individuals to take reasonable risks.

Wolfensberger continued to refine the principle of normalization and later introduced the concept of "social role valorization." This was a modification and expansion of the normalization principle. The most current conceptualization of social role valorization (Wolfensberger, 2000) focuses on social role theory and, in particular, dealing with individuals who are devalued by many in the larger society. Among several devalued groups, Wolfensberger includes individuals with sensory, cognitive, or physical impairments. The devalued status has a number of ramifications including exclusion and rejection, exacerbations of their impairment, low social status, being scapegoated, loss of control over one's life, and poverty. Wolfensberger describes these as the "wounds" of being devalued. The perceived social role or social image remains the key in the devaluation; language and descriptors that refer to the devalued group often maintain the devaluation. Social role valorization is a relatively comprehensive social systems theory and examines several points of intervention—the individual level; primary social systems (e.g., family); secondary social systems (community, school); and the greater society. The "system" should be arranged in a manner where physical and environmental conditions enhance the social images of the individuals as well as all members of the devalued group and to enhance the competencies of individuals and members of the group. Although perhaps an oversimplification, the theory espouses a dual approach of enhancing perceived social roles and image along with increasing socially relevant competencies.

The principle of normalization provided the base for implementation of inclusion programs

in the schools. Not only has inclusion been encouraged in educational law and regulation, it has become the norm for providing educational services for students with intellectual disabilities. Inclusion has been viewed as promoting social competence, increasing learning, and reducing social isolation within the school setting among children and adolescents with intellectual disability. An additional benefit is the increased understanding of disability among typically developing students. The actual benefits of inclusion have been somewhat difficult to isolate and document quantitatively. Surprisingly, considering the emphasis on inclusion, there have been relatively few studies on the topic. Lindsay (2007) reviewed studies on inclusive education and mainstreaming from eight major journals in special education and found only a small number of studies (1%, 14 out of 1,373 articles over a 5-year period) that represented comparative outcome studies on the effectiveness of inclusion. Lindsay also reviewed three meta-analyses published from 1980–1994 that evaluated the effects of inclusive placements. These analyses showed relatively small effect sizes (.11 to .28 for social effects, .08 to .44 for academic effects). Lindsay's (2007) analysis included studies from preschool to high school. Although noting that the study of the effectiveness of inclusive education is a very complex research question, Lindsay (2007) found only marginal support for the impact of inclusion and there was no "clear endorsement of the positive effects of inclusion" (p. 16). Lindsay obviously does not endorse abandoning inclusion, but rather calls for increased research to evaluate the context and the moderator and mediating variables that identify barriers to and/or contribute to more successful outcomes. Clearly, the full impact of inclusive education remains an unanswered question.

Normalization and inclusion have strong philosophical, theoretical, and humanistic bases that are consistent with the principles of positive psychology. Although the impact on children and adolescents and the in the schools is not fully understood, it appears that inclusive and normalizing approaches should remain the base of programs for children and adolescents with intellectual disabilities.

Self-Determination

Self-determination and the related construct of self-advocacy have become increasingly important in the field of developmental disabilities, particularly with adolescents in school settings. Although there are several definitions of self-determination, the term includes the capacity to make choices for oneself, initiate actions of one's own choosing, set personal goals, and assume control over one's own life (Duvdevany, Ben-Zur, & Ambar, 2002; Haelewyck, Bara, & Lachapelle, 2005). Self-advocacy can be viewed as the associated behaviors and skills necessary to enact self-determination. Self-determination takes on an increasingly important role for typically developing adolescents and young adult. Historically, this has not been the case for adolescents with intellectual disabilities—caregivers have traditionally made choices for these individuals, often without consulting with the adolescent and informing them after the decisions have been made.

Wehmeyer is considered to be the leading researcher and advocate for promoting self-determination for persons with disabilities and, in particular, for adolescents with disabilities (e.g., see Wehmeyer & Field, 2007; Wehmeyer, Mithaug, Martin, Hughes, & Agran, 2007, for most recent summaries). Wehmeyer and his colleagues have focused on adolescents with disabilities being involved at various aspects of educational decision-making via participation in Individual Educational Program meetings, transition planning, and educational goal-setting. The work of Wehmeyer and his colleagues has included middle, high school, and transitioning students and included students with mild and more severe intellectual disabilities. A study by Wehmeyer, Garner, Yeager, Lawrence, and Davis (2006) typifies Wehmeyer's approach. This study focused on older students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who were preparing for transition at the end of their

school careers, preparing for transition to community settings, and for whom exclusively school-based services were not necessarily appropriate. They describe a multi-stage, multiple component program called *Beyond High School*. The program is based on several assumptions including inclusion, services being provided in age-appropriate environments that promote social interaction, functional academic instruction, person-centered planning, and active student involvement and self-determination. The program was designed to “infuse” self-determination across several points of educational and transition planning. *Stage One* of the program is designed on helping students to set short- and long-term goals (vocational, living, recreation) based on individual interests, capacities, and preferences. The initial stage has a skill building and problem-solving focus and emphasizes preparation for involvement in educational planning with skill development in self-direction and self-regulation. In *Stage Two*, a student-directed, person-centered planning meeting is convened. Various stakeholders (e.g., teachers, parents, job coaches) meet with the student to discuss the goals and to identify needed natural supports to achieve the student’s goals. At the conclusion of this stage, the student provides informed consent for the educational plan. The *final stage* is the implementation of an action plan involving various life domains with the student self-monitoring the progress of the plan. The student’s self-evaluation may yield revisions to the action plan in consultation with the educational planning team. The evaluation of this program showed students made significant progress in ratings of goal attainment and self-reports of autonomous functioning, although there were no changes noted in self-ratings of self-determination variables. The authors concluded that the overall results were supportive of their multi-stage, multi-component process.

Wehmeyer and Palmer (2003) examined the impact of student perceptions of self-determination status on adult outcomes. While noting that multiple variables contribute to post-high school outcomes, they compared students with disabilities who rated themselves high on self-determination with students who rated themselves low on this variable. They compared the groups at 1 year post-high school and 3 years post-high school. At both points of comparison, the group of students who rated themselves as having higher self-determination were doing better across multiple life domains. These students were more likely to be employed, live independently, and have greater financial independence. Again, although there are multiple factors that contribute to both self-perception and post-school outcomes, it does appear that increases in self-determination, both in skills and perception of skills, is beneficial.

Test et al. (2004) reviewed the literature on studies that utilized interventions to increase student involvement in Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings. They examined 16 studies that evaluated both formal, published curricula to increase student participation and less structured, person-centered planning approaches. Although the studies did not all utilize self-determination principles, self-determination was often a component of the interventions. Both the formal structured curricula and the person-centered approaches were effective in increasing student involvement in the meetings. Many of the programs included verbal rehearsal, role-playing, and prompts as part of the instruction. The impact appeared fairly generalized as changes across the studies were noted in observed behavior at meetings, self-reports of self-determination, and reports of meeting participants (e.g., parents and teachers). Although the authors noted that there are some remaining questions about the effectiveness of these programs and approaches, it does appear that specific strategies preparing students for meeting do increase involvement.

Self-determination programs have been applied with a wide array of persons with disabilities. In schools, the programs have been utilized primarily in middle and high school settings. With legal mandates for older students to be involved in IEP meetings, it would appear that programs to teach students the principles of self-determination and self-advocacy skills would be important in making the students’ involvement meaningful. Furthermore, it appears that perceptions of self-determination are influential in later adjustment and functioning. Much of the research and writing

in this area focuses on transition planning—this appears to be one of the more useful points for the implementation of self-determination training and concepts.

Quality of Life

Quality of life issues have received considerable attention in the intellectual and developmental disability literature over the past several years within the United States and in many other countries (Bertelli & Brown, 2006). Quality of life addresses some of the topics discussed in this chapter, as well life satisfaction, social relationships, community affiliation and participation, health and well-being, mental health, and a sense of material (e.g., housing, financial) stability. Within the intellectual disability area, the emphasis has been on community participation and minimizing the impact of disability. It is evident from Bertelli and Brown's review that most of the research in this area has focused on adult populations.

Brantley, Huebner, and Nagle (2002) also noted that despite quality of life and life satisfaction being prominent in the mental disability area, there were relatively few studies conducted with children and youth with disabilities. These researchers examined multidimensional life satisfaction among high school students with mild mental disability (i.e., mild mental retardation). The study addressed some psychometric aspects of measurement of life satisfaction with these students, but the research also yielded several significant findings with implications for the schools. Students with intellectual disabilities expressed similar overall levels of life satisfaction compared to typically developing students, but found less satisfaction with friendships. There was more general satisfaction with school among the students with disabilities. Interestingly, students in self-contained placements reported more satisfaction with their school experiences. Although there are potentially a variety of mediating factors related to the specific placements, this does seem to add to the lack of clarity about the impact and benefits of inclusion discussed above. In a related study, Huebner, Brantley, Nagle, and Valois (2002) examined the correspondence of life satisfaction ratings between parents and adolescents. Typically developing adolescents and their parents showed an adequate degree of correspondence in their ratings, but parents of and students with mild intellectual disabilities did not show similar levels of agreement. Watson and Keith (2002) studied a wider (Kindergarten through Grade 12) age range of students with intellectual disabilities using a structured quality of life questionnaire. This study found lower overall quality of life for students with disabilities and lower scores on three of four factors assessed compared to students without disabilities. The students with disabilities showed lower scores on the factors of general satisfaction, social belonging, and well being. In contrast to the Brantley, Huebner, and Nagle study, this study suggests that perceptions of quality of life of students with disabilities may be less than their typically developing peers. Clearly, more research is needed in this area as well.

Happiness

Szymanski (2000) has noted that happiness is a difficult construct to define, but that it includes components of satisfaction with oneself or a positive self-image, and satisfaction with one's life. As has been mentioned previously, intellectual disabilities are often viewed from a deficit and problem perspective. Szymanski argues that happiness should be viewed as legitimate treatment goal for persons with mental retardation. Psychotherapy can often be part of an overall treatment plan but with goals beyond the elimination of problem behaviors or dysfunctional emotions. This requires that caregivers, whether families or professionals, need to be more attuned to "inner needs" (Szymanski, 2000, p. 358) of persons with disabilities. Senses of pride, independence, and self-respect are key factors. Caretakers need to avoid overprotection and to provide support based

on realistic expectations for the person with a disability. A positive self-image can be developed by helping individuals with disabilities recognize strengths along with facilitating a constructive awareness of their limitations.

Happiness should not be viewed as a construct that just pertains to individuals in the milder ranges of intellectual disability. Lancioni, O'Reilly, Campodonico, and Mantini (2002) report on a small study of four individuals with profound intellectual disability in addition to other disabilities. They found through exposure to various stimulus conditions—typically physical stimulation—they could observe increases in both indices of happiness (smiling, laughing, and positive excitement) and indices of positive engagement (movement toward the caregiver, holding, and seeking more stimulation). In a similar study, Yu and colleagues (2002) examined differences on happiness indices (smiling and laughing) during routine, naturally occurring leisure and work activities for persons with severe and profound mental retardation. Individuals displayed more happiness indicators when engaged in leisure activities versus work activities. Those of us without disabilities would agree with that finding in our own lives.

Robison (2000) has offered an interesting perspective on happiness among children, adolescents, and adults with Down Syndrome. Robison, at the time of the essay, was the father of two teenagers with Down Syndrome. He challenges the traditional stereotype of persons with Down Syndrome being “relentlessly happy” (Robison, 2000, p. 372). Rather, children, adolescents, and adults with Down Syndrome have unique personalities and experience the full range of emotions, and the stereotype should not be presumed. Much of what contributes to happiness for children and adolescents without disabilities also influences happiness in persons with Down Syndrome.

Happiness appears to be a construct that is important and relevant to the full range of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Happiness may be a valid outcome for programming in schools and as part of broader treatment programs. Yet, it should not be presumed that it exists, as is often the case with children with Down Syndrome.

Dual Diagnosis

As Dykens (2006) has noted, it is well established that persons with intellectual disabilities display higher rates of psychiatric disorders than the general population. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV-TR (DSM-IV-TR)* of the American Psychiatric Association (2000) notes that, in general, persons with mental retardation are three to four times more likely to have a second comorbid psychiatric disorder, although there is no specific delineation of child and adolescents rates. Borthwick-Duffy's (1994) review of incidence studies documents this general tendency of higher incidence of psychiatric disorder in persons with mental retardation and demonstrates that persons with mental retardation can experience a wide range of psychopathology.

The majority of studies of psychopathology among persons with mental retardation have been conducted with adult populations (Borthwick-Duffy, 1994). Emerson (2003) recently noted that there have been very few population based studies on the prevalence of psychiatric disorders among children and adolescents with mental retardation. Borthwick-Duffy reviewed studies up through the early 1990s. Considerable variance was noted across studies, but rates for children and adolescents with mental retardation ranged from 10%–61% depending on the diagnostic rubric with some studies using more generic indices of problem behaviors or behavioral or emotional disturbance. Dykens (2000), noting considerable variance in prevalence rates, has reviewed a number of theoretical perspectives relative to the increased risk of psychopathology for children with mental retardation. Dykens cited a range of 10%–70%, and indicates that there is limited research that helps us understand the higher risk of psychopathology for children with intellectual disability.

In a landmark study, Rutter, Graham, and Yule (1970) brought attention to the prevalence

of psychopathology among children and adolescents with mental retardation. These researchers found rates of mental illness as high as 40% in a population of institutionalized young persons. Prout (2005) reviewed more recent general incidence and prevalence studies of psychiatric disorders among children and adolescents. This review covered studies published in a 15-year span (1989–2004) and identified 16 studies that could be generally categorized as population, incidence or prevalence, or epidemiological studies, with most of these studies published in the last 10 years of the time frame. The research literature continues to point to higher rates of disorder and problems with children and adolescents. Among the findings were higher general rates of prevalence of psychiatric disorders, higher rates of a range of specific disorders, increased rates of “risky” health/injury behaviors, higher behavioral ratings of internalizing and externalizing behaviors, and higher rates of disturbance in specialized or segregated settings. These more recent studies also show considerable variance due to definitional issues, but generally report incidence/prevalence rates from 25%–48%. Prout (2005) also noted that there have also been a variety of studies examining more specific symptomatology and issues such as depression and anxiety and Dykens (2000) has reviewed studies examining issues related to various syndromes.

Despite data indicating significant needs, there appears to have been little initiative to address mental health needs with positive and substantial programs. This appears to be systemic across several health care areas with evidence indicating that persons with mental retardation receive less attention in the health care system. A report, *Closing the Gap: A National Blueprint to Improve the Health of Persons with Mental Retardation*, released at the U.S. Surgeon General’s Conference on Health Disparities and Mental Retardation (2001), suggested that an inequity in the health care system exists—persons with mental retardation suffer more physical and mental problems but appear to receive inferior care. Thus, the report represents a call-to-action for both researchers and practitioners, suggesting that attention should be directed towards the needs of this population, as well as filling in the gaps of our knowledge base. The report noted that persons with mental retardation are “invisible” in the data on health status. Specifically, the report called for action to enhance the visibility of health research with persons with mental retardation and to collect data on health status. This problem was demonstrated in a study by McCarthy and Boyd (2002). They conducted a retrospective study with young British adults with intellectual disabilities who had significant histories of child and adolescence psychiatric and/or behavior disorders. These researchers also cite programmatic data indicating children with intellectual disabilities are more likely to receive services from general health practitioners, rather than traditional mental health sources utilized by their peers without intellectual disability. Their findings showed that almost two-thirds did not receive mental health care at any point during their transition of early adolescence to adulthood. Interestingly, those individuals who did access formal mental health services were relatively satisfied with those services.

Prout (2005) has advocated for increased mental health services for children and adolescents with mental retardation, including the provision of counseling and psychotherapy services—consistent with Szymanski’s (2000) more general viewpoint. The issue of the effectiveness of psychotherapy has been a controversial area in mental health for years (e.g., see Prout, Chard, Nowak-Drabik, & Johnson, 2000). Prout and Nowak-Drabik (2003) reviewed a wide variety of studies of counseling and psychotherapy with persons with mental retardation conducted over a 30-year period (1968–1998). Their approach included an expert consensus panel method that included ratings of both outcome (i.e., amount of change) and effectiveness/benefits. Ninety-two studies were evaluated by the panel and a smaller number ($N = 9$) of studies were assessed via more traditional meta-analysis. Results of the panel review showed that psychotherapy with persons with mental retardation yields a moderate amount of change and appears to be moderately effective or beneficial. They also concluded that these apparent effects and benefits can be demonstrated, to some degree, across age, level of mental retardation, technique, and theoretical approach.

Effective therapeutic interventions can also be carried out in a variety of settings. The small meta-analysis was also consistent with the “moderate” levels of overall effectiveness. A closer analysis of the child/adolescent findings shows outcome and effectiveness ratings were generally comparable to those studies conducted primarily with adults. Twenty-four (26% of the 92) studies were conducted with children or adolescents—42% were conducted with children or adolescents identified as being in the mild range of mental retardation, with 58% identified as being in the moderate or lower below ranges. Individual and group interventions were equally represented, and there was a range of the theoretical bases for the interventions. In general, the child/adolescent research base did not look substantially different from the adult base. Prout and Nowak-Drabik noted that the overall finding of “moderate” levels of effectiveness and benefit suggested that psychotherapeutic interventions should be more frequently considered in treatment plans with persons with mental retardation. This implication of their findings would also appear to apply to the child/adolescent area.

The issue of dual diagnosis is virtually absent from the school-based literature in school psychology, special education, and pupil personnel services (Prout, 2005). Very few of the incidence and prevalence studies have been conducted in school settings or with the input of school personnel. This is somewhat surprising considering the incidence/prevalence rates and the fact that the school is the second (family being first) most important setting for children and adolescents. Additionally, almost all children with intellectual disabilities are either served in the schools or are provided support for education by the public schools. More inclusive environments also make these children more visible and involved in regular education. Yet, the issue of secondary social-emotional problems or psychiatric disorders is rarely directly addressed in assessment or the planning of educational programs and interventions. No other community institution has more frequent or regular contact with children and adolescents with mental retardation than the schools. The schools have the best opportunity to intervene with children and adolescents with dual diagnoses. Prout (2005) describes this as a “missed opportunity” with most schools not recognizing their options in this area. Considering a conservative comorbidity rate of 25%, this would indicate that at least one in four students with mental retardation presents with significant behavioral or emotional challenges at some point. It appears that counseling interventions should be more routinely offered in schools to students with intellectual disabilities and Individual Educational Plans should include more “mental health” oriented interventions (e.g., counseling as a related service) with their students with mental retardation. Schools that have full-service school programs or have collaborative on-site services provided by community mental health providers should insure that their students with mental retardation have access to the full range of services offered in these programs. Furthermore, these interventions should focus on elimination of symptoms and problems and on variables such as happiness and hopefulness as espoused by Dykens (2006) and Szymanski (2000). In addition, they should also focus on increasing social-emotional competencies and self-direction capacities.

Summary

The history of the treatment and care of persons with mental retardation has, until recently, been the antithesis of the principles of positive psychology. Prior to legal rulings and changes to federal law and regulations in the 1970s, this also was the case for children and adolescents with mental retardation in the schools. The legal basis of these changes has been paralleled by humanistic and philosophical perspectives that are consistent with the tenets of positive psychology. The examination of the literature discussed in this chapter yields a number of conclusions and directions in the field:

1. Normalization and the educationally related concept of inclusion are clearly the dominant perspectives in programs for persons with disabilities in the community and in the schools. The existing research in this area is equivocal on the actual benefits of these perspectives. Logic, humanitarian viewpoints, and the principles of positive psychology would indicate the continuation of inclusion in the schools. Yet, more and better delineated research is needed to understand the impact of inclusion on students with disabilities.
2. Self-determination and self-advocacy appear to have positive influence on the adjustment of students with disabilities. Middle and high schools appear to be appropriate settings for increasing both the sense of self-determination and the associated advocacy skills.
3. Quality of life and life satisfaction are important factors in the lives of persons with mental retardation. At this point, little is known about these variables with children and adolescents with intellectual disabilities or about the influences on how students with disabilities perceive their lives.
4. Happiness in persons with intellectual disability is also a construct that has had little attention in the research and professional literature. It does appear to be a variable relevant across the full range of persons with mental retardation.
5. Students with disabilities and who have mental health problems are likely to have a variety of additional issues that impact many of the variables key to positive psychology. Quality of life, happiness, and other aspects of positive development are likely impacted by the additional social-emotional issues. As with other areas, there appears to be little research linking mental health issues in students with disabilities and positive psychology constructs. Professionals in schools who deal with students with intellectual disabilities should evaluate mental health status of these students and program accordingly.

On a general level, the fields of mental retardation and special education have embraced many of the principles of positive psychology. The paradigm shift has occurred in educational programming and practice. It would appear that the next step would be for the research to shift to greater examination of positive variables and, in effect, catch up with practice.

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Positive Psychology and School/Community-Based Youth Participatory Photography Programs

MARYAM KIA-KEATING

This chapter reviews the literature on positive psychology and participatory photography programs for youth. In addition, it describes the theoretical and practical delivery of a specific, innovative media arts and photography-based educational program designed to empower refugee and immigrant youth to explore different dimensions of their identities, develop communication and leadership skills, develop self-sufficiency, and develop a sense of agency, both for themselves and their communities.

Positive Psychology and Youth Development Programs

Although the research trajectories associated with the study of resilience, positive psychology, and youth development have been diverse, several core themes are consistent among these research domains: human potential, optimal functioning, and a strength-based perspective. The scholarly interest in resilience emerged out of studies in the 1970s that drew attention to the concept of an “invulnerable child” who seemed to find ways to withstand adverse experiences, and continue to thrive (Andrew, 1974; Anthony & Cohler, 1987). Resilience research pursued the investigation of successful human adaptation in the face of risk, and began to pay attention to the various factors and processes associated with overcoming challenges and threats (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990).

Garmezy (1985) identified three broad categories of variables important to resilience: (a) dispositional attributes of the child or adolescent, (b) affectional ties and socialization practices within the family, and (c) extra-familial characteristics of the social environment. Individual factors included behaviors that elicit predominantly positive responses from the environment, such as temperamental factors, internal locus of control, a high achievement orientation, responsiveness to change, cognitive abilities, and coping skills. Within the family milieu, a positive relationship with at least one parent or alternative caregiver served an important protective function. Attributes of the extra-familial social environment included the availability of external resources and extended social supports as well as the individual's use of these resources. Werner's (1990) seminal Kauai longitudinal study followed at-risk children and similarly highlighted clusters of protective factors as important in their successful adaptations, including: *individual factors* (e.g., flexible coping strategies, achievement orientation, and positive self-concept), *family factors* (e.g., productive family roles,

and positive adult role-models), and *community factors* (e.g., a consistent and structured school environment, and teachers who acted as mentors, role-models, and confidantes).

Researchers have increasingly recognized the importance of environmental factors and relationships in mediating or moderating risk (e.g., Gutman & Sameroff, 2004). Moreover, the study of protective factors provided an opportunity to identify potential significant variables that, if targeted and fostered by an intervention program, might reduce or buffer the potential negative effects of risks. In particular, this area of resilience research demonstrates the potential for both theoretical and practical implications, to inform interventions and policies (Masten, 2001).

At the turn of the 21st century, positive psychologists inspired a continuing examination of the sources of strength drawn on during adversity, as well as a new focus on the positive aspects of human experience (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Sheldon & King, 2001). Likewise, the area of positive youth development garnered attention towards facilitating positive psychological development by taking a strength-based orientation and a focus on imparting positive and lasting effects promoting healthy developmental trajectories.

A number of models now exist (presented in Table 28.1) summarizing the theoretical and research literature on the ideal attributes of effective strength-based interventions for youth. Eccles and Gottman (2002) provide a summary of research on community-based programs promoting positive development among youth. Similarly, key constructs of positive youth development programs are identified by Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, and Hawkins (2004). Based on literature reviews and survey data, Benson (2003) delineates an asset-based model of ideal social experiences for youth. Finally, Lerner and colleagues have tested a model of positive youth development, identifying “five C’s”: competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Lerner, Fisher, & Weinberg, 2000; Lerner et al., 2005). These characteristics provide a picture of the attributes of psychologically healthy youth, as well as the components of interventions that might support their development (Lerner, 2004). Table 28.1 organizes these four models according to their overlapping aspects and, through identifying commonalities, puts forward seven attributes of successful strength-based programs: (a) promoting social support, bonding, and sense of belonging; (b) involving youth in prosocial activities; (c) ensuring structure and safety; (d) supporting self-efficacy and resilience-building; (e) competence-building through activities that provide youth with new skills; (f) character-building through the fostering of prosocial norms; and (g) perspective-building by supporting youth to develop a broader awareness of meaning in their lives (e.g., their spiritual beliefs, or their hopes for their futures). These attributes are in line with the objectives and activities of participatory photography programs for youth.

Participatory Photography

In a sense, the camera does indeed interpret reality, not just capture it.
(Sontag, 1977, p. 7)

From birth onwards, children are besieged by the imaged world. Technological advances have impacted the amount, variety, and pace by which images are presented. When language fails, images can impart strong messages, telling stories of great depth and emotion without necessarily having to rely on a verbal narrative. In addition to their role in the creative arts, photographs have been used to provide credibility and objectivity to an event, substantiating verbal testimonies through vivid representations, and generating a tangible historic document. The still image produced in photography often takes a powerful role in the memories of the public (in the case of media images) and the individual (in the case of family images and portraits of the self).

The use of photography in the social sciences began within anthropological and sociological

Table 28.1 Models delineating the characteristics of strength-based youth development

Domains of Strength-Based Programs	Eccles and Gottman (2002) model	Benson (2003) model	Catalano et al. (2004) model	Lerner et al. (2000, 2005) 5 C's model
Social Support, Bonding & Belonging	Supportive relationships Opportunities to belong Interaction of family, school, and community efforts	Support	Promoting bonding	Connection: sustained adult-youth relationships Caring
Prosocial Activities			Providing opportunities for prosocial involvement	Participation and leadership in community-based activities
Structure & Safety	Clear and consistent structure and supervision Physical and psychological safety	Boundaries & expectations		
Self-efficacy & Resilience-building	Support for efficacy and mattering	Empowerment	Fostering self-efficacy Fostering self-determination Fostering resilience	Confidence
Competence-building	Opportunities for skill-building	Constructive use of time	Promoting social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral competence	Competence: skill-building
Character-building	Positive social norms		Fostering prosocial norms Fostering clear and positive identity Providing recognition of positive behavior Promoting moral competence	Character
Perspective-building			Fostering belief in the future Fostering spirituality	

research as a method of data collection. More recently, participatory photography has emerged as a form of collaborative intervention, based on an ideology similar to that of other creative therapies. Photographs provide a unique combination of visual story-telling, aesthetic, documentation, memory-keeping, personal perspective, and relative ease of use and reproduction. Participants are validated and empowered as their perspective is expressed, providing them with introspective and reflective activities, which benefit their mental health. Participatory photography programs have been historically designed as collaborative interventions with marginalized groups such as victims of domestic abuse (Frohmann, 2005), rural women in China (Wang, Yi, Tao, & Carovano, 1998), inner-city youth (McIntyre, 2000), Appalachian children (Ewald, 1985), and refugee and immigrant youth in the case of the AjA Project (2000), which stands for *Autosuficiencia Juntada con Apoyo* translated to mean Supporting Self-Sufficiency, and is described further here. Marginalized

populations such as refugees are often represented as the silent subject in situations of victimization and suffering; rarely do they find themselves behind the camera, gaining an opportunity to share their vision as a photographer, artist, and storyteller. Participatory photography programs aim to provide a voice to populations that are often overlooked, and to offer a venue for self-guided reflection, reconciliation, and personal growth. Moreover, their expression allows them the opportunity to communicate with and educate their communities, and in some cases, encourages social change (Ewald, 1985; Frohmann, 2005; Harrison, 2002; Hubbard, 1994; McIntyre, 2000; Wang, Burris, & Xiang, 1996; Wang et al., 1998).

Youth photography programs take a strength-based approach, providing participants with the opportunity to build upon their individual and community assets, to become productive artists and active contributors to their social worlds, to explore freely and in innovative ways, and ultimately, to develop a stronger future orientation, sense of cohesion, efficacy, and sense of meaning (Wilson, Minkler, Dasho, Wallerstein, & Martin, 2006). These outcomes are often most needed for youth who face environmental and social distress in their neighborhoods and are at greatest risk for violence, substance abuse, early pregnancy, and school dropout. Photography has been used as a strategy to increase understanding and to provide support to children living with high levels of stress, such as chronically ill children (Hagedorn, 1990; Higgins & Highley, 1986), homeless children (Hubbard, 1994), or children of prostitutes (Briski & Kauffman, 2004).

Although many interventions either fail to attend to cultural differences or struggle to incorporate culturally meaningful elements, participatory photography invites the youth themselves to explore and draw on their cultural roots and the complexities of their cultural identities. The camera serves as a tool to help stimulate self-expression; it can traverse relatively unobtrusively with youth into the various social-ecological contexts between which youth often struggle to navigate, including schools, communities, peers, and families (Cole, 1998; Vinokurov, Trickett, & Birman, 2002). Photography helps to document their experiences through visual imagery.

Locating participatory photography programs in the schools can increase access to positive youth development resources for culturally diverse and underserved youth, and benefit their overall well-being. School plays a particularly crucial role in the lives of immigrant youth who often face unique barriers to their sense of belonging and success, such as change in language, incongruent educational experiences, bicultural conflicts, and acculturative struggles (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007). Schools can act as a primary influence in helping young immigrant youth adaptation, and preserving optimism and opportunity for future achievements (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Maintaining an optimistic belief in one's future, in other words preserving hope, serves an important role in positive youth development (Sun & Lau, 2006). In addition, given the ever-expanding media world, it is particularly notable that photography can be incorporated into media literacy education, using the process of deconstructing photographs as a consciousness-raising experience for youth. Photography has begun to be explored as a method to increase student engagement with technology, even as young as in Kindergarten and Grade 1 (Ching, Wang, Shih, & Kedem, 2006).

In the school context, participatory photography programs help to build upon children's natural creative instincts while supplementing them with the foundation to generate tangible products that they can both keep and share. In one analysis, self-focused photographic essays predicted creativity 7 years later (Dollinger, 2006), suggesting that the relationship between photography and creativity needs further exploration. Moreover, the photographs themselves provide a concrete version of a visual memory, a reflected image of a child's own life, which he or she can physically capture and hold onto, scrutinize, enlarge or reduce, and ultimately, even edit, alter, or reconstruct. Participants are thus validated and empowered as their perspective is expressed through introspective and reflective activities. The photographs can act as a catalyst to increase communication between youth and

their families, peers, schools, and communities, and ultimately, impact school and community-level social action driven by the youth themselves (Wilson et al., 2006).

In designing participatory photography programs, a number of methodological models have been proposed. Hermeneutic, or interpretative, photography has been suggested as a methodology to allow participants to examine and express the symbolic meanings depicted in their photographs, so that they make subjective interpretations of their experiences during the interview process (Hagedorn, 1996). The interview transcripts themselves are then analyzed for themes and metathemes. PhotoVoice has been increasingly used across diverse populations, using a community-based participatory approach in photography to bring about community social action (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, 2003). Participants engage in assessment, analysis, and action phases towards identification of their own community assets and concerns, critical dialogue and reflection, and ultimately, community organization towards social action. This methodology has been used with diverse age groups. For example, adapted for use with elementary school-aged children, the Youth Empowerment Strategies after-school program took an empowerment education approach, combining photography with guided facilitation of in-depth discussions, and written critical analyses of the visual meanings and representations (Wilson et al., 2006). The participating elementary school children ultimately developed school-based social action projects such as working with the Public Health Department to clean the creek beside their school, and presenting concerns to the school district's chief engineer in order to repair a bullet-holed, graffiti-covered shack on school grounds. More generally, the process of photo-elicitation, drawing out participant interpretations through in-depth interviews or ethnographic field work, was employed (Harrison, 2002). As a result, the aesthetics or visual presence of an image is made negligible compared to the symbolic meanings it has for the photographer.

Although many photography programs are focused on social action, programming, and the provision of tangible outcomes, few programs have been the object of scientific study, or been adequately described in the academic arena. One exception is reviewed below.

A Case Example: Participatory Photography with Refugee Youth

Approximately 47% of the world's 19.2 million uprooted persons are youth under the age of 18 (UNHCR, 2005; Westermeyer, 1991). These children and adolescents are exposed to many stressors related to war violence ranging from separation from caregivers to severe deprivation of basic needs; from witnessing violence to experiencing torture (Boothby, 1994; Harrell-Bond, 2000; Kinzie, Sack, Angell, Manson, & Rath, 1986; Pynoos, Kinzie, & Gordon, 2001). The consequences of such severe, multiple, and prolonged experiences of war-related adversities can profoundly impact refugee youths' mental health, leading to a wide variety of symptoms including post-traumatic stress, anxiety, and depression (Allwood, Bell-Dolan, & Husain, 2002; Kinzie, Boehnlein, & Sack, 1998; Macksoud & Aber, 1996; Sack, Him, & Dickason, 1999), which can persist years after resettlement (e.g., Lustig et al., 2004; Sack et al., 1999). Among this population, there is an urgency to gain a better understanding of the factors that protect refugee youth from the potential negative consequences of war violence and displacement, and more collaborative partnerships are essential to provide an ethical and effective healing process (Ellis, Kia-Keating, Yusuf, Lincoln, & Nur, 2007; Lustig et al., 2004; Rousseau & Drapeau, 2003).

Despite the importance of providing appropriate programs to help support positive adaptation among refugee youth, relatively few receive services that adequately address their unique psychosocial needs, taking into full account cultural and developmental considerations in the context of their unique experiences of forced migration (Barenbaum, Ruchkin, & Schwab-Stone, 2004). Some programs, however, have attempted to meet these needs through providing refugee youth

with opportunities for creative expression which allow for personal constructions of meaning, minimize the need for language proficiency, and meet the individual youth at their developmental level (Rousseau, Drapeau, Lacroix, Bagilishya, & Heusch, 2005).

The AjA Project was incorporated in 2000 in order to empower refugee and underprivileged youth through participatory photography-based educational programs designed to empower youth, foster their self-sufficiency and sense of agency, develop communication and leadership skills, and create opportunities for their futures (AjA Project, 2000). The AjA Project includes three international programs: Journey in the United States (San Diego, California), Record of Truth in Thailand, and *Disparando Camaras para la Paz* (Shooting Cameras for Peace) in Colombia.

The theoretical underpinnings of the AjA Project's work include ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) and resilience theory (Yates & Masten, 2004). The ecological model explicitly takes an interest in the interaction between adverse events, the developing child, and the variety of social contexts that children inhabit, for example family, peers, school, and neighborhoods (Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993). The project strives to connect the various social ecologies of refugee youth and positively intervene at each level (Kia-Keating, Takeda, & Magee, 2007; Takeda & Kia-Keating, 2006). For example, in addition to individual impact, AjA aspires towards community impact through efforts to promote awareness about refugees. Students gain an international voice through exhibitions and presentations held at the National Geographic Explorer's Hall in Washington, D.C. and at the United Nations building in New York City; in so doing they participate in raising global awareness about refugees. At the local city level, the 2004 Re+COLLECT exhibit (AjA Project, 2006) provided students with an opportunity to exhibit their photographs at the San Diego Museum of Art. In addition, the students were able to impact their communities with large-scale photographs exhibited within their own neighborhoods. For example, the 2005 INTER+SECTIONS exhibit (AjA Project, 2005) canvassed the neighborhood's main thoroughfare with the students' photographs displayed in store windows and along the busy road. The 2007 In+GraIn exhibit (AJA Project, 2007) integrated photography into ordinary locations, such as a roadside fence, an empty lot, and the housing projects where many of the participants lived (see Figure 28.1 and Figure 28.2). Moreover, at night the photographs were intended to be illuminated in order to impact neighborhood aesthetic and safety, and counteract perceptions of neighborhood disorder, a community-level factor related to depression (Latkin & Curry, 2003).



Figure 28.1 2007 In+GraIn exhibit (AJA Project, 2007). Photo by Julio Orozco/ Courtesy of the AJA Project.



Figure 28.2 2006 Re+COLLECT exhibit (Aja Project, 2006). Photo by Maryam Kia-Keating.

Operating in El Cajon and the City Heights area of San Diego, the Journey program provides an example of a participatory photography program that meets the seven overarching domains of strength-based programs, as described in Table 28.1. First, the program promotes *social support, bonding, and a sense of belonging* by involving recently resettled refugee youth from various countries including Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Burma, and El Salvador. Students have the opportunity to connect with their peers, find a social niche, and relate to youth from other countries by sharing common immigrant experiences such as displacement, and negotiating between adhering to one's cultural traditions and acculturating to one's home of resettlement. In addition, the adult teachers and volunteers act as mentors, providing the students with extra-familial adult support that has been highlighted in the resilience literature as an important protective factor (Masten et al., 2004).

Second, the Journey program involves youth in *prosocial activities* by engaging them in photography. Classes take place during the after-school hours, an important time to engage youth in positive, structured activities due to the increased potential to participate in problem behaviors if unsupervised (Osgood, Anderson, & Shaffer, 2005). Cameras are portable and thus, the activities go beyond the program time. Outside of class time, students take photographs both for assignments and enjoyment. Their photography-based education provides students with common skills that they can share with each other and with peers outside the program. Oftentimes, students introduce friends and younger siblings to the program.

A third element of the Journey program is that it ensures *structure and safety*. The program consists of a comprehensive three-semester program that teaches the creative storytelling process, providing youth with an important opportunity to utilize photography, video, and other media arts to reflect upon, process, and share their experiences of migration. Journey exists to alleviate the sense of despair, loss, and alienation refugee youth and families often experience in acculturating to life in the United States (Lustig et al., 2004), as well as to help their non-immigrant peers, communities, and the broader public understand and appreciate the challenges associated with the refugee experience. The program provides a safe space to process their heritage and evolving identities, without fear of stigma or discrimination. Refugee youth, by definition, have encountered persecution due to ethnicity, religion or beliefs in their country of origin (UNHCR, 2001). After migration, they contend with the negative connotations associated with being a refugee or immigrant, such as being viewed as "undesirable," "alien," or "inferior." This kind of prejudice is a key factor associated with resettlement stress and negative outcomes (Jablensky et al., 1994). For example, one study

suggested that bullying and peer relations were as important or more important than pre-migration exposure to violence in the adjustment of young Iranian refugees in Sweden (Almqvist & Broberg, 1999). Thus, providing youth with social ties, and a safe place for self-expression, is an important feature of the Journey program. The fourth attribute of the strength-based programs reflected in the AjA Project is the steadfast effort to *support self-efficacy and promote resilience*. Participants learn to use photography and other media arts to share their stories, gain a sense of self-efficacy, and build leadership skills. In addition, participation in the program engages young people in their communities, provoking the students to reflect on issues of identity and belonging, and providing opportunities for community-building and meaning making. Research has suggested that meaning-making is an important cognitive process that enhances resilience through increased coherence about self and experience (Grossman, Sorsoli, & Kia-Keating, 2006). The AjA Project curriculum not only includes image-making activities, but also includes writing activities in which participants describe their photographs and experiences. Constructing narratives, particularly after difficult or troubling events, can increase a sense of agency through helping youth to integrate their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Pennebaker & Seagal, 1999; Rubin & Rhodes, 2005).

At the core of the project's initiatives is *competence-building*, the fifth element of its strength-based program. The youth learn to use a camera, work in groups and individually, interact with people of all ages at school and in their communities, and present their work. Classes consist of interactive projects and discussions, photo and writing assignments, and field trips that engage refugee youth in critical thinking through self and community exploration. The students learn how to analyze their surroundings through the lens of a camera, create a photography-based story combining their words and images, and develop their computer and English literacy skills. Based on a sample of 68 students participating in the Journey Program, one of the most striking findings was the importance of a student's sense of their English proficiency and how it related to a number of the other key variables assessing psychosocial well-being (Kia-Keating, 2007). In particular, English proficiency was significantly positively related to students' sense of self-efficacy in terms of their ability to meet their own and other's expectations (i.e., their parents, teachers, and friends), social skills (i.e., making and keeping friends, working in a group, and carrying on conversations), and self-assertiveness abilities (i.e., standing up for oneself, expressing a different opinion, resisting pressure). In addition, students who reported higher levels of English proficiency also experienced lower levels of depression and social anxiety (e.g., "I'm afraid that others will not like me"). Finally, students with a greater sense of English proficiency also reported more positive expectations that they would succeed in the future in the various domains of health, family, school, and job.

In addition, for young people who are recent arrivals to the United States and who often are just developing their English skills, photography and art in general provide a universal means of expression that goes beyond the limitations of language. Youth participants in the AjA program receive in-depth visual media training, enabling them to use photography as a means to tell the stories of their lives, families, and communities that are often difficult for them to express verbally.

The sixth dimension of the program is *character-building through the fostering of prosocial norms*. Each semester, the classes hold an end-of-semester event during which students showcase their photography in front of family, friends, and community members, receive awards, and gain recognition for their positive achievements. Oftentimes, such an event is the first public-speaking opportunity that students have ever had. Students also take leadership in organizing the program and honoring their teachers with acknowledgements and appreciation. Some students take the opportunity to share supplementary aspects of their cultural traditions, for example, through dances or songs. This experience can be transformative for students, building their self-esteem as they see their work recognized and valued, and also empowering them to view themselves as important, contributing members of their community. It also encourages them to value their heritage and

the cultures they bring with them, and to embrace art as a powerful means of sharing their stories with others (Larson, 2000; Rousseau et al., 2005).

Finally, *perspective-building* by supporting youth to develop a broader sense of meaning in their lives is an important seventh component of the Journey Program. The curriculum includes photographic techniques such as “framing the subject,” “light,” and “points of view,” as well as themed projects in which the students are encouraged to explore certain themes both literally and metaphorically. Four such themed projects include “self-portrait” (in which students take photographs that represent their identities), “old home” (in which students take photographs that represent their country and culture of origin), “leaving and arriving” (in which students take photographs that represent their migration experience), and “new community” (in which students take photographs that represent their acculturation experiences in their new culture, neighborhood, and school). In presenting their work, students accompany their photographs with written descriptions that point to the developing sense of meaning that they are gaining through their visual explorations of identity, meanings of home, and hopes for their futures.

Notably, in the same sample of youth participants described above, a path analysis was conducted to examine a theoretical model of hope as a predictor of mental health and well-being, as well as to test whether use of engagement coping (Connor-Smith, Compas, Wadsworth, Thomsen, & Saltzman, 2000) mediated the relationship between sense of hope and mental health (Kia-Keating, 2007). Engagement coping—specifically a participants’ use of strategies to change (i.e., problem-solving) or adapt to (i.e., positive thinking) a stressor—did not significantly mediate the relationship between hope and mental health. Hope, measured by a self-report instrument examining future expectations (Ruchkin et al., 2005), significantly predicted depression, social anxiety, and sense of self-efficacy. Notably, however, approximately one-fifth of the variation in social anxiety, one-quarter of the variation in depression and one-third of the variation in self-efficacy were explained by hope and engagement coping. These striking levels of association highlight the significance of the relationship between mental health and refugee youth’s sense of hope for future success in such domains as education, occupation, family, and personal health.

Narratives of Transformation

In order to gain a better understanding of the lived experiences of the adolescents in their own words, 21 (13 female and 8 male) students participated in in-depth qualitative interviews. Students were ages 12–17 and originally from a variety of countries including: Somalia, Uganda, Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Burma, Mexico, and the Marshall Islands. The interviews used the students’ collections of photographs as an adapted photo-elicitation method (Harrison, 2002). The participants were asked to describe the process and impact of photography within the context of their journey from their countries of origin to their home of resettlement. They selected individual images from hundreds of their photographs to represent themes of self, family, culture, community, migration, future, hope, and belonging.

Qualitative analyses illustrated how students used their photographs in the process of adjustment and healing to (a) retain memories, in holding onto positive connections from the past; (b) depict ways that they can unify their experiences of their old home with the realities of their new communities; and (c) motivate oneself towards making and maintaining positive changes and reaching future goals. Using the photographs to process these important themes provided an important opportunity for young refugees and immigrants to begin to find the language to describe their journeys, losses, hopes, and strategies for coping. Processing these photographs ultimately engendered a sense of belonging, as well as a cohesive sense of self and identity, within the context of their families and communities.

For these youth, the role of photographs as retaining memories was powerful because they could create tangible reminders of their past lives including the countries to which they might never be able to return, family members who were left behind, and reminiscences of their cultural roots. For example, Mya, a 14-year-old female from Burma, chose a photograph of her little brother sitting in the living room with his collection of toy cars lined up around him to depict her old home. When she elaborated it became evident that the photograph was only a representation of more meaningful experiences. She described it as a reminder of the early mornings that she would spend with her grandmother, who still lived in Burma, going into the city and shopping at the open market. She reminisced about the busy streets, the cars, and the throngs of people who were also there to shop. She expressed how much she missed her grandmother and said that having the photograph made her “feel better.”

Hajia, a 14-year-old from Somalia chose the photograph that her mother asked her to take. Hajia’s mother posed sitting with her hands folded behind her head and said to her daughter, “If you take this picture and you give to your teacher and then they clean it to bring to me, every time I look this picture, I will remember Africa. What I was doing with my family and my sons and the other people, my neighbors, I will think about this picture.” Hajia explained that her mother sat in that position when she was crying as they were leaving for the United States. She explained, “If I look at the picture, sometimes I don’t feel sad. I don’t feel . . . a little bit happy, a little bit sad. ‘Cause my Mom, she represent to me and my brother and my sister. She’s like my brother and my sister.” The activity of photography outside the classroom provided Hajia and her mother with a mutual opportunity for self-expression and connection. Hajia went on to say that the process of showing her photographs to her mother, made her mother “happy” because Hajia could share her accomplishments.

In finding a way to connect her past and present experiences, Christelle, a 15-year-old female from the Democratic Republic of Congo took a photograph of a young girl standing next to a drum at her dance lesson. Christelle’s own love for dancing extended into her participation in the Journey program, where she and her female peers from a variety of different countries all shared and learned each other’s cultural dances. The unifying force of a shared activity, regardless of differences in techniques and specifications, connected and bonded them. Furthermore, Christelle articulated the broader implications of her photograph, “When people look at this photo, I want them to know that there are people from different places that they can join together and dance together, and there are different type of drumming, and different clothing of dancing . . . They can work together, from different people like different countries, they can work together by uniting. And working together without discrimination . . . we talk about unite even when playing basketball, we all talk about unite. Nothing can work without uniting.”

Significant transformations were described by a number of the students. Out of several hundred photographs, Zemar, a 14-year-old male from Afghanistan, chose a photograph of himself buried to his neck in sand as the one that best depicted himself. In the photograph, his face is turned to the side and he is squinting uncomfortably because of the sand going into his eyes. It is not the first photograph you might assume a teenager would choose to represent himself. Zemar’s unexpected explanation brought insight and provided a lesson: “When I take this picture, it shows me I have to be much better than that.” The day of the photograph, his friends had buried him under the sand and he was trapped there until his sister came to his rescue. Zemar started to question the influence of his friends, and described the transformation that took place: “It shows me how I was and how I am now . . . much better than that there.” The photograph not only provided him with a metaphor for his vulnerability and discontent, but served as a continual and tangible reminder for him to maintain the positive changes in his life, a motivator to stay out of trouble, and to make careful choices.

Similarly, Mahad, a 16-year-old male from Kenya described his transformation from being a “gangster” and “making trouble” to becoming a “good student and good friend.” In fact, when Ma-

had first begun participating with the program, he often appeared angry, distant, and mistrustful. Over the course of his participation, his transformation was evident to everyone. He explained the impact of his participation in the AjA Project:

I enjoyed taking photographs from AjA project. I was know nothing about photograph, so even I wasn't know nothing about afterschool. I'd get out of school. I was going home. I wasn't doing no homework. When I come [to the U.S.], I used to get F. So next day, when they say, "after school," I think about it and say, "I'm gonna go to after school"... So I keep going to after school, one day I see AjA project people. So I enjoy with them. They say take picture home, take it, and I keep taking picture, keep taking picture, keep taking picture. You know, the next thing is I tell my friends, I say, "hey, there is something you've got to enjoy just like how I did. Come with me today." They say, "Alright." They come with me. I show you guys. They say, "This the people who show you how to take picture?" "Yes, they will show you anything you want. Close up, or nice. Everything you know." And they say, "Alright, let's do it"... So I teach them. Now everything I know, and they know ... Everything they know they teach me; everything I know I teach them. We help each other, you know. And they taking a picture now. We taking picture together now.

Mahad's narrative exemplifies the positive influence of participating in prosocial activities during after-school hours, and how the basic skill acquisition of taking photographs builds upon itself to extend into other positive opportunities, such as connecting with peers. Mahad's status shifted from drawing attention for his risky behaviors, to gaining recognition for his achievements.

Ethical Considerations

A number of important ethical considerations exist in any research or intervention program with refugee youth (Ellis et al., 2007), as well as specifically for participatory photography programs. In particular, negotiating the relationship between adults and youth participants is an important element, and a number of questions are raised. For example, when does shift occur between a child or adolescent being viewed as a student who needs guidance to create an acceptable or worthwhile (by whose definition?) art product, versus being viewed as an artist or photographer in their own light, with their own point-of-view? How important is it for the adults to guide the process and trajectory of the images and their use, rather than allowing the process to occur freely and with the spontaneity which is often viewed as valuable to creative expression? Who determines how to retain dignity for the subjects of the photographs, and under what definition of dignified? Whose permission is necessary to take the photographs, to display the photographs, and to sell the photographs? Community participatory action methods provide a helpful structure by which to assure ethical practice and encourage a continual process of joint negotiation of ethical practice (Ellis et al., 2007). In the case of the AjA Project, a youth advisory council made up of past participants, who act as youth leaders and mentors, is a particularly helpful strategy to create a continuous feedback process that promotes effective dialogue between youth and staff. Nonetheless, ethical issues related to participatory photography need further elaboration in both research and practice.

Future Directions

Visual narratives are an underutilized resource producing unique lines of inquiry and sparking innovative pedagogies. Photography can be used as a product (providing a form of individual expression and shared voice), narrative, assessment, and tool for impacting social policy.

Participatory photography is also an innovative approach that exemplifies the characteristics of strength-based programs for youth. In the context of a structured, prosocial activity, engendering a sense of safety and belonging, youth have the opportunity for competence-, character-, perspective-, and resilience-building. Engaging students in creative arts allows them to find a voice, share stories, connect with others, contextualize their experiences, and participate in a group larger than themselves or their families (e.g., in their neighborhoods, schools, the broader communities, or sometimes nationally or internationally). Participatory photography programs help to promote a public view of youth, and particularly adolescents, as assets, rather than problems, to the community (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2000).

The research on the effectiveness of participatory photography programs is at its nascent stage. Future research is important to providing empirical support for the impact of these programs on the mental health and well-being of youth participants. In particular, the strength-based approach presents a valuable opportunity to examine the process of building of assets. Researchers can use the models of positive youth development to track the impact of participatory photography on the development of psychologically healthy characteristics such as hope, self-efficacy, and engagement. Participatory photography programs also have the potential to be integrated with more traditional models of prevention and intervention programs.

It is important that researchers examining participatory photography programs attend to four particular components that influence an adolescent's advancement. The first dimension includes investigating self-reflection and meaning-making about one's identity, one's experience, and one's relationship with family, peers, and community. Stressful experiences and adversities can be filtered through attributions and meanings that evolve over time, and these cognitive processes need to be examined within more culturally-meaningful frameworks. The second dimension is to examine youth capacities to use symptoms, risks, and problems to motivate themselves to reflect, to test new thoughts or behaviors, and to gain insight from stressors, challenges, and adversities. This transformational flexibility is an important component in fostering youth resilience, and more research will help inform school-based prevention and intervention programs. The third relevant dimension is to examine how to engage youth in productive relationships and to provide support from adults who are attentive and make a positive contribution to youth development and well being. Finally, the fourth dimension includes investigating effective ways of providing opportunities for success and security, through activities that build the capacity for self-sufficiency.

Many participatory photography programs for youth already exist internationally. These programs oftentimes target the most vulnerable of populations to provide them with opportunities for self-expression, belonging, meaning, and capacity for social action. These activities can mediate an important developmental time period when underprivileged youth encompass the potential for both acute risk and remarkable resilience. Empirical studies of participatory photography programs are essential to understanding and implementing the most effective strategies for using participatory photography to support positive youth development.

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Child and Adolescent Health Risk Behaviors

Prevalence and Comprehensive Prevention and Intervention Strategies

ROBERT F. VALOIS AND KEITH J. ZULLIG

The size, mean age, and racial and ethnic composition of the adolescent population changed significantly during the 1990s, and this change is predicted to continue into the next several decades. From 1990 to 2000 the population of adolescents ages 10 to 19 grew by almost 8%, and will continue to grow from an estimated 39.9 million (in 2000) to 41.7 million by 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001a, 2001b). In this context of increasing diversity among America's youth, there is a need for programs that promote positive development for all youth. Adolescence is a time of great plasticity when the formation of harmful habits can have long-term effects that exact a costly toll on society. Burt (2002) suggested that a focus on the quality of life—rather than on morbidity and mortality—is a more effective strategy for convincing policy makers of the need to invest in health promotion in youth. By the same token, policy makers also need to know which strategies work for adolescents. This chapter suggests that the principles of positive psychology provide a perspective for implementing such programs. Current and promising prevention and intervention programs with a school-focused component are reviewed.

The Comprehensive Youth Development Approach

Risky behaviors, unhealthy behaviors, antisocial behaviors, poor mental health, and poor academic achievement remain highly prevalent and continue to pose critical dilemmas for parents, educators, and communities. Flay (2002, 2003) argued that these problems are highly correlated, have many of the same risk and protective factors, and severely limit success and happiness in life. The implication is that the prevention of problematic behaviors starts with promoting positive behaviors in a comprehensive, coherent, and integrated approach.

Various literature reviews and commentaries in recent years suggest that prevention science is advancing knowledge of what is efficacious for the prevention of problematic and health-risk behaviors for adolescents. Social influence and social skills programs, especially those designed to have at least 18 activity hours that incorporate skills development and changing normative beliefs, are effective for promoting health and problem behavior change among adolescents. Effectiveness has been documented in the prevention of adolescent *substance use* (Tobler & Stratton, 1997), *violence* (Derzon, Wilson, & Cunningham, 1999), *unsafe sexual behaviors* (Kirby, 2001a, 2001b;

Moore, Sugland, Blumenthal, Gleib, & Snyder, 1995), *character education* (Berkowitz, 2002; Licona, Schaps, & Lewis, 2002) and *mental health promotion* (Durlak & Wells, 1997; Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994). However, these programs have limited effectiveness and long-term positive results have not been found. Given these issues, Hechinger (1992) advised that to be optimally effective, adolescent health promotion programs need to be:

1. comprehensive by covering health-compromising and health enhancing behaviors;
2. continuous and longitudinal over several grades, with carefully designed review, reinforcement and booster extensions sessions;
3. developmentally appropriate;
4. school and classroom focused, although not necessarily limited to the school;
5. culturally sensitive and competent;
6. use peers for education and promotion where appropriate to demonstrate skills and model norms;
7. training of teachers and other school personnel involved in program delivery;
8. involve parents/guardians actively in homework exercises and other activities;
9. adapted to local conditions with input from students, parents, education and community leaders;
10. include school improvement and reorganization components; and
11. have ongoing evaluation at all stages of program development, implementation, and institutionalization.

In keeping with Hechinger's advice, Coordinated School Health Programs (CHSP) were developed to offer a solution to school's responsibilities for both the health and academic success of children and adolescents (Allensworth & Kolbe, 1987; Kolbe, 2002; Marx & Wooley, 1998). The 2000 Joint Committee on Health Education and Promotion Terminology defined CHSPs as an organized set of policies, procedures, and activities designed to protect, promote, and improve the health and well-being of student and staff, thus improving the student's ability to learn. The CHSP model includes, but is not limited to: (a) family and community involvement in school health; (b) comprehensive school health education; (c) physical education; (d) school health services; (e) school nutrition services; (f) school counseling, psychological, and social services; (g) healthy school environment; and (h) school-site health promotion for staff (Joint Committee on Health Education and Promotion Terminology, 2000). The model also recognizes that the focus of the school should be on the whole child, with student academic achievement as its organizing goal.

Effectiveness of CSHP Components: Evidence is Emerging

Alone, or in some combination, the components of CSHPs appear to improve the health behaviors and academic achievement of children and adolescents (ASTHO & SSDHPER, 2002). A brief review of the related research follows.

Family and Community Involvement in School Health

Students whose parents are actively involved in their education have demonstrated significantly greater achievement gains in math and reading (achievement and comprehension), improved attendance and consistency of completed homework compared to students with uninvolved parents (Henderson, 1987; Shaver & Walls, 1998). Nettles (1991) and Allen, Philliber, Herring, and Kupermine (1997) found that community activities that connect to the classroom reduced school suspension rates, improved school-related behaviors and positively impacted academic achievement.

Comprehensive School Health Education

Connell, Turner, and Mason (1985) reported that students who participated in health education classes increased their (a) health knowledge, (b) attitudes, and (c) health promoting skills and behaviors. Constancy of these effects was established for all three learning domains after 40–50 classroom hours of instruction. Dent et al. (1995) found that by incorporating a social influences model curriculum into the model (e.g., Project Towards No Tobacco), smokeless tobacco and cigarette use was decreased. These effects were stable for junior high adolescents 2 years after program exposure. Botvin, Griffin, Diaz, and Ifill-Williams (2001) found that the curriculum could be used to reduce binge drinking in early adolescents. Protective effects of these components were reported at 1- and 2-year follow-up. Moreover, Elias, Gara, Schuyler, Branden-Muller, and Sayette (1991) found that students who had received an intensive 2-year social decision-making and problem-solving program in elementary school showed increased prosocial behavior and less antisocial and self-destructive behaviors in high school.

Physical Education

Physical activity among adolescents appears to be consistently associated with higher levels of self-esteem, lower levels of anxiety and stress (Calfas & Taylor, 1994), higher levels of social-emotional self-efficacy (Valois, Umstatted, Zullig, & Patton, 2008), and higher levels of perceived life satisfaction (Valois, Zullig, Huebner, & Drane, 2004). Physical activity also has been positively associated with academic performance for children and adolescents (Dwyer, Blizzard, & Dean, 1996; Sallis et al., 1999; Shepard, 1996).

School Health Services

Early childhood and school-aged school-based intervention programs that provide parental support and health services are associated with improved school performance and academic achievement (Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, & Mann, 2001). The Chicago Child-Parent Center Program is one example of a program that documents how early intervention efforts improved high school completion rates and lowered juvenile crime for students through age 20 (Reynolds et al., 2001). McCord, Klein, Foy, and Fothergill (1993) and Walters (1996) also found that schools with school-based health centers reported a significant increase in school attendance and graduation rates, and a significant decrease school dropouts and suspensions, in comparison to schools without such centers.

School Counseling, Psychological and Social Services

Based on a social development model, Hawkins, Catalano, Kosterman, Abbott, and Hill (1999) found that a comprehensive intervention combining teacher training, parent education and social competency training for children had long-term positive effects on multiethnic, urban youth, including: (a) greater commitment and attachment to school, (b) reductions in violent behavior, (c) reductions in heavy drinking and sexual intercourse by age 18, (d) reduced frequency of school misbehaviors, and (e) increases in academic performance. Similar interventions targeting high-risk youth in grades 9–12 reported significant increases in grade point averages, school bonding and self esteem, and modest success in stemming the progression of substance use (Eggert, Thompson, Herting, Nicholas, & Dicker, 1994). Furthermore, Bowen (1999) reported significantly elevated academic performance among children who participated in a social service intervention focused on improving parent-child and parent-teacher communication.

School Nutrition Services

Alaimo, Olson, and Frongillo (2001) found that teenagers who were “food-insufficient” were more likely to have repeated a grade, visited a psychologist, been suspended from school, and report greater difficulty getting along with other children. Similarly, one study of public school students in Philadelphia and Baltimore found that school breakfast programs increased learning (especially math) and academic achievement, improved student attention to academic tasks, improved school attendance, and decreased visits to the school nurse (Murphy et al., 1998). Meyers, Sampson, Weitzman, Rogers, and Kayne (1989) also reported similar findings—school breakfast programs positively impacted academic performance and reduced absenteeism and tardiness among low-income elementary school students.

Healthy Physical School Environments

Berner (1993) found that the physical condition of a school was related to student achievement, and that an improvement in the school’s physical condition by one category (i.e., moving from “poor” to “fair”) was associated with almost a 6-point improvement in group mean achievement scores. Cross (2002) documented how pesticide use around and in a school could have a negative effect on the life quality of students; we currently do not know the harm these toxins may cause in children. Asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism due to chronic illness, and Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) is a key factor in asthma exacerbations. It has been estimated that half the schools in the United States have poor IAQ (Daisey, Angell, & Apete, 2003).

Healthy School Environment: Psycho-Social

The feeling of belonging to and being cared for at school has been referred to as school connectedness (McNeeley, 2002). Intervention research suggests that the relationship between feeling connected to school and good health is strong. For example, a classroom management program that gave middle school students responsibility for setting classroom rules and managing the classroom increased school connectedness and promoted self-discipline. After 1 year, between 30%–100% fewer students were sent to the principal’s office for acting out in class, fighting, or assault (Freiberg, 1989). Although school connectedness cannot in and of itself improve student learning, it is one important ingredient (Lehr & Christenson, 2000). When students feel they are part of their school and are cared for, they are more receptive to the high expectations of academically rigorous programs. In turn, school administrators do not have to choose between competing social and academic agendas. Efforts to promote connectedness can reinforce efforts to increase academic achievement (Bosworth, 2000) and reduce misconduct at school (Simons-Morton, Crump, Haynie, & Saylor 1999). School connectedness can be modified via intervention (see Griffiths, Furlong, & Sharkey, chapter 16, this volume).

In summary, the CSHP model has potential for improving students’ academic performance and increasing healthy behaviors as well as preparing school-aged children and adolescents for their future (Murray, Low, Hollis, Cross, & Davis, 2007; Valois, Ory, & Stone, 1989).

Building and Sustaining Effective School-Community Health Programs

Schools can develop and implement a coordinated school health program, but building a CSHP takes time, commitment, patience and success in some critical program elements. Results from the Mariner Project—a coordinated school health pilot project in South Carolina—found that after a 3-year developmental period, ongoing sustainability was due to a combination of four critical

performance elements: (a) administrative support, (b) effective coordination by a school-based health promotion team, (c) an effective program champion/liaison/facilitator, and (d) an effective staff wellness coordinator (Valois & Hoyle, 2000). Similarly, a recent report from CSHP efforts in Florida suggests that program strength and stability depended on long-term resources, qualified personnel, and administrative support (Weiler, Pigg, & McDermott, 2003).

From extensive fieldwork, Marx provided important information in *Stories from the Field: Lessons Learned About Building Coordinated School Health Programs* (see Centers for Disease Control—Division of Adolescent & School Health [DASH], 2002). Most of these lessons are not new, but they reinforce most of what educators already know about building a CSHP. The central lesson is that those involved in building and sustaining a CHSP must have the “drive and determination” to make CHSPs successful. The 10 major lessons learned outlined in these stories discuss the importance of:

1. support of district and building-level leadership (superintendents, principals, school board members);
2. policies that reinforce district and school commitment (mission statements) to promote positive student academic and health outcomes;
3. resources from outside the school setting (change agents, partners, and advocates);
4. parents, families, and caretakers as essential partners in the model (expertise and collective wisdom);
5. students as significant contributors to the success of programs, as well as program beneficiaries;
6. opportunities for participants to interact with other colleagues (enthusiasm, support, and recognition);
7. professional development to engage staff and sustain their participation (enjoyable continuing education);
8. patience-changing a system takes time (turf issues, “reluctance conversion,” culture of schools); and
9. data to document ongoing needs, support, monitoring, communication, process, impact, and assistance.

Building Capacity for the Continuous Improvement of Health-Promoting Schools

Capacity building has been defined as a series of actions that lead to an increase in the collective power of a group to improve student achievement (Fullan, 2004). Thus, mutual accountability between educational community and the public is essential to ensure success, and necessary resources are supported by both entities to accomplish the school’s academic mission (Newmann et al., 2001; Olson, 2000; Wixon, 2003). Ultimately, schools must prepare all students to maximize their potential, to contribute to the common good, and to live a full and rewarding life, (Ravitch, 2003).

The federal mandate No Child Left Behind is a commendable objective (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Public schools *should* be accountable for promoting the potential of all students to achieve future success. However, this accountability must be preceded by responsibility—a shared responsibility of the educational community and the public to ensure the *capacity* of the organization and the individuals within the organization to succeed (Hoyle, 2006; Wixon, 2003). Traditionally, school improvement efforts, including No Child Left Behind, are based on the assumption that all students come to school equally “ready to learn” every day of the school year. Oftentimes, reform efforts make no accommodation for building the capacity of schools to address students’ health issues as potential barriers to learning (Ouellette, 2000), nor do they address non-academic barriers

to learning. Creating health-promoting schools through implementation of coordinated school health programs and services has been proposed as an efficient and effective means to improve both the health and education of youth (Fetro, 1998; Kolbe, Collins, & Cortese 1997; Wolford, Cinelli, James, & Groff, 1997). Internationally, the World Health Organization (WHO), through its Global Health Initiative, seeks to increase the number of health-promoting schools, which they describe as schools that are constantly strengthening their capacity as a “healthy setting for living, learning, and working” (WHO, 2007, pp. 44–45).

Wixon (2003) stated that the dimensions of capacity include: (a) vision and leadership; (b) collective commitment and cultural norms to realize the vision; (c) knowledge and access to knowledge; (d) organizational structures and management conducive to improvement; (e) adequate resources, infusion of external ideas, and assistance; and (f) support to move beyond current practice. In this regard, Hoyle, Samek, and Valois (2008) describe the pre-existing conditions and on-going processes in Pueblo Colorado School District 60 that built capacity for the development and continuous improvement of Health-Promoting Schools. Capacity building strategies and a program-planning model for continuous improvement for health promoting schools included: (a) visionary/effective leadership and management *structures*, (b) extensive internal and external *supports*, (c) development and allocation of adequate *resources*, (d) supportive *policies and procedures*, and (e) ongoing *professional development* (Hoyle et al., 2008). In turn, Pueblo 60 developed an infrastructure through which a wide array of health programs and services were delivered successfully through building organizational capacity at the school district and school level—where additional school health programming can be developed and sustained (Hoyle et al., 2008).

Evidence to date suggests that a CHSP approach or a Health Promoting School Approach, working alone, and in combination with a Positive Youth Development Approach (to reducing health risk and problem behaviors) have the ability to improve academic achievement while reducing risk behaviors for children and adolescents. School health promotion programs and systems can be developed and implemented. What the future holds for effective school-community health promotion programs will depend on a variety of factors. At its core, the trinity of future effectiveness, for health promotion program success depends largely upon its infrastructure; that is, the sustained quality and appropriate quantity of people, time and money, (social and financial capital), combined with leadership at the school, community, state and national levels.

Promoting Adolescent and School Health: Quo Vadis?

What the future holds for adolescent and school health promotion is difficult to predict. It is reasonable to suggest that CSHPs, full service schools, health promoting schools and communities, and other contemporary approaches will move forward, as schools, school districts and communities realize the benefits of enhancing the health and academic achievement of students.

One such direction suggested by Valois and Hoyle (2008) is to begin with a public health planning process model and focus on health promotion (of students, staff and families) as the vehicle for school improvement. Considering the school as the center of the community, and health and well-being as the ultimate goal, then a CSHP should be considered a school improvement process at the micro level and a community development process at the macro level. The program planning process for health-promoting school communities is imperative. Planning and implementation procedures are needed to: (a) address the needs of the “whole child,” (b) organize the school as the convener of societal supports, (c) re-culture schools for health promotion, (d) build organizational capacity to achieve the mission of schooling, (e) ensure individual capacity for learning through a seamless system of support, (f) utilize a systematic process for continuous improvement, (g) align health promotion with related fields, (h) gain the commitment of stakeholders, (i) identify issues

form a local perspective, (j) focus on continuous improvement as a fluid process, and (k) have an ongoing evaluation system.

However, gleaned from experience and the desire for future success, there are a number of directions that need to be seriously considered and pursued. The best way for health educators and health promoters to predict the future is to create it (Gold & Kelley, 1988).

Conclusion

Professionally, those working in child and adolescent health need to adapt in order to effectively shape the future. Imperative for future generations is the combination of healthy students and academic success. It can be argued that the school is the most critical community corner stone and that coordinated school health programs can help meet positive developmental outcomes for all students. It is essential to consistently work toward tipping social and financial capital in the direction of coordinated school health programs and health promoting school efforts at the international, national, state, and local levels. Promoting child, adolescent, and school health is the right thing to do, and we need to do it right (Valois, 2003).

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Wholistic Wellness and Exercise Among Adolescents

R. L. PETOSA AND BRIAN V. HORTZ

Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, It is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity.

(John Fitzgerald Kennedy, 1960, p. 16)

A healthy mind in a healthy body.

(Hippocrates)

A discussion of positive human functioning is not complete without consideration of the synergistic interdependence between the well-being of the body and the well-being of the brain. Although the brain accounts for less than 2% of a person's weight, it requires 20% of the body's total oxygen consumption (Drubach, 2000). Regular aerobic activity can increase the capacity of the body to deliver oxygen to the brain and all tissues of the body. A well oxygenated brain contributes to alertness, cognitive endurance/performance, and enhanced mood. A well oxygenated brain also "facilitates" a well oxygenated "rest of the body," leading to increased levels of vigor and performance. Endorphins released during vigorous exercise contribute to a heightened sense of well-being. An experienced exerciser can make the brain/body feel great while reaping health and fitness benefits. It is a win/win for the active person. Furthermore, physical fitness and the activities that promote fitness can make a substantial contribution to the development of the virtues identified by positive psychology.

The purpose of this chapter is to make a case for physical fitness as a critical component of positive human wellness. A review of wellness concepts is presented as a complement to emerging models of positive psychology. A brief review of research on the positive effects of exercise on health is presented. We then propose a positive, wellness approach to physical activity promotion in the schools. This is followed by a review of studies that evaluate the effectiveness of a theory-based program of physical activity among adolescents. The Planning to be Active Program (P2BA) is designed to empower young people to build self-regulation skills to foster personal agency. The evidence suggests that this approach promotes regular physical activity among previously sedentary adolescents. P2BA also encourages the development of skills and beliefs that contribute to personal empowerment, self-regulation ability, and personal agency. The program can make a meaningful contribution to positive psychological development among adolescents.

Wellness

Health is the vital principle of bliss, and exercise of health.

(James Thomson, 1748, stanza 57)

We live in an era of specialization; layers of specialists within and between disciplines and practitioners. Specialization promotes problem-oriented thinking but fragmented solutions. Over the past 40 years Americans have waged “wars” on the health-related issues of poverty, drugs, teen pregnancy, AIDS, homelessness, smoking, and crime. Problem-oriented thinking has led to certain solutions but also away from other valid perspectives. This chapter takes the position that a fragmented, problem-centered analysis of health is a fundamental barrier to a science of positive wellness and happiness. A case is made for thinking holistically, in terms of dynamic relationships among interdependent dimensions of wellness. From a developmental perspective, wellness and happiness are not problems to be solved (Larson, 2000) but rather are products of active, creative adaptation manifested by the individual striving to develop capabilities (Petosa, 1984, 1986a).

Public Health has a proud history of mobilizing science towards the prevention of human disease. In particular, the fields of epidemiology, environmental health, and health education have made significant advances in the identification of causal agents and the mobilization of community resources and individual actions to prevent the spread of illness and increase the human lifespan. However, there were forward thinking folks seeing beyond the prevention of disease. As early as 1947, the World Health Organization defined health as: “A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (1958, p. 1). Halbert Dunn is often credited with being the “Father” of wellness. Through a weekly radio program and later a book, Dunn explored the intellectual possibility of wellness. Dunn defined wellness as “... an integrated method of functioning which is directed toward maximizing the potential of which the individual is capable. It requires that the individual maintain a continuum of balance and purposeful direction within the environment where he [sic] is functioning” (1961, p. 4). This effort to create a clear sense of positive human endeavor beyond the prevention of disease was proposed for a variety of reasons. The affluence of many individuals, particularly in developed nations, allowed them the time and resources to pursue the “good life.” However, it was equally important to acknowledge that the avoidance of disease is generally not a good motivator of consistent actions among general populations. Health promoting behaviors must generally be practiced consistently to produce salutogenic effects. The pursuit of wellness provided positive motivation that appealed to a segment of the community. Petosa (1986a, p. 26) articulated the wellness hypothesis: “Are people more likely to adopt and maintain health enhancing lifestyles when they are aspiring to positive levels of functioning rather than avoiding future health threats?” This hypothesis has broad implications for research agendas in both the prevention and wellness sciences.

If wellness is an integrated method of functioning, it is important to identify what is being integrated. Russell (1975) proposed a model of holistic wellness that attempts to identify the dimensions of wellness (see Figure 30.1). These dimensions were described as pillars or wellsprings that support holistic wellness and the balance within and among the dimensions shaped lifestyle patterns and, ultimately, health. Among the six dimensions, one clear focus is on the biological needs of the body. One dimension focuses on the balance of nutrients and energy needed to support the growth and activity of the body. A separate physical activity dimension illustrates the need for providing the body with challenges to build strength, endurance, and physical skills needed to support successful adaptation to environmental challenges across the lifespan. The mental/emotional balance dimension encourages individuals to actively consider how situations and personal

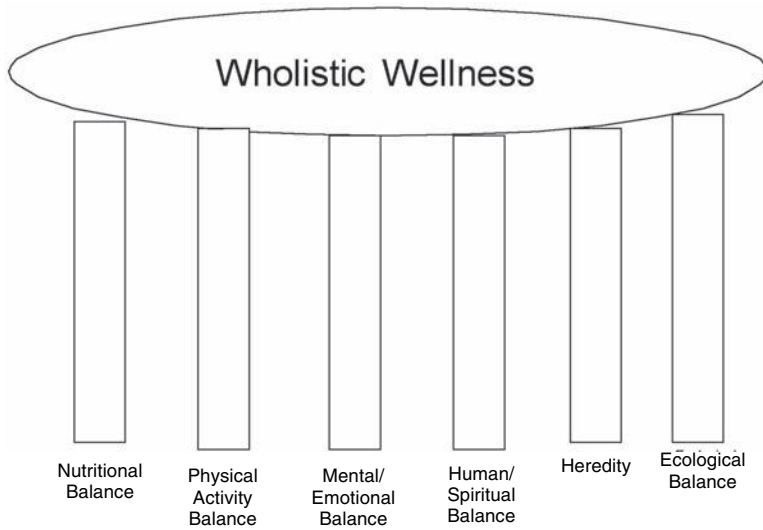


Figure 30.1 Model of wholistic wellness.

actions affect how they think and what they feel. This dimension encourages consideration of capabilities for making decisions, taking action, and evaluating consequences. Finally, the human/spiritual balance dimension describes sources of cultural, social, and spiritual support to develop capabilities and provide options for meaning and purpose in life.

The balancing of these dimensions is considered in the context of the genetic strengths and weaknesses with which an individual is endowed. In this model, individuals seek to adapt to the environment in proactive and positive ways with an eye towards advancing their levels of wellness. For example, cognizant of the six dimensions of positive wholistic wellness, the individual would carefully consider their daily lifestyle and seek to develop patterns of behavior that consistently promote and express their capacities for wellness. As part of this expression of wellness, the individual would seek to create community environments that promote the wellness of self and others.

The abstract nature of wellness and the complexity of wholistic principles suggest that the capacity to act on these concepts is likely to develop gradually. Success in skillfully adopting these concepts presumes considerable, ongoing educational support. Schools, families, and communities must work together to set young people in the direction of wellness. However, it is clear that wellness is not “achieved,” rather it is an ongoing, life-long pursuit. Indeed, our culture provides many challenges and distractions that can lead people away from wellness on a regular, if not permanent basis. In a complementary fashion, positive psychology focuses on the qualities of the individual that aid in maximizing an individual’s potential. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000, p. 5) describe positive psychology as “...a science of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions that promise to improve quality of life and prevent the pathologies that arise when life is barren and meaningless.” This focus on positive experiences allows for a disciplined study of human agency, the reasons why positive everyday life occurrences may occur, how they may be evaluated, and their impact on future behavioral decisions. Clearly, the respective fields of wellness and positive psychology share a common, health enhancing vision. Both fields can work together to further our understanding of human wellness.

Physical Activity Enhances Health

We do not stop playing because we grow old
We grow old because we stop playing

(Anonymous)

The positive effects of regular leisure-time physical activity on physical health and well-being have been well documented (Rowland, 2001; Tolfrey, Jones, & Campbell, 2000; USDHHS, 1996). Regular physical activity substantially reduces risk of chronic disease, but evidence also suggests that there are many mental/emotional benefits as well. Physical activity improves mental health by improving the body's ability to deal with the effects of physical and mental stressors (Salmon, 2001). There is some evidence that physically active people have better emotional health than those who are sedentary (Morgan, 1997). Physical activity has been found to be associated with emotional well-being and negatively with anxiety and depression (Biddle, 2001; Salmon, 2001). Meta-analyses (Calfas & Taylor, 1994; Gruber, 1986) reveal that physical activity and vigorous forms of exercise produce statistically significant increases in self-esteem. Aerobic activity appears to generate larger benefits to self-esteem than other types of moderate intensity activities (Gruber, 1986). Three meta-analyses (Calfas & Taylor, 1994; Long & Van Stavel, 1995; Petruzzello, Landers, Hatfield, Kubitz, & Salazar, 1991) revealed that exercise was significantly related to a reduction in trait and state anxiety. High intensity exercise (i.e., aerobic exercise) and the length of training (greater than 15 weeks) produced greater reductions in anxiety. Meta-analyses (Calfas & Taylor, 1994; Kugler, Seelback, & Kruskemper, 1994; North, McCullagh, & Tran, 1990) have consistently shown that exercise produces a reduction in depressive symptoms. Again, impact on depression is stronger with higher intensity exercise (i.e., aerobic exercise) and increased frequency of exercise. Exercise is an important personal behavior in reducing risk of chronic disease. However, evidence is accumulating to suggest that exercise produces positive mental and emotional benefits as well.

Physical Fitness and Physical Activity Balance

People who believe they have the power to exercise some measure of control over their lives are healthier, more effective and more successful than those who lack faith in their ability to effect changes in their lives.

(Albert Bandura, 1997, p. 279)

Physical Fitness can include many dimensions that influence performance, but four types of fitness are generally considered fundamental: cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and joint flexibility. *Cardiorespiratory* fitness describes the body's ability to deliver oxygen and nutrients to all the tissues of the body enabling high intensity activity for a prolonged time without undue fatigue. *Muscular strength* and *muscular endurance* describe the ability of skeletal muscles to perform hard and/or prolonged work. *Joint flexibility* describes the range of motion in bone joints. High levels of these types of fitness enable people to carry out their daily occupational tasks and leisure pursuits more easily. Physical fitness also increases enjoyment of daily activities and promotes functional independence.

However, physical fitness is not included in the wholistic wellness model and here a critical distinction is made. Wellness is an integrated method of functioning; essentially, it describes the human in action. Physical fitness is a condition of the organism. Physical activity balance is a method of functioning that actively places fitness concerns in the context of the dimensions of wellness. The model of physical activity balance presented in Figure 30.2 reflects this important distinction.

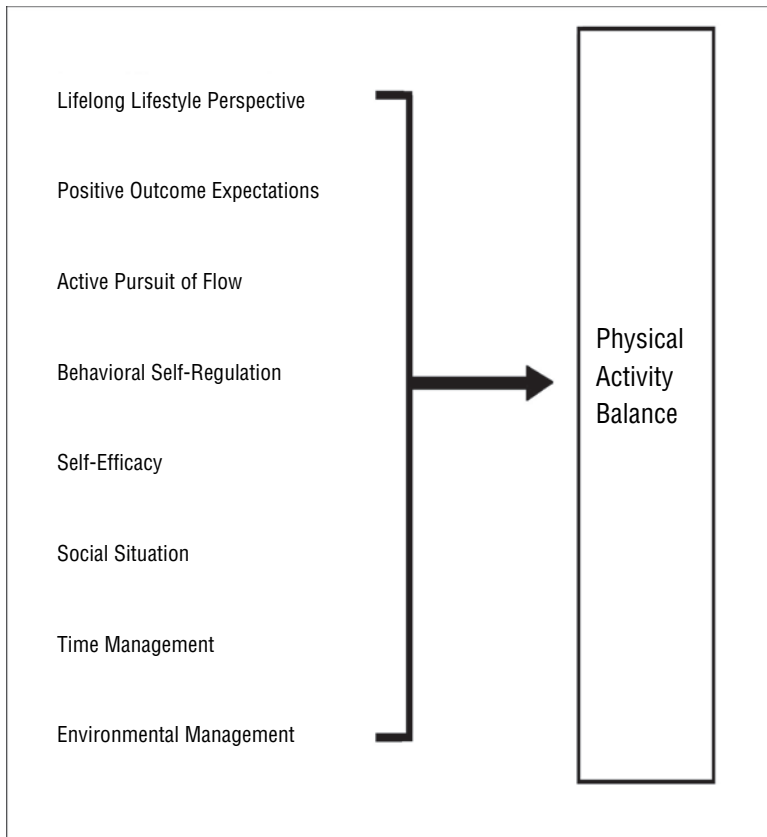


Figure 30.2 Construct validity of the planning to be active program.

The well-functioning individual constructs a lifestyle in which daily physical activity complements all of the dimensions of wholistic wellness. Each dimension is considered in the context of the individual's plan to maximize potential, but manifests in action. The premise of the wholistic model is that synergy is generated to the extent that the individual acts to enhance all of the dimensions. A focus on one dimension to the exclusion of other dimensions ultimately leads to reduced potential. For example, a rigorous physical activity program without a carefully integrated nutrition program will eventually diminish fitness and overall wellness (see the Pyle, Harder, Haddock, Poston, chapter 31, this volume). Conversely, careful integration across dimensions can enhance capabilities up to one's genetic potentials. Listed below is a brief description of each of the components of physical activity balance. Our research reveals that each of these dimensions is amenable to change in educational settings and contributes to adherence to physical activity.

Lifelong Lifestyle Perspective

You are what you do—but when it comes to health and wellness you are only those things you do consistently over significant portions of the lifespan. Accepting personal responsibility for wellness actions is a fundamental step. The individual fully appreciates the direct connection between current actions, quality of experience, and future wellness. How one behaves is what will build or compromise wellness. Most importantly, the persistent process of behavior is what makes a difference. A fundamental challenge for most Americans is assuming the lifelong approach to personal

habits and behaviors. Many children are physically active only to become sedentary as young adults. Continuous physical activity across the lifespan is the only way to reap long-term health benefits. The challenge is to carefully and creatively assess the types of physical activity that reap positive benefits at each stage of life.

Positive Outcome Expectations

As a function of experience, people develop a set of fundamental beliefs about the anticipated consequences of a behavior. For example, physical activity may be seen as: fun/not fun, good use of time/waste of time, enhancing appearance/not enhancing appearance, or pleasant/painful. The beliefs are referred to as outcome expectations. Outcome expectancy is the value that an individual places on each outcome expectation. Outcome expectation value is created by combining an outcome expectation with a matched outcome expectancy (Bandura, 1986). That is, if an individual believes a behavior is linked to a personally valued outcome, the behavior is more likely to be practiced regularly (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1998).

Outcome expectation values for adolescents are generally physical or social in nature. Positive physical expectation values include pleasant sensory experiences and improved appearance. Negative expectation values include physical discomfort and pain (Bandura, 1986). Social expectation values can take on many forms: the ability to spend time with friends, meet new friends, and receive positive feedback from others as a result of engaging in physical activity. Outcome expectation values have been demonstrated to be associated with physical activity among high school students (Petosa, 2005 ; Winters, 2003). A wellness-oriented person carefully tailors physical activity experiences to produce outcome expectations that are consistent with personal values and lead to ongoing motivation to continue physical activity in the future.

Active Pursuit of Flow

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has extensively studied flow as a defining dimension of optimal human experience. Flow is a state of mind when consciousness is harmoniously ordered and focused on the execution of an activity (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). Flow is a perception of total immersion in the performance of a behavior. During flow, a person's attention is so completely focused on the activity that awareness of self and the environment is reduced, producing a reduction of self-conscious cognitions. Perception of time is often altered. Often during flow experiences, a person feels a sense of elevated control or mastery. Taken together these characteristics create the autotelic experience—an enjoyable event of intrinsic worth. Flow is fostered by perceptions that an action provides adequate challenge and results in a sense of accomplishment. For further information on the relationship between flow and physical activity, see Shernoff and Csikszentmihalyi (chapter 11, this volume).

Behavioral Self-Regulation

Behavioral self-regulation can be conceptualized as a set of skills used by individuals to elicit or reinforce actions they consciously have chosen to adopt. The three core skills of self-regulation are: goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. Complementing these core skills are stimulus control procedures and reinforcement control methods. These skills have been described in detail by Petosa (1986 a). All of these skills are used by individuals to pursue the patterns of behavior they have chosen. Personal wellness actions require consistent practice over time. Often

these actions do not produce immediate reinforcing consequences. For example, fitness gains are produced by several weeks of consistent physical activity. Maintaining fitness gains require adherence to regular physical activity over many years. Self-regulation skills can be critical in enabling individuals to maintain physical activity patterns. Successful self-regulation leads to enhanced self-efficacy and perseverance in the face of environmental challenges. Self-regulation has been demonstrated to be associated with physical activity among high school students (Petosa, 2005a; Winters, 2003).

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a person's assessment of her or his ability to organize and execute courses of action needed to attain desired outcomes (Bandura, 1998). Self-efficacy's role in human behavior can be powerful. Bandura (1998) states that an individual's level of motivation, emotional arousal, and persistence are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true. It is important that students believe they can engage in sustained physical activity over a long time. They need to believe they can overcome everyday barriers that might inhibit the execution of daily physical activity. Fundamentally, students need to believe that they are in control of the forces that shape their physical activity behavior. Self-efficacy has consistently been shown to be associated with higher levels of physical activity among high school students (Hortz, 2006; Hortz & Petosa, 2008; Petosa, Hortz, Cardina, & Suminski, 2005; Winters, Petosa, & Charlton, 2003).

Social Situation

Social situation is a person's perception of his or her environment and the evaluation of his or her interaction with it. These perceptions can either enhance or inhibit efforts to engage in behaviors. Social situation is a critical factor in adolescent behavior because it provides a set of norms that convey standards by which behavior can be judged. Personal standards interact with social norms creating a self-regulation system that operates through internalized self-sanctions. Anticipatory self-sanctions thus keep conduct in line with personal internal standards. Interacting with friends, family, and acquaintances creates perceptions of normative behavior that individuals use to regulate personal behavior (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1998). To promote wellness, individuals can find, evaluate, and develop social networks that support their long-term self-directed physical activity. People in the social environment can provide emotional and instrumental support. The wellness approach involves actively engaging families and members of the community in providing social support for positive actions. Individuals recruit people they like to engage in the construction of supportive social environments.

Time Management

Wellness involves purposeful energy expenditure to support lifestyle practices across time. Young people often have many activities competing for their time: school, jobs, clubs and organizations, family responsibilities, homework and entertainment activities, to name just a few. Given the many competing demands for time, young people need effective time management skills to ensure that actions supportive of wellness are specifically planned into daily time schedules. Physical activity takes time. Without a time plan, physical activity may become optional, leading to inconsistent practice. Lack of time is consistently cited as the most common reason why individuals do not exercise regularly when they intend to do.

Environmental Management

The physical environment can have a profound effect on both behavior and the quality of experience (Burton, 2005). Environments can often be selected or altered to elicit and support targeted behavior. Exercising in a park or with music are common ways that young people can develop pleasant environments. Furthermore, environments may determine if a wellness activity is enjoyable or challenging. Ideally, a wellness-oriented person actively seeks out environments or creates environments that support their behavioral goals.

These dimensions are designed to promote a balanced, lifelong pursuit of physical activity among adolescents. Clearly, these dimensions would lead to the design of educational experiences that are quite different from contemporary physical education experience. Indeed, this model is a departure from the youth sport model practiced in most communities. Instruction in sport skills and competition would be reduced. Emphasis on lifelong fitness and behavioral self-regulation would be increased. The Planning to be Active program is designed to teach these principles.

Evaluation of the Planning to be Active Curriculum

Over a period of 6 years, a team of researchers developed, implemented, evaluated, and refined an approach to promoting regular exercise in high schools termed *Planning to be Active* (P2BA; Hartz, 2005, 2006, 2007; Stevens 2006; Winters, 2001). The curriculum is grounded in social cognitive theory. The 10-week program is designed to encourage exercise among both active and sedentary adolescents. The curriculum targets development of skills that are hypothesized to build personal agency for regular exercise. The curriculum can be delivered in any class but most often is found in physical education classes. It is an integrated curriculum, meaning that teachers deliver their regular lessons, but once a week insert a P2BA lesson. See Table 30.1 for week-by-week intervention details.

Each of the P2BA lessons involves a cycle of self-assessment, behavioral goal setting, self-monitoring, evaluation, and reflection. This cycle is repeated each week integrating new topics into planning. The program targets behavioral capability by fostering the self-regulation skills of: behavioral goal setting, lifestyle planning, self-monitoring, and self-reflection. Students learn multiple methods by which they can self-monitor their activity using self-report logs, fitness testing, and activity monitors. Each week, the student integrates a new approach to self-management into his or her lifestyle planning. Examples of these methods include: planning for social support, creating environments, and time management. Over the course of the instruction unit, the student

Table 30.1 Week-by-week detail of the planning to be active program content

Lesson	Concepts / Content	Homework
1. Exercise and Fitness Outcome Expectations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why fitness is important to health 2. Define fitness, medium intensity, and vigorous intensity exercise 3. Dimensions of fitness 4. Type of exercise to improve specified fitness components 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students keep an exercise log
2. Exercise and Health Outcome Expectations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Link between health, exercise and fitness 2. Recommended amount of medium and vigorous exercise activity 3. Review students weekly exercise behavior, Identify one fitness component to target 4. Identify examples of medium and vigorous exercise activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students interview 3 adults about their exercise behaviors and health problems • Students write a paper summarizing the interviews

Lesson	Concepts / Content	Homework
3. Exercise Intensity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate the different types of exercise intensities 2. Learn how to take a pulse, the ranges for their pulse rate for medium and vigorous intensity exercise 3. Experiment with which intensity they prefer to exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students keep a daily exercise log of activities, minutes, and comfort zone they exercise in
4. Goal Setting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn the importance of setting behavioral goals in a personal exercise plan 2. Learn to evaluate pre-formulated exercise goals and correct them so that they are specific 3. Write clear and objective weekly exercise goal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have a parent sign their goal • Students log daily exercise, minutes, and reasons they don't exercise if they don't
5. Keeping Track of your Exercise, Use of Pedometers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore how keeping records of their exercise 2. Learn how a pedometer can be used to keep track of their exercise 3. Learn to write clear and objective weekly exercise goals using pedometer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have a parent sign their goal • Students log daily exercise, steps taken, minutes, and where they exercised
6. Exercise Barriers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify barriers to exercise 2. Develop strategies to overcome barriers to exercise 3. Plan to overcome an exercise barrier that they faced last week 4. Practice writing clear and objective personal exercise goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have parents sign their goal • Students log daily exercise • Students write paper in how the exercise strategies worked
7. Exercise Motivators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore various types of exercise motivators 2. Plan and negotiate a reward for meeting their exercise goals 3. Practice writing clear and objective personal exercise goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students set a personal weekly exercise goal • Students plan how they will be rewarded for meeting their goal
8. Friends and Family Can Help You Exercise, and Where to Exercise	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn the ways that friends and family can provide support for their exercise goals 2. Plan to enlist family members and/or friends to provide support for their exercise goals in the upcoming week 3. Learn how to plan to do certain activities according to the location of the activity 4. Writing clear and objective personal weekly exercise goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students recruit 3 people to help them with their exercise program • Students keep a daily exercise log
9. Exercise Environments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the different environments to exercise in 2. Explore the classes environments exercised in last week 3. Share ideas on new possible environments to exercise in 4. Develop strategies to overcome environmental barriers to exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students log daily exercise • Write paper on how they exercised in three different environments and the experience in each
10. Long-Term Lifestyle Planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review their program exercise goals 2. Develop a personal long-term exercise goal 3. Learn how they can vary their exercise routine to avoid discontinuing their exercise program due to boredom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students write a two-page paper reviewing the effectiveness of the program in increasing their knowledge of their own exercise preferences and activity level

has significant experience in identifying preferences: exercise type, exercise intensity, and use of self-regulation strategies.

Planning to be Active: Content and Educational Process

The P2BA intervention focused on producing changes in leisure-time exercise behavior through a cycle of self-assessment. This cycle was accomplished using an intervention workbook to engage students in specific classroom activities designed to teach behavioral skills associated with developing personal agency for regular exercise. Students were asked to use the behavioral skills learned in class to engage in a regular exercise program outside of school. They were advised to direct their personal, weekly exercise program towards meeting the recommended 5 days of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A major component of the curriculum included weekly homework assignments, which were designed for students to evaluate the use of the behavioral skills learned in class in the development and execution of their personal, leisure-time exercise program. All classroom and homework curricular activities were presented within the student workbook in order to facilitate implementation by trained teachers. All curricular activities were specifically designed to produce changes in self-efficacy, self-regulation, outcome expectancy-values, and social situation for physical activity.

The intervention was designed to develop the students' self-efficacy through activities, such as identifying common barriers to physical activity, working with peers to develop strategies to overcome barriers, planning ways to vary students' modes of exercise based on the resources, and considering multiple ways they could be both moderately and vigorously physically active given their resources.

The students engaged in activities that developed their self-regulation for physical activity through weekly goal setting, long-term goal setting, goal evaluations, self-evaluation of progress in goal attainment, self-monitoring with pedometers, daily physical activity logs, and the program Web site.

Through exposure to lessons, each student attempted various modes of activity at varying intensities to explore their preferences for activities. They were also asked to: evaluate how their bodies felt after engaging in moderate versus vigorous physical activities; identify the physical, mental, and social benefits of regular physical activity; plan ways to reward themselves for meeting physical activity goals; identify the outcomes they hoped to achieve through regular physical activity; and plan specific ways to be physically active to achieve desired outcomes.

Over the course of the 10 weeks, the students' social situations were targeted through activities such as identifying members of the social network who could provide support for physical activity goals, identifying specific ways members of the social network could provide support for physical activity goals, planning for ways to recruit friends and family to specifically support physical activity goals, exercising with members of the social network, and interviewing and evaluating key members of their social network about their physical activity behavior.

Evaluation of the Planning to be Active Curriculum

Construct validity of the intervention methods was used to examine P2BA's impact on targeted constructs. A fundamental question in intervention research is establishing how a program produces change in targeted behavior (Flay, 1985). It is generally assumed that behavioral theories can increase the effectiveness of health behavior change programs. A review of prevention research revealed that little is known about the construct validity of effective programs (McCaul & Glasgow, 1985). Construct validity of the intervention is a method of theory-testing programs, not the

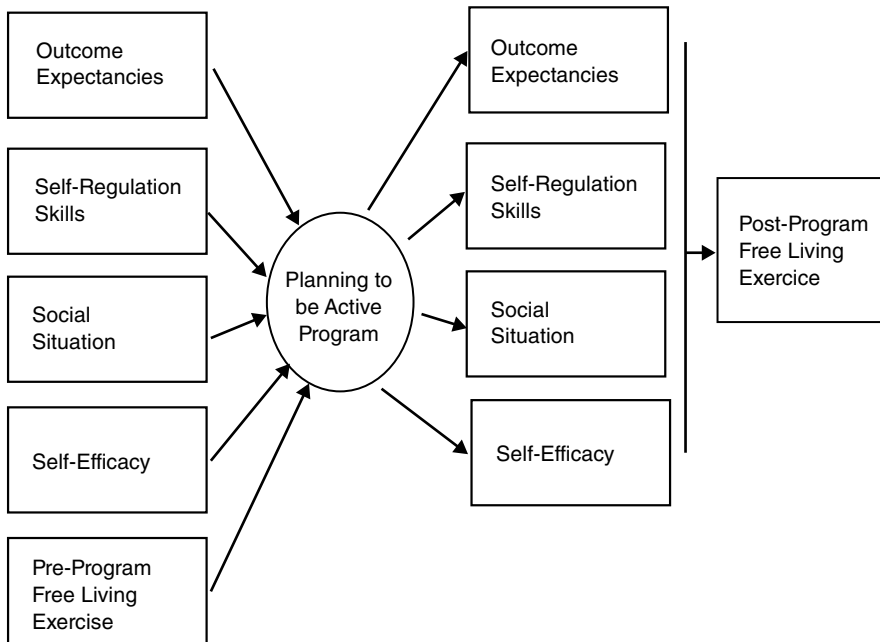


Figure 30.3 Wellness approach to physical activity balance.

construct validity of instruments (Cook & Campbell, 1979). Establishing construct validity for instruments employs factor analysis to verify that items produce empirical evidence of theoretical constructs. In contrast, construct validity of the treatment involves the use of impact evaluation methods to link intervention components with targeted theoretical constructs. Generally, this involves pretest and posttest assessments of constructs during intervention implementation. This approach enables researchers to carefully test the theoretical assumptions related to the ability of the intervention to produce changes in constructs and the relative contribution of constructs to supporting behavior change. The model that guided the design of construct validity for the P2BA intervention is presented in Figure 30.3.

Each of the social cognitive theory constructs, as well as free-living exercise, was measured prior to intervention and 2 to 5 weeks after the intervention. Previously published instruments with established validity and reliability were used to measure each of these variables. Over the course of three studies, we have documented positive learning experiences that have yielded statistically significant changes in the targeted self-regulation, outcome expectation values, social situation, and outcome expectation values (Hortz, 2005; Stevens, 2006; Winters, 2001). Students in the treatment groups increased their self-regulation for physical activity, achieving a 0.6–0.9 *SD* increase in self-regulation ability, representing a moderate to large effect at posttest relative to comparison groups. Students in the treatment groups increased their social situation for physical activity, achieving a 0.4–0.8 *SD* increase in social situation scores, representing a moderate to large effect at posttest relative to comparison groups. Students in the treatment groups increased their self-efficacy for physical activity to a lesser degree, achieving a 0.2–0.5 *SD* increase in self-efficacy, representing a small to moderate effect at posttest relative to comparison groups. Students in the treatment groups also increased their outcome expectation values for physical activity to a lesser degree, achieving a 0.2–0.6 *SD* increase in outcome expectations, representing a small to moderate effect at posttest relative to comparison groups.

The program demonstrated positive effects on leisure time physical activity behavior could be accomplished through using the program. Students in the treatment groups increased their frequency of moderate leisure-time physical activity from 1.06 to 2.05 days per week (Hartz 2005; Stevens, 2006; Winters, 2001). Smaller, but meaningful, changes in vigorous activity also occurred (Hartz 2005; Stevens, 2006). These results support the effectiveness of P2BA in producing positive changes in social cognitive theory variables. Furthermore, these changes appear to contribute to increases in exercise rates among the high school students.

Summary

This chapter has presented a case for wholistic wellness as a viable model for conceptualizing positive health. The model complements current models of positive psychology by taking into account the multidimensional nature of well-being that should be considered in the formulation of a health enhancing lifestyle. Wellness is not the absence of illness. Rather it is conceptualized as an integrated method of functioning that is directed toward maximizing the potential of which the individual is capable. A challenge is for each young person to develop the skills necessary to be effective in their environment. We believe that a wellness approach to physical activity promotion can help direct school curriculum towards this wellness skills perspective.

Planning to be Active is a theory-based approach to promoting regular exercise among adolescents. The lessons of this program have been effective in increasing participants' scores on: self-regulation, social situation, outcome expectancy values, and self-efficacy, all constructs that fall within the positive psychology framework. The intervention has been successfully implemented in physical education, but has also been implemented in a variety of other courses, including health education and life skills. This program has produced increases in exercise during students' leisure time outside of school, which is an important outcome at a time when physical activity generally declines among high school students.

A great number of adolescents are not participating in the levels of physical activity recommended by the Center for Disease Control. Most importantly, adolescence is marked by a steep decline in activity rates. National Surveys reveal that 31% of students are completely sedentary (Grunbaum et al., 2004). The National Children and Youth Fitness Study found that minutes of physical activity declined sharply between grades 9 and 12 (Ross, Dotson, & Gilbert, 1985). In a study that assessed exercise intensity, 1,200 students in grades 5–11 were surveyed and found that only 15% participated in aerobic activity. This study also showed an increase in sedentary lifestyle from 61% to 81% between grades 5 and 11. Reviews (Grunbaum et al., 2004; Sallis, 2000) reveal a decline in physical activity that progresses with age but begins in early- to mid-adolescence. This decline in activity is occurring while the enrollment of high school students in daily physical education classes has decreased from 41.6% to 28.4% from Grade 9 to Grade 12. Viewed in aggregate, these findings indicate that rates of physical activity among youth are modest and decrease sharply during the high school years. Clearly, trends for physical activity and physical education in the schools are heading in the wrong direction. Yet, schools are a potentially powerful setting for the promotion of physical activity and wellness among youth. Evidence-based programs are needed. P2BA is an example of a wellness-based intervention that has demonstrated impact in reversing declines in physical activity.

Joseph Campbell (1988, p. 220), the renowned scholar of world religions and the power of myth, stated, "My own peak experiences all came in athletics (running). It was the experience of really being at my full and really knowing it." Campbell was an expert on the many varieties of transcendent human experience. In spite of the depth of his knowledge, he claimed that his peak experiences were all associated with running. His quote illustrates an important, potential link

between physical action (running) and peak experiences. Physical activity can be an effective route towards positive feeling states and personal growth. Transcendent experiences during physical activity serve as a powerful motivator for adherence and can serve as a door to personal growth. For young people, vigorous physical activity could be one method of cultivating peak experiences. Regular physical activity provides an arena for personal expression, testing of one's capabilities and direct experience of mind–body relationships.

Physical activity is an important element of wholistic wellness. For adolescents, physical activity can be a vehicle for personal growth. Adolescence is a developmental period marked by limited opportunities for personal growth. Most schools offer opportunities for intellectual, social, and personal growth via academic studies, athletics, and a few extra curricular options. Many of these opportunities are competitive or limited to more gifted students. As a result, many adolescents do not have access to these options. Physical activity as conceptualized in the P2BA program provides opportunities for all adolescents to develop a personal plan for success. The approach was designed to promote growth in self-regulation skills for all students regardless of athletic ability. The consistent use of self-regulation skills to exercise regularly will simultaneously enhance fitness levels and confidence in personal agency. Linking personal lifestyle behaviors to health outcomes is a critical wellness concept. Personal agency is a core capability for positive human wellness.

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31

Nutrition

The Foundation of Health, Happiness, and Academic Success

SARA A. PYLE, MELISSA L. HYDER, C. KEITH HADDOCK,
AND W. S. CARLOS POSTON

Nutrition and consumption of a balanced diet is a key concern for children and schools. Adequate and balanced nutrition obviously is the foundation of physical health but also plays a crucial role in psychosocial, cognitive, and academic development. Everyone is encouraged to eat a balanced diet, which consists of eating based on the food guide pyramid in relation to serving size and number. Malnourishment is, in general, a condition that results from an unbalanced intake of micronutrients (i.e., vitamins and minerals the body needs to function). Children who are malnourished can fall into one of two categories: (a) those who are undernourished because they do not receive enough micronutrients through their food and beverage intake and (b) those who are overnourished; that is those who consume more than they should but not of the proper micronutrients. Thus, while children can consume large amounts of food, they may be deficient in the specific micronutrients that are needed for proper development.

Both undernutrition and overnutrition can have a severe and chronic negative impact on development. Although undernutrition is most prevalent in developing countries (deOnis & Blössner, 2003), there are an estimated 18 million children in the United States who live in poverty, which results in uncertain availability of nutritious food options, food insufficiency, hunger and underweight (Hamilton et al., 1997; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1999). Conversely, overnutrition commonly leads to children being overweight. Overweight and obesity among children has become a problem of epidemic proportions and has implications for children's physical, psychosocial, and academic health. While the problem of overnutrition has historically been a problem in developed countries, developing nations are increasingly seeing the impact of poor nutrition choices as their diets change to a more Western orientation (Popkin, 2001).

The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) provides direction for proper nutrition for children and adolescents. Given their unprecedented access to children and the teaching mission of schools, schools are the ideal place for nutrition education and interventions that can lead to balanced diets and healthy lifestyles. By emphasizing the importance of these interventions and focusing efforts on implementing measures to address both undernutrition and overnutrition (particularly obesity), mental health professionals have the potential for unprecedented positive

impact on several levels of development. It is important to first develop an understanding of the background of both undernutrition and obesity as well as the consequences of each. Once the groundwork of the importance of the issues and their relevance to school settings is developed, an understanding of current interventions for each will be explored.

Undernutrition

Defining Undernutrition or Food Insufficiency

The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) provides national prevalence rates for children experiencing food insufficiency (Alaimo, Olson, & Frongillo, 2001b). For the purpose of the NHANES III survey (and future investigations using these data), “food insufficient” in children was defined as “...an inadequate amount of food intake due to a lack of money or resources” (p. 420). The child was classified as food insufficient if the family’s response was that the family either sometimes or often did not get enough food to eat (Alaimo, Breifel, Frongillo, & Olson, 1998). Based upon this definition, NHANES III determined that 4.1% of the U.S. population was food insufficient between 1988 and 1994; that is, more than 14 million children under the age of 18 live in food insecure homes (Alaimo, Olson, & Frongillo, 2001a).

Physical Health, Psychosocial, and Academic Consequences of Food Insufficiency and Hunger

Poor dietary intake, which may stem from food insufficiency, can lead to iron deficiency or anemia. This can lead to impaired exercise capacity and problems with small bowel function (Halterman, Kaczorowski, Aligne, Auigner, & Szilagyi, 2001). Other physical health consequences can include low birth weight and higher levels of chronic illness (Weinreb et al., 2002). Other studies have found that food insufficient children and adolescents were more likely to have seen a psychologist or psychiatrist for emotional, mental, or behavioral problems, were significantly more likely to have trouble getting along with others, and were more likely to be suspended from school (Alaimo et al. 2001a). In a study of homeless and low-income housed mothers, Weinreb and colleagues (2002) found that among preschool-aged children, 51% experienced moderate hunger while 8% experienced severe hunger. There also were significant relationships between experiencing severe hunger and homelessness, experiences of traumatic events and internalizing behavior problems. Of the participating children in the study, those who participated in a breakfast program had significantly better student and teacher ratings of psychosocial problems (Murphy, Pagano, Nachmani, Sterling, & Kleinman, 1998). A separate study (Murphy, Wehler, et al., 1998) found that children who were classified as hungry or at risk for being hungry were significantly more likely to have higher levels of hyperactivity than children who were classified as not hungry.

The effects of undernutrition during childhood may affect health and cognitive performance through adulthood. For example, school-aged children who were classified as being undernourished had significantly lower arithmetic scores and they are significantly more likely to have repeated a grade than their peers who were not undernourished (Alaimo et al., 2001a). Halterman and colleagues (2001) also found that iron deficiency and anemia were significantly associated with lower standardized math scores among school-aged children and adolescents. Efforts to address nutrition have been found to be significantly related to improved outcomes. A study by Murphy, Pagano, and colleagues (1998) found that students who participated in a universally free breakfast program had significantly greater increases in math scores and significant decreases in the number of school absences and tardiness.

Overnutrition Leading to Overweight

Defining Obesity and Overweight

Body Mass Index (BMI), an approximation of body fat that adjusts weight for height, is the most commonly utilized measure of obesity and is used universally to define obesity status in adulthood (Garrow & Webster, 1985). Classification standards are based on gender specific BMI-for-age charts developed based on national statistics collected between 1963 and 1964 (Kuczmarski et al., 2002; Ogden, Flegal, Carroll, & Johnson, 2002). “At risk for overweight” is classified by a BMI between the 85th and 95th percentile of a child’s gender and age group, whereas “overweight” is classified by a BMI being at or above the 95th percentile. These classification differences are used because with children, the goal with growing children and adolescents often is to maintain their current weight with the intent of reaching a healthier height/weight ratio as the child matures (Amador, Ramos, Morono, & Hermelo, 1990). On the other hand, because adults do not typically grow in height, the focus of intervention is to reduce their weight as a means of decreasing their BMI to the normal range. Adult BMI cut offs as established by The World Health Organization (WHO, 1998) are underweight (below 18.5), healthy weight (range 18.5–24.9), overweight (range 25.0–29.9), and obese (30.0 and above).

The Obesity Epidemic

An examination of the trends reported by NHANES paints a dismal picture of the increasing prevalence of obesity (Flegal, Carroll, Ogden, & Johnson, 2002). Rates have more than doubled since the first report in the early 1960s. Currently, an estimated 65.7% of adults in the United States are overweight or obese, 30.6% of adults are obese and 5.1% are extremely obese (Hedley et al., 2004). Foreyt et al. (1995) estimated that if current trends in the rates of obesity persist unchanged, 100% of adults in the United States would be obese by 2230. However, taking into account more recent data from the NHANES study that indicates an increase of 1.6% per year for obesity and a 1% increase per year for overweight, it is possible that this could happen sooner. The obesity epidemic is not unique to United States. The WHO estimates at least 20 million children under the age of 5 are overweight (WHO, 2006). This is most notable given that being overweight in childhood has consistently been related to risk for disease and obesity in adulthood (Freedman, Dietz, Srinivasan, & Berenson, 1999; Garn & LaVelle, 1985; Guo, Roche, Chumlea, Gardner, & Siervogel, 1994; Guo, & Chumlea, 1999; Must, Jacques, Dallal, Bajema, & Dietz, 1992; Whitaker, Wright, Pepe, Seidel, & Dietz, 1997).

Mirroring adult trends, the rates of overweight among children and adolescents have also been rising at an astounding rate over the past three decades and also have reached epidemic proportions (Flegal, 1999; Rippe, 1998). Results of the first NHANES study in the early 1960s indicated that 4% of 6- to 11-year-olds and 5% of 12- to 19-year-olds were overweight (Centers for Disease Control, 2006). These rates remained relatively stable until the NHANES-III, completed between 1988 and 1994, found that 11% of individuals in both age groups could be classified as overweight. As of 2002, a troubling 31.5% of youth were at risk for overweight and 16.5% could be classified as overweight (Hedley et al., 2004).

Physical Health Consequences of Overweight and Obesity

Poor diet and inadequate physical activity, or overnutrition, was identified as the second leading cause of death in 2000 within the United States (Mokdad, Marks, Stroup, & Gerberding, 2004). A large number of disease conditions claim obesity as a risk factor including stroke, osteoarthritis,

type II diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and some types of cancer (WHO, 1998). Wolf and Colditz (1998) reported an estimated overall annual price tag of obesity in the United States to be over \$90 billion, of which approximately \$51 billion was in direct health care costs.

Children and adolescents face a vast range of health concerns related to being overweight. For instance, when compared to normal weight peers, overweight children are three times more likely to develop diabetes and twice as likely to develop hypertension and heart disease (Mossberg, 1989). Overweight children also are at increased risk for developing dyslipidemia (increased fats in blood) and lower levels of high density lipoproteins and higher levels of low-density lipoprotein (good and bad cholesterol, respectively; Leung & Robson, 1990). The Bogolusa Heart Study, a longitudinal cohort study, found that adolescents who were obese were at increased risk for developing Type 2 diabetes, which involves increased systolic and diastolic blood pressure, and increased levels of lipoprotein cholesterol, insulin, and glucose (Srinivasan, Bao, Wattigney, & Berenson, 1996). Further, among those who were classified as obese in adolescence, 2.4% developed Type 2 diabetes by the age of 30 compared to none in the non-obese population. The negative health effects of overweight in adolescence are pervasive and enduring. For example, a study by Strauss (1999) found that being overweight in adolescence predicts early mortality even more consistently than adult-onset obesity.

Psychosocial Health Consequences of Being Overweight

The complications related to being overweight in youth are not limited to physical health status. Being overweight in adolescence also has been associated with fewer years of education, higher poverty, lower marriage rates, and lower family income (Dietz, 1997; Maffei & Tato, 2001). Contrary to public perceptions that being overweight and having low self-esteem are high correlates, the findings in this area are inconsistent. Some studies support this belief (e.g., French, Story, & Perry, 1995; Manus & Killeen, 1995; Strauss, 2000), whereas others have found no significant relationship (Gortmaker, 1993; Renman, Engstrom, Silfverdal, & Aman, 1999). To explain these equivocal findings, Israel and Ivanova (2002) posited that levels of self-esteem become incrementally lower as the level of severity of overweight increases. This hypothesis was found to be true among clinical populations where self-esteem has been significantly related to overweight status (Rumpel & Harris, 1994). The most consistently replicated psychosocial outcomes for overweight relate to negative body image meaning that children who are overweight tend to report higher rates of body image issues (Buddeburg-Fisher, Klaghofer & Reed, 1999; French et al., 1995; Israel & Ivanova, 2002; Manus & Killeen, 1995; Pesa, Syre, & Jones, 2000).

Academic Health Consequences of Overweight

Academic performance can also be impacted by being overweight in childhood and adolescence. In general, obese adolescents report believing that they are worse students than their normal weight peers (Falkner et al., 2001). In addition, clinically significant problems with memory functioning and learning abilities have been found among overweight children (Rhodes et al., 1995). These deficits may be the result of sleep apnea, which has been reported at rates as high as 94% among samples of overweight children (Brenner, Kelly, Wenger, Brich, & Morrow, 2001; Chinn & Rona, 2001; Von Kries, Hermann, Grunert, & Von Mutius, 2001; Von Mutius, Schwartz, Neas, Dockery, & Weiss, 2001).

Research by Datar, Sturm, and Magnabosco (2004) suggests that being overweight, while not necessarily directly associated to poor academic performance, can be used as a secondary marker for poor academic performance. In their study with kindergarten and first-grade students, the

authors found that overweight children scored significantly lower on math and reading tests than their normal weight peers, but that the findings were no longer significant when behavioral factors and socioeconomic status were included in the models. Gortmaker (1993) found that even controlling for baseline aptitude and socioeconomic status, women who had been overweight in adolescence completed less school, were less likely to be married, and made less money than their peers. The authors posited that their findings were related to discrimination against overweight individuals that follows them past their adolescent years into adulthood. Findings such as these highlight the importance of multifactorial interventions that focus on improving quality of life and health overall and not just focusing on weight status.

FDA Nutrition Recommendations

Key to nutrition interventions in schools is an understanding of what a healthy diet is. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has published nutrition guidelines for all Americans and, in particular, children (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2005). The FDA suggests that everyone consume a variety of nutrient dense foods from the basic food groups, with a particular focus on increasing consumption of dark green and orange vegetables, legumes, whole grains, fruits, and low fat milk or milk products. Decreases should be made in the intake of refined sugars, salt, cholesterol, and saturated and trans fats. They recommend that a minimum of half the grains consumed by children be whole grains. In addition, children between 2 and 8 years old should consume 2 cups of low fat or fat free milk or milk equivalent products every day. For children over age 9, 3 cups of milk products should be consumed for proper nutrition. As for fat intake, for children between 2 and 3 years old, 30%–35% of calories consumed should be from fat intake. For children between 4 and 18 years old, the target is 25%–35% of calories from fat. According to their recommendations, the majority of this fat should preferably come from polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids that are present in fish, nuts, and vegetable oils. In particular, under consumption of calcium, potassium, fiber, magnesium, and vitamin E are of concern for children and adolescents as are over consumption of saturated and trans fats, sugar, salt, and cholesterol.

Because the recommended daily caloric intake is related to activity level, the FDA has made age and gender specific recommendations based on the amount of energy expended (i.e., sedentary, moderately active, active). By definition, a sedentary activity level is one that involves only light physical activity that is required in day to day life. To be considered as moderately active, an individual needs to engage in the light physical activity of day-to-day life as well as walking between 1.5 and 3 miles each day at a rate of 3–4 miles per hour. For the active category, individuals need to walk 3 or more miles per day or the equivalent as well as engaging in the light physical activity of day-to-day life. For physical activity, it is recommended that children engage in a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity every, or almost every, day of the week. Table 31.1 lists suggested caloric intake based on gender, age, and activity level.

Caloric intake recommendations may be decreased for children who are considered at risk for overweight or are overweight. For children who are overweight, the FDA recommends that parents consult with a health care provider to ensure that weight loss (or weight maintenance) remain sensitive to appropriate growth and development.

Nutrition Interventions

Schools are the ideal environment for a focus on nutrition. Given the psychological, psychosocial and academic impact related to poor nutrition habits, schools are unique in that they have consistent

Table 31.1 Daily caloric expenditure for youths ages 2–18, by gender and activity level

Age Range (years)	Girls			Boys		
	Sedentary	Moderately Active	Active	Sedentary	Moderately Active	Active
2–3	1,000	1,000–1,400	1,000–1,400	1,000	1,000–1,400	1,000–1,400
4–8	1,200	1,400–1,600	1,400–1,800	1,200	1,400–1,600	1,600–2,000
9–13	1,600	1,600–2,000	1,800–2,200	1,800	1,800–2,200	2,000–2,600
14–18	1,800	2,000	2,400	2,200	2,400–2,800	2,800–3,200

access to the children most in need. School-based interventions exist for both food insufficiency/hunger and overnutrition/overweight. Intervention efforts aimed at improving nutrition habits of all children are easily tailored to the school setting and fit well with the teaching mission of schools. Interventions range from providing food to children to teaching children about nutrition and physical activity.

Interventions for Food Insufficiency and Hunger

According to the recommendations of the United Nations Subcommittee on Nutrition (Allen & Gillespie, 2001), every effort should be made to make sure children eat a balanced diet of leafy green vegetables, lentils, fruits, milk and dairy products, fish, eggs, poultry, and more. However, as the subcommittee's findings indicate, many children do not receive the recommended dietary allowance (RDA) based on diet alone. Although proper nutrition through diet is the optimal, it is possible that some children will need nutritional supplements to reach RDAs. By reaching the recommended dietary allowance, physical growth, mental development, and the prevention of infection and disease will be optimized.

In a study completed in Philadelphia and Baltimore, a universally free breakfast program was offered in three public, inner-city schools (Murphy, Pagano, et al., 1998). At the beginning of the intervention only 15% of the students from the three schools participated. However, by the end of the intervention, 4 months later, 27% of students were participating. Those who participated in the meal program were found to improve their grades and showed decreases in absences and tardiness. This suggests that if a free program is offered, students will participate and it can improve student outcomes. Although there are obvious financial challenges to these types of interventions, knowing that assuaging hunger in school-aged children promotes good health, academic achievement, and reduced levels of absenteeism should serve as an impetus for communities to finding ways to implement such interventions.

Interventions for Overnutrition and Overweight

There are several ways that schools can positively impact the health of their students through nutrition interventions. In recent years, interventions targeted toward reversing the trends of childhood overweight are focused on not only decreasing the prevalence of overweight but also increasing prevention efforts to avoid the influx of children becoming overweight (Caballero et al., 2003; Davis et al., 1999; Donnelly et al., 1996). Comprehensive programs typically include a focus on nutrition education, behavioral techniques to alter nutrition intake, and increasing physical activity (Pyle et al., 2006). Both nutrition education and behavioral techniques for improving nutrition are both discussed here and the focus on physical activity will be discussed in other chapters of this book (see Petosa and Hertz, chapter 30, this volume).

As detailed earlier in this chapter, national guidelines are available for children's nutrition intake. In this regard, the most commonly used program to explain nutrition intake to children is the Traffic Light Diet developed by Epstein, Wing, Koeske, and Valoski (1984). This program categorizes foods into categories as either being green, yellow, or red. Green foods are the healthiest such as vegetables and fruits, low fat milk, and white fish. This category contains foods that can be consumed most frequently. Yellow foods include such things as lean meats, beans, nuts, seeds, rice, high-fiber breads, and cereals. Caution is encouraged when choosing foods from this food group because of the higher fat and calorie content, even though it is nutrient dense. The final group is the Red foods, which include the least healthy foods such as ice cream, cookies, and cakes that are high in calories and low in other nutritional values. Children are encouraged to focus on increasing their intake of Green foods and limiting their intake of Red foods. The United States Department of Agriculture (2005) also publishes a program referred to as the My Pyramid for Kids program that teaches children what is considered proper nutrition and how to achieve a balanced diet.

A range of behavioral techniques is used to alter nutritional intake. The intent of behavioral approaches is to focus on the environment, physical settings, social settings, thoughts, and their associated behaviors (Ledford, 2003). These techniques require that the student pay particular attention to his patterns and habits around eating and work to alter them (Sheslow & Hassink, 1997). Behavioral techniques specific to nutrition management include self-monitoring, stimulus control, eating management, and operant conditioning (Hyder, O'Byrne, Poston, & Foreyt, 2002; Sheslow & Hassink, 1997). *Self-monitoring* is focused on systematically observing one's own behavior. With regard to nutrition, this approach most commonly includes keeping a food diary and having the individual track what is eaten, how much, and when. Some programs also suggest that the participant record the context in which they are eating (e.g., mood). *Stimulus control* is a technique that involves changing the environment to control eating habits. For example, if a student realizes that they regularly eat cookies and chips after school, they might choose to remove the chips and cookies from the home. Or, in instances where having food out and readily available (e.g., candy in a candy dish) might increase the likelihood of consumption of empty calories, removing the food from view would decrease the likelihood of consumption. *Eating management* is a tool where the individual is instructed to change behaviors during the time they are eating to decrease intake. A common technique is to require that all meals and snacks be eaten at the table, which decreases the likelihood of consuming a large amount of calories while watching television or working on the computer. Another method is to have the individual slow down their pace of eating by taking a drink of water between bites (to give the body a chance to feel full before overeating), and/or portion control to avoid overeating. *Operant conditioning* techniques such as positive reinforcement where the individual is rewarded for positive changes to eating habits also are a common way of improving eating habit.

Although schools can serve as the primary intervention site for these programs, it is important to understand that the impact that interventions can have pertain not only to time spent in school, but outside of the school setting as well. Barlow and Dietz (1998) highlight a range of interventions that can focus on the parents' role in improving health and moving toward proper nutrition. For instance, parents can be educated on what good nutrition is and taught skills about how to monitor eating habits and employ the behavioral techniques described earlier. Interventions can include suggestions about limiting food choices for unhealthy behavior, increasing activity time, and decreasing sedentary behaviors such as watching television.

Both primary and secondary prevention efforts for childhood obesity have been implemented in school settings (American Dietetic Association [ADA], 2006). Primary prevention efforts are largely geared toward improving overall nutrition and increasing physical activity for the entire student population, whereas secondary prevention efforts are focused more on inducing change

in those at highest risk. The ADA's position is that there is evidence to support multicomponent interventions (e.g., behavioral change, nutrition education, school food environment, physical activity education) for obesity prevention in schools. According to the policy statement of the ADA, most secondary prevention efforts fail to address what stigmatization these secondary efforts have when the "fat kids" are singled out in the school setting. In addition, advocating for attention to be paid to nutrition in the schools and working to implement intervention and prevention efforts, mental health professionals can highlight the importance of attending to stigmatization of children in the course of the programs.

Conclusion

Proper and adequate nutrition has an important role in health and development for children through the impact it has on positive psychological, social, and academic development. As such, schools are logical settings for helping to encourage proper nutrition and they have the opportunity to make a positive impact on the children they serve. Focus should be on both serving the needs of malnourished children, whether they are struggling with undernourishment or overnourishment and overweight. Given the focus of school-based mental health professionals and the physical, mental, psychosocial, and academic implications of poor nutrition, mental health professionals are in the ideal position to take a leadership role in addressing these needs in school children. By making nutrition a central focus of schools' missions and part of the role of mental health professionals, there is the potential for lasting influence on the well-being of the students.

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A Positive Psychology Approach to Developing Talent and Preventing Talent Loss in the Arts and Sciences

RENA F. SUBOTNIK AND STEVEN KNOTEK

Martin Seligman conceived of positive psychology after a now well-known interaction with his unusually self-aware, five-year-old daughter as they were working in the family garden. What Seligman intuited that day was that educators and caregivers can respond in ways that dampen or enhance the expression of children's talent. Our goal in this chapter is to build on Seligman's insight by integrating the principles of positive psychology and the talent development of gifted children. First, we describe the field of talent development including current models that focus on psychosocial variables, and then discuss how the addition of a positive psychology perspective may enhance the ability of gifted children to thrive and progress. We then illustrate how psychologists can use positive psychology to improve the climate in which talent development is implemented. Finally, we suggest directions for future research at the nexus of talent development and positive psychology.

Gifted Children and Talent Development

Although the terms *gifted education* and *talent development* are often used interchangeably, they are derived from different philosophical bases with implications for psychologists and educators. *Gifted education* concerns itself with providing services to students identified by standardized tests as being exceptionally able problem solvers in general intellectual and academic domains. Because such tests are considered stable measurements, a student labeled as gifted in school programs usually retains this label throughout his or her schooling. In contrast, *talent development* focuses on developing domain specific abilities. In the talent development context, an individual retains services only as he or she undertakes and commits to different challenges and opportunities provided by educators, families, mentors, coaches, or psychologists.

Good and Dweck (2005) provide strong evidence for conceptualizing intelligence in ways that parallel our descriptions of gifted education and talent development. According to Good and Dweck (2005), one view of intelligence is as a fixed entity, and individuals who hold entity views of intelligence avoid situations in which their intelligence will be challenged. Conversely, those who allow for the possibility of developing their talent hold that intelligence is enhanced incrementally

by effort and exposure to new challenges. Notably, Good and Dweck (2005) have shown that entity views of intelligence can be transformed into incremental views through intervention.

Subotnik and Jarvin (2005) documented the process of talent development in classical music at three renowned U.S. conservatories. The results of their analyses point to transformations of abilities into competencies, expertise, and finally artistry or scholarly productivity by way of psychological and environmental supports. According to Subotnik and Jarvin (2005), the particular psychosocial and environmental variables involved in the process of talent development change over time. For example, early in the talent development process, the most effective teachers identify students' strengths and weaknesses and a suitable set of strategies to address both. Students are guided in the next stage into pursuing solo, orchestral, or chamber careers, or even teaching or business (e.g., artistic director, coach, agent). Later in the talent development process, expert coaches working with elite musicians devote a large proportion of instructional time providing insider knowledge about achieving professional success. We call this type of coaching psychological strength training.

We summarize with three important points. Most talent development proponents, ourselves included, hold that abilities or gifts, whether innate or not, are proclivities that make individuals better candidates for initiating the talent development process. Second, the end product of the talent development process is extraordinary performance or an original contribution. Third, without opportunity for guided expert instruction and intensive effort, gifted children or adolescents are less likely to transform their abilities and efforts into extraordinary performances or original contributions.

What Psychosocial Skills Identified by Researchers Are Associated with Talent Development?

Talent development has been the subject of intensive research since the mid-1980s (Subotnik & Calderon, 2008). Several important scholars focused directly on identifying those variables most likely to ensure fulfillment of potential in specific domains. As an example, Tannenbaum (1986) argued that five variables are essential: general ability, special aptitudes, internal qualities such as motivation, a support system, and chance (being in the right place at the right time).

Other talent development models place key variables in developmental sequence. For example, Bloom's (1985) three-stage model includes an early *romance* period (instruction focused on falling in love with a topic, domain, or idea), a middle *technique* period (learning the rules, skills, knowledge, and values of the domain), followed by a highly sophisticated *mastery* period (instruction in achieving professional success). In each stage, teachers play a key role in supporting and enhancing talent. However, the focus of their instruction changes over time, from enrichment, to technique, to socialization into a field.

The authors of this chapter synthesized the psychosocial variables identified in the literature on talent development into the following larger categories: knowing oneself and using that self-knowledge to enhance talent; receptivity to knowledge, opportunity and experience; risk taking, courage and wisdom; social skills; and passion based on internal forces. Later in the chapter, we describe components of these categories in more detail.

1. *Knowing oneself and using that self-knowledge to enhance talent*—this variable encompasses self-regulation, addressing weaknesses and capitalizing on strengths. Moon (2003) argues that these psychosocial variables can be learned through systematic instruction. Subotnik and Jarvin (2005) concur and assert that the process begins with instruction and ends with self-monitoring such that capitalizing on strengths becomes the primary focus of the activity.
2. *Receptivity to new knowledge, opportunity, and experience*—this variable includes “teachability” and curiosity. According to Subotnik and Jarvin (2005), talented individuals are open

to learning the skills, content, and values of a domain from expert teachers. Once students master the material sufficiently, good teachers (i.e., possess “teachability”) encourage their students to “bite back” with critiques of the status quo, opening avenues for students’ own creative contributions. Concurrently, talent development is more likely to happen when one’s cultural values match the field of interest (Ziegler, 2005). If doors of opportunity are closed, whether in the realm of education or in terms of family, cultural or peer understanding, one needs enormous resilience to overcome feelings of marginalization (Noble, Subotnik, & Arnold, 1996). According to Ochse (1990), however, acts of resilience against adversity can serve as the fodder for greatness.

3. *Risk taking, courage, and wisdom*—According to Sternberg (2005), it takes enormous fortitude to shape, modify, or select one’s environment; balancing among intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extra-personal abilities and interests. Sternberg further promotes the notion that understanding and taking responsibility for the consequences of one’s creative activities is associated with what he deems the highest form of talent development—wisdom.
4. *Social skills*—are variables that demonstrate sensitivity to others’ needs, whether based on empathy and caring, or for instrumental purposes. Most of the social skills identified by Subotnik and Jarvin (2005) were instrumental in nature, but also described by expert teachers and gatekeepers in the classical music domain as being important to success. These skills include “tasteful” self-promotion, knowing how to “play the game,” and exhibiting collegial behaviors such as being punctual and prepared for performances.
5. *Passion based on internal forces*—or intrinsic motivation reflected by, deep interests, drive, resilience, and persistence. According to Piirto (2004), these personality attributes outweigh measured intelligence in determining the attainment of high or creative achievement. In the performing, visual, and other creative arts, intrinsic motivation in the form of passionate communication of beauty or other virtue is what defines the work as valuable (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Feldman, 1986; Subotnik & Jarvin, 2005).

Implications for Deliberate Skills Training in Psychosocial Skills

If psychosocial dimensions of talent development are defined as traits, psychologists and educators would not have much to offer to the talent development process. For example, Heller, Perleth, and Lim (2005) view individual characteristics as “equipment” and stable traits. The most dynamic part of the talent development process for Heller et al. is in acquiring domain content and skills. Accordingly, there is no overt role in this model for psychologists and educators in coaching for psychological strengths.

Most other talent development models, however, focus on internal and external forces that are conducive to intervention or instruction. Optimally, psychologists, teachers, and coaches conduct outreach to parents and other teachers about how to recognize and support needs of talented members of their families, schools and communities. Bloom (1985) contributed vastly to the field of talent development by being the first to present the process as a set of developmental stages. According to Bloom (1985), each stage is facilitated by the contributions of parents and teachers.

Jarvin and Subotnik (2005) and the authors of this chapter argue that psychosocial dimensions of talent development are not only derived from external forces but also from internal variables that can be introduced to talented individuals as psychological strength training. Certainly, some young people are more interpersonally and intra-personally able than others, but all can benefit from coaching. This notion is reinforced by the existence of experts in psychological strength training for elite athletes and musicians. Teachers, mentors and psychologists working with academically talented students, like their colleagues in elite sports and music, can reinforce persistence through

good and bad times, model and reinforce social skills such as being a good colleague, and reward strategic risk taking.

At What Stage in Talent Development Do Psychosocial Variables Play the Greatest Role?

In this section, we delve more into Subotnik and Jarvin's (2005) multi-year effort to analyze the talent development process that takes place in the domain of classical music. The Subotnik and Jarvin model was derived from a study conducted with 80 stakeholders in music training at the nation's three top conservatories including: (a) 54 students at different stages of their musical education at the conservatory; (b) 20 music faculty, most of whom perform professionally as well; and (c) 6 "gatekeepers," including 2 music critics for national newspapers, 3 artistic directors for prestigious concert halls, and 1 agent. Although the model was developed to describe the development of elite talent in classical music, Subotnik and Knotek have been exploring applications of the model by participants in other talent domains, including chemistry and mathematics (Subotnik, Pillmeier, & Jarvin, in press) and sports (Knotek).

The Subotnik and Jarvin (2005) model includes three transition stages: (a) from ability to competency, (b) from competency to expertise, and (c) from expertise to scholarly productivity or artistry. The model takes into account the changing nature of psychosocial variables in the talent development process.

Two variables play an important and consistent role throughout the talent development process. The first is *intrinsic motivation*. Without passion for a domain, it would be impossible to devote so much time and effort to its pursuit. Intrinsic motivation feeds *persistence* through good and bad times, achievements and setbacks.

Teachability

This variable refers to openness to learning. If students are too rigid and set in their ways to be open to learning early in the process of talent development, they are not likely to progress productively. As mentioned previously, during the second transition from competency to expertise, when a student has sufficient knowledge and experience to challenge the status quo, a good teacher will encourage students to "bite back" with their own ideas.

Assessing Strengths and Weaknesses

During the first transition from abilities to competencies, teachers assess their students' strengths and weaknesses and provide instruction accordingly. During the second stage of talent development, students are expected to take more responsibility for shoring up their weaknesses and strengths. As individuals emerge as artists or productive scholars, they are coached to capitalize more exclusively on their strengths.

Response to External Rewards

Although much of the literature ascribes the key source of creativity to intrinsic motivation, historical analysis indicates that many great artists and scholars were driven instead by attaining recognition and battling past slights or marginalization (Ochse, 1990). We call this "I'll show you" motivation. During the second stage of talent development, opportunities to compete or to produce/compose/publish keep individuals focused on their growth. Finally, during the process of attaining artistry or scholarly productivity (third stage), talented individuals aspire to financial

and creative independence as sources of external reward, even as they work through their need to “show you.”

Self-Promotion

Self-promotion is a double-edge sword. With it, one can develop the reputation as self-important and insecure. Without it, one can miss opportunities. This psychosocial variable and component of tacit knowledge is important to develop during the second stage of talent development. The point of self-promotion is to acquire a mentor who can assist in promoting the talented individual's academic and professional career.

Learning “How” to Play the Game

Learning “how” to play the game is an important component of tacit knowledge. How does one determine what magazine or competition or school would serve as the best outlet for one's work? Who are the gatekeepers in your field? This psychosocial skill is not central to the first stage of talent development, but is very important in the middle and final stages.

Social Skills

These social skills include collegiality and are extremely important and underrated in domains where teamwork is essential to success. In chamber music, for example, being punctual and prepared is key to getting jobs, and if a musician is not collegial, he or she may sacrifice the careers of their chamber group members. Academe does not tend to be team oriented and “lone cowboys or cowgirls” are less likely to suffer because of poor social skills. However, over time, good social skills, even in academe, are more likely to engender supporters, tenure, and getting out your message. Social skills are especially important to be taught and highlighted during the second stage of talent development (transition from competencies to expertise).

Self-Confidence

This is a particularly interesting psychosocial variable. Like self-promotion, self-confidence allows one to be a risk taker and to put one's work out for review and consideration. Too much self-confidence, however, can close one off to constructive criticism and make one appear arrogant. As referenced earlier, during the second stage of talent development, talented individuals find themselves, sometimes for the first time, around others with shining talent. Many formerly self-confident young people start to doubt themselves. Mentors and teachers are important guides through this difficult transition. According to Subotnik and Jarvin's (2005) research, during the last stage of talent development it is important to appear self-confident (even if you do not feel it) in order to engage audiences in taking musical risks along with you.

Risk Taking

As a central component of creativity, risk taking is most important to display during the third transition from expertise to scholarly productivity to artistry. Although *expertise* reflects mastery over a field based on experience and reliable judgment, it does not imply creative contributions to a field. According to Subotnik and Jarvin (2005), *scholarly productivity or artistry* involves pushing the frontiers of imagination, interpretation, or implementation. However, willingness to challenge

the given in one's field, or to bring together principles or ideas from a number of fields may lead to disdain by others in one's domain. A sensitive mentor or coach can help students to make good judgments about where to take risks and when risks are counterproductive (Subotnik & Jarvin, 2005; Zuckerman, 1996).

Charisma

Charisma is difficult to define and even more difficult to develop. It is one of the very few variables that Subotnik and Jarvin's (2005) study participants said, "You have it or you don't." The common understanding of charisma is as a form of showiness, as "Look at me!" However, according to the gatekeepers interviewed in the study, there are also more subtle and elegant forms of charisma that compel others to "Listen to this!" In other words, when gatekeepers in artistic venues seek out top talent, they are most intrigued by performers who draw attention to their interpretation of the music rather than to themselves as a person (Subotnik, Jarvin, Moga, & Sternberg, 2003).

Implementing Positive Psychology in Talent Development

Positive psychology offers a useful perspective from which to consider the growth of the psychosocial skills associated with talent development. In a 2000 interview conducted by Subotnik, Seligman talked about how differences in the development of talented individuals might occur because of the relative maturity of their character strengths.

I think in any given field there are always a set of very highly qualified competitors who can perform at the very highest level. And the question is, which one does? Or which two do? It requires quite extraordinary motivation to do that. For the most part, you can think of there being a set of high mountains between talent and great performance. And people fall away and only make it up certain mountains. There is something about optimism, (and other character strengths) ... as enabling conditions that allow a few people to make it to what, at any give time is the peak. (Subotnik, 2000, p. 100)

From Seligman's perspective, some students reach the optimal level of their talent because they may have strengths that are more fully developed than those of their peers. He also described how the other two pillars of positive psychology can impact talent development.

Yes, I definitely think we can and should deliberately foster creative genius ... One important enabling condition is that someone be able to identify what the child is good at. Another part of fostering is to remove disabling conditions. (Subotnik, 2000, p. 101)

The three pillars of positive psychology include: (a) subjective experience (e.g., gratification); (b) individual traits (e.g., strengths of character); and (c) institutions (e.g., schools). Students' development will be impacted both by their experience (the first pillar) and by the institutions (the third pillar) that are charged with promoting their optimal development. Will a student experience pleasure, happiness, and/or fulfillment as they seek to develop their talent? Will the organization that is charged with educating the student have mentors and procedures devoted to promoting their strengths?

Positive psychology can thus contribute to the development of talented youth by enhancing their psychosocial skills. Embedding a positive psychology perspective into an educational context may lead to the growth of character strengths that are relevant to and/or associated with the optimal development of a youth's talent. For example, the virtue of wisdom contains four

strengths—creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, and love of learning—(Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005) that are important to the psychosocial skills of receptivity to new knowledge and risk taking. We now explore two of the psychosocial skills we reviewed above through the lens of positive psychology.

Teachability

Talented youth need to both be open to the challenge of learning new information and also be critical consumers of knowledge (e.g., question the status quo). Their capacity to be teachable will increase if they are encouraged to embrace a love of learning. To develop, students need opportunities to master new skills and bodies of knowledge. According to Seligman (2005), open-mindedness will optimize their learning experiences as they carefully think through challenges and critically examine the possibilities inherent in a situation. Building students' capacity for open-mindedness and love of learning may allow them to achieve greater benefit from a mentor or an educational opportunity.

Risk Taking

Talent development is furthered as one moves out of his or her comfort zone and strives to give an outstanding performance or explore a new idea. A willingness to take risks can help a student consider the previously unconsidered or come upon a novel means to design and invent. Well-developed curiosity may also imbue a youth with the sustained focus needed to see a new venture through to completion. Youth who are able to improve upon these two character strengths will be better able to enhance their psychosocial skill of risk taking.

Seligman and coauthors (2005) believe that psychologists must work to foster “climates” that enhance students' strengths. Intuitively this makes sense, a positive climate would seem necessary to developing emerging gifts. To provide interventions that optimally develop talented students' psychosocial skills, it is necessary to have an environment that is challenging, nurturing, and sustaining. Yet, operationally how can this climate be defined? From an organizational stance, climate may be characterized as including (a) shared norms, beliefs, and behavioral expectations as well as (b) individuals' unique perceptions of the organization's environment, including psychological safety, challenges, equity, stresses, and conflicts (Hemmelgarn, Glisson, & James, 2006).

Like the construct of climate, positive psychology is also conceived of as existing within a range from institutional settings to internal states (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Given the range of characteristics included in both climate and positive psychology, actually influencing them in the service of talent development may seem to be a broad and even ephemeral goal. What would be the target of intervention? What should the goal(s) be? Psychologists must be prepared to impact a students' experience across a range of contexts. We will now discuss how consultation can provide psychologists, teachers, and caregivers with the coaching they need to serve their talented children and clientele in ways that maximize talent development.

An Intervention Framework

The use of positive psychology to affect the development of talent by way of psychosocial dimensions will, depending upon the goals and needs of a situation, require intervention at varying levels of focus. For example, in some instances psychologists may be asked to help a mentor think through motivation strategies and consider how she might imbue her students with a love of learning. Alternatively, a teacher may ask for help in getting a gifted child to overcome a pattern of risk aversion so that she might take on analytic problems that might expose her less than perfect

knowledge. Realistically, most psychologists do not have the content expertise to be effective in either of these cases, and perhaps more importantly, their directive is not to supplant the mentor. However, psychologists will be the experts in positive psychology, development, and psychosocial intervention. Consultation offers psychologists a means to provide the personal and professional development necessary for dedicated mentors, caregivers, and teachers to enhance their skills to support their charges' optimal development.

Consultation

Consultation is defined as an indirect service through which a consultee (a parent, teacher, or coach) gains support for a client (a talented student) by engaging in a problem-solving process with a consultant (Brown, Pryzwansky, & Schulte, 2006). For instance, a conservatory music teacher may initiate consultation with a psychologist in order to consider means to foster persistence in her students. In this case, the teacher has primary responsibility for the student and the consultant/psychologist has a primary responsibility to facilitate the teacher's acquisition of new perspectives and possible solutions to the problem. For example, consultation may focus on assessing the types of musical challenges that students find both intriguing and initially manageable.

Consultee-Centered Consultation (C-CC)

C-CC evolved out of Caplan's (1970) philosophy of using consultation in support of primary prevention. This approach takes a public health view of youths' development and focuses on applying consultation in educational settings to support teachers' and caregivers' ability to enhance children's competence and to lessen risk factors. The contemporary definition of consultee-centered consultation was developed over three international seminars in the past 10 years and contains the following key elements (Knotek & Sandoval, 2003):

1. Consultee-centered consultation emphasizes a non-hierarchical helping role relationship between a resource (consultant) and a person or group (consultee) who seeks professional help with a work problem involving a third party (client).
2. This work problem is a topic of concern for the consultee, who has a direct responsibility for the learning, development, or productivity of the client.
3. The primary task of the consultant is to help the consultee pinpoint critical information and then consider multiple views about well-being, development, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and organizational effectiveness appropriate to the consultee's work setting. Ultimately, the consultee may reframe his or her prior conceptualization of the work problem.
4. The goal of the consultation process is the joint development of a new way of conceptualizing the work problem so that the repertoire of the consultee is expanded and the professional relationship between the consultee and the client is restored or improved. As the problem is jointly reconsidered, new ways of approaching the problem may lead to acquiring new means to address the work dilemma.

Consultee-centered consultation distinguishes itself among the various forms of consultation by its emphasis on promoting consultees' professional development within and through the consultation relationship. A C-CC consultant seeks to use the interpersonal relationship to facilitate change in the conceptual understandings of the consultee. As an indirect intervention, the expectation is that by facilitating change in the consultee's knowledge, and supporting his or her reconceptualization of and approach to the work problem, clients will be better served. This type of consultation

is well suited to support the integration of positive psychology into talent development models because: (a) it is prevention-focused and designed to enhance consultee and client (talented student) functioning; (b) it is designed to encourage consultee's adaptation to novel work problems, such as deciding how to add a psychosocial dimension to talent development; and (c) it is content neutral and can be used to discuss the integration of positive psychology within any of the psychosocial skills essential for talent development.

Consultation to Enhance Positive Experiences

Positive psychology does not deal with humanity in the abstract. The first pillar is about positive objective experiences (Peterson, 2006). In other words, it concerns an affirmative evaluation of one's activity in the real world. From this perspective, development occurs when students are presented with challenges that are both attainable and effortful (Kleiber, Larson, & Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Engagement in properly balanced tasks affords students a positive experience that is characterized by qualities such as fulfillment and gratification.

An important element of successful engagement in a positive activity is the degree to which a student experiences *flow*. Flow involves the use of a student's strengths and talents at full capacity (see Shernoff and Csikszentmihalyi, chapter 11, this volume). As students experience the pleasure inherent in a state of flow, they further expand and develop their skills. Repeated experience in activities that have an element of flow has long-term desirable consequences that include creative achievement and possibly health (Peterson, 2006). Additionally, Peterson (2006) cites research (Moneta & Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Shneider, & Shernoff, 2003) that flow actually builds psychological capital. Given the potential of flow to enhance students' development, it would make sense, where possible, to increase their engagement in activities that produce flow.

Consultation is best used when it supports the ability of a caregiver, mentor, or teacher to support not only the client (in this instance, a talented student), but when it also increases the capacity of the consultee to resolve similar circumstances with other clients. In the instance of a positive psychology case consultation it could be used to help a mentor think through the issue of flow related to an individual student or an entire class. For example, a teacher may find his mentorship stymied by a promising student's loss of self-confidence and engage the services of a consultant to help resolve the problem. The consultation could focus on numerous areas, including jointly developing a new way of conceptualizing the student's functioning. Together, the consultee and consultant may consider how to build the student's psychological capital through flow-generating experiences.

Effective question posing from the consultant to the consultee is the currency of the realm in consultation. In the case of helping a consultee conceive of new means to increase a student's flow experience, the consultant might ask the following kinds of questions (Peterson, 2006, p. 68):

1. What are his (client) skills?
2. Where can they be deployed in an appropriately challenging way?
3. What obstructs flow in the current environment?
4. How can the environment be reshaped to foster flow?

Consultation to Build Critical Character Strengths

Consultation is built upon the use of a coherent and systematic problem-solving process in which time and technology are judiciously applied (Brown, Pryzwansky, & Schulte, 2006). The consultation

process does not begin with a meeting of the consultant and consultee to plan interventions. Typically, consultation progresses through a series of stages—an initial period of problem identification and analysis that is then followed by strategy selection and implementation, and finally evaluation. Effective problem solving (in this case the enhancement of the mentor’s instruction and guidance, as well as the furthering of the student’s progress towards optimal performance) starts with a vigorous period of assessment and problem identification.

The effective use of positive psychology in the development of talented youth will depend upon the careful and thorough assessment of where a student stands in terms of his or her strengths. Fortunately, issues of assessment have been considered in positive psychology and a classification schema for character strengths and virtues—the VIA Classification of Character Strengths—has been created (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). A consultant and consultee may use both formal (VIA Inventory of Strengths for Youth, see Park & Peterson, chapter 6, this volume) and informal (observations) means to pinpoint critical information, and then reframe and reconceptualize the presenting issue(s) from a perspective of positive psychology.

For example, as mentioned previously, Subotnik and Jarvin (2005) identified social skills such as collegial behaviors and knowing how to “play the game” as essential for talent development. If a mentor requested consultation to discuss ways to enhance the team functioning of a group of talented adolescents, it would be important to assess the students’ current level of strength in areas related to teaming before beginning any discussion of interventions. The consultation process would help ensure that ample time was spent in problem identification and assessment before the onset of intervention. In this stage, the consultant could use the consultation process to help the mentor create a data-gathering plan, and then think through what kind of intervention the data would support. Say the assessment revealed a need for the talented adolescents to demonstrate forgiveness and self-regulation (two character strengths), then the consultant could help the mentor prioritize her concerns (e.g., self-regulation was an absolute necessity for the group). The consultant would ask the mentor questions such as: What is your current conceptualization of group functioning and what information and skills do you need to acquire? How does your present group facilitation skill set match with what will be needed to help the students demonstrate improved self-regulation? Given discrepancies between the development of forgiveness among different members of the group, how can you simultaneously support them all?

Mentoring talented youth is complex, and no amount of prior training can prepare service providers to meet all contingencies. C-CC may be used as a value added intervention to target and address mentors’ conceptual and skill base to better meet the needs of their students.

Consultation to Foster a More Positive Institution

The culture of an organization exhibits a profound influence on the delivery of services to its clients. Glisson and Green (2005) have shown that organizations with constructive climates are more attentive to and effective in their service delivery than are organizations that are characterized by a passive-defensive culture. Constructive cultures promote positive, proactive behavior and encourage interactions that meet the higher satisfaction needs of its employees, while passive-defensive cultures promote protective, reactive behavior and encourage interactions that meet members’ lower security needs, such as avoidance, dependence, and approval (Hemmelgarn, Glisson, & James, 2006). Mentors and coaches in passive-defensive organizations who are preoccupied with issues such as their own psychological safety are less likely to promote the development of optimal character strengths and achievement in their mentoring of talented youth. In order to embed the principles of positive psychology into their mentoring effectively, teachers and coaches should experience an organizational culture that encourages their thinking in unique and independent

ways and allows them to model the pursuit of a standard of excellence (Glisson & James, 2002). Consultee-centered consultation offers a means for psychologists to intervene at the systems level to support an organization's implementation of positive psychological curriculum and practices.

Most teachers or coaches will need professional development and administrative sanction prior to adjusting their pre-existing instructional agenda (Fullen & Hargreaves, 2001). C-CC has two potential roles in the introduction of positive psychology to an organization: (a) as a means to help administrators conceptualize the role of positive psychology in talent development, and (b) as a means to support an administrator's subsequent implementation of the program.

Gifted programs, unlike talent development programs, are typically housed within a larger unit of a district's Department of Exceptional Children's Services. Department heads are often steeped in the static view of gifted education wherein the goal is for students to simply accrete levels of skill. However, the positive psychology approach is that youths' optimal development of scholarly productivity and/or artistry occurs through positive experiences in which unique character strengths are repeatedly engaged and supported. Enhancing the likelihood that gifted education will grow into an endeavor focused on developing talent as well as virtues of positive psychology such as optimism and wellness will not happen without administrative buy-in of this vision. C-CC can be used to facilitate gifted education coordinators' conceptual integration of positive psychology principles (i.e., the importance of assessing and then supporting students' character strengths) within the framework of talented youths' psychosocial needs. For example, some administrators' world-view of student functioning may downplay the importance of providing students with a positive subjective experience in order to promote optimal development of talent. Such administrators may not readily conceptualize the need for repeated flow experiences to stimulate and enhance development. The task of a consultant would be to help administrators pinpoint information critical to the development of gifted students and then consider the impact of flow experiences on such students.

Another use of C-CC would be to support administrators in generating a professional development training plan that would move beyond the typical didactic presentation and offer means for teachers to gain conceptual understanding as well as skill acquisition. C-CC would support administrators' creation of a training plan that would include not only didactic instruction but also dyadic consultation for teachers to help them adopt and adapt positive psychological principles to the unique context of their schools.

Needs for Future Research and Consideration

We have attempted in this chapter to bring together three entities that have heretofore not interacted in the literature—talent development, positive psychology, and consultation. Whenever a new conceptual framework is attempted, there are bound to be dissonances that need to be overcome theoretically, empirically, and practically. We present here three for our readers to consider.

Empirical evidence would strengthen the proposition that consultation provided by those who are not expert in a particular domain is as valuable as consultation from one with expertise. Further, studies would also address the notion that a consultant without expertise in talent development in a domain is as effective as consultation with such expertise. In other words, if exploration of the nexus of three domains is conducted, does expertise in one—consultation—trump domain expertise or expertise in the psychology of talent development? We argue that what can be missing for the coach, mentor, or teacher is not the domain content or skills or talent development expertise, but rather the ability to step back and organize solutions in tested ways.

Second, how does positive psychology explain the historical/biographical evidence that many great performers and innovators do not create as a result of virtue or even intrinsic motivation,

but rather as an expression of marginalization (Ochse, 1990)? Can multiple and even competing explanations for creativity exist simultaneously?

Third, what virtues and character strengths are most closely aligned with the expression or inhibition of talent development? Given the broad range of skills implicated within and across domains of talent it is likely that some character strengths are more vital than others. In some instances, the appreciation of beauty and excellence may be more important to talent development than a strong sense of temperance, while in others humanity may trump transcendence. Youth engaged in activities that are traditionally expressed individually, such as golf or chess, may need a different profile of character strength than students whose talent lies in areas that are expressed in group or team settings. Knowing the relationships between character strengths and the psychosocial skills necessary for talent development may help in the formation of effective mentoring strategies and practices.

We look forward to joining our colleagues in the search for answers to these questions. This volume is a key contribution to exciting changes in psychology and education and we are delighted to be part of that journey.

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Positive Psychology, Culture, and Schools

Conceptual and Empirical Challenges

CRAIG FRISBY

One popularly held impression is that ethnic, language, and racial minority groups experience reduced positive psychological outcomes as a direct result of prejudice, discrimination, and racism in society generally, and in schools particularly (Byrnes & Kiger, 2005; Ponterotto, Utsey, & Pedersen, 2006). For example, Brown and Bigler (2005) opined that “[d]iscrimination affects millions of children in the United States and throughout the world” (p. 533), and that children’s perceptions of discrimination directed toward themselves “is likely to affect individual’s identity formation, peer relations, academic achievement, occupational goals, and mental and physical well-being” (p. 533). According to a previous National Association of School Psychologists’ *Position Statement on Racism, Prejudice, and Discrimination* (NASP, 2004), students who are victims of racism, prejudice, and discrimination achieve less in school, have diminished aspirations for the future, and drop out of school in increased numbers. Perhaps Stephan and Stephan’s (2000) statements best illustrate the profound fatalism that permeates these perceptions:

Minority groups have always been under siege in America. Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination are part of the fabric of their lives. Minority group members must live with a system of power and privilege that favors Whites and disadvantages all others. (p. 24)

For an example of this sentiment reported in the popular press, see McShane and Tompson (2007).

Although these statements may make provocative headlines, they obscure serious conceptual and empirical challenges that should be considered by those who wish to conduct credible cross-cultural research in positive psychology. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the nature of these challenges. The chapter begins by outlining some basic cautionary principles for readers (and researchers) when making claims about (i.e., operationalized according to ethnicity, language, and race). Next, the complexities involved when understanding (and using) terms such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination and racism are discussed. Typical efforts by the education establishment to address these concerns in the “multicultural education movement” are reviewed, and their effectiveness will be critiqued to the extent allowed by limitations in our current knowledge. In conclusion, implications of this previous discussion for viewing positive psychology in schools are discussed through the lens of cultural diversity.

Challenges in Identifying Reliable Culture x Behavior Interactions

Considering the myriad cross-cultural studies on positive psychology constructs, it has been debated whether the reported findings are truly “culture free” (i.e., revealing universal principles that are transcendent of cultural differences) versus “culturally embedded” (i.e., influenced by the cultural values and biases of researchers). The position of this chapter is that such arguments are not fruitful unless we first question what it means when researchers use the term *culture*. Rather than treat the term as a static entity with clear boundaries between groups of interest, there are many aspects of culture that are dynamic and shared across disparate groups. This concept is certainly not new. In understanding the concept of culture, Kluckhohn and Murray’s (1950) observations reflect three interlocking principles, which are described below.

1. *Every human being shares some characteristics in common with all other human beings.* According to Jorgensen and Nafstad (2004), this principle is rooted in the Aristotelian tradition, which supports the view that the task of psychology is to discover universals in the nature of human nature. One example of universality of human functioning can be found in the study of the constellation of “Big Five” personality factors (i.e., Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience), which has been shown to be remarkably robust across a wide variety of assessment instruments (see de Raad & Perugini, 2002) and global cultural groups (Benet-Martinez & John, 1998; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Bermudez, Maslach, & Ruch, 2000; Paunonen, Ashton, & Jackson, 2001). A further example comes from a series of anthropological studies across multiple cultures (see Brown, 1991, 2000), which revealed that all cultural groups share more than 200 traits in common. These shared traits include, but are not limited to: the capacity for language and mental abstraction; emotions (shame, guilt, empathy); family (households, kinship groups/nepotism); aesthetics (beauty, music, dance); childhood behaviors (thumb sucking; play, fear of strangers, perfection of skills through practice); gender differences (females associated with childcare; males being more aggressive, more prone to theft and violence, and dominating in politics); conflict (group territoriality; materialism); sex taboos (i.e., against incest; enforcement of sexual modesty; presence of sexual jealousy); law (distinguishing right from wrong, ways to redress wrongs, judgment and decision making); and rituals (cooking, greetings, gift giving, rites of passage). Human universals have also been identified from international research on perceptions of family interrelationships (Georgas, Berry, van de Vijver, Kagitcibasi, & Poortinga, 2006) as well as in common themes within world religions (Dahlsgaard, Peterson, & Seligman, 2005).
2. *Each human being possesses an idiosyncratic combination of qualities and experiences that makes them unique and thus different from any other human being.* Behavior genetics, which has become a leading perspective in the psychology literature, has shown remarkable human differences even among identical twins (who share the same genes) reared in the same household (thus sharing similar environmental conditions). For example, longitudinal studies of identical twins sharing living environments have reported robust individual differences in childhood temperament (e.g., emotional reactivity and behavioral regulation systems), social relationships, social status, and subsequent life goals (see Goldsmith, Lemery, & Essex, 2004).
3. *Each human being is the product of experiences and characteristics that are shared with certain subsets of other human beings.* Verification of this principle serves as the foundation of cross-cultural studies, yet the method used to explore cross-cultural differences is contingent on the manner in which groups are subdivided. Many studies focus on countries that prescribe

similar (or different) social/political/religious philosophies. For example, some research has found that individuals from “Eastern” (more specifically, East Asian) and “Western” (European-influenced) cultures (countries) differ in their “individualist” vs. “collectivist” self-orientation. In these views, persons from individualistic cultures are socialized to seek independence from their cultural group by attending to the self and expressing their uniqueness. In such cultures, individuals are prone to hold overly positive views of self, exaggerated perceptions of personal control, and an unrealistic optimistic bias. In contrast, persons from collectivist cultures are socialized with a worldview of the fundamental relatedness of each person to their cultural group. Here, the importance of “fitting in” to the group is highly valued. In these groups, self-criticism, or a general sensitivity to negative self-relevant information, is most evident. In these cultures, self-criticism is viewed as vital for supporting and maintaining the group; hence, it is viewed as a constructive process. Research has found cultural differences in positive and negative affect, and life satisfaction along the individualistic/collectivistic continuum (see Chang, Sanna, & Yang, 2003; Ng, Ho, Wong, & Smith, 2003; Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener, 2002). As Ng et al. (2003) argued, “what counts as happiness is culturally grounded, and good feelings are not the same for everyone in [the] world” (p. 336).

Nevertheless, studies that use nations as the unit of measurement presume that individuals within a nation are sufficiently homogeneous—sharing unique experiences only with other individuals in that nation. In reality, the individuals often belong to distinct cultural subgroups. Indeed, cultural subgroups within countries differ in such variables as race/ethnicity, insularity, acculturation, cohesiveness, and history (Naylor, 1998). As a recent example, Seidman and Pedersen (2003) studied risk, protection, and competence factors in 1,438 poor adolescents from public schools in three Eastern American cities having the largest percentage of students on reduced price/free lunch. Although the sample was ethnically heterogeneous (i.e., 27% Black, 23% White, 40% Latino/a, and 10% Other), 79% of the Black and Latino youths lived in federally designated poverty neighborhoods compared to 60% for the entire sample. Similarly, 48% percent of the Black subsample lived in one-parent households, compared to 28% for the entire sample. Perhaps due to these different living conditions, the authors found significant group differences in how teens described the quality of their family and peer interactions, as well as the quality of their athletic, religious, and employment competencies.

Moreover, within-country subgroups that are homogeneous in some characteristics (such as race or ethnicity) may, nonetheless, be heterogeneous in other characteristics. For example, two individuals may share the same ethnic group, however one person’s membership in an academic honor society and the other’s membership in a street gang could strongly influence their respective attitudes and values on a range of issues.

In conclusion, interpretation of cross-cultural findings on positive psychology constructs can run the danger of assuming that culture is a monolithic entity. Although there appears to be some universal principles of human functioning that transcend culture, researchers also are urged to remember the unique individual differences that occur within and across cultural boundaries as well. To quote Naylor (1998):

Most humans are not influenced or motivated by a culture, rather, most are motivated by any number of cultures, any one of which can exert the greater influence on their actions at any given point in time or given a particular set of circumstances. Unfortunately, the multiculturalism of individuals has not yet been given any significant attention. (p. 25)

Challenges in Achieving Consensus in Defining Stereotypes, Prejudice, Discrimination, and Racism

American multicultural education research articles, textbooks, and curriculum guides routinely provide explicit definitions of terms such as “stereotypes,” “prejudice,” “discrimination,” and “racism,” and then base subsequent instructional content on these definitions (e.g., Banks, 2001; Byrnes & Kiger, 2005; Pedersen & Carey, 2003; Stephan, 1999). This begs the question of whether racial/ethnic minority status within a country causes various groups to be unusually vulnerable to persistent maltreatment as a direct function of their minority status, thereby undermining positive psychology outcomes in school settings. However, a broader overview of these topics reveals conceptual problems in how “multicultural education” defines these terms. The following section describes the myriad difficulties for researchers who wish to study these topics as they pertain to positive psychology and the routine of everyday living.

Are Stereotypes Always Bad?

By the late preschool years, children appear to naturally sort people into racial categories (Katz, 1982). More recent research finds that young children understand that physical properties characteristic of a given race are immutable and fixed at birth, and that not all physical properties contribute to racial identity in the same way (see Hirschfeld, 1996). By school age, children become adept at inferring others’ beliefs, attitudes, and internal states about racial issues (see review by McKown & Weinstein, 2003). According to McKown and Weinstein (2003), children’s ability to infer stereotypes held by others increases dramatically between the ages of 6–10. Children belonging to lower achieving groups (e.g., Blacks and Latinos) are more likely to be aware of broadly held stereotypes than children from higher achieving groups (e.g., Whites and Asians). Thus, there appears to be a progression to the development of stereotypes, based in part by early awareness that not everyone is the same. Stereotypes are socially created to make sense of these distinctions.

One common feature found in many stereotype definitions is that stereotypes are bad because they are inaccurate. However, stereotypes do not materialize out of thin air. Stereotypes find their origins in generalizations, and generalizations have their origins in the “kernel-of-truth hypothesis,” which Schneider (2004) articulates as follows:

... stereotypes are based on some empirical reality, although they may exaggerate the extent to which a particular group can be characterized in a certain way ... Even if the kernel-of-truth notion is correct, it is likely that many (probably most) stereotypes are exaggerated generalizations, in the sense that groups are seen as having more of some feature that would be justified by empirical data. (pp. 17–18)

Given this statement, a careful analysis of the complexity of stereotypes must begin with an analysis of the concept of “inaccuracy.” Consider the following four statements:

- Statement #1:* For the 2006–07 season, 75% of the players in the National Basketball Association (NBA) were African American.
- Statement #2:* If an athlete is a player in the NBA, then he is probably African American.
- Statement #3:* African Americans are athletically inclined.
- Statement #4:* Marcus is African American, therefore he is probably good at basketball.

Clearly, Statement #3 is easiest to criticize; one could easily find examples of many African Americans who have little to no athletic ability. Empirical reality is nonetheless represented by

Statement #1 (see Lapchick, Bustamante, & Ruiz, 2007). African Americans are indeed over-represented (compared to their population numbers) in some professional sports (such as the NBA). Thus, the danger here is equating a truism (Statement #1) with an inaccurate stereotype (Statement #3), which precludes constructive discourse on the nature of stereotypes. For example, even when there is a high probability (greater than chance) that a stereotype will be accurate based on knowledge of a group (e.g., Statement #2), many believe that it is morally wrong to ascribe characteristics to an individual based on any information about a group (regardless of accuracy). Thus, even though Statement #2 is more defensible than Statement #4, both statements may be viewed as equally objectionable.

On its face, Statement #3 appears complimentary of African Americans. However, many fear that the widespread acceptance of even positive attributes of groups will make it easier to also accept negative attributes of these same groups (e.g., see Hoberman, 1997). Others fear that positive stereotypes are objectionable because they limit freedom of individuals to be perceived as diverse in their personal characteristics. To further complicate matters, multicultural “advocates” and “activists,” whose stock in trade is to loudly condemn negative stereotypes of groups, have been known to reconfigure negative stereotypes into positive stereotypes (and vice versa) whenever the situation is advantageous for sociopolitical reasons (Carroll, 2007; D’Souza, 1995, pp. 274–275; Harrell, 2006).

According to Schneider (2004), pre-1970s stereotype research assumed implicitly that stereotypes are widely shared by members of a particular cultural group, who have received the stereotypes through limited personal contact with members of the stereotyped groups—as well as intentional transmission of stereotypes through parents, schools, and/or peers. In short, early stereotype research assumed that persons are passive receptors for stereotypes that are “fed” to them by “implicit messages” from their culture. However, post-1970s research inaugurated the serious study of the view that individuals play an active role in the development, maintenance, and use of stereotypes based on their own personal experiences with members of different groups.

Given this enhanced understanding of how stereotypes develop, one question can legitimately be raised: why are some stereotypes considered inherently “bad” if a majority of an individual’s personal experiences confirm the stereotype? This has led some researchers to opine that, “stereotypes are simply generalizations that somebody doesn’t like” (Schneider, 2004, p. 22).

Is Prejudice Always Bad?

Whereas stereotypes are defined as faulty beliefs, prejudice has been defined as “the set of affective reactions ... toward people as a function of their category memberships” (Schneider, 2004, p. 27). Prejudice simply means to “pre-judge,” however, this word has most often had negative connotations in two salient ways. First, it is often assumed that prejudice is a concept that refers only to a negative judgment about groups, although in actuality one can “pre-judge” persons or groups in a favorable light. Second, the word “prejudice” has earned a reputation as a pernicious social evil to be aggressively exposed and fought, as evidenced by multicultural education book titles such as *Preventing Prejudice: A Guide for Counselors, Educators, and Parents* (Ponterotto et al., 2006) and *Reducing Prejudice and Stereotyping in Schools* (Stephan, 1999). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that definitions of prejudice from these and similar texts characterize prejudice as virtually synonymous with attitudes that are negative, rigid, irrational, and unjust (Stephan, 1999).

Like stereotypes, the reality is that making prejudgments is a routine process involved in normal cognitive functioning (i.e., categorization processes; see Cohen & Lefebvre, 2005). Every day, in numerous situations, people make pre-judgments in choices of what to wear; what to eat; in their preferences in choosing forms of entertainment; what people, places, and situations to avoid; and

reactions likely to be encountered in response to what one says or does. Although the content of human prejudgments can be criticized according to any number of perspectives, they nevertheless serve a crucial function. Prejudgments offer efficiency and time saving advantages in that they allow human beings to navigate through life in a more time-saving manner—as opposed to the untenable alternative of conducting time consuming research on every conceivable option before making even the simplest of decisions. Prejudgments also have a self-protective function, as they permit humans to avoid actual or potentially dangerous people, places, or situations that could cause serious harm. Treating each new situation as if one has no prior knowledge of similar situations in the past can be foolhardy in some instances.

Barrett (2007) and his colleagues collected data from over 4,000 children and adolescents, ranging from 6 to 15 years of age, living in 10 different countries (England, Scotland, Catalonia, the Basque Country, Spain, Italy, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, and Azerbaijan) to understand how preferences for, and prejudices against social groups originate and develop through childhood and adolescence. Data analysis from this research, coupled with an extensive review of the developmental psychology literature, led the researchers to conclude that contemporary theories (e.g., Piagetian stage theory, cognitive developmental theory, social identity theory, self-categorization theory, and social identity development theory) were inadequate to fully explain the complexities of their observations. They posited a complex Societal-Social-Cognitive-Motivational Theory (SSCMT) that, in their view, fully captures the interdynamics of the reviewed evidence.

According to SSCMT, the development of children's prejudicial attitudes begins with a working knowledge of specific geographical, historical, economic, and political circumstances that characterize the child's national or state context. In some geographical locations, racial and ethnic groups live side by side in relative peace and harmony. In other locations, ethnic, religious, and racial tensions routinely erupt in state-sponsored terrorism, genocide, torture, and warfare lasting for many decades (Stout, 2002). Children and youth are enculturated in these contexts; hence, their attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices should be evaluated in light of this knowledge. The attitudes and values of teachers and other educators who are responsible for the content of school curricula will have some influence on how out-groups are represented to the child. The mass media, the Internet, books and magazines also carry information about racial, ethnic, religious, and language groups that is influential in shaping the child's beliefs. At home, the behavior, choices, and sociopolitical attitudes of parents or guardians also exert a tremendous influence on the development of children's attitudes, and these parental variables differ considerably from child to child. Furthermore, the neighborhood in which a home or school is selected is influenced by parents. Some children's extended kinship networks may be culturally homogeneous, whereas other children's kinship networks may be more diverse. Even parents' choices for family vacations influence the child's exposure to, and first hand experience with, persons from different cultural groups.

Further complicating matters on the development of prejudicial attitudes is the fact that children's own temperamental make-up, perception and attention processes, and level of identification with their own subgroup influence what features of their upbringing will be attended to, exaggerated, or rejected. As the child develops and matures, parents and teachers adjust their own methods of interacting with youth, as youths' levels of competence increases. As youth develop their own abilities to think critically, the school curriculum changes accordingly to reflect complex discussion involving outgroups. Throughout this process, the beliefs and attitudes of peer groups evolve and grow as well, and are influential in shaping or reinforcing ingroup and outgroup attitudes. The implications of SSCMT are indeed important, showing the complexity of prejudice and the folly of assuming that patterns of development exhibited by children growing up in one particular cultural context must necessarily apply to children growing up in other contexts (Barrett, 2007).

Is Discrimination Always Bad?

Whereas definitions of prejudice tend to emphasize an attitudinal component, definitions of discrimination tend to emphasize a behavioral component. Yet, when divorced from its negative connotations, discrimination, like prejudice, is rooted in normal cognitive and social processes. To “discriminate” essentially means to “divide, separate, or tell the difference between” objects, events, or people. In psychometrics, correct answers on test items are evaluated according to their ability to discriminate probabilistically between high versus lower scoring individuals on the total test. In popular culture, book, food, and movie critics are expected to have “discriminating” tastes with respect to artistic works in their respective fields of expertise.

Among school-aged children, discrimination is a multi-faceted concept. The most common forms of discrimination among very young children are on the basis of social group membership, although preschool children report that discrimination based on race or gender is unfair (Theimer, Killen, & Stangor, 2001). In empirical research studies, older school-aged children report discrimination in the form of exclusion from play activities, being accused of wrong-doing, name-calling, verbal insults (including racial slurs), an unwillingness of others to share materials, or threats of physical harm (Simons et al., 2002; Verkuyten, Kinket, & van der Weilen, 1997). The basis on which school-aged children discriminate against their peers is virtually limitless. Children’s discriminatory behaviors can occur on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, language, physical and/or mental abilities and disabilities, religion, country of origin, or socioeconomic status (SES). However, children may avoid classifying certain behaviors as discriminatory if they consider the target to be responsible for the negative behavior, or if the actions of the perpetrator of the negative behavior were unintentional (Verkuyten et al., 1997). Among adolescents, perceived discrimination in the context of schools takes the form of being discouraged from joining advanced level classes, feelings of being disciplined wrongly by teachers, or being graded unfairly (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000).

The Racism Conundrum

Historically, the term “racism” has had numerous widely debated definitions (D’Souza, 1995). Of all of the terms used in this chapter, “racism” is currently the most sloppily defined by educators, researchers, and the lay public. The term is often difficult to entangle from more general concepts such as “ethnic nationalism,” “ethnocentrism,” and “xenophobia.” Early definitions of this term were derived from the idea that each race carries biologically determined personality, intellectual, and temperamental traits that are characteristic of all members of the particular race, as well as cultural achievements and capacities that characterize each race as a whole. The spoken and written pronouncements from organized hate groups (see Ridgeway, 1991; Swain, 2002) all involve a high degree of consensus as prototypical examples of “racist” attitudes. Sociological definitions for racism tended to emphasize power inter-dynamics among groups, where racism is defined primarily as a tool for political and social domination and control (Feagin, 2006). Psychological definitions tended to emphasize the content of privately held beliefs and attitudes about groups (Sears, 1988). However, as overt racism and legally enforced racial discrimination (such as the Jim Crow Laws of the 1950s) have largely disappeared from American life, the trend for American social science researchers over the decades has been to *expand* the boundaries for how racism is defined. This has largely occurred in numerous ways.

One way that social scientists have expanded the meaning of racism is to include *any* stereotypes (beliefs), prejudices (attitudes), and discrimination (behaviors) “that denigrate individuals on the basis of phenotype” (McKown, 2004, p. 597). In short, simply to harbor a negative generalization

about a group of people now qualifies as an indicator of “racism” (Katz, 2003). The second way that social scientists have expanded the definition of racism is to characterize it as a force that cannot be easily detected by the naked eye, because it has become “institutionalized,” “covert,” “subtle,” or “modernized” (Brauer, Wasel, & Niedenthal, 2000; Waller, 1998). A third method of redefining racism, which is common among sociological definitions, is to define racism backwards from undesirable social conditions. According to this method, the so-called results of racism include, among other things, social inequalities based on racial affiliation. Thus, any condition that reflects social inequality among groups is automatically “caused” by racism, regardless of contrary evidence. For example, a popular and widespread shared assumption is that statistical inequalities between ethnic and racial groups in employment, housing, education, and related economic indicators is *prima facie* evidence of widespread racism at work (Waller, 1998).

As a result of these redefinition efforts, objective standards for documenting supporting evidence for the existence of racism have been lowered to the point of virtual non-existence. As a corollary, the term “racism” has come to mean anything anybody wants it to mean. For example, the following conditions have been cited as evidence of “racist” thoughts or actions at the individual level:

1. believing that racial classifications have some degree of biological validity that is more than just an arbitrary social construction (Gil-White, 2004);
2. believing that average group differences in intelligence co-varies across racial groups (Gil-White, 2004; Levin, 1997);
3. holding politically conservative views (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950);
4. placing value on planning for the future, self-reliance, individualism, discipline, social morality, and standard English (Bobo, Kluegel, & Smith, 1997; Harrell, 2006);
5. having attitudes that are colorblind or that downplay the importance that race plays in people’s lived experiences (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000); and
6. believing it is unfair for the government to afford special preferential treatment to racial and ethnic minorities (Waller, 1998).

The following conditions have been cited as evidence of “racist” thoughts or actions at the institutional level:

1. when the Republican-led congress in 1994 pushed for tax cuts, a democratic congressman denounced the plan as a form of modern day racism (Cohen 1994);
2. requiring high scores on standardized tests for admittance into a training program in higher education (Ponterotto et al., 2006);
3. having service fees that are too high for minority families to afford (Ponterotto et al., 2006);
4. any actions that “operate to maintain the racial status quo” (Coll et al., 1998, p. 446);
5. any policies or practices that result in group inequalities even when there is no intention to discriminate against a group (Jones, 1997);
6. believing that Western European culture, law, aesthetics, music, and philosophy are inherently superior to corresponding areas developed by other cultures (Waller, 1998).

This contemporary tendency to widen the definition of racism (i.e., to mean whatever the speaker wants it to mean) leads to a predictable confusion and incoherence in attempts to apply these definitions to real life (e.g., see Levin, 1997, p. 157).

Concluding Observations on the Intersection of Positive Psychology, Cultural Differences, and Schools

In the opening of this chapter, readers were introduced to the facile belief that cultural minorities, simply by virtue of their minority status, are at risk for experiencing less optimal positive psychology outcomes. Upon closer analysis, this belief is shown to be overly simplistic given inherent complexities in defining terms. These difficulties may hinder progress when investigating cross-cultural differences on positive psychology constructs. In keeping with the guiding principles outlined in Kluckhohn and Murray (1950), more accurate guiding principles pertaining to culture and positive psychology research are discussed in the following section.

1. *Factors that influence happiness, or “subjective well-being” (SWB) are extremely complex and cannot be explained by one specific cause.* Neese (2005) summarized research on major pathways to SWB in a path model that included at least 21 different variables (with sociocultural factors being one of them). Considering this complexity, outward circumstances do not necessarily make human beings happier, due to the universal propensity of humans to adapt (i.e., as humans adapt to their favorable circumstances, subjective expectations about what will create personal happiness rises; see Kasser, 2002) and compare (i.e., humans adjust their expectations for happiness by comparing themselves to others, see Marks & Shah, 2005).

2. *It is simplistic to isolate one childhood demographic variable (such as race, ethnicity, or SES) and predict with any degree of certainty, differences in SWB, either in childhood or in later adulthood.* As illustrated in the opening pages of this chapter, some writers have argued that cultural minority status alone, when considered in the societal context of current or historical evidence of racial/ethnic prejudice or discrimination, leads to lower levels of SWB or happiness. This argument, no matter how compelling it seems on its face, suffers from two primary problems. First, it fails to take into account a wide variety of social variables that impact SWB and co-vary with racial/ethnic group status. Such variables include, but certainly are not limited to differences in percentages of out-of-wedlock births across groups, which, in turn, impact frequencies of single parent households and its associated problems for children (Camarota, 2007; Roth, 1994; Weitoft, Hjern, Haglund, & Rosén, 2003). Second, the relative developmental immaturity of school-aged children and youth complicates the relationship between ethnic/racial/cultural differences and SWB in childhood or in later adulthood.

An example of one (apparent) universal principle is the reduction of school satisfaction as children matriculate from primary to secondary school (Marks, Shah, & Westall, 2004). Yet, as apparent as this universal may be, there are individual differences *within* age ranges that must be considered. Educators and school-based mental health personnel cannot predict how unanticipated life events (e.g., parental divorce, child illness, major moves) will interact with a child's unique genetic, dispositional, or temperamental constitution in generating potential changes in the child's sense of SWB. Although educators may fear that children's experiences of prejudice and discrimination may have a longstanding effect on their sense of SWB when they become adults, this ignores the counterbalancing effects of other constitutional and situational factors that may influence developmental outcomes. After chronicling various detail in accounts of her daughter's experiences growing up with racial taunts and insensitivity at the hands of her schoolmates, for example, a mother reports:

Over the years, Vanessa, a bright and sensitive child, developed ways of coping with her school situation by using a measure of cynicism mixed with the power of words. Strong enough to avoid victimization, Vanessa developed her own sense of coherence through family and spiritual values. She is now a strong, self-assured young woman. (Pacino, 1995, p. 44)

See Williams (1995) for another example of individuals who experience discrimination in childhood, yet grow to become successful adults.

3. *The problems (or advantages) faced by cultural minorities within a society are conditioned by context, and are not universally inherent in minority status alone.* Conflicts between groups are worldwide and ubiquitous, and ethnic conflicts are a subset of these conflicts (Elmer & Elmer, 1988; Wolff, 2006). Ethnic conflicts in certain portions of the world can create consequences (or “reverberations”) that show up in other parts of the world. This is because ethnic conflicts create instability, refugees, and conditions that lay the groundwork for organized crime and terrorism in neighboring regions populated by related ethnic groups (Wolff, 2006). Within the past decade since the time of this writing, the most violent ethnic conflicts have occurred (and are still occurring) in such diverse locations as Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Cyprus, the Middle East, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kashmir, and Sri Lanka, to name a few (Wolff, 2006).

Nevertheless, the mere presence of two or more ethnic groups within a society does not in itself inevitably lead to violent ethnic conflict. In any given country at any given time, ethnic groups can choose compromise, cooperation, and peaceful co-existence versus competition and confrontation. The conditions responsible for the eruption and maintenance of ethnic conflict within a given country are varied and complex and must be considered when examining SWB using nations as the unit of analysis. Readers may be surprised to discover that even though group conflicts may manifest themselves outwardly along ethnic lines, the source of these conflicts are political or economic rather than “ethnic” (Wolff, 2006).

4. *Schools’ efforts to “improve society” by attempts to reduce stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and racism are laudable, but are unfortunately based on a somewhat simplistic understanding of these mechanisms.* There are sections of the world in which ethnic conflict is so trenchant, that efforts to promote ethnic intergroup goodwill and harmony in children and youth have little chance of being effective. Children who grow up in such environments are routinely exposed to bombings, murder, rape, mass looting, arson, torture, state-sanctioned ethnic hatred, and various acts of unexpected terrorism (Stout, 2002). Children and youth who are exposed to such conditions experience a variety of debilitating effects, which can vary according to developmental level, degree of personal impact, and severity. Children and youth experience profound feelings of grief and separation from murdered family members, fear and anxiety, mood disorders and psychosis, sleep/eating disturbances, desensitization to violence, and the development of racial/ethnic hatreds and rage toward other groups. Many children experience feelings of hopelessness, powerlessness, and the loss of any ability to make moral choices. Some children become literally “robbed” of their childhood, and, as a result, are recruited for membership in violent warring subgroups (Stout, 2002). At minimum, many attend schools in conflict-ridden countries where the teaching of ethnic hatred and discrimination is accepted practice. In the context of these realities, the “can’t-we-all-just-get-along” philosophy, so prevalent in American multicultural education materials, seems naïve at best.

5. *In dealing with stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination, the burden of change is too often seen as the exclusive responsibility of non-minorities, while the responsibilities of minority groups are ignored.* Multicultural education is built on the implicit assumption that American society consists of “victims” and “victimizers”—where victims suffer lower levels of SWB, either directly or indirectly, as a result of the wrong attitudes, and potential behavior, of victimizers. Thus, multicultural education is built on the assumption that if certain perceptions and attitudes about minority groups are aggressively portrayed as moral deficiencies, and are replaced by more acceptable perceptions and attitudes by educators, then over time, “victim” groups will enjoy a decrease in impediments to their well-being and happiness in society (see Fein, 2001, for a more detailed discussion of these assumptions).

However, these assumptions have not yielded results as hoped for by multicultural educators.

Even in America, where intergroup relations are currently not as violent or contentious as is evident in other countries, efforts to promote intergroup “sensitivity” and interethnic cooperation have met with mixed, unimpressive, or outright disappointing results (see reviews by Bigler, 1999; Frisby, 2005). Arguably the biggest flaw of American multicultural education for societal improvement (and presumably the SWB of cultural minority groups) is its failure to address the role and responsibilities of “victim” groups in this process (see Roth, 1994, p. 71).

An Example of Group Behavior Change

Stern (2000) describes in vivid detail the near miraculous transformation of Irish immigrant life in America within the span of less than one generation during the 1800s. Beginning in the 1820s, Irish immigrants formed a massive underclass in New York City, “mired in poverty and ignorance, destroying themselves through drink, idleness, violence, criminality, and illegitimacy” (p. 3). A few years later, immigrants fleeing the great potato famine in Ireland came to America in cargo ships lacking any toilet facilities or basic sanitary conditions. This, coupled with hundreds packed in cramped living conditions, was a breeding ground for disease, filth, and death, with “a mortality rate much higher than that of slaves transported from Africa in British vessels of the same period” (p. 11). Once in New York, Irish immigrants packed into cramped ghetto neighborhoods characterized by a lack of running water, shanties erected in alleys, raw sewage spilling over into backyards, cholera outbreaks, and rat infestations. Gang violence, lawlessness, profanity, alcohol and drug addiction was rampant among the young boys and men in Irish neighborhoods. According to Stern (2000), an estimated 50,000 Irish prostitutes worked the city in 1850, with skyrocketing illegitimacy causing tens of thousands of abandoned Irish kids to roam and prowl city streets unsupervised, illiterate, and uneducated. Irish living conditions in New York were so bad during the early and middle parts of the 19th century, that Stern was prompted to remark “no Americans before or since have lived in worse conditions...” (p. 11). Irish immigrants endured virulent anti-Irish and anti-Catholic prejudice and discrimination from politicians, newspapers, and Protestant churches. The Irish were considered to be a genetically inferior “race” by respectable New York society, the medical profession, and opportunist politicians.

John Hughes, a charismatic and principled Irish immigrant who eventually rose to the position of bishop over the New York diocese, almost singlehandedly spearheaded a series of social changes built on the philosophy of discipline and a faith-based inner moral transformation. He began by building a Catholic school system that stressed basic academics, mandatory parental involvement, and a “faith based code of personal conduct that demanded respect for teachers and fellow students” (p. 10). He formed parish churches staffed by priests he trained personally, and sent them into neighborhoods to spread a faith-based system of personal confession for wrongdoing, personal responsibility, and personal spiritual values. He helped to form a Catholic “abstinence society” that specifically targeted the problem of alcohol abuse. Hughes and his followers helped train nuns for positions of community leadership in managing schools, hospitals, orphanages, and charity organizations. Nuns were encouraged to reach out specifically to women, encouraging them to become community leaders and church fund-raisers. As a result of these efforts, Irish women started managing safe boarding houses for new immigrants and starting their own neighborhood grocery stores. By the 1850s, nuns became “major forces for moral rectitude, stability, and progress in the Irish neighborhoods of the city” (p. 16). Balancing these messages of inner moral discipline were extensive networks of neighborhood (church-related) support groups to help the Irish handle difficult personal, family, and employment problems. Through both government and private contributions, Hughes encouraged his acquaintances to start religious boarding schools for homeless or unsupervised children, which became an early model for the modern day Boys Town (see www.

boystown.org/home.asp). According to Stern (2000), by the 1880s and 1890s, Irish arrests for violent crime, alcoholism, and drug addiction rates were drastically reduced compared to earlier decades. Three-quarters of the police force in late 19th century were Irish. The Irish in New York became more regular church participants, and the resulting prostitution and illegitimacy rates plummeted—so much so that the Irish began to gain reputations for their “puritanical” attitudes (p. 21). Most importantly, roughly 30% of New York’s teachers were Irish women, and the Irish literacy rate exceeded 90%.

The notion that minority groups bear some responsibility for altering negative behavior patterns that encourage stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination has been discovered in more recent research on the effects of school desegregation. For example, Schofield (1989) conducted an intensive observational study during the first year of an integrated middle school in the mid-1970s, the results from which vividly illustrate how the formation of negative attitudes towards groups is more complex than what is typically portrayed in multicultural education texts. The school was located in an ethnically diverse industrial city attended by relatively equal numbers of Blacks and Whites. She found that Black students, on average, fell about one standard deviation below Whites on standardized ability tests. These differences manifested themselves most noticeably in wide racial disparities in students’ grades for academic work (see also Steinberg, 1996, for similar findings). However, the most useful findings from Schofield’s study were troubling observations of intergroup relationships and behaviors. Blacks were viewed as less interested in learning, more disruptive in class, more physically aggressive and intimidating, and more prone to being suspended (see Richardson, 2003, for similar observations). Whites, in contrast, were viewed as brighter, more successful, more interested in learning, more rule abiding, physically restrained, weaker, and less willing to defend themselves when physically threatened by Blacks. Based on his review of Schofield’s research, Roth (1994) concluded:

The conclusion one must reach from Schofield’s observations and from a fairly large literature on the effects of desegregation is that integration, by itself, does not appear to dramatically improve race relations or change negative attitudes about out groups, especially when those attitudes are confirmed by experience. White students . . . developed a set of attitudes toward Blacks, often negative, even if they held no such attitudes at the outset. If they already had such attitudes, their experience . . . merely reinforced them. (p. 283)

In Closing

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss various factors that need to be considered in understanding the intersection of positive psychology, schools, and cultural issues. In the positive psychology literature, certain simplistic beliefs have an intuitive appeal, such as the popular notion that material affluence has a high positive correlation with subjective well-being. As referenced in this chapter, this relationship has been shown to be much more complex and subject to nuanced, counterintuitive findings. In the same way, educators and school psychological support personnel must be cognizant of various statements, prominent in the multicultural education literature, that promulgates equally simplistic messages. Such messages support the conviction that cultural/ethnic minority children and youth have less potential to develop high levels of subjective well-being from their vulnerability to the effects of stereotyping, discrimination, prejudice, and racism from “majority” groups. The corollary is that the destructive effects of these mechanisms can be neutralized, at least to some degree, by institutionalizing various forms of multicultural education in schools.

Such a view is unwarranted, due to difficulties in how these mechanisms have been defined *ideologically* rather than *scientifically*. The effects of minority group status are not uniform globally,

as the political conditions in different countries create very different environments for culturally minority children. Finally, contentious interactions between subgroups cannot be attributed exclusively to character deficiencies in majority groups, but that the behavior of all cultural groups bears responsibility for improvements in intergroup perceptions.

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Positive Psychology for Educators

COLLIE W. CONOLEY AND JANE CLOSE CONOLEY

The past several decades have been marked by a growing public conviction that our success as a nation depends on a world-class educational system (e.g., National Academy of Science, 2005; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The need for greater expertise among educators has been a key recommendation of many national reports (e.g., Guarino, Hamilton, Lockwood, & Rathbun, 2006; Peske & Haycock, 2006). This scrutiny has been fueled by numerous factors, but especially the apparent decline in achievement levels—especially in reading, science, and math—among children and youth in the United States as compared to their international peers and our failure to close the achievement gap in these subjects among domestic economic, ethnic, and racial groups. The debate continues, but it is safe to say that schools and colleges of education have been roundly criticized for their poor preparation of educators to be successful with today's historically high numbers of poorer, and more linguistically and culturally diverse children at a time when advanced educational attainment is critical for economic and social stability (e.g., Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005).

As educators have turned their attention to the achievement needs of today's children, similarly mental health researchers have documented serious concern about children's welfare. Representative findings from data presented by Sheridan and Gutkin (2000) and Crockett (2003) about children's mental health include the following:

1. every day at least 1,500 students drop out of school;
2. 3 million teenagers struggle with depression;
3. 19% of high school-aged students who completed the 2001 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention seriously considered suicide at some point in the prior year;
4. only 36% of youth at risk for suicide during the past year received mental health services;
5. 1 in every 4 girls and 7 boys has been sexually abused before the age of 18;
6. 17% of youth between the ages of 12 and 17 reportedly carried weapons; and
7. 50% of adolescents are at moderate to high risk for mental health problems.

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate how research and best practice from positive psychology can advance the explicit goals of educator preparation programs. Further, incorporating positive psychology in educator preparation provides future educators with guidance on how to integrate

best teaching strategies with best mental health practices for children and youth in school contexts. Diener (2008), commenting on the importance of inserting positive psychology information into undergraduate and graduate education, suggested that this information takes students to the edge of science and encourages them to envision its future for themselves.

Thus, our aim is to suggest particular evidence-based topics and activities that may be useful in broadening trainers', educators', and psychologists' focus to include the cognitive, social, physical, and emotional development among children. At a time when millions of children start school not ready to learn, when dropout rates are extremely high especially among Latino and African American children, and when the percentage of high school graduates ready to engage with university level tasks is discouragingly low, business as usual is not the preferred option (Kessler, Berglund, Demler, Jin, & Walters, 2005).

This chapter presents an argument for positive psychology principles having a central role in the training of school personnel. The argument is based primarily upon the assertion that positive psychology contributes to the process of children learning and developing in healthy, virtuous, and engaged ways. Furthermore, findings from positive psychology can contribute to the broader school environment so that students, teachers, administrators, counselors, psychologists and staff all benefit. We focus on teaching educators to increase children's enjoyment in school via learning gratitude and involvement in flow experiences. We attempt to ground these discussions with an awareness of the moderating effects of culture on both these experiences (Ng, Pomerantz, & Lam, 2007; Nickerson, Schwarz, Diener, & Kahneman, 2003; Oishi, Diener, Lucas, & Suh, 1999; Suh, Diener, Oishi, & Triandis, 1998). Although these are but two of the many of positive psychology concepts that could be beneficial, gratitude and flow have been shown to facilitate student's broader development and their school engagement.

A key concern, of course is determining if there is a place in professional training programs for positive psychology concepts. That is, can this area of scholarship be included in educator, counselor, and psychologist preparation in service of the broad goals associated with education and schooling?

Preparing Educators

What is the most efficacious model of teacher and administrator education? Do we have evidence upon which to base an ideal model of educator preparation? In the main, little is known about specific aspects of educator preparation that can be directly linked to greater educational, social, or emotional advantage for K–12 students. There is, however, a consensus among the Council of Academic Deans from Research Education Institutions (CADREI) about teacher and Pre-Kindergarten–12 education:

It no longer suffices for students to demonstrate surface learning, that is, the ability to memorize and recite facts or display rudimentary skills. Today's successful student must acquire learning that is deep, conceptual, and transferable. Deep learning occurs when students are able to think creatively, critically analyze situations and problems, and come up with new ideas and solutions in contexts that are often different from those in which they have been taught. (CADREI Design Principles, 2005, p. 2)

With this as a 21st century goal for teachers (and in fact, K–12 students), the deans outlined 10 design principles for educator preparation programs. An in-depth analysis of all 10 is beyond the purview of this chapter about positive psychology, but several of the principles deserve mention as they set the stage within the educational literature for the key importance of teacher preparation with a deep understanding of positive psychology principles (Ackerman, 2003; Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Eccles, Wigfield, Schiefele, 1998). For example:

Principle 3: Teacher education program must encourage students to become active learners who construct their own understandings by building on their existing knowledge and beliefs, often in collaboration with their peers (CADREI, 2004, p. 4).

Principle 6: Learning tasks in teacher education must be designed to be interesting, contextually meaningful, and relevant, as well as presented at appropriate and increasing levels of difficulty (CADREI, 2004, p. 5).

Principle 9: Teacher education faculty should model behaviors and practices in their own teaching that they want their students to adopt (CADREI, 2004, p. 6).

As just these three design principles indicate, there is a key role for positive psychology principles in educator preparation. The call for active learners who are skilled at working with peers and who are motivated by challenging work indicate the mandate to develop teachers and Pre-K–12 students who are motivated and optimistic enough to engage in the learning process. Furthermore, the standards suggest that professors/instructors model the teaching and interpersonal behaviors that are the goals for students learning.

Other common educational standards reinforce this position. For example, the standards for beginning teacher licensure promulgated by the Association of Chief State School Officers and standards for the preparation of school psychologists share some common aspirations (e.g., Ysseldyke et al., 2006). Both sets of standards call for mastery of the particular field's content knowledge but also challenge the educators to develop high levels of interpersonal and collaborative skills. Furthermore, both sets of standards contain a focus on healthy development, wellness, and life skills for the educator and the Pre-K-12 student.

Thus, we focus on research that supports the importance of educating educators in new ways to focus their attention on their own and their students' positive development (Diener, 2008; Sarason, 1993). This call is especially important during a time when the pressures from federal and state accountability mandates tend to over-emphasize knowledge standards as isolated from the well-being of learners.

Shifting to a Positive Focus

Children often are overlooked as stakeholders in their own lives (Ben-Arieh, 1999, 2005). They are considered to be potential rather than as fully functioning members of society. Often their welfare is viewed through professional lenses that judge school processes based solely upon the outcomes of childhood, especially cognitive abilities at the end of childhood (Wintersberger, 2002). Educators must see childhood as a valued developmental state, not merely as a preparatory step to becoming a real person (Qvortrup, 1994). One strategy to develop this positive perception is to encourage educators to ask children about the issues that define their own well-being (Ben-Arieh, 1999; Hart, 1991). Children want to be asked, on their level, about issues that are important to them. They believe they have important insights that adults do not see (Backe-Hansen, 2003; Mauthner, 1997). Children as young as age seven have unique voices that can provide significant insights about complex issues (Melton & Limber, 1992). For example, Fattore, Mason, and Watson (2007) found that children were able to generate complex definitions of well-being. The definitions included feelings of happiness, dealing with sadness, feeling secure in relationships, and making moral decisions. The children also recognized their dependency upon the decisions of adults.

When middle school and high school students are asked about their experience of school, 15% of them report dissatisfaction saying that it is an unhappy or terrible experience (Huebner, Drane, & Valois, 2000; Huebner, Valois, Paxton, & Drane, 2005). Finding that a sizable minority of middle and high school students experience schools as a source of stress suggests that educators are not

having the positive or buffering effects needed to ameliorate the influences of the many societal ills that threaten young people's well-being (Epstein & McPartland, 1976; Huebner et al., 2000, 2005). Disengaged students risk poor achievement and dropping out of school (Baker, Dilly, Aupperlee, & Patil, 2003). On the other hand, students who are satisfied with school are more likely to be academically and socially successful (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). The percentage of poor children of color who express dissatisfaction or alienation from school can be quite a bit higher than 15% (Urdu & Giancarlo, 2001). We wonder what they would identify as causes for their disengagement and what solutions they would create.

Thirty years of well-being research illustrate some of the concerns being voiced by children and adults (Land, Lamb, Meadows, & Taylor, 2007). Since 1975, educational attainment and family economic well-being have risen slightly, but children's concerns about safety and risky behaviors have risen sharply. Physical health (because of obesity) and social relationships have degraded the most dramatically. Children are most worried about their physical well-being and their physical wellness. Additionally, they have less satisfying interpersonal relationships. Although school personnel cannot be responsible for every sphere of a child's life, the call to do more is clear.

One of the fundamental constructs in positive psychology is the experience of well-being or happiness. Several studies have found that happiness is central to subjective well-being and overall satisfaction with life (Buss, 2000; Diener, 2000; Suh et al., 1998). Contrary to popular wisdom, the eudemonic road to happiness is more influential than the hedonic approach; that is, meaning, engagement, and moral behavior appear as the most important processes to achieving happiness for adults (Diener & Seligman, 2002). We suggest that teaching adults and children in engaging ways that highlight relevance and have a focus on moral decision making may support higher levels of happiness.

Happiness is important because it is beneficial in many ways. Diener and Seligman (2002) found that very happy people have highly satisfying relationships with friends, romantic partners, and family members. Very happy people are consistently more extraverted, more agreeable, and less neurotic. Children who are happy are healthier, more successful, and more socially engaged.

Additionally, the causality appears to run in both directions (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). Children who are healthy, socially engaged, and successful become happier, and happiness causes interpersonal and personal gains as well. The interplay of circular causality leads to a highly functional spiral of betterment (Fredrickson, 1998, 2000). Starting the engine of happiness and well-being begins an enhancing process. This process is exemplified in studies demonstrating that the follow-up levels of happiness and well-being are higher than are scores at the end of experimental procedures (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Froh, Sefick, & Emmons, 2008; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). The influences of creating eudemonic happiness appear to self-perpetuate.

Fredrickson (1998, 2000) offered the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions to describe how positive emotions broaden people's thought-action repertoires, and by doing so build their enduring personal resources, including physical, intellectual, social, and psychological assets. To the extent, then, that happy people have more positive experiences in daily life, they may also gain more personal and social resources relative to their less happy peers.

A shift in focus toward attending to aspiring educators' and children's happiness and well-being may cause some to question whether the options we offer below will undermine their skills in realistically appraising situations. That is, do we need to worry about being too happy? Fortunately, being very happy is not a malfunction (Alloy & Abramson, 1979). Very happy people are not typically euphoric or ecstatic people who experience no unpleasant emotions. They see unpleasant functionally, as signals of troublesome issues that require some resolution (Diener & Seligman, 2002).

We present strategies that ask future educators to reflect on their levels of happiness, well-being, and gratitude. As called for in the CADREI Design Principles, those who educate educators should

model the behaviors that are desired outcomes (CADREI, 2004). The goal of this modeling is that practicing educators seek out the voices of children as foundational in designing interventions to create school environments that are supportive of all children.

Gratitude

Gratitude has been described as a moral behavior that strengthens the person, the person's relationships with others, and benefits society generally because of mutual appreciation engendered by the activity (Simmel, 1949). Being a grateful person is a central strength in positive psychology and has a high correlation with well-being and happiness (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000; McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002; McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001; Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Watkins, 2004). Watkins, Woodward, Stone, & Kolts (2003) further characterized grateful persons as appreciating life's simple pleasures.

Educators, counselors, administrators, and psychologists may find introducing gratitude exercises into school settings beneficial and relatively straightforward. Community stakeholders may be supportive of such activities because gratitude counters the hedonistic, self-gratification worries often engendered by the construct of happiness. Furthermore, most, if not all, spiritual or religious traditions support the practice of gratitude. McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, and Larson (2001) believe that gratitude serves as a prosocial motivator. When people are treated well, recognition of the prosocial treatment motivates them to respond in a prosocial manner. Gratitude influences the social interaction further by reinforcing the prosocial actions of other people. Thus, a focus on gratitude may have a positive organizational effect as students, teachers, and staff attend to events and processes that create gratitude.

Wood, Joseph, and Linley (2007) found that grateful people used positive coping strategies such as seeking out emotional and instrumental social support, positive reinterpretation, and planning instead of the negative coping styles of behavioral disengagement, self-blame, substance use, and denial. Although research is needed to investigate whether teaching and practicing grateful behavior will eventually transform a person's coping style, Emmons and McCullough (2003) found that writing 10 weekly entries about gratitude resulted in college students exercising more regularly, having fewer physical symptoms, feeling better about their lives as a whole, and feeling more optimistic. In a follow-up study they found that daily writing of gratitude events for 2 weeks increased the students' level of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, attentiveness, and energy as well as producing higher levels of pleasant affect. They concluded that daily attention to gratitude was an effective intervention for increasing positive affect. Not only were intrapsychic changes reported, the daily writing of gratitude entries for two weeks influenced the participants' interpersonal behaviors. The college participants reported being more likely to help and/or offer help to someone with a personal problem.

Froh, Steffick, and Emmons (2008) used a similar gratitude intervention with middle school students. The students wrote about their "daily blessings" for 2 weeks. Students were asked to list up to five things that they were grateful for since the last time they wrote in their journal with this prompt:

There are many things in our lives, both large and small, that we might be grateful about. Think back over the past day and write down on the lines below up to five things in your life that you are grateful or thankful for. (p. 220)

At the 3-week follow-up, the middle school students experienced higher optimism, overall life satisfaction, and domain-specific life satisfaction (e.g., school experience, residency).

Suggested Classroom Activity for Happiness and Gratitude

Many individuals, and surely some students in professional preparation programs, believe that activities creating instant pleasure are the most powerful for increasing happiness or well-being. College students who perform happiness experiments designed to help them discover what makes them happy are consistently surprised by what brings them long-lasting happiness. It is likely that students engage in both types of activities, but they will probably believe that the pleasurable activities bring them more happiness than the grateful ones. This activity will help students become aware of their feelings about these two types of activities and lead to discussion of which type of activity creates more positive affect.

We recommend using these experiments with professionals in training. The first suggested classroom activity is meant to help students explore which activity creates more happiness for them, a pleasurable or grateful activity. The desired learning outcome is that students become aware that gratitude should increase happiness more than physical or homeostatic pleasure, and, further, they apply this learning to their lives.

Materials needed for the exercise are described below. The first is a measure of happiness. Emmons and McCullough (2003) used the following 30 affect terms with instructions to students to rate the extent to which they experienced each feeling during the past week on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely often). The terms are: interested, distressed, excited, alert, irritable, sad, stressed, ashamed, happy, grateful, tired, upset, strong, nervous, guilty, joyful, determined, thankful, calm, attentive, forgiving, hostile, energetic, hopeful, enthusiastic, active, afraid, proud, appreciative, and angry. Students are asked to record their reactions for 2 weeks.

Also required for this classroom experiment is a measure of activity. Students are asked to keep a record of what they do and how much time was invested in particular activities. The professor should ask students to discuss examples of passive, immediately pleasurable activities (e.g., watching TV for 30 minutes or eating a favorite food). Exclude physical or interpersonal activities from counting as a passive, pleasurable activity. Students should be asked to engage in passive activities every day for 1 week while recording their happiness levels.

In week two, gratitude activities are introduced. Gratefulness can be described as remembering the many things, both large and small, that students may enjoy. For example, “Each evening, think back over the past day and write down on the lines below up to five things in your life for which you are grateful or thankful.” Students continue to complete the happiness measure during the second week.

After the two experiences students plot their happiness and activity scores. They can be asked to analyze their findings with the following questions:

1. Which activity influenced your happiness the most?
2. What were the most important differences in each type of activity?
3. Which activity would have the greatest influence on how you define yourself?

The classroom discussion might focus on the importance of both receiving benefits in the world and appreciating the process of receiving benefits. Gratitude is found to broaden and build upon the happiness it creates. Gratitude probably leads to more positive thoughts and behaviors.

Flow

Another central contribution of positive psychology to education is the advancement of intrinsic motivation through the concept of flow or optimal experiences. Well-being and happiness address school engagement and the concept of flow more directly approaches the complementary issue of

achievement (Carli, Delle Fave, & Massimini, 1988; Mayers, 1978; Nakamura, 1988). Given flow's close alignment with the historically important concept of intrinsic motivation, it has moved into mainstream education as researchers and educators study and address issues associated with students' low intrinsic motivation around academic tasks (Anderman, Maehr, & Midgley, 1999; Gottfried, 1985; Harter, Whitesell, & Kowalski, 1992).

U.S. educators in the 21st century are challenged to understand and to develop strategies to enhance intrinsic motivation or flow across multiple cultural and immigrant groups (e.g., Giancarlo, Blohm, & Urdan, 2004; Ogbu, 1992; Rivas-Drake, 2008; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995a, 1995b, 2001; Suarez-Orozco, M., 1989; Urdan & Garvey, 2004; Wang, Pomerantz, & Chen, 2007; Waxman, 1997). Although the goal of a differentiated repertoire of approaches that match cultural expectations or strengths is clear, the exact paths to achieving such cultural competence are affected by numerous variables. These include, at least, the following: the immigration or generational position of the individual; language spoken at home; acculturation and self-identity status; and whether the student is from a voluntary or non-voluntary immigration group (Berry, 1980; Ogbu, 1992; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995a, 1995b, 2001). Although a complete review of the moderating effects of these variables is beyond the scope of this chapter, the available research provides some understanding of the complexity facing educators striving to support success for every child.

Differences in flow experience at school may vary by task characteristics and with ethnicity and race (Shernoff, Knauth, & Makris, 2000; Uekawa, Borman, & Lee, 2007). Examples of active involvement were taking tests, participation for group learning activities, and working individually on a project. Passive involvement included listening to lectures and watching instructional videos. Students, in general, described more flow in active (e.g., sports) than passive (e.g., television) endeavors. Although Latino students were found, overall, to experience the least amount of engagement in their class activities compared to other racial/ethnic groups, they were far more engaged and responsive to classroom lessons during the time they spent in small problem-solving groups. On the other hand, Asian students were most engaged during individual work when compared with other racial/ethnic groups. This research underscores the importance of considering the historical cultural values of children in designing environments to facilitate flow and student engagement with learning tasks.

Improving our effectiveness with impoverished, English learners is a particular mandate given the rapid growth of various Latino groups in the United States (U.S. Census, 2003). Research evidence suggests that Latino families are quite dedicated to the success of their children (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001). Common Mexican and Mexican American parental directives such as "*No te lo puede quitar nadie*" (no one can take that from you) and "*estudia y se alguien*" (study and be somebody) illustrate the hopes and dreams parents have for their children (Ibanez, Kuperminc, Jurkovic, & Perrilla, 2004; Suarez-Orozco, 1989). Furthermore, findings suggest that some Latino students may be more motivated by familial ties than are their European American peers and do less well in competitive activities that promote individual success (Buriel, 1984; Triandis, Bontempo, Vilareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1998). Just these two general tendencies among some Latinos suggest adjustments of classroom practices toward building explicit ties with parents and favoring group over individual contingencies (e.g., Kisida & Wolf, 2008; Smith et al., 1997).

Relevance of the material to the student is important to flow. Uekawa et al. (2007) found that engagement levels were higher when the lesson content was related to the student's everyday life or to upcoming tests as compared to the small influence played by lesson content related to college and future job success. Educator success in using this principle harkens back to the need to ask students about their lives and be open to the possibility that the various ethnic and language groups in a classroom may be experiencing very different contexts. Only through understanding

the students' present concerns and dreams can increased engagement be attained. Students were also more engaged when they felt cooperative with the process, felt positive competition, did not feel sleepy, and were not confused. Surprisingly, fun was not related to engagement. Also, while friends were viewed as valuable sources of information, they were often seen as sources of distraction when the friends were not "doers."

Common activities or tasks used in flow research are music, art, sports, or work (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Flow conditions are threatened when external evaluation is at too high a level. Flow is predicted to occur under circumstances of fit between the person's characteristics and the demands of the task. A suitably challenging task for the capabilities of the person produces optimal flow. A poor fit between the task's challenge and the person's ability leads to anxiety if the task is too difficult or boredom if too easy (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Hektner and Asakawa (2000) examined the fit of task challenge and adolescents' capability for schoolwork. As predicted, they found that concentration, perceived importance to future goals and self-esteem were the highest for the optimal flow fit of high challenge of the task with high skill of the student (compared to high challenge/low skill, low challenge/high skill, and low challenge/low skill). Interestingly, in this research, student enjoyment was as high for the low challenge/high skill as the high challenge/high skill group. This finding was contrary to prediction and can be interpreted as students' socialization to the high stakes testing environment (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). The current, high stakes focus on test scores competes with personal experience of accomplishment so that the learner may attend to the anticipated external reward of a good grade rather than the internal experience of accomplishment or the building of intrinsic motivation for learning.

Flow is often described using terms such as "in the groove" or "in the zone" (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Unfortunately, these descriptive expressions of flow are most often applied to involvement in hobbies or sports rather than school or work. In fact, sixth- to twelfth-grade students who reported more positive school experiences relative to passive, out-of-school activities such as watching television, still indicated that they would rather not be in school (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). There appears to be a conflict between perceiving enjoyment in an activity and having control in the involvement. Adults who are in high challenge/high skill situations report high concentration and feeling happy, creative and satisfied while at work. However, they too reported that they longed to be elsewhere. They wanted more time for leisure pursuits even when they reported that their leisure activity was less enjoyable (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000; LeFevre, 1988). A key aspect of educator preparation should, therefore, focus on developing student "ownership" of their schooling to counter a perception of being forced into a particular context which may reduce engagement and enjoyment (e.g., consider the Dweck and Leggett, 1988; Elliot and Church, 1997; and Elliot and Harackiewicz, 1996, studies that distinguish between performance and mastery motivation as background for this assertion).

Family interactions that facilitate flow and intrinsic motivation in young people have been characterized as supportive of the student and at the same time challenging the student to be involved (Hauser, 1991; Rathunde, 1996). This finding suggests the importance of educator outreach to students' families to increase their engagement in the schooling process with special attention to the cultural and economic positions of the families (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Lichter, 1996; Menacker, Hurwitz, & Weldon, 1988; Moles, 1993).

In summary, it appears that facilitating flow can make an important contribution to children's experience of schooling. The vast majority of the research in flow describes the context that facilitates flow. Research supporting interventions that create flow are scant. However, the convergence of the literature strongly supports the importance of flow as a contributor to optimal learning. Although we should not expect that a major portion of students' time would be in flow, sufficient flow is

important for creating optimal learning and school engagement. Additionally, helping students understand the characteristics of contexts that support flow is important for their development.

Suggested Classroom Activity for Flow

The following activity is designed for the educator in training to experience learning with and without flow. Again, this activity is designed to increase the commitment of educators to incorporate positive psychology concepts into mainstream education as well as learning more about flow. The learning outcome associated with this activity is to compare a “flow designed” versus traditional learning activity in terms of which enhances intrinsic motivation and thus learn the requirements for flow. Because mastery and approach motivations are affected by academic climate created by the teacher, it is vital for educators to adeptly create appropriate learning tasks and environments (Roeser & Eccles, 1998). These strategies may also correspond with the cultural values of many Latino families, which place an emphasis on hard work and respect of elders. As a result, Latino students may benefit greatly when teachers, elders they respect, emphasize the importance of task mastery and skill building over performance and grades (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). An activity that makes use of the research on flow would include:

1. a suitably challenging task for the capabilities of the person (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, 2000);
2. attending to internal values rather than external expectations such as grades (Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2005; Rathunde, 1996; Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005);
3. an authoritative source providing communication of support (i.e., affective enabling) and challenge (i.e., cognitive enabling; Rathunde, 1996);
4. an allowance for low structure, occurring either individually or in a small group (Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005); and
5. tasks of high importance to the individual rather than merely a fun activity (Uekawa et al., 2007).

Materials needed are measures of flow and of activity. The Experience Sampling Method (ESM) is the most used measure of flow (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1987, 1992). The primary measures are affect, potency, salience, intrinsic motivation, and flow. Affect is comprised of the average answer (range 1–7) of four items: happy (vs. sad), relaxed (vs. worried), sociable (vs. lonely), and proud (vs. ashamed). Potency is the average of three items: strong (vs. weak), active (vs. passive), and excited (vs. bored). Intrinsic motivation is the average of three items (range 1–10): Did you enjoy what you were doing? Was this activity interesting? Did you wish you had been doing something else (reverse coded)? Salience is the average of three items (range 1–10): Was this activity important to you? How important was this activity to your future goals? How challenging was the activity? Flow calculation uses the two variables, “challenges of the activity” and “skills in the activity.” Flow is assumed when skills and challenges are both high (see Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1997, for the exact computation formula).

The measure of activity can be accomplished by having the students keep a record of what they wish to learn and their process for learning. Classroom discussion should occur after the two experiences. Students can compare the amount of flow and intrinsic motivation they measured and experienced. Also, they could discuss the following questions aloud in class or in a written format: (a) What did you experience in the two learning structures? (b) What were the most important differences in each type of activity that influenced your experience? and (c) How can you take greater control over your learning so that you can maximize flow?

Conclusion

Revising the paradigm of professional education will be difficult, but current challenges in the social, academic, and emotional development of children demand change (Albee, 2005; Elias, 2006). The evidence of our failure with millions of these children is incontrovertible (Gutkin, in press; Vigil, 1988, 1999; Vigil & Yun, 1990). For example, the opening sentence of the summary of the Report of the Surgeon General's Conference on Children's Mental Health (U.S. Public Health Service, 2000) underscores that the *nation is facing a public crisis in mental healthcare for infants, children and adolescents*. Furthermore, in 1995 Garbarino wrote,

The mere act of living in our society today is dangerous to the health and well-being of children and adolescents ... the social world of children, the social context in which they grow up, has become poisonous to their development. (pp. ix, 4)

The energy and creativity of positive emotions can fuel a new era of school engagement, intrinsic love of learning, achievement and well-being. The introduction of positive psychology principles into the pre-service preparation of all educators holds promise to enhance K-12 education and its efforts to prepare youth who are flexible, engaged learners ready for the challenges of the 21st century. The addition of research findings and activities from positive psychology appears to be consistent with existing standards and principles in a variety of fields from teacher education to school psychology. It may be that even more explicit standards of professional training would be useful in shifting the focus of professional education toward strengths-finding and well-being instead of an over reliance on diagnosis, problem solving, and extrinsic motivation. For example, a possible training standard might read:

Competence in developing research-based learning tasks, treatments, and activities to increase well-being, intrinsic motivation, and engagement in young people across developmental levels and tailored to the individual and cultural strengths.

Such a standard could shift the focus of professional training from deficit reduction to strength development. The next research agenda associated with effective preparation of educators might be, however, to expand their repertoires to include evidence-based strategies that enhance the systems inhabited and experienced by a wide array of different young people (Gutkin, in press; Trimble & Fisher, 2006).

This chapter focused on personal change associated with positive psychology research and strategy, but of equal importance is organizational/system processes that support positive development in our pluralistic society. Individual work with students will be doomed to failure if not accompanied by equal energy for promoting positive school cultures, family life, and civic contexts (Albee, 1999, 2000). The time for such a reconceptualization of our roles as educators appears to be now.

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The Law's Place in Fostering Positive Youth Development in Schools

ROGER J. R. LEVESQUE

Generations of Americans have identified and supported education as a prerequisite for a smooth functioning society and for healthy individual development. This history of strong support for education dates to our nation's founding and development. Seventeenth century colonial and state constitutions provided, for example, for state-supported and controlled educations that develop citizens of sound, moral, and civic-minded character (Levesque, 2002a). Through the 18th and 19th centuries, this support took the form of compulsory education. Eventually, all states would accept the need for common, public education; and most would adopt constitutional clauses that would virtually mimic one another in their exhortations (Id.). In the 20th century, states would move toward ensuring citizens with greater access, as reflected in and spurred by, most notably, leading Supreme Court cases and expansive federal legislation addressing minority and disabled children's access to education (Id.). Entering the 21st century, concern turned to ensuring that more students receive appropriate and effective educations, as evidenced by the numerous contemporary laws examined in this chapter. Schools have become the center of society's efforts to foster positive human development.

The legal regulation of schooling reveals how a focus on societal and personal development has transformed schools into institutions of social service delivery. In addition to accommodating a wide variety of individuals, schools continue to be sites of responses to pressing social needs. By law, for example, schools have enacted programs to address drug use, violence, troubling media images, obesity, sexual behavior, road safety, bad parenting, and even the appropriate use of firearms and archery (Levesque, 2002a, 2007). Schools' new roles have come with urgent calls to reshape the nature of education to ensure that even these social service delivery goals become part of a quality education. This development is best revealed by statutes that now explicitly enumerate goals for schools, such as the highly-touted GOALS 2000: Educate America Act (1994) and the most pervasive federal government involvement in elementary and secondary education to date—the controversial No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2005). Indeed, the public's concern for quality education (rather than just access to schools) to address individual and social goals has become so great that states have adopted increasingly popular programs that permit the use of publicly funded vouchers to support private schools, even parochial schools (*Zelman v. Simmon-Harris*,

2002). These developments, many of which would have been unimaginable even a decade or so ago, evince a settled commitment to fostering effective educational environments and positive outcomes for youth.

As society moves toward experimenting with different types of schools and makes increasing (and increasingly different) demands on schools, researchers familiar with positive youth development have come to the conclusion that we know much about what makes educational programs reach effectiveness and promote healthy development. Researchers have offered a wide variety of principles and possible components of what would constitute environments conducive to “positive youth development” (for reviews, see King et al., 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Much of that research actually has been conducted in extra curricular contexts, as revealed by recent research offering rather compelling results (see Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006; Mahoney, Larson, & Eccles, 2005). Insights about relationships that contribute to positive development, however, do transfer to educational contexts (for a review, see Levesque, 2002a). Reduced to their simplest denominators, this area of research suggests at least four fundamental objectives schools should adopt as they foster the scholastic development of their students. First, schools must acknowledge and address adolescents’ needs, concerns, and realities. Second, programs must provide students with the information and experiences needed to become critical thinkers and responsible decision makers. Third, schools must create environments in which students and teachers share responsibility and decision making within a broad framework of what must be learned. Lastly, the entire curriculum must enshrine the values deemed worth instilling and must incorporate skills into students’ everyday activities, including those outside of school. The principles rest on the premise that, if society wants students to develop into citizens who can function peaceably, responsibly and healthily in a modern, civil society, then society should allow students to experience such relationships in their classrooms, schools, families and communities. Given the wide variety of environments and situations in which adolescents find themselves, it is not surprising that schools essentially have become the universal focal point on which broader society seeks input in the development of adolescents’ knowledge, values, and capabilities that would allow them to fulfill their own potentials while, at the same time, effectively contribute to society.

Given that available developmental science already has identified ways to enhance positive youth development beneficial to students as well as to broader society, cause for the failure to craft curricular developments and promote educational climates conducive to such development must lie beyond pedagogical matters. Largely, current failures reveal a fundamental failure of law. Many legal realities hamper the development of effective programs that would enhance positive youth development. This chapter examines the status of these developments as they relate to efforts that shape students’ educational environments. I begin by highlighting a fundamental point in understanding legal assumptions that shape educational policies: concern for localism. That concern with providing school officials considerable power in shaping and implementing policies reveals the fundamental challenge facing reform efforts. That analysis reveals that federal legislative and constitutional mandates merely provide minimal thresholds and that they leave considerable power to the states to enact policies regulating schooling. I then explore how states tend to enact laws that relate to positive youth development and the general limitations of these mandates. Thereafter, I detail the need for adopting policies, especially those that become legally binding, and then detail some needed components of statutes that would shape environments conducive to positive youth development. This chapter ends by noting that efforts to foster schools as centers for positive youth development necessarily must consider the legal parameters of these efforts and, if they are to reach sustained effectiveness, must ensure that they take seriously the exhortation that schools exist for the common good.

An Enduring Tradition of Favoring Localism to Shape the School Curriculum and Learning Environments

The transformation of schools, especially the new demands placed on them to foster societal and personal development, has been phenomenal, as has been the public's commitment to schooling. Although constantly changing, and despite an overt commitment to supporting and shaping public education, educational mandates at both state and national levels have not changed in one fundamental way. Decades of reform have not undone strong commitments to the belief that local communities, especially local school officials and parents, should control the curriculum students receive as well as the school environments in which they receive it. Our legal system seeks to leave educational policy and its administration squarely in the hands of those operating at local levels of government. Great significance attaches to this orientation; we cannot understand the legal regulation of schooling without appreciating the nature of this approach and its implications.

The Power of State-Level Government

The traditional emphasis on local control remains securely in place, even despite increased federal funding for education and despite a spike in federal laws attempting to influence how states approach schooling. Federal forays into education policy continue to take pains to recognize this foundation and avoid interfering whenever possible. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2005), for example, serves as the culmination of efforts to increase federal involvement in public education. Yet, the act expressly provides for high levels of local control in its statement of purpose: The statute will reach its goals by “providing greater decision-making authority and flexibility to schools and teachers in exchange for greater responsibility for student performance . . .” (Id., § 6301). Even the greater responsibility, however, leaves much to local communities. The act expressly permits each state to decide what its students should learn and how well they should learn it. Conceptually, the act draws a hard line as it requires states to show progress in their students' performance; but, in practice, the ongoing dedication to localism in education led legislators to reject any strong enforcement provisions. Most notably, states ultimately determine the standards against which to measure progress in students' outcomes. Almost bizarrely, the effort to increase standards actually provides incentives that encourage states to lower them. Arguably even more potentially problematic, the approach encourages schools to forego education in untested subjects and, equally troublesome, to withdraw students from certain classes to protect test scores (see Behn, 2007). As the federal involvement has created a pool of funds and intellectual resources on which states can draw, it has not imposed obligations to develop uniform success among and within states, communities, schools, and even classrooms.

The federal legislature's deference to local government is not surprising. The Supreme Court recognized and formally established a similar position several decades ago. The court did so in the now classic case of *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973). It was in this decisive case that the Supreme Court rejected the view that education constituted a fundamental right and upheld Texas' unequal school funding plan, founded on property tax income, as a rational way to support schooling. Under the approved approach, wealthy districts could exist near poor districts; and wealthier districts and communities need not subvent poorer ones. The court reached this conclusion by highlighting the importance of local control in shaping educational policy. In granting Texas wide deference to determine its own funding scheme, the court praised the plan's stated goal of encouraging and supporting local differences. The breadth of this decision, in particular the rejection of a fundamental right to education and permitting wide disparities even in local school funding decisions, essentially foreclosed future challenges to state educational systems

in federal court. The court forcefully asserted its reticence to get involved in matters historically deemed local affairs, a position bestowing wide deference to local decision makers.

In addition to limiting the Constitution's reach in school affairs, the Supreme Court also essentially has foreclosed the federal government's ability to compel states, let alone local communities, to enact specific laws and policies relating to schooling. Two groundbreaking Supreme Court cases set this approach's parameters, and both revealed the limits of federal mandates. The first case, *United States v. Lopez* (1995), rejected the constitutionality of the Gun-Free School Zones Act, a federal statute that had banned guns within 1,000 feet from the grounds of public, parochial or private schools. The court struck down the statute for two principal reasons. First, the statute exceeded congressional authority under the commerce clause. That clause heretofore had been broadly used by the federal government to regulate state activities if it could be shown that the activities related to the economy or commerce in general. Second, the statute constituted an infringement on the traditional police powers of the state as a violation of federalism. The court reasoned that permitting Congress to regulate activities that adversely affected the learning environment would mean that it would give it too much power to regulate the educational process given that congress could determine that a school's curriculum had a significant effect on the extent of classroom learning. Indeed, under this approach, the court argued, Congress could even mandate a federal curriculum for primary and secondary schools due to education's substantial effect on interstate commerce. The court found these possibilities flatly impermissible. The court concluded that education had nothing to do with economics, the economy, or commerce in general, which permitted the court to hold that the federal government lacked the authority to mandate what our nation's students should be learning. *Lopez* significantly limited the federal government's power; it actually announced a new era supportive of judicial restraint: it was the first time in over half a century that the Supreme Court limited congressional authority to legislate under the commerce clause, and it was unsurprising that the turn took shape in the context of schooling.

In the second leading case highlighting the limits of congressional powers over state policies, the Supreme Court appears to support the federal power to enact legal mandates. Rather than permit direct federal control over local educational policies, the court has let stand a system where the federal government can provide incentives. The court, in another context, found this approach permissible as it articulated this position in *South Dakota v. Dole* (1987). *Dole* involved a challenge to federal legislation withholding 5% of federal highway funds from states that did not adopt a minimum 21-year-old drinking age. The court upheld the statute as a valid use of the federal government's spending power. The court found such laws permissible as long as the federal government intends the expenditure to serve general public purposes, does not induce states to engage in activities that would themselves be unconstitutional, and does not impermissibly induce or coerce states to enact policies. Accordingly, even if the *Lopez* dicta correctly observed that Congress lacked the authority to require states to adopt certain educational standards under the commerce clause, congress still may, under its spending power, induce states to adopt such standards. Congress may place conditions on grants to state and local governments, provided the conditions of acceptance are clearly stated and have some relationship to the purpose of the spending program and promote the general welfare. As a result, what we have left is a system based on incentives, with the power of Congress essentially curbed to its ability to tie conditions to federal grants. Together, these possibilities continue to champion a focus on local control and comports with the ingrained belief that effective policies derive from local communities.

The Power of Local School Officials

The tradition of localism goes even deeper than leaving matters to state governments. Supreme Court precedent, including the most recent on this matter, reveals how school officials retain the

general right to make curricular and administrative decisions. This important development reflects a move away from recognizing students' own control in engaging their educational environments, a control that the court was believed to have had recognized at mid-century. The court specifically had recognized students' right to protection from governmental intrusion in students' right to engage in speech and right to protection from government-compelled speech. The court had recognized the right in two cases over two decades. In the first case, *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette* (1943), the court used unusually powerful language to find "that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein" (Id., p. 642). The court found a school's requirement that all students salute the U.S. flag an unconstitutional exercise of governmental authority. In the following case, the court delineated its commitment to students' rights. In *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* (1969), which involved a school's prohibition against students' wearing black arm bands to protest the Vietnam War, the court struck down the ban as it found that students may not be confined to the expression of "officially approved" sentiments (Id., p. 511). According to this approach, schools should encourage students to participate in the learning process, rather than impose values. *Tinker* became the court's leading case of the late 1960s, as it harkened the notion that democracy demanded respect for "hazardous" freedoms and that students had a right to those freedoms.

Despite *Tinker's* strong image of democracy, the court eventually placed the power to guide and direct democracy squarely on the schools—on local school officials and teachers. In curricular matters, the Supreme Court has announced that school boards essentially retain complete discretion in deciding the values it wishes to transmit. The leading case in which the court asserted this blanket claim, *Board of Education, Island Trees v. Pico* (1982), actually was one in which the court had ruled against school officials. In that case, a school board had removed a slew of books from its library and had justified the removal on the basis that they were "anti-American, anti-Christian, anti-Semitic, and just plain filthy" (Id., p. 857). The court found that school boards could not remove books based on partisan politics. Although certainly limiting the powers of school boards, the court did so in a way that left the power of schools quite expansive. Most notably, schools still had discretion to remove books based on educationally relevant criteria and the court granted schools with the broad authority to determine which books it could place in the library in the first instance. The court construed the school board's rights as "vitaly important 'in the preparation of individuals for participation as citizens' and...for 'inculcating fundamental values necessary to the maintenance of a democratic political system'" (Id., p. 864). In curricular matters, the court concluded that school boards "might well defend their claim of absolute discretion" to transmit community values (Id., p. 869).

The cases that followed firmly shifted the control of school governance in the direction of school officials. In *Bethel School District v. Fraser* (1986), a 17-year-old senior delivered a sexually charged speech nominating a fellow student for elective office. The court narrowed students' rights as it allowed school officials to curb forms of speech deemed threatening to others, disruptive, and contrary to "shared values" (Id., p. 683). The court balanced tolerance of diverse and unpopular political and religious views against the interests of society in teaching the bounds of "socially appropriate behavior" (Id., p. 681). The power of school authorities, acting as the inculcators of proper community values, was supported and developed further in *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier* (1988). In *Hazelwood*, students alleged that their free speech rights had been violated when the principal deleted two objectionable articles from a school paper. One article had addressed issues of teen pregnancy and the other had described the impact of parental divorce on students. The *Hazelwood* court upheld the authority of school officials to control the content of school-sponsored speech based on "legitimate pedagogical concerns" (Id., p. 273). The *Hazelwood* majority emphasized the role of schools as the primary vehicles for transmitting cultural values

and their discretion in refusing to sponsor student speech that might be perceived as advocating conduct otherwise inconsistent with “the shared values of a civilized social order” (Id., p. 272). These remarkable cases considerably limited the expressive rights of students. The cases installed school authorities as the inculcators of proper community values; schools were to determine community standards and the inculcative function of schools in the manner they wished to teach the bounds of socially appropriate behavior.

The court also has granted local school officials with immense discretion in the manner it treats students, and in doing so the court has affirmed that it more narrowly defines students’ constitutional rights in public school settings than it does those of adults in other settings. Two examples are illustrative. The first example emerged when the Supreme Court directly addressed the constitutionality of schools’ use of corporal punishment in *Ingraham v. Wright* (1977). In *Ingraham*, students had been disciplined with brass knuckles and large wooden paddles, the students were so badly beaten that they had needed medical assistance, including surgery. Some of these students brought suit in federal court arguing that the paddling was “cruel and unusual punishment” and that students should have a right to be heard before suffering physical punishments. The Supreme Court rejected their claim that they had suffered the type of cruel and unusual punishment worthy of protection from under the Eighth Amendment. The court further held that the procedural due process guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment did not require schools to provide notice and a hearing before the application of physical discipline. Rather than being found in the basic principles of the Constitution, the protections were to be found at the local level—in the openness of the school, the professionalism of those who impose punishment, and the civil and criminal remedies available to those who get too severely beaten. Corporal punishment remains a matter under local control.

The second example of schools’ immense power to control students and of the court’s leaving matters to local decision makers involves policies that permit schools to infringe on students’ privacy to determine whether they are using drugs. The cases in this area also confirm the move toward granting school officials increased authority and offer considerable discretion to school officials in their effort to control student behavior. The most recent case, *Board of Education of Independent School District No. 92 of Pottawatomie County v. Earls* (2002), involved a suit brought by students who alleged, among other claims, that the school’s drug testing policy violated the Fourth Amendment (which requires reasonable searches and seizures, most likely supported by warrants and probable cause). The court found that it was not unreasonable to force all students to submit to random drug testing as a condition of participating in school activities, that the schools’ interest in ridding their campuses of drugs outweighs students’ right to privacy, even when the school had not shown that the school was marked by a drug problem or that the targeted students were suspected of drug use. Although the court did struggle to find a proper balance between the rights of individual students and the needs of school officials, it nevertheless opted to broaden the authority of public schools.

Even when the court has found that students have protected liberty interests, it still leaves immense discretion to schools. Two examples again are illustrative. The first example involves suspensions from school. The leading Supreme Court case in this area, *Goss v. Lopez* (1975), held that when students are suspended from school, even for short periods of time, they are entitled to basic due process protections: notice and opportunity to be heard. The court found the need for these protections because the students had, under state law, the right to a public education; the court also continued and found that students had an interest in protecting their reputations, although it did not clearly note the source of that interest. To avoid injustice and damages to their reputation based on allegations of misconduct, the court held that the students may present their side of the situation prior to suspension. The protections granted students actually were surprisingly minimal.

The court again evinced a need to protect local decision makers as it found that students' rights could be protected by an informal hearing that presumes most disciplinary decisions correct and that grants final authority to school officials. The other case that exemplifies the power granted to local officials even when the court finds that students have recognized rights, *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education* (1999), involved Title IX legislation. This case involved a claim that school officials had failed to recognize and respond appropriately to the harassment of a fifth-grade girl by a fellow fifth-grade male student. The court did find that school districts could be held liable. In doing so, however, the court imposed a standard that is very hard to meet and that creates an environment in which schools have very little incentive to create proactive sexual harassment prevention policies (Levesque, 2000). Thus, although a focus on localism may have its benefits, considerable costs still attach to it.

The Significance of Local Power

The immense power granted to those closely entrusted with the education of students is not accidental. Many cherish this closeness to education as they view the teaching of children as a community effort unsuited to the policy making of a distant government. It is a system based on the notion that every parent, indeed every member of the community, wants and knows what is best for the community's children. It is a system based on the notion that parents have the right to control the educational development of their children, and can serve (or elect others to serve) on local boards that oversee educational environments. It also is a system based on the belief that disparate local efforts and reforms serve as laboratories for others. These and other supporting assumptions remain quite powerful. History may be replete with evidence that challenges the view that a particular community can and does grasp precisely what constitutes appropriate education, that parents act on the best interests of others' children, and that communities can support education (see, for example, the need to influence, and in some instances usurp, local control to address racial discrimination; *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954). Despite reason to doubt the ingrained wisdom of placing so much power in the hands of local decision makers for some actions, the strong attachment to local control continues and shapes legal responses.

The attachment to defining education as a local affair complicates efforts to pursue sweeping change to raise educational quality and it helps explain why progress may proceed slowly. For our purposes, this is of significance for three reasons. First, as one can tell from the cases highlighted above, the federal legal system simply provides minimal thresholds. When adopted, these thresholds cannot be said to foster positive youth development. Efforts that control adolescents, deny them access to information, remove them from schools, infringe on their privacy, fail to protect them from harm, and permit them to be treated worse than criminals all run counter to our basic understanding of what would foster positive youth development (see Levesque, 2002a). Second, schools exist to educate students in ways that inculcate them into responsible citizenship and help them adjust normally to their social environments. This reality actually serves as the major rationale for bestowing local officials with considerable power. Those environments for which students are prepared for, however, move beyond the local. School environments help students form certain dispositions by providing ways to organize thoughts, actions, and emotions; and this means that schools necessarily play important roles in the preparation and understanding of values; it also means that schools must aim to transmit values appropriate for the survival of civil society. Our legal systems increasingly provide schools with institutional autonomy to develop students' educated capacities, but the court properly has seen fit to require schools to promote rather than stifle civic attitudes that prepare students for living in democratic, pluralistic, and civil communities. Lastly, and perhaps more fundamentally for those interested in shaping policies affecting youth

development, the focus on localism highlights the need to craft social policies that take into account these realities if we are to move schools toward creating environments that foster positive youth development. The law requires that we take local affairs seriously, a mandate that can actually point us toward more effective implementations of policies given that, at bottom, effective rules must be internalized and become part of everyday relationships.

The Multiplicity of Laws Supporting Positive Youth Development: Their General Nature and Typical Limitations

Given the relatively recent emergence of an identifiable field devoted to the study of “positive youth development,” it would be unreasonable to expect the existence of legal mandates directly requiring schools to follow its principles. A close look at current mandates, however, does reveal numerous ways by which laws already require schools to take seriously several aspects of what constitutes positive youth development. It cannot be said that these mandates are comprehensive, but they do provide an important starting point. These mandates are worth briefly reviewing, for they reveal not only that mandates already exist to support orientations embracing positive youth development but also that states actually could enact such provisions. The mere existence of laws, however, does not guarantee their effectiveness. Despite an impressive array of laws supporting orientations that we could deem as conducive to positive youth development, many trends and tendencies operate to counter the effectiveness of these efforts. As we consider state statutes, then, we briefly consider their limits, an important exercise that can be used to guide us toward envisioning more effective policies.

State Mandates

Most states statutorily address positive youth development through the manner they regulate some aspect of adolescents’ mental health in school contexts. Their mandates, however, are remarkable for their diversity: programs reveal a wide range of curricula and services that differ in terms of aims, scope, implementation, content and qualifications for participation. All states, for example, have enacted laws that address the special psychological, social, and educational needs of specific groups of students. Most notably, all states (spurred by federal mandates) now have laws that address the mental health needs of handicapped or disabled adolescents; some states even single out for special services adolescents with severe emotional disturbances (e.g., Florida Statute, §§ 1006.04, 2007; Vermont Statutes Annotated, tit. 16, § 910, 2007). In addition, some state statutes affirm that schools could provide adolescents who have violated school rules (most notably rules regarding drugs and alcohol) with special services that could include counseling, peer mediation, or other forms of intervention aimed at reducing their problem behavior (Delaware Code, Ch. 14 § 1605A, 2007; Maine Revised Statutes Annotated, 20 § 6606, 2006; New Jersey Statutes, § 18A:40A-11, 2007). Statutes also frequently address the mental health needs of adolescents identified as at risk for school failure; these statutes allow schools to provide special prevention services that frequently address emotional concerns (Arkansas Statutes Annotated, § 6-5-601, 2007; Revised Statute of Missouri, § 166.260, 2007). Given how schools traditionally concerned themselves with educational needs, these statutes certainly reveal the recognition that schooling may well need to focus on students’ mental health.

Statutes address positive youth development in other important ways, some of which require schools to provide for all students rather than those with identified special needs. A most notable example involves fostering positive health through curricular mandates. Most often, states require schools to provide students with some curriculum relating to health education (California Educa-

tion Code, § 51220, 2007; Connecticut General Statutes, § 10-16b, 2007; Indiana Code Annotated, § 20-10.1-4-5, 2007; Virginia Code Annotated, § 22.1-207, 2007). Although these curricular mandates are the most common, they actually deal mainly with physical health and the benefits that derive from a healthful lifestyle. These statutes certainly address important issues, but some states have recognized the need to take an even more comprehensive view of healthy development. At least two states have adopted a very comprehensive view of health to include, for example, emotional development and the promotion of self-esteem or emotional health (Massachusetts Annotated Laws, ch. 69, § 1L, 2007; North Carolina General Statutes, §115C-81, 2007). Rather than more explicitly defining health education as encompassing mental health, other states simply add separate curricular topics and programs that address students' mental health needs. Thus, Wisconsin encourages health education that builds self-esteem and personal responsibility (Wisconsin Statutes Annotated, § 118.019, 2006) and Alabama and Mississippi permit "wellness education" in addition to physical and health education (Alabama Code, § 16-6B-2, 2007; Mississippi Code Annotated, § 37-13-21, 131, 2007). Most notably, though, many states encourage schools to initiate and conduct programs that, in addition to basic health concerns, would address family violence (Alaska Statutes, § 14.30.360, 2007), chemical abuse knowledge, prevention and/or intervention (Arizona Revised Statutes, § 15-712, 2006; Revised Code of Washington, § 28A.170.080, 2007), and sexually transmitted diseases or sexuality education (Alabama Code, § 16-40A-2, 2007; Arizona Revised Statutes, § 15-716, 2006; Arkansas Code Annotated, § 6-18-703, 2007). These curricular mandates highlight the wide variety of ways legislatures attach significance to adolescents' positive development.

In addition to curricular mandates relating to health, state statutes sometimes do legislate the provision of health services. The most notable form of health service involves those provided through school-based health clinics. Much like statutes addressing health in the curriculum, these clinics tend to focus on the physical health needs of students, as exemplified by having nurses as typical designated clinic staff and the failing to mention, for example, social workers (e.g., California Education Code, § 49426, 2007; Minnesota Statute, § 121A.21, 2006; Rhode Island General Laws, § 16-21-7, 2007; South Dakota Codified Laws, § 13-33A-1, 2007). Other types of statutes also provide for school health programs, but they do so in ways that do not necessarily address psychological and social health needs, such as by simply delegating the determination of the nature of services to the Department of Education (Maryland Education Code Annotated, § 7-401, 2007; Mississippi Code Annotated, § 37-13-131, 2007; Revised Statutes of Nebraska Annotated, § 79-713, 2007). Some statutes do address issues beyond physical health needs, as exemplified by the manner some focus on sexual activity and provide statutory language that typically limits the services clinics can offer by, for example, requiring parental consent in order to obtain services (Arkansas Statutes Annotated, § 6-18-703, 2007) and by limiting the psychological or mental health services to, for example, evaluation or consultation and the need to involve parents (Arkansas Statute Annotated, § 6-18-1005, 2007; Connecticut General Statutes, § 10-76v, 2007; Illinois Compiled Statutes Annotated, ch 105, 5/14-1.09.1, 2007; Texas Education Code, § 38.011, 2007). States, then, increasingly do provide services to address students' health; but mandates supporting them remarkably very among states.

In addition to matters dealing directly with positive health, states also address issues relating to positive youth development through legislative requirements that students be taught certain values and virtues in public schools. One of the most explicit examples of this approach involves the manner states frequently require school districts to teach in a manner that promotes civic and moral virtues or require specific curricula directed to the development of those virtues. For example, Utah law requires that "Honesty, Temperance, morality and other skills, habits, and qualities of character which will promote an upright and desirable citizenry and better prepare students for a richer, happier life ... [must be] taught in connection with regular school work" (Utah Code Annotated

53A-13-101(4), 2007). Several other states have statutes that make similar exhortations (see, e.g., Tennessee Code Annotated, § 49-6-1007, 2007; Texas Education Code, § 21.101(d), 2007); Indiana Code Annotated, § 20-10.1-4-4.5, 2007; Rhode Island General Laws, § 16-12-3, 2007). Iowa serves as an exemplar of the more expansive statutes, as it states that “Schools should make every effort, formally and informally, to stress character qualities that will maintain a safe and orderly learning environment, and that will ultimately equip students to be model citizens. These qualities include but are not limited to honesty; responsibility; respect and care for the person and property of others; self-discipline; understanding of, respect for, and obedience to law and citizenship; courage, initiative, commitment, and perseverance; kindness, compassion, service, and loyalty; fairness, moderation, and patience; and the dignity and necessity of hard work” (Iowa Code, § 256.18, 2006). Some states, then, do require schools to support programs that foster personality and social dispositions that could be seen as central to positive youth development. Even those states, however, do so by enacting statutes that render program development largely precatory.

Federal Mandates

Although state level statutes direct the educational policies of schools, it is important to not dismiss the role of federal legislation. As with most federal legislation in areas of traditional state control, federal education legislation developed as a response to the perceived failure of the states to meet certain needs. By addressing these needs, federal efforts clearly have helped create environments conducive to positive youth development. For instance, the earliest federal legislation dealt with providing land grants to states for educational facilities, vocational education, and school lunch plans. However, by the mid 20th century, the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and the subsequent passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 resulted in increased federal interest in the condition and quality of American education. In the early 1970s, Congress enacted the first significant federal mandate for schools to become involved in the psychosocial, mental and social health of their students. The primary and major focus of that legislative activity involved efforts to assist disabled students. These laws required states to have a policy that “assures all children with disabilities the right to a free and appropriate public education” (Title 20 U.S.C., § 1412(1), 1998). Although much of the focus has been on emotionally disabled adolescents, federal legislative enactments also clearly aim to matters considered in the realm of positive youth development. Most notably, for example, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (1994) provided impetus for changes in school based services and programs. *America 2000: An Education Strategy* (1991) outlined eight educational goals for the nation to aspire toward as we prepare for the 21st century. The national agenda for school reform provided a commitment to the socioemotional and physical health of all students, with prominent attention to mental health-related issues.

In addition to educational goals relating directly to emotional health, significant federal legislation directly relates to providing students with educational environments conducive to positive social and emotional development. Most notably, anti-discrimination laws play an important role. Efforts to combat sex and racial discrimination, for example, seek to provide important opportunities for groups that previously were unable to enjoy important educational benefits and environments. For example, education could not contravene equal protection mandates, such as the anti-discrimination statutes prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race (Civil Rights Act of 1964), gender (Title IX Education Amendments of 1972), and disabilities (Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Individuals With Disabilities Act, 1998). Likewise, efforts to redress economic concerns impact the extent to which schools will have the resources to offer effective educations and the extent to which students themselves could have the resources to take advantage of educational opportunities. Efforts to address school violence, with support from federal funds, also importantly

address the needs of adolescents. These, of course, have been highly criticized; but they do remain important areas that must be addressed if schools wish to move more decisively toward shaping educations that foster positive youth development. Lastly and in addition to these impressive mandates, some legislative efforts directly sought to produce positive outcomes by engaging students with their communities. The passage of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 followed by the National Service Trust Act of 1993 generated enthusiasm for service learning at all levels of education. The funds inspired a proliferation of programs throughout the states and encouraged educators and community-based organizations to seek new ways of collaborating. Despite an enduring commitment to protecting the local control of schooling, these developments highlight well the potential role the federal government can take, even if it means that its major power rests on prodding with incentives.

The Limits and Significance of Mandates

The remarkable progress we can witness in formal, legislative responses to education so that schooling can effect positive youth development is not without limitations. The statutes targeting students with special needs are offered only to a small, targeted group of students. The services tend to be reactive, and those that are not are less likely to be provided for through legislation. Likewise, except for disabled or handicapped adolescents, the services are phrased in a precatory manner, i.e., statutes tend to allow schools to offer services rather than mandating them. Yet another limitation involves the tendency to not even define the nature of key concepts; most statutes, for example, tend not to even describe what should be the components of health education. Simply listing health education as a requirement for graduation generally leaves it narrowly defined and equated with physical health. Approaching health in this manner further fails to detail the nature of programs that would be mandated. As a result, these statutes' approach to health generally remains rather broad, vague, and does not offer explicit guidance in terms of what instructors must teach. Likewise, approaching mental health needs by simply adding them to definitions of health reduces the chances that mental health needs will be addressed: statutes typically mandate a health curriculum but only make optional the other curricular programs related to mental health needs, such as those dealing with drugs, violence, and sexuality. In addition, provisions for programs, even those that would most likely include mental health needs, tend to limit what can be taught, which solidifies a focus on physical needs.

Although problematic and, as argued below, in need of reform, the diversity among state statutory mandates is significant for several reasons. First, the diversity reveals the relative failure of most states to address education that would directly address adolescents' mental health, even though states possess the authority to do so. Some states are notable for their absence of mandates that would control the state's approach to health, mental health, or other life-skills education. These states have no statute to regulate what could be labeled as ways that would guide the provision of services or creation of curricular materials that relate to adolescents' mental health. These states offer the least statutory guidance since they do not mention what should or may be taught at all regarding adolescent mental health. Second, the diversity also reveals challenges school systems face in their attempt to provide education: Schools must wrestle with the controversial and complex task of deciding what to teach and how to teach about mental health and provide environments conducive to mental health. This is quite problematic in light of the pervasive failure to detail the rights of individuals involved. Essentially no state explicitly provides for the rights of adolescents who seek services. Maryland provides one notable (but still very narrow) exception. Maryland law preserves the rights of students seeking to overcome drug abuse by making any statement they make to educators in their efforts to seek information to overcome any form of drug abuse

“not admissible against the student in any proceeding” (Maryland Education Code Annotated, § 7-412, 2007). Importantly, other states focus on the rights of others and on essentially discouraging adolescents from seeking assistance; these statutes require reporting the use of alcohol or other controlled substances to authorities and protect those who make reports (Minnesota Statute, § 121A.29, 2007; New Jersey Statutes, § 18A:40A-12, 2007; Rhode Island General Laws, § 16-21-16, 2007). Third, and perhaps more importantly, the general failure amid some statutory mandates reveals that efforts to develop and actually enact statutes that could guide programs at least are within the realm of possibility. States that guide the development of programs through legislation reveal that all states may guide curricular matters regarding mental health education, that they may do so with broad statutory mandates, and that mandates also may provide explicitly for the provision of specific approaches and the delivery of services to adolescents. Current legal principles do not negate the possibility of harnessing the law to ensure the development of environments that would foster optimal adolescent development. Indeed, many legal mandates actually require the creation of programs that foster optimal development and many mandates support the creation of environments conducive to positive youth development.

The Salutary Effects of Statutory Guidance

The diverse ways states guide the delivery of education provides room for considerable legal reforms. Before considering strategies to foster reform and suggesting what appropriate reforms should consider, it is important to understand imperatives that may catalyze efforts for change. Several closely related rationales support the need for enacting policies that can better shape environments conducive to positive youth development.

The presence of statutes creates and helps reinforce state and district education agency policy. This presence is significant for several reasons. Without a statute, program content or effectiveness rests on the extent to which it can maintain political support, which is subject to change given that educational concerns remain within the purview of local politics and are determined largely by the personal relations among individual teachers, parents, and local school officials. In addition, the current focus on protecting local discretion means that the provision of educational programs will vary greatly from region to region as teachers seek to cope with the wishes of parents in their particular schools. Just as policies may vary across districts, policies may change from year to year, depending on who takes office and the desires of different parental groups. Perhaps more important than variations due to location and time is variation in the extent to which schools will take no position and simply not adopt the kinds of programs that can shape positive youth development. The rising focus on core subjects means, for example, that student services and health programs may not have high status in the educational hierarchy, which contributes to the marginalization of services and staff. Rather than be subject to ad hoc support, statutorily recognized services and policies could help determine the significance of the initiatives and increase the likelihood of obtaining funding when scarce resources are allocated among competing goals.

The presence of statutes also can help schools develop a more effective curriculum to the extent that they may clarify administrators' and teachers' roles. For example, existing mandates generally fail to provide for the training of teachers and administrators and they fail to offer guidance for what teachers can do and what curriculum they can follow. The omission is significant. The failure to offer appropriate guides can cast a shadow over class discussions and can create a tendency toward self-censorship. The failure to guide teachers also can place them in awkward and compromising situations when students seek confidential advice regarding, for example, the desire to engage in certain activities. The Supreme Court has yet to delineate the free speech rights of public school teachers; nor do states provide clear legislative mandates that would guide teachers. The lack of

clear authority most likely casts a pall of orthodoxy over students and creates schools that fail to engage students as fully as they could.

In addition to clarifying the role of teachers and administrators, effective policies could clarify the nature of parental and students' rights. We know, for example, that parents retain the right to control their children's upbringing, including their educational development. Our legal system permits parents to send children to private schools (*Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 1925) and even to withdraw them from formal schooling altogether, so long as education is provided (*Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 1972). Few educational statutes clearly address parental rights. State statutes that do address the place of parents tend to provide unhelpful language that simply views parents as partners in educating children (see, e.g., Texas Education Code, § 4.001, 2007). Some states, however, use the opportunity to claim that parents have the right to direct their children's education (see, e.g., Michigan Statutes Annotated, § 15.4005, 2007), which for some states includes the power to exclude their children from curricular requirements, even if their children do not want to be excused (see, e.g., Utah Administrative Regulations, 277-105-5C, 2007). Similarly, some states prohibit schools from referring students to psychiatric treatment without parental consent (South Dakota Codified Laws, § 13-32-3, 2007). Although states do seek to respect parental rights, it is important to note that states all leave determinations of curricular matters to school officials who, at most, may be required to receive input from parents and community members. This may mean that parents may not have the right to control the curricular decisions of schools, but given that schools now perform many functions, such as providing health services, the rights of parents still may remain quite strong. Most notably, parents retain the right to control the mental health treatment of their children (*Parham v. J. R.*, 1979) and have a general right to control their medical care (Levesque, 2002b). Despite the rights of parents, the Supreme Court has recognized instances in which children may have the right to obtain services without their parents' permission (*Bellotti v. Baird*, 1979) and a slew of exceptions permit adolescents to have access to medical care (see Levesque, 2000, 2002b). These rules, however, are remarkable for their diversity. It would be helpful if states provided more clarity in their approaches to the rights of individual family members.

Clearly delineated standards also are necessary to protect teachers and school personnel in ways that also protect adolescents' rights. This is particularly important when dealing with issues of violence and attempts to discuss potentially controversial topics. A public official has a defense of qualified immunity to a section 1983 action (actions that allow victims of rights violations to sue those who denied these rights) if she can show that her actions did not violate clearly established law (*Harlow v. Fitzgerald*, 1982). The court has held that "the right the official is alleged to have violated must have been 'clearly established' in a more particularized, and hence more relevant sense: [t]he contours of the right must be sufficiently clear that a reasonable official would understand that what he is doing violates that right" (*Anderson v. Creighton*, 1987, p. 640). The Supreme Court's precedents reveal the importance of policies; statutory mandates could help determine what remains discretionary, which would protect both the rights of school personnel and those of adolescents.

Statutory frameworks could help those who would implement the mandates and assist researchers in their design of better interventions. Well-delineated statutes would provide researchers with clear, measurable outcomes, such as rates of violence, youths' emotional development, and nature of sexual behavior. In terms of implementation, the mandates would help determine the extent to which programs could receive funding. Currently, few schools can afford the curricula and resources needed to make effective use of some programs. By systematizing research, statutes could help ensure the development of more usable knowledge that allows policy makers to focus their attention on the areas of greatest need and those that contribute to failure. Likewise, the guidance could help support programs long enough to determine their effectiveness and factors that

could ameliorate outcomes. Effective statutes would thus assure the foundation for much needed evaluative research.

Lastly, statutory guidance could help focus educational systems toward a more proactive, preventative, and enabling approach to adolescent development. Appropriate legislation can help ensure that schools remain faithful to their mission. As we have seen, schools necessarily exist to inculcate values, enhance mental health, and foster the development of productive citizens. The role statutes can play is particularly important and obvious in the context of dealing with violence and gaining access to services to deal with matters of mental health. Statutes are more than practical tools. Legal recognition helps ensure that adolescents know that they can be victims or can have mental health problems and that assistance is available to them. Statutes also can play a key role in fostering informational environments that help, for example, students better engage the diverse media that society still cannot regulate in ways that do not adversely affect healthy developmental outcomes (Levesque, 2007). Similarly, despite the prevailing belief that public schools must refrain from addressing spiritual and religious matters, a close look at legal mandates reveals that schools can address these issues (Levesque, 2002c). Addressing matters relating to the meaning of life and one's place in society certainly figures prominently in many adolescent's concerns (Id.). Rather than viewing these issues as simply individual concerns that hopefully will eventuate in positive outcomes, recognition would help confirm society's obligation to assist adolescents and would reinforce adolescents' access to environments that can enable them, and society, to reach positive outcomes.

Crafting Effective Policies and Taking the Law Seriously

The current reality of the legal regulation of schools and of trends in educational reform leads to important conclusions. The legal system always has sought to regulate adolescents' educations. These laws contradict popular perceptions that laws only now address schools' responses to problems associated with adolescent life. The existence of these laws challenges the even more popular perception that laws unduly stifle the discretion of educators. Rather than finding an over-regulation of schooling, a close look at existing legal mandates reveals that schools have very limited legal obligations to ensure students' safety, need not foster socially-minded citizens, and need not address the mental health needs of most of their students. In a real sense, schools need not foster students' positive development. Indeed, the law actually poses numerous obstacles for those who would want to invoke existing mandates to ensure that students receive more adequate educations. In addition, surprisingly few legislative mandates structure states' responses to education. Although the legal system does provide broad parameters, it pervasively fails to structure schools' efforts. The current legal regulation of education, then, confirms how schools' responsibilities actually remain remarkably minimal. These requirements are likely to become even more minimal given recent legislative efforts to "deregulate" public schools, as evidenced by a system of vouchers (Levesque, 2002c). Yet, laws clearly can play a more central role in fostering the development of curricular activities, extracurricular programs, and educational environments more conducive to positive youth development. In light of our previous discussion, we can conclude that reaching these goals requires policies to address at least four central issues.

Our analyses reveal that schools can increase positive youth development by adopting clear policies that shape responsive and structured environments. At the very least, the law can help ensure that schools recognize and respond to the need for the type of structured environments linked to positive adolescent development. The law can require the establishment of policies, guide educational experiences, and help develop environments conducive to following policies. Thus, the law can require schools to set clear policies to structure safe school environments and respond

to disruptive forces. The law also can guide the development of curricular programs that foster prosocial behavior. The law also may help foster school climates that respond better to adolescents' psychological needs. These potential roles may seem rather straightforward and obvious. Given that schools pervasively operate without policies, however, taking the proposals seriously would shift current conceptions of adolescents' educational rights. States pervasively lack clear policies to guide the social development of students and to create healthy school environments. The effort, however, would be neither unjustified nor unfeasible. Our understanding of positive youth development leads us to conclude that effective policies enumerate improper conduct, educate students about policies, foster students' skills and abilities to tailor their conduct to responsible behavior, and effectively provide adolescents with access to redress both within schools and outside of them.

Our analyses also reveal that creating environments conducive to positive development necessarily involves fostering school accountability. As we have seen, the most accepted way the legal system holds schools accountable is through funding or holding teachers and officials financially responsible for failures. We have seen that these efforts evince important limits. Most notably, the standards are so high to reach that those challenging failures are unlikely to obtain favorable results, our legal system does not recognize what some would see as violations as the type of violations worth redressing, standards focus on minimal requirements or permit parents to determine the proper response to students' needs, increasing competition among schools (as through vouchers) may not necessarily result in addressing students' social and psychological needs, and current legal mandates offer school officials great deference and discretion that translate into the inability to hold schools liable. These limitations counsel us to seek alternatives.

The most reasonable way to enhance accountability would be to have the legal system foster environments supportive of school accountability. This approach takes a much more programmatic view of rights; it views rights more as ways to structure environments so that they ensure the development of environments that increase rights-consciousness and internalization of mandates. These environments are largely self-enforcing; external environments (e.g., courts and legislatures) serve to ensure that the proper alternatives, boundaries, and appropriate issue resolution mechanisms are in place. Although not the subject of commentaries in the study of positive youth development, the need to focus on the internalization of rules has a long history in our understanding of how and why individuals follow rules (for a review, see Levesque, 2006). This approach simply requires that schools make policies and standards known and actually integrated into school environments, rather than simply, at best, requiring the enactment of policies. In the context of addressing violence, for example, effective responses would require schools to (a) enhance awareness among students, teachers and school officials, (b) provide students with an adequate complaint or reporting mechanism, (c) take appropriate steps to react to reports of violence, and (d) provide individuals with skills to respond to actual and potential violence. Schools also could enact policies that address mental health concerns. They could (a) increase awareness of the nature of positive mental health, (b) provide environments conducive to seeking and benefiting from support, and (c) require a concerted effort to respond appropriately to students' needs and concerns. Current laws again pervasively fail to promote these types of environments. Effective policies would address the central limitations of current responses: the failure to enhance awareness and failure to provide supportive environments conducive to internalizing values necessary for positive youth development. The legal system can serve as a supportive and awareness-enhancing mechanism by ensuring the development of enabling structures.

Our analyses reveal that we must not ignore a third component of effective policies relating to students: the need to support familial obligations. The legal system generally grants parents the right and responsibility to control their children's educational experiences as well as their rights when involved in juvenile, mental health, and school systems. As we have seen, the power

of parents remains so great that they may remove their children from public schools and educate them in alternative educational environments of their choice. The rights and necessary roles of parents certainly limit the potential reach and nature of school reform. Yet, neither parental rights nor their roles must remain immune from reform efforts to foster adolescent development in ways that could help achieve more positive outcomes. The current system still allows for encouraging families to adopt orientations that would more likely foster healthy adolescent development. Most notably, laws exempt the need for parental consent for many medical services, and those exceptions relate to the potential harm adolescents would endure or the burden their harms would place on society. The legal system also can serve to challenge attitudes that regularly generate, legitimize, and reinforce negative outcomes. The legal system can support families and engage in family building through community supports and partnerships and can provide for parenting and family skills development programs. Social commitment to these programs has yet to match and recognize the extent to which even existing programs actually can powerfully impact families at risk and help foster more positive adolescent development.

Given that schools and families persistently encounter difficulties in their efforts to provide supportive environments, another necessary component of policies must include ways to provide students with alternative ways to address their developmental needs. Adolescents' environments and experiences would be enhanced if schools were able to connect adolescents to service providing institutions, including service-provisions within schools. At a minimum, this approach to reform envisions providing adolescents with better access to juvenile justice, mental health, and legal systems. This approach could also include connecting youth to organizations known for effective mentoring. These efforts typically would take four forms. They would (a) complement schools' and parents' roles, (b) provide adolescents with exits from failing families and school environments, (c) ensure support for adolescents to exercise their rights to access services, and (d) connect students to appropriately structured environments. These directions simply seek to benefit from what we know about effective service provision. Effective services emerge from environments that provide adolescents with basic knowledge about the services, skills to seek out services, and ways to maintain involvement in needed services. Legal mandates could help school systems and students better exploit services in ways that would foster healthy adolescent development. The legal system already has made immense progress in recognizing adolescents' rights in medical and mental health contexts (see, e.g., Levesque, 2000). Although an important development, merely providing access to possible services remains inadequate and results in failed service delivery. Adolescents often fail to seek formal needed support simply because they may be unaware of available opportunities for assistance, may rely on informal social networks, or may define their adversities as requiring no intervention (Levesque, 2007). Failing to offer support to actually get the needed services has the added negative effect of concealing the need for services, which results in viewing the services as unnecessary and, eventually, contributing to their demise. The underutilization of formal support services indicates a possible role for the legal system. Most notably, a burden could be placed on school personnel to direct adolescents to support services, rather than, as current obligations tend to have it, allow school personnel to dispense with their limited obligations by alerting others to problems (as with child maltreatment laws, Levesque, 2002b). The development of these efforts are far from radical; numerous exceptions erode the general rule that parents control adolescents' access to these services, including controversial medical services deemed important to adolescents (see *Bellotti v. Baird*, 1979).

Conclusion

Developmentalists now know the sources of positive youth development, and their research contributes to the development of principles identified as effective in fostering more positive devel-

opmental outcomes. These principles include, for example, the need for educational environments to address students' psychosocial needs, foster participation and inclusion in matters important to them, help them develop a sense of control and positive self-concept, and provide them with needed structure. Research also indicates that comprehensive programs and effective school environments can promote positive youth development.

Despite advances in our understanding of development, it cannot be said that education policy takes that research seriously. Our legal system is fraught with examples of ways that run counter to our understanding of what could contribute to positive youth development. The most recent Supreme Court cases dealing with students' rights and school climates reveals the incredible extent to which our Constitution permits policies that run counter to what we know constitutes the foundations of relationships conducive to positive youth development. That the legal system sometimes does respond effectively, however, means that it can permit, encourage and even require schools to address students' developmental needs more effectively. We have seen, for example, that the legal system can guide the use of clinics, determine the availability and implementation of curricular programs, ensure that adolescents are exposed to appropriate knowledge and skill-building activities, delineate the boundaries of what schools can do, and channel school officials' and parents' actions with accepted rationales that balance their own needs with those of society and individual students. Similarly, the legal system can help schools shape the role parents play in their children's educations and, equally importantly, can help foster adolescents' familial and communal relationships. Likewise, the legal system can ensure that schools provide adolescents with supportive environments that increase awareness about the nature of, need for, and access to services, even to services outside of schools. There is no doubt that the legal system's role relies heavily on those closely involved in the implementation of these efforts, but it does not mean that communities, administrators, teachers, parents, and students should be left to fend for themselves. Educations' promise can be reached only if we take seriously the exhortation that schools exist to provide for the common good, for individual fulfillment fostered by the values, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for living in democratic, pluralistic, and civil communities.

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