

Chapter 11: Education and Student Wellbeing

– Professor Toni Noble

Education is the transmission of civilization.

~ Will Durant

It is a greater work to educate a child, in the true and larger sense of the word, than to rule a state.

~ William Ellery Channing

Introduction

Our children are our future. Education is the key to creating new possibilities for creating a safe, socially and ecologically responsible global order that enhances human happiness and wellbeing of all life. Through education we can capture the hearts and minds of our children and young people to the new development paradigm. Our challenge in education is to develop our young people's capacities as active responsible learners and global citizens who thrive and flourish in the complex world of the 21st century.

Educational goals and skills for the 21st century

All educators in both developing countries and developed countries understand that change is the hallmark of history but the exponential rate of change in the 21st century demands new goals for education to help our children and young people flourish. To gain support from educators worldwide in developing sustainable happiness and wellbeing for the children and young people in our schools it seems prudent to consider how this goal meshes with current goals for education in the 21st century. There is now a consensus in education that a focus only on learners' acquisition of discipline knowledge is now out of kilter with the needs of learners in the 21st century.

This focus on learners' skills and understandings is reflected in the United Nations goals for education: to make people wiser, more knowledgeable, better informed, ethical, responsible citizens who are critical thinkers, and capable of life long learning. The four United Nations pillars of Education for the 21st century offer a paradigm for quality education for all children. The four pillars are learning to live together, learning to know, learning to do and learning to be (Delors et al., 1996). These four pillars are described here and developed further to align with the New Development Paradigm and other frameworks on educational skills for the 21st century.

Learning to live together includes explicitly teaching young people the values that connect people, build relationships, strengthen communities and enhance their acceptance and valuing of social, cultural and religious diversity. Learning to live together is also understanding the critical interdependence of our local and global community and learning how to collaboratively work with others on a common goal or project. This pillar extends to developing learners as active and informed citizens who act with moral and ethical integrity and develop into responsible local and global citizens.

Learning to know is more concerned with helping young people learn how to learn and much less with the acquisition of structured discipline knowledge. Learning how to learn refers to developing learners' skills in using effective learning strategies such as the capacity for critical thinking, and using sound evidence in support of their argument, in solving problems and in making decisions.

Learning to do refers to the capacity development of young people in the skills required by the world of work whatever their chosen occupation. These skills include communication skills, teamwork and collaborative skills and problem solving skills as well as their capacity to be resilient in the face of adversity.

Learning to be focuses on providing opportunities to foster young people's aesthetic, artistic, scientific, cultural and social discovery and experimentation, and to stimulate their imagination and creativity.

The four pillars proposed by the United Nations complement the 21st century skills as identified in a major international project that involved a group of 250 researchers across 60 institutions worldwide (Griffin, McGaw & Care, 2012). The ten important skills for learners that evolved from an analysis of international educational curriculum and assessment frameworks fall into the following four broad categories.

Ways of thinking (learning to know)

- Creativity and innovation,
- Critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making
- Learning to learn, metacognition

Ways of working (learning to do)

- Communication

Happiness

- Collaboration (teamwork)

Tools for working

- Information and communications technology (ICT)
- Information literacy (includes research on sources, evidence, biases, etc.)

Skills for living in the world (learning to live together)

- Citizenship- local and global,
- Life and career
- Personal and social responsibility- including cultural awareness and competence

These ten skills are life skills, not just skills learned at school. The key difference between the pillars proposed by the United Nations and the more recent skills identified by the international team led by Griffin (2012) for the 21st century is that children's use of information and communications technology has increased significantly in the last five years in Western countries and even in developing countries with widespread mobile phone networks throughout Asia. The use of information and communications technology highlights that learning in the 21st century can occur at any time and any place, not just in schools. Even infants and toddlers are learning through the use of iPads and mobile phones and education for the 21st century must also teach the ICT and information literacy *tools for working*.

It is also recommended that the *skills for living in the world* be extended to focus on the roots of deep abiding happiness that comes from living life in full harmony with the natural world, with our communities and fellow beings, and with our culture and spiritual heritage (New Development Paradigm).

What can schools or school systems do to embed these 21st century skills and understandings into educational practices for sustainable wellbeing?

Although education is a broader concept than schooling, our children's education depends on the quality of our schools and their teachers. Schools are the most important social institution for helping children to learn the skills, knowledge and understandings that are critical for sustainable wellbeing in the 21st century.

School systems, governments and policy makers are increasingly focusing on the role of coordinated educational initiatives in promoting mental health and wellbeing in young people. A meta-analysis undertaken by the Collaborative for Academic and Social and Emotional (Durlak et al. 2011) of 213 research studies into the effectiveness of school-based social and emotional programs identified

that there were significant improvements in students' social-emotional skills and their sense of feeling more connected to their school (Durlak et al., 2011) as a result of participating in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs. The participating schools also documented a 44% decrease in suspensions and a 27% decrease in other disciplinary actions. Academic achievement scores improved by 11 to 17 percentiles that illustrates the strong interdependence of student wellbeing with student learning. The school-based programs were also most effective at increasing academic achievement when taught by the classroom teacher, rather than a visiting specialist. A classroom teacher can embed the program into their classroom and school practices, and integrate the social-emotional learning with the academic curriculum. The teacher can also customise the program for individual student's needs or the class as a whole.

Diekstra (2008) also conducted a meta-analysis of worldwide research studies into the effectiveness of school-based social and emotional learning programs. The study concluded that enhanced social & emotional development is the key to the overall development of students in terms of their personality, academic progress, school career and societal functioning. Universal school-based social and emotional learning programs were seen as highly beneficial for children and adolescents, especially those implemented with students aged between 5 and 13 (ie in primary/elementary schools). Young people from low socio-economic status and different ethnic backgrounds were found to benefit at least as much as other young people (and often more) from social and emotional programs.

School-based pathways for sustained student wellbeing

The following section explores evidence-based 'wellbeing pathways' that describe the directions schools can take to enhance sustained student wellbeing and their engagement in learning. These pathways are

1. *Building a supportive, respectful and connected school community* based on values education and the intentional development of positive relationships
2. *Developing Social-Emotional Learning Skills, Thinking Skills & ICT Skills*
3. *Using strengths-based approaches*
4. *Fostering a sense of meaning and purpose* through community engagement and student ownership

All four pathways are derived from the research literature that strongly links student wellbeing with student engagement in learning and learning outcomes (Noble et al., 2008).

Sustainable student wellbeing is seen as an outcome of these pathways. All the wellbeing pathways are inevitably interrelated and interdependent but also discrete enough to be separable. The more pathways that a student is able to access at school, the better their education and the higher their level of wellbeing. All four pathways together contribute to developing a holistic, dynamic and connected school community that ensures a more sustainable and equitable education for all children that is central to promoting happiness and wellbeing for all (students, teachers, parents and the local community).

Pathway 1: Building a supportive, respectful and connected school community based on values education and the intentional development of positive relationships

Interdependence is not a theory, but a practical reality that impacts our everyday lives (New Development Paradigm).

This section first addresses how values can be embedded in school practices and curriculum and then reviews the importance of positive relationships for sustained student wellbeing and positive schools.

Values Education

Sustained happiness and wellbeing is underpinned by positive values that strengthen communities. Values are intrinsic to all that a school does. A starting point in building a supportive, respectful and connected school culture is to help a school community clarify and reach agreement about the values that guide the school's practices. If a school articulates pro-social values through its vision statement, policies, structures and teaching practices, then these values form a 'moral map' that guides how everyone in the school community interacts and communicates with each other and the positive choices they make. The importance of learning to act in accord with one's pro-social values for sustained wellbeing in one's youth is illustrated by a longitudinal study that tracked high school students over fifty years into late adulthood. The students were interviewed every ten years and the results demonstrated that 'giving' adolescents became both psychologically and physically healthier adults (Wink et al. 2007).

The critical importance of a whole school approach to values education was endorsed by the Australian Government's Values Education Project that involved 166 schools in 26 school clusters and 70,000 students. Acting in accord with positive values ensures that everyone in the school community understands that their happiness and wellbeing derives from contributing to the happiness of others. The project's final report observed that '*involving more*

people in the enterprise takes more time but ensures deeper commitment, stronger consistency and durable continuity beyond personnel changes.'

What are the values that resonant across cultures and are universally acceptable to both individualistic Western cultures as well as collectivist cultures of Africa, Asia and the Middle East? According to the former President of UNESCO, Lourdes Quisumbing values are an integral component of education and are essential if an individual is to 'survive, to live and work in dignity and to continue learning'. Arguably values are essential to help individuals and communities to flourish. The values Quisumbing identifies for personal and social transformation are peace, human rights, dignity, democracy, tolerance, justice, cooperation and sustainable development.

From surveys of more than 25,000 people in 44 countries, Schwartz and his colleagues (2011) identified ten types of universal values. These values fall on two dimensions: *self-transcendence* that is more concerned with collective interests and *self-enhancement* that is more concerned with individual interests.

- *Self-enhancement* (individualism) is represented by nine values in Schwartz' research: social power, wealth, social recognition, authority, self respect, ambition, influence, capability and success.
- *Self-transcendence* (collectivism) is represented by fifteen values: equality, a world at peace, unity with nature, wisdom, a world of beauty, social justice, broadmindedness, a protected environment, mature love, true friendship, loyalty, honesty, helpfulness, responsibility and forgiveness. Of interest to education for sustained student wellbeing, people who give priority to self-transcendent values are more willing to engage in altruistic, cooperative and/or ecologically responsible behaviour than people who give priority to individual or self-enhancement values.

Teaching values

How can self-transcendent values that accord with sustainable wellbeing be readily communicated to schools and especially to children and young people so these values effectively guide their behaviour? The Australian Values Education Good Practice Schools Projects found that effective values education meant that a school's shared values must be explicitly articulated, explicitly taught, modelled by staff and embedded in the mainstream life of the school. This means values education is integrated in the mainstream curriculum rather than as an 'add-on' or separate to the academic curriculum and that teachers consciously create many opportunities for students to practise the values.

One example is the articulation of the following core values which have been taught to children as young as four and five years of age through to teenagers using children's literature, media stories, role-plays, writing activities and opportunities for students to engage in classroom and school community activities that provide service to others (McGrath & Noble, 2011).

- *Compassion*: Caring about the wellbeing of others and helping where you can;
- *Cooperation*: Working together to achieve a shared goal. Cooperating includes cooperating for world peace and for the protection of our environment.
- *Acceptance of differences*: Recognising the right of others to be different and not excluding or mistreating them because they are different; acting on the inclusive belief that diversity is to be celebrated and others are fundamentally good;
- *Respect for others*: Acting towards others in ways that respect their rights; for example to have dignity, have their feelings considered, be safe and be treated fairly;
- *Friendliness*: Acting towards others in an inclusive and kind way;
- *Honesty*: Telling the truth, and owning up to anything you have done;
- *Fairness*: Focusing on equity and addressing injustices; and
- *Responsibility*: Acting in ways that honour promises and commitments and looking after the wellbeing of those less able.

Values education initiatives in schools have been shown to extend the strategies, options and repertoires of teachers in effectively managing learning environments and in developing supportive and connected school and class cultures that positively connect learners with their classmates and teachers (Lovat & Clement 2008; Carr, 2006). A focus on values increases children's sense of safety from bullying and harassment (Battistich *et al.*, 2001; Cowie & Olafsson, 2000; Cross *et al.*, 2004a; Flannery *et al.*, 2003; Frey *et al.*, 2000). From their experience in working with schools implementing the Australian Framework in Values Education, Lovat and Toomey (2007) conclude that values education is at the heart of quality teaching. Many of the school projects funded by this Values initiative engaged students in purposeful authentic learning activities that were valued by the students, had broad community value and met or exceeded mandated curriculum goals (Holdsworth, 2002).

A Case Study

Values in action across the school

When I met Gerda v d Westhuizen she was the principal of the Observatory School for Girls, a school in a very impoverished area of Johannesburg where many families were refugees from other African countries, where often four families shared one room, and where there was no hope of work for most of these families who were just surviving. Gerda's explicit focus on values formed the core business of the whole school community. She chose one of the twelve values from the *Living Values* program every two weeks to become the central focus for everyone's work and behaviour across the school. The twelve Living Values are freedom, cooperation, tolerance, happiness, honesty, love, peace, humility, respect, responsibility, simplicity, and unity. Gerda drew the children's attention to the current value by making a visually stimulating and eye-catching display of the value and especially the actions the students could take to put that value into action. This display was on a notice board in a prominent place in the school playground. The most highly prized award in the school was the opportunity that a student at each grade level had to wear the values gold sash award for a week that showed that this student had been observed putting this value into action through their interactions with others across the school.

Positive Relationships

We are all deeply social beings. A child's sense of belonging and the support provided by close personal relationships with peers and teachers is vital to their wellbeing. Isolation or exclusion exacts a very high emotional price. Children's wellbeing at school comes from being connected to their peers and teachers and their collaborative engagement in learning.

Positive peer relationships

A student's level of social competence and their friendship networks are predictive of their academic achievement (Caprara et al., 2000; Wentzel & Caldwell, 1997). A significant meta-analysis of 148 studies involving 17,000 students conducted in 11 different countries found positive peer relationships explained 33-40% of variation in academic achievement (Roseth, Johnson & Johnson 2008). Feeling accepted by peers and having positive peer interactions can enhance the confidence of vulnerable students and make it more likely that they will behave in ways that further encourage positive relationships with others. Criss et al. (2002) have demonstrated that peer acceptance and peer friendships can moderate aggressive and acting-out behaviour in young children with family backgrounds characterised by family adversity such as economic/ecological disadvantage, violent marital conflict and harsh family discipline. Research suggests that having high-quality friendships, or at least

one best friend, can help prevent children and young people from being bullied (Bollmer et al., 2005; Fox 2006).

The number of friendships that a child has is not as important as the quality of those friendships. Werner and Smith (1982) identified that resilient young people, although not necessarily popular, tended to develop a small number of friendships with people who stuck with them, sometimes from primary school through to middle age. High quality friendships are characterised by this kind of loyalty and support as well as a willingness to stand up for their friend (Bollmer et al., 2005). Poor quality friendships feature negative characteristics such as conflict or betrayal & have been linked with emotional difficulties (Greco & Morris 2005). In some cases bullying can occur within low-quality friendships (Mishima 2003; Mishna et al., 2008). It is helpful to teach children and young people skills for making and keeping friends but also skills for monitoring the quality of one's friendships.

Friendships at school can provide a buffer for students if they are bullied or having difficulties. Adolescent girls in particular are more likely to seek peer support than family support when they are experiencing difficulties (Fischmann & Cotterell, 2000). Friendships provide students with intimacy, a sense of belonging, security, validation and affirmation and social and practical support. They also offer opportunities for learners to practise and refine their social skills and discuss moral dilemmas. This assists in the development of their empathy and socio-moral reasoning (Hodges Boivin Bukowski & Vitaro, 1999; Schonert-Reichel, 1999; Thoma & Ladewig 1991).

Positive Teacher-student Relationships

Positive teacher-student relationships play an important role in students' resilience and wellbeing (Brazelton & Greenspan, 2000; Geary, 1988; Nadel & Muir, 2005; Raskauskas et al., 2010; Weare, 2000). The quality of the teacher-student relationship has also been shown to be one of the most significant factors influencing student learning outcomes (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hattie, 2009; Rowe, 2001). Many studies have found that children with close positive teacher-student relationships achieve more highly, have more positive attitudes toward school, are more engaged in the learning that occurs in the classroom and are less likely to repeat a grade (e.g. Birch and Ladd 1997; Hamre and Pianta, 2001).

Many researchers and educators have argued that teachers' relationships with their students cannot just be left to chance and that it is a teacher's professional responsibility to ensure that they establish a positive relationship with each student (Krause et al. 2006; Marzano et al., 2003; Smeyers, 1999). Both teachers and students believe that fostering positive relationships with students is a core

aspect of what effective teachers do (Hattie, 2009; Good & Brophy, 2000; Larrivee, 2005). When evaluating whether or not their teacher is a 'good teacher', students tend to focus most on the interpersonal quality of their relationship with them (Rowe 2004; Slade & Trent, 2000; Werner 2000; Dornbusch, 1999).

Meta-analytical research undertaken by Marzano (2003) strongly suggests that positive teacher-student relationships are also the foundation of effective classroom management. In his meta-analysis of research studies Marzano (2003) found that, on average, teachers who had high-quality relationships with their students had 31 percent fewer discipline and related problems in a given year than did teachers who did not have this type of relationship with their students.

High quality teacher-student relationships are characterised by involvement, emotional safety, understanding, warmth, closeness, trust, respect, care and support (Brazelton & Greenspan, 2000; Good & Brophy, 2000; Krause et al. 2006; Larrivee 2005; Noddings, 2005). Teachers who have positive relationships with their students are more likely to behave towards them in the following ways:

- They acknowledge them, greet them by name and with a smile & notice when they are absent (Benard 1997; Stipek 2006).
- They respond to misbehaviour with explanations rather than with punishment or coercion (Bergin & Bergin 2009; Noddings 1992; Stipek 2006)
- They take a personal interest in them as individuals and get to know them (Marzano 2003; Stipek 2006); they also endeavour to know and understand them as individuals with a life outside school (Trent, 2001)
- They are available and approachable (Pianta 1999; Weissberg Caplan & Harwood, 1991)
- They are fair and respectful. (Stipek, 2006). Keddie and Churchill (2003) found that, when asked what they liked about the good relationships they had with certain teachers, adolescent boys most frequently referred to the fair and respectful way in which their teachers treated them.
- They have fun with their students and let students get to know them through some degree of self-disclosure and being 'real' with them (Davis 1993). In this way common interests and experiences can be identified.
- They support their students in the development of autonomy e.g. by offering choice and opportunities for students to be involved in decision-making (Gurland and Grolnick 2003).
- They listen to them when they have concerns or worries and offer emotional support (Benard, 1997).

High quality teacher-student relationships lead to feelings of security that empower children to interact confidently with their environment and encourage them to adopt the behaviour and values modelled by their teacher (Bergin & Bergin 2009). Children's behaviour will be influenced by the behaviour of people around them that they trust or who function as a secure base within a relationship (Masten and Obradović 2008). Feelings of security also promote child self-reliance and independence (Bretherton and Munholland, 1999).

Students who believe that their teachers care about them are more motivated to try hard, pay attention in class and do well and are therefore more likely to achieve and stay in school rather than drop out (Benard 2004; Pianta 1999; Sztejnberg et al. 2004; Wentzel 1997). Students who experience good relationships with their teachers are more likely to be open and responsive to their directives and advice (Gregory et al. 2010) and more reluctant to disappoint them by failing to complete assignments, being absent from school or engaging in anti-social behaviour (Stipek, 2006) The way in which a teacher responds to a vulnerable student can also 'set the tone' for how peers respond to that student (Hughes Cavell & Wilson, 2001). This increases the likelihood that a student will be accepted by his/her classmates.

A Case Study

Buddy programs for whole school positive relationships

The implementation of buddy programs that involve all students and all staff including administration and support staff illustrate one school's focus on the importance of building positive relationships across the whole school community. Like many schools, St Charles Borromeo Primary School in Melbourne for many years has successfully run a buddy program where the year 5 and year 6 children (10-12 year olds) become a buddy for a child (5/6 year old) in their first year of school. The buddies connect with each other during informal times in the playground as well as during formal lesson times where the Year six children act as tutors. But St Charles takes the concept of a buddy program further. The years 1/2 children buddy up with the years 3/4 children. Also the school teams up the year 5 children with 'an oldie' at a nearby residential home for elderly people. Once a term (4 times per year) the children and the elderly take turns at hosting a meeting at the residential home or the school and learning from each other. For example the children might teach their elderly buddy about technology such as sending emails etc and the 'oldies' might teach a card game or about their life when they were young. Another variation of the buddy program is that each year 6 child has an adult staff mentor as a buddy who meets their year 6 buddy regularly to prepare them for secondary schooling and early adolescence. Also all new parents/carers are buddied up with existing parents/carers to facilitate their entry into the school community. In all examples of the school's buddy programs the focus is on

reciprocity where both 'buddies' benefit from the positive relationship, gain in-school-community support and value diversity in age, gender, and cultural backgrounds (Cahill, 2012).

Pathway 2: Developing Social-Emotional Competencies and Thinking Skills

A learner's engagement in their schooling and education can be viewed from four perspectives: social engagement, behavioural engagement, emotional engagement and cognitive engagement. When learners are *socially engaged* they are effectively communicating with their classmates and teacher, working well in a team and cooperating well with others by using social skills such as turn taking, active listening, and negotiating. When students are *emotionally engaged* in learning in a positive way they are interested, curious, excited, confident, joyful and they are proud of their learning products. When students are *behaviourally engaged* they are positive, respectful participants who are actively involved in the learning process whether it be an individual, group or class activity. These social-emotional skills encapsulate the '*Ways of working/learning to do*' skills seen as essential for sustained wellbeing in 21st century. These social-emotional skills also underpin the development of positive relationships in the short term and for life-long learning and life and represent the *Skills for living in the world* (learning to live together).

When students are *cognitively engaged* they are intellectually challenged and stretched by their learning activity. They show a capacity to be self-regulated, and they are prepared to persevere even when the task is difficult. They are also more likely to employ critical and creative thinking as they analyse possible solutions and build on each other's ideas to solve the problem or task at hand. These thinking skills incorporate the *Ways of thinking* (learning to know). Cognitively challenging students is important for all students but appears to be particularly important for students who traditionally may be perceived as 'poor learners'. When teachers collectively raised their expectations of all their students, made their students clearly aware of these high expectations, and provided challenging learning experiences, they consistently observed improvements in their students' learning, and in their self confidence and behaviour (Groundwater-Smith & Kemmis, 2004).

The use of information communication technology (*tools for working*) can create a highly motivating learning environment for students by the provision of learning activities that engage through online communication, social networking and the use of gaming principles. ICT provides opportunities for 'anytime, any place' learning that increases access to quality learning environments for all learners. Learners' use of ICT also increases their capacity to take responsibility for their own learning and to be creative and innovative in the way they learn, in their problem solving and decision-making and in the

multi-media products they produce. The benefits are especially strong for learners in remote communities who have access to ICT but not access to high quality schooling (e.g. Australian indigenous learners).

Increasingly educators are recognising the importance of explicitly teaching these social emotional skills, thinking skills and ICT skills and embedding their students' practice of the skills through highly engaging learning activities that help students gain a genuine sense of contributing to others as local and global citizens.

Social-emotional competencies

The social and emotional skills and attitudes related to student wellbeing include social skills, resilience skills (including helpful thinking skills and optimistic thinking skills), skills for managing uncomfortable emotions and skills for amplifying positive emotions. All these skills are critical to developing sustained student wellbeing where students feel connected and responsible for their own and each other's wellbeing.

- *Social skills:* Key social skills in school settings include: sharing resources and workload, cooperating, respectfully disagreeing, negotiating, making and keeping friends, having an interesting conversation, presenting to an audience, and managing conflict well. Social skills have been described as 'academic enablers'. A student's level of social competence and their friendship networks have been found to be predictive of their academic achievement (Caprara et al. 2000; Wentzel & Caldwell 1997). Friendships provide students with intimacy, a sense of belonging, security, validation and affirmation and social and academic support. Friendships also offer students opportunities to practise and refine their social skills and discuss moral dilemmas in a way that enhances the development of empathy and socio-moral reasoning (Hodges Boivin Bukowski & Vitaro, 1999; Schonert-Reichel 1999; Thoma & Ladewig, 1991). Having the social competencies to develop high-quality friendships, or at least one best friend, can also help prevent children and young people from being bullied (Bollmer et al. 2005; Fox 2006).
- *Resilience skills:* Some of the core skills that enable a young person to cope with difficult times and challenges are: optimistic thinking skills, helpful thinking skills, adaptive distancing skills, using humour and seeking assistance when needed.
 1. Optimistic thinking: In their review of the construct of optimism, MacLeod & Moore (2000) conclude that an optimistic way of interpreting and adjusting to negative life events is an essential component of coping. The following four components to optimism

are a useful focus for school-based resilience and wellbeing programs:

Positivity: finding the positives in negative situations, however small

Mastery: feeling some sense of control and competence in school work and in other aspects of one's life.

Hope: having a disposition or tendency to *expect* things to work out, to be forward looking and proactive and to have the confidence to persist when faced with setbacks or adversity; (Carver & Scheier, 1999; Masten, 1994); and believing that failures and setbacks will happen but that things will get better and you can try again (Benard, 1997).

An optimistic explanatory style: believing that bad situations are temporary, acknowledging that bad situations are usually not all your fault, and believing that bad situations are specific, and don't affect everything else or necessarily flow over into all aspects of your life (Seligman 1998; Gillham & Reivich 2004; Seligman et al.1995)

Helpful thinking is always rational (ie reflects how things really are rather than how they should be or how an individual would like them to be) and helps an individual to calm down, feel more emotionally in control and hence be more able to solve problems (Werner and Smith, 1992; Ellis, 1997). It derives from the original Cognitive Behaviour Therapy model (CBT) (Beck, 1979) based on the understanding that how you think affects how you feel which in turn influences how you behave.

Adaptive distancing encompasses a range of skills such as: being able to detach from individuals whose influence is negative; withdrawing from family members who are enmeshed in anti-social or dysfunctional behaviour (Werner & Smith 1992); emotionally distancing oneself from distressing and unalterable situations instead of constantly immersing oneself in a negative situation and continually thinking about it.

Humour. Individuals are less likely to succumb to feelings of depression and helplessness if they are able to find something humorous, even if only small, in an adverse situation (Benard 2004; Wolin & Wolin 1993). Lefcourt (2001) has argued that humour enables individuals to live in what are often unbearable circumstances. Humour can also be seen as a form of optimism that helps to keep things in perspective.

- *Self management and self-discipline.* These skills include: a willingness to plan and set both personal and academic goals and be prepared to strive, persist and work hard towards achieving those goals (Vaillant 2005; Werner & Smith 1992; Dweck 2005); a preparedness to tolerate frustration and delay short-term gratification in order to achieve longer term outcomes (Masten & Obradović 2008; Vaillant 2005; Werner & Smith 1992); time management and organisational and planning skills. Baumeister et al., (2007) highlight the importance of self control and willpower as critical to school and life success and Hattie (2009) highlights the importance of self-regulation for school success.
- Emotional literacy
 1. Skills for managing uncomfortable emotions: Skills for handling one's emotions are important components of resilience and wellbeing (Masten 2004; Masten and Coatsworth, 1998). These skills include: calming oneself down and managing uncomfortable feelings such as anger, fear and disappointment.
 2. Skills for amplifying positive emotions. Positive emotions at school can include feelings of belonging, feeling safe, feeling satisfied with their learning, pride, curiosity, excitement and enjoyment. The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson & Tugade 2004; Fredrickson & Joiner 2002) proposes that the ongoing experience of these positive emotions helps to extend one's awareness of options for problem solving and coping. For example experiencing feelings of closeness and satisfaction when working with others to accomplish a shared goal can become valuable knowledge about how to get along with others and access support from others in difficult times. Having fun through playing games, singing and dancing together at school can contribute to creative thinking, physical fitness and better health. The joy and fun that occurs during social play can build bonds, highlight the importance of humour and teach and encourage empathy and perspective taking.

These positive emotional 'assets' can be drawn on if needed and can help young people to deal with distressing events that are temporarily occurring in their life and 'bounce back' rather than break. Learning how to amplify positive emotions also 'undoes' the effects of stress more quickly (Fredrickson & Tugade 2004). In contrast, experiencing predominantly negative emotions such as anxiety, anger and disappointment are more likely to prompt narrow attention on survival-oriented behaviours such as avoidance, running away or fighting.

Thinking skills

Higher order thinking skills empower students to think flexibly and creatively, to make reasoned decisions and to critically analyse and evaluate possible strategies to solve complex problems. These skills are life skills and essential not only for academic success but also for sustained happiness and wellbeing (McGrath & Noble 2010). Teachers can scaffold higher order thinking using graphic organizers to facilitate an organized approach to student thinking and problem solving. John Hattie's meta-analysis of student learning involved more than 800 analyses of student learning in over 52,600 studies. Good teaching, according to Hattie (2009 p.159) "is less about the content of the curricula and more about the strategies teachers use to implement the curriculum so that students progress upwards through curricula content."

Pedagogy that builds positive relationships and promotes academic effort

Cooperative learning is a significant success story with one of the largest bodies of knowledge in educational and social psychology. The numerous research outcomes can be organized under three categories: improving student effort to achieve; building positive relationships and support and enhancing student wellbeing. The most effective strategies combine a scaffold for higher order thinking, and are organized as cooperative learning activities so the strategy encourages the use of thinking skills as well as social-emotional skills. Both the structure of the scaffold and the nature of the topic are key factors in promoting deep engagement in learning. The best topics are values-based controversial or provocative events, issues or 'big ideas', or issues that arise from texts or the media that capture the students' interest (McGrath & Noble, 2010) and further their sense of responsibility to their community and the natural world.

Teaching strategies for thinking skills and social-emotional learning

The following strategies all combine higher order thinking skills, social-emotional skills and employ cooperative learning (McGrath & Noble, 2010). The topics the children research and discuss could readily be issues that contribute to their understanding of ecological sustainability and a just and peaceful local and global community.

- Ten Thinking Tracks is a sequenced cooperative problem-solving/decision making scaffold where students work in groups. Each student in the group takes turns in leading the discussion and recording their group's answers in relation to two or three tracks. The tracks challenge children to think of the bright side, the down side, their feelings, suggest improvements, think ethically and to consider issues of social justice and finally to negotiate a group solution eg patenting of seeds so farmers have to buy their seeds.

- Multi-View encourages perspective taking and empathy. Students consider a problem such as cyber-bullying, organ donation or the case of the Kerala women against Coca Cola plant from different people's perspectives.
- Under the Microscope encourages students to explore a controversial issue through different lens that includes their responsibility and the impact of the issue or event on their own lives and on others' lives.
- Cooperative Controversy provides a scaffold for conflict resolution. Students work in groups of 4 where pair A identifies two arguments in support of a topic-related controversial proposition and pair B identifies two arguments against it. Each pair presents their arguments to the other pair. Then each pair's perspective is reversed and pair A thinks of new disadvantages and pair B advantages. Finally the group of 4 negotiate the strongest argument for and against.
- In Socratic circles half the class becomes the inner circle as discussants and the other half work in the outer circle as observers. The observers have a checklist to provide constructive feedback to the discussants on the quality of their thinking and their use of social-emotional skills. The two groups then swap roles and responsibilities.

Pathway 3: Using strengths-based approaches

Schools that value the different individual and collective strengths of all members of the school community demonstrate the third pathway for sustained student wellbeing. A 'strength' can be defined as a natural capacity for behaving, thinking and feeling in a way that promotes successful goal achievement (Linley & Harrington, 2006). Using one's strengths in schoolwork or in one's job is far more enjoyable and productive than working on one's weaknesses, especially for those students whose strengths are not in the traditional academic domain (Noble, 2004). This strengths-based approach does not ignore weaknesses but rather helps students achieve optimal development by building on their strengths and understanding and managing their weaknesses. When people work with their strengths they tend to learn more readily, perform at a higher level, are more motivated and confident, and have a stronger sense of satisfaction, mastery and competence (Clifton & Harter, 2006; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Linley & Harrington, 2006).

A 'strength' can be a specific ability (eg playing music, swimming, cartooning, using spread-sheets) or a character trait (eg persistence, bravery, kindness to others, leadership skills). Gardner's (1999) theory of multiple intelligences for ability strengths and Peterson and Seligman's (2004) model for character strengths are both useful frameworks for educators to utilise in school settings and have been applied in class and school settings (eg see Kornhaber et al., 2005; McGrath & Noble 2005; McGrath & Noble, 2011; Chen et al., 2009; Petersen & Seligman, 2004; Yeager et al., 2011).

The first step for teachers is to help students to select strategies for the identification of their strengths so they develop a deep understanding of their relative strengths and weaknesses. The second step is to collaboratively design and implement educational programs and environments in which students can use and further develop their strengths in a productive and satisfying way, and learn that work that they find difficult may require a lot more effort.

Howard Gardner's (1999) model of multiple intelligences (MI) provides directions for identification and development of cognitive strengths. MI theory has been widely adopted in schools since its publication over twenty-five years ago and identifies eight intelligences. A differentiated curriculum based on Gardner's multiple intelligences model has the potential to build positive educational communities in which students value and celebrate student differences and for students who struggle with learning to achieve more academic success (Kornhaber, et al., 2003; McGrath & Noble, 2005a, 2005b; Noble 2004). An evaluation of outcomes in forty-one schools that had been using MI theory for curriculum differentiation for at least three years found significant benefits of the MI approach in terms of improvements in student engagement and learning, student behaviour, and parent participation (Kornhaber, et al., 2003). This evaluation found particular benefits for students with learning difficulties who demonstrated greater effort in learning, more motivation and improved learning outcomes.

The MI/Bloom Matrix (McGrath & Noble, 2005a, 2005b) is a curriculum planning tool which assists teachers to develop tasks based on each of the eight intelligences at each of the Revised Bloom's levels of thinking. The planner helps teachers to provide opportunities for students to make meaningful choices about their learning tasks and products (Noble, 2004). The MI/Bloom Matrix is accompanied by a number of MI assessment and tools that can be used to assist students to identify their own relative cognitive strengths. The use of the matrix helped teachers in two schools identify academic and other strengths in their students and increased the teachers' confidence and skills in diversifying their curriculum tasks to effectively engage different students in learning (Noble, 2004).

Teachers can also help students to identify their character strengths. A useful tool for this purpose is Peterson and Seligman's online VIA (Values in Action) Signature Strengths Questionnaire (www.viastrengths.org). The children's version of the questionnaire is for children from 10 years to 17 years of age. For younger children, Park and Peterson (2006) successfully asked parents of children who were too young to complete the questionnaire to identify their children's strengths. An example of the use of the framework with students is illustrated in secondary students application of their knowledge of character

strengths to analyse characters in English literature, leading to significantly improvement in their essay writing skills (White, 2012).

Engagement or psychological flow is a term coined by Csikszentmihalyi (2003). He has identified that young people are more likely to be fully engaged and experience 'flow' when involved in an activity that utilises their strength(s) and has a degree of challenge that requires a reasonably high level of skill and attention in a specific domain (eg building a model, or playing a musical instrument) (Csikszentmihalyi, et al., 1993). Being in a state of 'flow' also increases young people's satisfaction (from the completion of a task or the creation of a product or performance) and enables them to have some respite from worries and problems they may be experiencing. Tasks that engage student strengths in the service of others also contribute to their sense of meaning and purpose.

Pathway 4: Meaning and purpose

A meaningful life has been defined as "one that joins with something larger than we are - and the larger that something is, the more meaning our lives have" (Seligman, 2002 p.260). Seligman states that life is given meaning when we use our strengths every day in the main realms of living 'to forward knowledge, power or goodness'.

Students have a sense of 'meaning' in their lives when they are engaging their strengths and using them to do something that has impact on others beyond themselves. They have a sense of 'purpose' when they pursue worthwhile goals. Most current curriculum initiatives focus on the importance of an authentic curriculum that has relevance, meaning or 'connectedness' to students' lives. Student voice and agency is a feature of high performing schools where student wellbeing is a priority. One example of empowering students by giving them a 'voice' is through their participation in Student Action Teams (Holdsworth, 2000). A student action team is a group of students who identify and tackle a school or community issue: they research the issue, make plans and proposals about it, and take action on it (see case study below). To ensure the success of these student-led initiatives it is important they are recognized within the 'authorised activities' of a school, and within the 'authorised approaches' of the Education system (Holdsworth, 2000). The importance of student ownership for effective projects that 'made a difference' was also a strong theme that emerged in an Australian Government Project involving 171 schools planning and implementing 'safe schools' projects (McGrath, 2007).

Other school initiatives that can foster a sense of meaning and purpose include: encouraging students to participate in peer support programs (eg peer mediation, buddy systems, mentoring systems); finding ways for students to

participate in class-wide or school-wide leadership and decision-making structures (eg circle time, classroom councils, classroom committees or school-wide Student Representative Committees); arranging for student products and performances to reach a wider audience (eg posters or artwork displayed in the local community such as a shopping centre, performances recorded on DVDs that can be bought or borrowed by parents, student-made books placed in the library etc); and developing students' sense of pride in and commitment to their school (eg by establishing student 'School Pride Committees' at each year level).

A case study of students taking action for meaning and purpose

An academic inquiry unit on 'caring for our environment' inspired children at one primary school to take action to make a difference in their school and local environment. The children set up their student action team titled the environmental impact team made up of students from prep (the first year of school) to year 6. The team have initiated a number of environmental projects that include i) a schoolwide 'nude food' campaign where all children are encouraged to bring their lunch to school without plastic wrap; ii) the installation of 3 rubbish bins in every classroom for a) recycling, b) their school worm farm and c) non-recyclable waste and iii) a project to raise funds titled living gardens where the children have made packs of different seeds of herbs and vegetables to sell to the school community. The funds has helped the children set up their own herb and vegetable garden and chickens in the school grounds as well as buy trees to replant in the local community (Cahill, 2012). An example at the secondary level was initiated with a group of year 10 students who were disengaged from school and alienated from their neighbourhoods. Appreciative inquiry questions were used to help the students identify their strengths and create meaningful community projects of their choice designed to show how 'we will make a difference in our community' (Morsilla & Fisher, 2007). The projects included a public underage dance party, and the development of children's activities at a refugee cultural festival. These two examples illustrate the key aspects of a Student Action Team; the students are challenged, their participation enables them to make decisions about what's important to them; they learn how to apply their knowledge, skills and attitudes to 'real world' situations; and they gain a real 'authentic' sense of meaning and purpose by contributing to making a difference within their community.

Education is central to all other domains for sustained wellbeing

Psychological wellbeing: Defining student wellbeing

A logical starting point for the Education domain is to develop a robust and evidence-based definition of student wellbeing in order to effectively guide educational policy and school practices. Naturally a child's family, home and community all significantly impact on a young person's wellbeing. However an

educational perspective focuses on the actions that schools and teachers can take to help our children and young people flourish within a school context.

Although there are many definitions of wellbeing *per se*, a literature search revealed only three definitions of student wellbeing (Noble et al., 2008). One definition perceived student wellbeing as “a positive emotional state that is the result of a harmony between the sum of specific context factors on the one hand and the personal needs and expectations towards the school on the other hand” (Engels et al., 2004, p.128); another simply defined student wellbeing as “the degree to which a student feels good in the school environment” (De Fraine et al., 2005); and the third definition focused on student well being as “the degree to which a student is functioning effectively in the school community” (Fraillon, 2004). A more comprehensive definition of student wellbeing in the school context that incorporated the multiple dimensions associated with wellbeing was sought.

In order to develop an operational definition of student wellbeing twenty-six key people working in the field of wellbeing and/or student wellbeing from a range of countries including Australia, Denmark, United Kingdom, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal and the USA were invited to give feedback on a proposed definition of student wellbeing using Delphi methodology. There was significant but not total agreement amongst the experts on the final definition (Noble et al., 2008; NSSF, 2011) which is:

Optimal student wellbeing is a sustainable state characterised by (predominantly) positive mood and attitude, positive relationships with other students and teachers, resilience, self-optimisation, and a high level of satisfaction with their learning experiences at school.

This definition integrates the subjective (or hedonic) construct of wellbeing that encompasses how students evaluate their life at school. It incorporates the affective component (how they feel) and the cognitive component (what they think). The definition also incorporates the eudaimonic paradigm of wellbeing where wellbeing as construed as an ongoing dynamic process rather than a fixed state by incorporating the notion of self-optimisation. A capacity for self-optimisation refers to the capacity of the student to know their own strengths, abilities and skills and demonstrate a willingness to use this self knowledge to maximise their perceived potential in many areas (eg intellectual, social, emotional, physical and spiritual).

The construct of sustainable happiness goes further than the hedonic and eudaimonic constructs of wellbeing and explicitly includes concern for others,

for one's community and culture and for the natural environment. To further the goal of sustainable happiness it is recommended that an educational policy for sustained student wellbeing integrates all three constructs of student wellbeing. Research indicates that a student with an optimal level of wellbeing is more likely to have higher levels of school attendance, demonstrate age-appropriate academic skills, engage in more pro-social behaviour and be less likely to bully others (Noble et al., 2008).

Resilience

The constructs of wellbeing and resilience are closely linked and bi-directional. Most definitions of wellbeing incorporate some reference, either explicit or implied, to the capacity of the individual to be resilient and resilient students are more likely to have optimal levels of wellbeing. The above definition of student wellbeing incorporates the construct of resilience. Nearly all definitions of resilience refer to the capacity of the individual to demonstrate the personal strengths that are needed to cope with difficulties, hardship, challenge or adversity. Resilience has been described as 'the ability to persist, cope adaptively and bounce back after encountering change, challenges, setback, disappointments, difficult situations or adversity and to return to a reasonable level of wellbeing' (McGrath & Noble, 2003). It is also the capacity to respond adaptively to difficult circumstances and still thrive (McGrath & Noble, 2011). The school pathways that promote sustained student wellbeing all contribute to providing the positive, protective and connected class and school environment and the explicit teaching of the values and personal and interpersonal skills that contribute to student resilience.

Health

Good health is an important element for sustained child wellbeing as it can influence all aspects of a child's life, especially their capacity to attend school and actively participate in learning. Childhood and adolescence is a critical time for the development of health behaviours and the health patterns and habits that develop during their school years often continue into adulthood (Dimitrakaki & Tountas, 2006; WHO, 2004). Individuals with higher rates of education report fewer illnesses and have better mental health and wellbeing than those with lower levels of education (Turrell et al., 2006). Schools have a direct and indirect impact on student health and wellbeing. For example schools can directly teach the benefits of good nutrition and exercise and the adverse effects of substance abuse and smoking. Schools also can indirectly affect children's health by providing the safe and supportive environment that is essential for physical, spiritual, cognitive and social-emotional health and wellbeing.

Living standards

Academic achievement and the completion of high school leads to greater employability, less reliance on welfare support and a higher likelihood of participation in further education. These outcomes in turn further increase the likelihood of sustained employment, adequate income, higher living standards and self-sufficiency (Department of Premier & Cabinet 2005; Muir et al.2003)

Cultural diversity and resilience

In most countries every child goes to school so the school is a microcosm of the cultural diversity of the local community. Education for intercultural and interracial harmony begins in classrooms where values of respect and acceptance of difference underpin how children from diverse cultures, languages, nationalities and beliefs learn to interact confidently and constructively with each other. This ability is vital to ensuring social cohesion and sustainable wellbeing both nationally and internationally. Activities to build intercultural and interracial harmony can readily be embedded in the curriculum from the first years of school using personal stories, media reports, contextual information, online forums, quizzes, interactive activities and reflection tasks. Resilience is a product of protective environmental factors such as positive peer and teacher relationships and the social-emotional skills that can be directly taught in classrooms and help to connect children and young people to school and to each other.

Good governance

What is prioritised in education at the state, system and school levels is a reflection of what is prioritised by a nation's government. Government priorities drive the decisions for funding for educational projects and reflect the Government's values. So sustainable happiness and wellbeing of our children and youth must become a Government priority for funding for educational pathways to develop student wellbeing. Good school governance and school leadership is also critical for any initiatives to be sustainable over time.

Community vitality

The well-known African adage: It takes a village to raise a child reflects the critical importance of community partnerships for child wellbeing. Schools are the most important community institution in any village, town or city. A school's partnership with the families in their school community and with local community groups and agencies is seen as central to the school's effectiveness in providing an education for sustained student wellbeing.

Ecological diversity

Teaching our children about ecological diversity and how different countries adapt to this diversity is the starting point for helping our children develop a responsibility for caring for our environment. Helping children understand the

importance of living life in full harmony with the natural world, and developing their skills and responsibility for our environment can begin from the first days of schooling.

Educational Policy

How can school wellbeing pathways underpin educational policy for sustainable student wellbeing?

Many educational policies have been developed in reaction to problems. For example the first Australian National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) launched in 2004 was a response to concerns about school bullying, harassment and violence. A major revision of this Framework in 2011 incorporates the vision that schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing. The Government's Scoping Study on Approaches to Student Wellbeing (Noble et al., 2008) informed the development of the new Framework. This scoping study included a comprehensive literature review of school pathways for student wellbeing; a new definition of student wellbeing in consultation with 26 national and international experts working in the field and feedback from educators and key stakeholders on policy development for student wellbeing.

Unanimous endorsement for the notion of a national framework or policy for student wellbeing was made by leading educators representing key community and Government agencies linked to education as well as by a sample of school practitioners. A national framework in student wellbeing was seen by both parties to have the following advantages.

A national policy on student wellbeing:

- promotes an holistic education of the whole child;
- provides a common, shared national vision, goals and agreed practices to develop sustained student wellbeing across all states and territories;
- encourages a whole school approach that engages all sectors of the school community in initiatives for student wellbeing to enhance student learning; a whole school approach also encourages sustainability of those initiatives
- generates a common language for teachers and the whole school community about the nature of student wellbeing and its enhancement in classrooms; this common language facilitates the opportunity for meaningful dialogue about student wellbeing within a school, across schools and across states
- enhances the capacity to 'join the dots' and link other national initiatives and policies in education. The examples from the Australian education context are the Framework in Values Education, The Safe Schools

Framework, the Mental Health initiatives such as MindMatters (for secondary schools) and KidsMatter (for primary schools) and the National Schools Drug Education Plan.

Such a framework was also perceived to have the potential to change the dominant paradigm in many schools from a 'deficit perspective' to a positive, values and strengths-based pro-social perspective.

Some of the concerns expressed by the State educational representatives were that teachers were 'framework/policy fatigued' and that a new framework must be seen by teachers to add value to their existing classroom endeavours rather than be perceived as an additional task or burden. Therefore they perceived that a new Framework needed to be promoted to teachers as a tool for consolidating and enriching their existing activities for student wellbeing and linked to student learning outcomes.

The school practitioners were also asked to identify the strongest features of eight current educational policies/frameworks that had led to their implementation in their schools. The element considered the most important is that the Framework demonstrated a strong linkage to research evidence followed by the provision of flexibility for the local context and the provision of practical activities for schools to use.

Factors influencing the successful implementation of a national student wellbeing framework

Almost 90% of the educational 'experts' and over 95% of the school practitioners considered the following factors as 'very important' or 'important' to the successful implementation of a student wellbeing framework.

- Strong systemic and school leadership and a strategic plan
- Developing a collaborative whole school student wellbeing strategic plan
- Providing ongoing and wide-reaching professional learning opportunities for teachers
- Planning for parental involvement

85% of the practitioners and almost 70% of the 'experts' also saw the value of online national resources as 'important' or 'very important' to support implementation of the framework. These resources may include case studies of successful implementation in schools, assessment tools and professional reading. The same response from both parties was also found for the need to plan for community participation. Several of the 'experts' also cited the advantages of a student wellbeing framework for a more coordinated and

coherent approach to student wellbeing across different community agencies. This is illustrated in the following quotation:

A framework such as this could have far reaching effects. If agencies such as Health were to collaborate with Education in creating and promoting this, it would probably stand a better chance of creating a national shift in awareness.

Recommendations for educational policy development for sustained student wellbeing

The following recommendations are based on what has been learned through the development and implementation of the Australian National Framework in Values Education, the National Safe Schools Framework and the investigation into national interest in a Student Wellbeing Framework (Noble et al., 2008).

1. Establish a platform for an international framework policy for sustained student wellbeing

- Seek common agreement and understanding of the **key elements** of a Framework for Sustained Student Wellbeing and early endorsement of the Framework and an Implementation Strategy from the highest levels of decision-making in each country's National and State Education systems
- Ensure the framework reflects the **research evidence** that confirms the link between student wellbeing and learning outcomes
- Link the Framework to national and international Goals for Education and Skills for 21st century
- Seek agreement on the **school pathways** that underpin the Framework for sustained student wellbeing, and consider promoting flexibility so schools can adapt the pathways for their local context.

2. Collaboratively develop the framework with educational communities

- Recognise and build on the work already undertaken on sustained student wellbeing in educational communities at the local, national and international level
- Develop a national/international monitoring and evaluation plan, including the development of performance measures to monitor the ongoing implementation of the Framework for Sustained Student Wellbeing.
- Develop and disseminate support material and resources to assist schools to implement the Framework

3. Facilitate support for implementation in schools

- **Implementation plan:** Develop a national/international implementation plan to monitor the ongoing implementation including support for school systems so they can provide support to schools. Indicate a suitable timeline for implementation that gives consideration to school planning cycles and funding support.
- **School leadership.** Develop specific activities to engage school leaders in leading whole school wellbeing. Strengthening schools for sustainable student wellbeing will often involve significant school change and reform. Committed and inspiring leadership that models and articulates the school pathways for sustained student wellbeing provides a vision, energy and focus over time to make a difference.
- **Encourage the appointment of a Student Wellbeing Leader in each school** who has the leadership responsibility for the implementation of student wellbeing initiatives including monitoring progress of these initiatives across the whole school community.
- **A holistic whole school approach.** A whole school approach focuses on positive partnerships and assumes that all members of the school community (i.e. teachers, support staff, students and parents) have a significant role/voice in promoting and sustaining a supportive school and connected culture. A whole-school approach also involves all areas of the school: policy and procedures, teaching practices, curriculum, and the organisation and supervision of the physical and social environment of the school
- **Develop a professional learning plan** for all teachers tailored to the school's vision and agreed school pathways for sustained student wellbeing/ The professional learning plan may include:
 - an initial communication strategy to schools and teachers regarding the nature and purpose of the framework and their role in, and responsibilities for its implementation
 - an ongoing professional learning plan to develop individual and collective teacher capacity and pedagogy in enhancing student wellbeing and learning, and
 - guidelines to schools in building a whole school community culture that enhances student learning about wellbeing.
 - advice to schools about how they can engage parents and community based organisations in their approaches to supporting student well being; and
 - assistance to pre-service education of teachers to help them to better understand that student wellbeing is strongly linked to student learning and their responsibilities in this area.

Ideally the Framework for Sustained Student Wellbeing is available in multiple formats (electronic and paper) and readily accessible to schools. It is also well resourced, evidence-informed and includes many practical examples to guide schools in how to apply the Framework to their own school and classroom context. These resources may include whole school case studies, resources and support materials that clearly demonstrate the interdependence of many school initiatives/pathways to ensure sustained student wellbeing.

A Case Study: The Australian Safe Schools Framework (NSSF)

A national school policy that focuses the attention of both Government ministers and school leadership to the crucial role of schools in promoting student wellbeing and resilience is illustrated by the Australian Government's (2011) National Safe Schools Framework; a framework endorsed by all State Ministers of Education and distributed to all schools in the nation. This policy appears to be a world first in guiding all schools' curriculum and practices and highlights the Australian Government's endorsement of the important role of student wellbeing for learning and achievement. A safe and supportive school is described in the following way:

In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing.

The Framework identifies the following nine elements to assist schools in fulfilling this vision:

1. Leadership commitment to a safe school
2. Supportive and connected school culture
3. Policies & practices
4. Professional learning
5. Positive behaviour management approaches
6. Engagement, skill development and a safe school curriculum
7. A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership
8. Early intervention and targeted student and family support
9. Partnerships with families, community agencies and the justice system.

Schools are encouraged to conduct an online evaluation of their school's strengths and limitations based on these nine elements. The Framework provides examples of many evidence-based practices and resources for enhancing their school's capabilities for whole school, staff and student wellbeing. An online 'safe schools hub' to support schools and teachers in their implementation of the Framework will be launched in 2013 and will include case studies of schools that place a high priority on sustained student wellbeing.

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