

“Schooling for joy?” Presentation at Pupil Inclusion Network conference, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh, 2nd October 2014

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Overview

Who could fail to be interested in questions of how schooling – if at all – makes people’s lives go well? Or in how school improvement might make people’s lives go even better? Who doesn’t know people whose lifelong happiness or misery seems significantly influenced by good or bad school experiences? Surely just about everyone has paused to think about the important roles that schooling plays in facilitating happiness and, more generally, good lives. Few would deny that happiness ought to be an important consideration when designing and running of schools, delivering lessons, organizing school activities, and assessing school performance and outcomes at pupil, class, school, and national levels.

Strangely, however, although parents, teachers, pupils and educational philosophers have always shown strong interests in the relationships between schooling and happiness, this hasn’t traditionally resulted in systematic attention to happiness in curricular planning, school design, school policy, or pedagogical assessment. It is only recently, and only in richer countries with long-established schooling systems, that happiness has become a salient criterion in educational policy, research, and assessment.

In this presentation I will review recent developments worldwide towards policies, practices, and research that take happiness seriously as an aspect of schooling and as a lens through which to view the purposes and intended outcomes of schooling. I will also link this with wider trends towards *positive planning* and *appreciative learning* as efforts to redress the balance away from pathological, remedial, and instrumentalist biases in social and pedagogical research and planning. I will argue that a ‘happiness lens’ can inspire positivity and empathy, as well as attending more systematically to the interactions between life domains and to the lifelong narrative development of individuals’ sense of having an enjoyable and purposeful life. And I will recommend that the individual-focused ‘positive psychology’ perspectives need to be complemented by systematic attention to the *positive social qualities* which we have reason to value, and by which happiness is facilitated.

Reading suggestions:

Schooling and happiness

- David, S., I. Boniwell, and A.C. Ayers [eds] (2013) *Oxford Handbook of Happiness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Section 6: *Positive Education*
- Noddings, Nel (2003) *Happiness and Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Morris, Ian (2009) *Teaching Happiness and Well-being in Schools: Learning to Ride Elephants*. London: Network Continuum
- Thin, Neil (2012), *Social Happiness: Theory into Policy and Practice*. Bristol: Policy Press, ch.12 ‘Schooling for joy’.
- Schuller, T., Preston, J., Hammond, C., Bassett-Grundy, A., & Bynner, J. (2004) *The Benefits of Learning: the*

Impact of Education on Health, Family Life and Social Capital. London: Routledge Falmer

- Spring, Joel H. (2007) *A New Paradigm for Global School Systems: Education for a Long and Happy Life*. London: Routledge
- Stradling, Julie (2004) *Educating for the Good Life Democratic Schooling and its Dilemmas*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton
- Gilman, Rich, E. Scott Huebner, and Michael J. Furlong [eds] (2009) *Handbook of Positive Psychology in Schools*. London: Routledge

School happiness interventions

- Orpinas, Pamela, and Arthur M. Horne (2006) *Bullying Prevention: Creating a Positive School Climate and Developing Social Competence*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association
- Stronach, Ian, and Heather Piper 2008 'The touching example of Summerhill school' In P.A. Woods and G.J. Woods [eds], *Alternative Education for the 21st Century: Philosophies, Approaches, Visions*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 49 -64
- Ofsted 2007 'Developing social, emotional and behavioural skills in secondary schools: A five-term longitudinal evaluation of the Secondary National Strategy pilot' London: Ofsted
- O'Brien, Maeve (2008) *Well-Being and Post-Primary Schooling: A Review of the Literature and Research*. Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
- Cheney, Gemma et al (2014) ‘Targeted group-based interventions in schools to promote emotional well-being: A systematic review.’ *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 19(3): 412– 438
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- Froh, Jeffrey J., and Acacia Parks [eds] (2013) *Activities for Teaching Positive Psychology: A Guide for Instructors*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association

Assessment

- Ben-Arieh, Asher, and Paul Baerwald (2009) 'Indicators and indices of children's well-being: towards a more policy-oriented perspective' *European Journal of Education* 43,1: 37 - 50
- Fattore, Toby, Jan Mason, and Elizabeth Watson (2008) 'When children are asked about their well-being: towards a framework for guiding policy' *Child Indicators Research* 2,1:57-77
- Kamerman, Sheila B., Shelley Phipps, and Asher Ben-Arieh [eds] (2010) *From Child Welfare to Child Well-Being: An International Perspective on Knowledge in the Service of Policy Making*. Dordrecht: Springer
- Barker, J., & Weller, S. 2003 ' "Is it Fun?" Developing children centred research methods.' *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 23(1/2), 33-58
- Evans, P., & Fuller, M. 1998 'Children's perceptions of their nursery education.' *International Journal of Early Education*, 6(1), 59-74
- McNeely, Clea (2005) 'Connection to school' In K.Moore and Laura Lippman [eds], *What do Children Need to Flourish?* New York: Springer, pp. 289-30
- Newell, Ronald J., Mark J. Van Ryzin, and Debbie Meier (2008) *Assessing What Really Matters in Schools*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield
- Karatzias, A., KG Power, and V Swanson 2001 'Quality of school life: Development and preliminary standardisation of an instrument based on performance indicators in Scottish secondary schools' *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 12,3: 265 - 284
- Jiang, Xu, Hanita Kosher, Asher Ben-Arieh, and E. Scott Huebner (2014) 'Children's rights, school psychology, and well-being assessments.' *Social Indicators Research* 117:179-193
- Liu, Wang, Lili Tian, E. Scott Huebner, Xiaoting Zheng, and Zhaorong Li 2014 'Preliminary development of the elementary school students' subjective well-being in school scale.' *Social Indicators Research* [online first]

Social quality in schools

- Blatchford, Pete (1998) *Social Life in School: Pupils' Experiences of Breaktime and Recess from 7 to 16*. London: RoutledgeFalmer
- Colley, Helen (2003) *Mentoring for Social Inclusion*. London: Routledge
- Schultz EW et al. 1987 'School climate: psychological health and wellbeing in school.' *Journal of School Health* 57(10):432-436
- DeSantis-King, A., E.S. Huebner, S.M. Suldo, and R. F. Valois (2006) 'An ecological view of school satisfaction in adolescence: Linkages between social support and behavior problems' *Applied Research in Quality of Life* 1,3-4:279-295

Mission statements and purposes

- Lesch, Lyn (2009) *Learning Not Schooling: Reimagining the Purpose of Education*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield
- Axtell, Dan nd [accessed Sept14] '101 Elementary School Mission Statements.' <http://danaxtell.com/missions101.html>
- Ames, Roger T., and Peter D. Herschok [Eds] (2007) *Educations and Their Purposes: A Conversation Among Cultures*. University of Hawai'i Press
- White, John 1982 *The Aims of Education Restated*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Marples, R. (Ed.) (1999) *Aims in Education*. London: Routledge
- Kronman, Anthony T. 2007 *Education's End: Why Our Colleges and Universities Have Given Up On the Meaning of Life* New Haven Yale University Press
- Steutel, Jan, and Ben Spiecker (1996) 'Good sex as the aim of sexual education' *Philosophy of Education* 400-407

Education and happiness correlations

- Cuñado, J., Perez de Gracia, F. (2012). Does education affect happiness? Evidence for Spain.' *Social Indicators Research*, 108(1), 185-196
- Feinstein, Leon, David Budge, John Vorhaus and Kathryn Duckworth (2008) *The Social and Personal Benefits of Learning: A Summary of Key Research Findings* University of London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning
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- Michalos Michalos, Alex C. (2007) 'Education, happiness and wellbeing' *Social Indicators Research* 87,3:347-366

Critiques of happiness schooling

- Parents Against Outcomes Based Education: <http://www.outcomeseducation.com>
- Craig, Carol 2007 'The potential dangers of a systematic, explicit approach to teaching social and emotional skills (SEAL)' Glasgow: Centre for Confidence and Well-being
- Zeidner, M., Roberts, R.D. & Matthews, G. (2002) 'Can emotional intelligence be schooled? A critical review' *Educational Psychologist*, 37,4:215-231
- Hayes, Dennis, and Kathryn Ecclestone (2008) *The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education* London: Routledge
- Stout, M. (2000) *The Feel-Good Curriculum: The Dumbing Down of America's Kids in the Name of Self-Esteem*. Cambridge, Da Capo Press

Critical pedagogies

- Gatto, John T. (1992\2002) *Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling*. New Society
- Carnie, Fiona (2003) *Alternatives in Education: A Guide*. London: RoutledgeFalmer
- Holt, John (1976) *Instead of Education: Ways to Help People Do Things Better* E P Dutton
- Aronowitz, Stanley (2008) *Against Schooling: for and Education that Matters* London: Pluto Press
- Orwell, George 1952 'Such, Such Were The Joys'
www.orwell.ru/library/essays/joys/english/e_joys
- Füredi, Frank (2009) *Wasted : Why Education isn't Educating*. London: Continuum
- Harber, Clive (2004) *Schooling as Violence: how Schools Harm Pupils and Societies*. London: Routledge Falmer
[Harber Clive, 2002, 'Schooling as violence: an exploratory overview'. *Educational Review* 54,1:7-16]

Web sites

- OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) www.pbis.org
- GoodSchool (tool developed by Hans Henrik Knoop)
www.godskole.dk
- Human Scale Education www.hse.org.uk/hse
- Flourishing Schools <http://flourishingschools.com>
- School of Emotional Literacy www.schoolofemotional-literacy.com
- Good Childhood Inquiry <http://www.childrensociety.org.uk>