

Enhancing Emotional Literacy: A Critical Case Study of Multiple Stakeholders' Perspectives and Effects of a Whole-School Approach

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A thesis submitted to the Australian Catholic University in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Institute for Positive Psychology and Education
Faculty of Health Sciences

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30 September 2014

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Acknowledgements

The author is indebted to many individuals who have contributed to this research program. The following acknowledgments are in chronological order of the contributions that were made. In particular the contributions made by the following people are gratefully acknowledged:

Professor Herb Marsh who encouraged me to undertake this research.

Professor Rhonda Craven and Dr Sue Roffey as my supervisors who have worked tirelessly. I appreciate their deep knowledge and expertise. They have provided the support necessary for me to meet the challenges accompanying this research.

Thanks are extended to the Board of Governors, Principals, teachers, and students from the case study school for their kind permission for me to complete this research and for their cooperation throughout their participation in the studies.

Dr Frances Whalan who has been a continued personal and professional support as I have worked to complete this thesis.

Sabine Mueller for her assistance with desktop publishing.

Dr Constance Ellwood for editing my thesis chapter by chapter and Katherine Cummings for editing the entire thesis prior to submission.

To Ferina, Natasha and Kate for their support during my candidature.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband Lewis and son Ryan for their understanding and support over the years of my candidature. I would also like to acknowledge the support I received from my entire family and all of my friends. I would like to dedicate my thesis to my family, and teachers and students everywhere.

Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray background. The signature reads "Michelle Nemec" in a cursive, flowing script.

Michelle Nemec

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Abstract

Enhancing Emotional Literacy: A Critical Case study of Multiple Stakeholders' Perspectives and Effects of a Whole-School Approach

Emotional literacy (EL) provides a basis for understanding how relationships between teachers and students contribute to effective learning. This facet of schooling is central to the growing interest in positive education and the place of positive psychology in schooling. As schools are relational organisations, EL provides a cornerstone for building pro-social values and social-emotional skills that can help make schools more satisfying places to work and learn.

The thesis comprises two interrelated studies of multiple stakeholders' perspectives of EL in a case study school (school executive ($n=4$), school counsellors ($n=2$), teachers ($n=89$), students ($n=509$)). An ecological systems view provided the theoretical underpinning for utilising a participatory action research (PAR) approach. Study 1 examined the status of EL to determine strengths, barriers, and areas that would benefit from school-derived EL interventions. Multiple stakeholders ($n=215$): leading teachers ($n=3$), School Counsellor ($n=1$), teachers ($n=33$), and students ($n=178$) participated in Study 1 by completing a survey and participating in focus groups ($n=2$) and interviews ($n=4$). Study 2 explicated and implemented school-derived EL interventions through PAR and elucidated the impact of the EL interventions on EL. Study 2 aimed to identify the features of an emotionally literate school. Multiple stakeholders ($n=396$: School Executive ($n=3$), School Counsellors ($n=2$), teachers ($n=56$), and students ($n=331$)) participated in Study 2 by completing the survey utilised in Study 1 in two waves of data. Teachers ($n=6$), students ($n=4$), and school counsellors ($n=2$) participated in focus groups or an interview after the EL interventions were implemented to determine the impact of the interventions and how their views about EL evolved.

Using qualitative analysis methods the research findings informed school-derived EL intervention strategies. Research data was coded against the research questions and ascribed meaning. On this basis patterns and themes emerged, enabling understanding and insight

about the research findings. The ecological framework used in this research informed my thinking about the data and the way I derived meaning from the data.

Study 1 found stakeholders' views about EL were influenced by school social environment perceptions. Students confirmed their positive view about the role of social-emotional skills and relational quality for academic outcomes, as found in other research (Dix, Slee, Lawson, & Keeses, 2011; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnick, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Study 2 found that emotionally literate school leadership played a key role in how teachers feel about their roles and contributions to school. The findings suggested that activating teacher and student voices adds to a positive school ambience and builds teacher self-efficacy. In Study 2, the PAR approach elucidated that while quality implementation of EL is the ideal, EL change could be promoted through a 'ripple effect', if embedded in the school culture through teacher ownership. A teacher EL development model using teacher professional practice, knowledge of self and others, and positive education approaches is another outcome of the research. Using pedagogical approaches akin to EL, teachers can model pro-social values, EL skills, and grit, enabling students to develop EL. The research findings imply that teacher well-being provides a foundation for building EL through value-laden approaches embedded in the school philosophy.

CHAPTER 1

EMOTIONAL LITERACY FOR WELL-BEING

In two words or less, what do you want for your children? If you are like hundreds of Australian parents I've asked, you said – happiness, confidence, contentment, balance, good stuff, kindness, health, satisfaction, and the like. In short, well-being? In two words or less what do Australian schools teach? If you are like other Australians you said: achievement, thinking skills, success, conformity, literacy, maths, discipline and the like. In short, accomplishment. Notice that there is no overlap between the two lists (Seligman, 2008).

Overview of the Present Investigation

The primary purpose of the present investigation was to contribute to a new understanding of well-being in schools in particular how emotional literacy (EL) contributes to effective learning, effective school leadership, and positive relationships in schools. This research investigates how schools interested in the area of embedding change, building strong relationships, and successful leadership can use and adapt the model to suit their own contexts. This research aims to develop an EL school framework for educational leaders interested in strengthening EL in schools. As EL underpins well-being and is a crucial element of well-being, my research can add to burgeoning knowledge in positive psychology for schooling.

Action research took place in one school over a period of three years. A range of influences determined the choice of research questions and how the research data was interpreted. These included the researcher's role as a member of staff and the school context in which unique temporal and leadership factors can have a strong bearing on the results. As such, the research questions do not remain in a vacuum but are, rather, influenced and informed by an array of demographic, social, political, historical, geographical, and economic issues linked to the case study school. Embedded in the research questions are the beliefs, values, and skills that will inform the development of a revised school emotional literacy framework. This research study addresses five research questions:

- (1) What is the nature of an emotionally literate school?
- (2) How can interventions shape and impact upon EL?
- (3) What are the effects of EL?
- (4) Which features of a school define it as emotionally literate?
- (5) How can barriers to developing EL be overcome?

This research builds on research about EL using an ecological framework in the Australian context (Roffey, 2007; 2008; 2010). This Australian qualitative research, involving middle school students from a case study secondary school, comprises two studies based on multiple stakeholders' perspectives. Issues involving middle school students were important from developmental and case study perspectives, as the school moved into a middle school structure during the research. Study 1 determined the status of EL in the school in order to elucidate strengths in, and barriers to, developing EL, as well as areas that would benefit from school-derived EL interventions. Multiple sources of data were gathered from questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and observations. These form the basis for analysing student and teacher experience in and out of the classroom. Impacts on student well-being, learning, and EL were also investigated. Using a participatory action research (PAR) approach to evaluate and understand the impact of EL interventions on teachers and students, Study 2 implemented the school-derived EL intervention strategies, developed as a result of Study 1. Study 2 also identified the features of an emotionally literate school in order to further build on the EL School Framework and develop an Australian school EL framework.

Background

The Influence of Positive Psychology. The rise of positive psychology and the scientific study of authentic well-being suggest that sustainable happiness is really about meaning and purpose, rather than hedonistic endeavours (Seligman, 2002). While it may be generally true that, in the early 21st century, standards of living have risen and the capacity to access positive experiences has increased, these factors have not been matched by our mental states. In fact, rates of depression and feelings of alienation continue to rise (Seligman, 2002; Hamilton & Denniss, 2005; Eckersley, 2008). The dissonance between what has been referred to as 'affluenza' (a desire to possess more) and our mental state has inspired research about what can make us feel satisfied in positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Peterson, 2006; Vallerand, 2008; Fredrickson, 2001).

Today people are concerned about well-being because they are looking for satisfaction in their lives and for meaning in what they do. Positive psychology presents people with the goal of seeking sustainable pleasure as an alternative to chasing temporary pleasure (hedonism) in consumerism or superficial experiences, (Seligman, 2002; Lyubomirsky, 2005; Sharp, 2005). The field of positive psychology, including the study of what makes people feel satisfied, offers a key perspective in aiding the development of a framework for EL in schools. One of the recognised proponents of positive psychology, Martin Seligman (2011), has provided an updated theory of well-being in the form of five measurable elements, referred to as PERMA: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement. These elements are used in this research to examine well-being and EL in schools. PERMA provides a theory of well-being, and is an important consideration for the operational definitions provided in Chapter 2.

The field of positive psychology dealing with what makes people feel satisfied has moved into schooling. In schools this movement is known as positive education. Positive education in schooling examines strengths, rather than weaknesses, as has historically been the case in psychology, and includes skills for achievement and well-being (Noble & McGrath, 2008; Seligman, 2009; 2011). More needs to be known about these areas of positive education (Green, Odes, & Robinson, 2011; Seligman, Ernst, & Gillham, 2009; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006). While research has been conducted about positive psychology approaches and some areas of EL, in Australia it has tended to be short-term as in the case of Wellman (2010) or focused on particular interventions such as circle time (McCarthy, 2009). Longer term research will create more information about changes over time and the factors that bring about that change. To address this need the present school-based investigation was conducted over three calendar years and involved a wide range of stakeholders in a broad examination of the nature, extent, and development of EL for well-being in a middle school. Consequently, my research is timely in the investigation of teacher and student relationships and well-being in schools.

Pedagogy and Positive Emotions

Strong positive relationships underpinned by positive emotions can further develop social-emotional skills both for learning and relationships. Diverse approaches to pedagogy including problem and inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning strategies, a thinking skills curriculum, and Web 2.0 learning technologies have the capacity to challenge students and maintain their enthusiasm for learning. When learning creates positive emotions it makes learning and the learning experience memorable. A focus on positive emotions through

positive psychology, and developments in neuroscience with a foundation of brain research knowledge, support the role of positive emotions in learning and in schools (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002; Seligman, 2011; Waters, 2011). Hence a positive psychology approach underpinned the present investigation, which considered how learning and relationships are part of the larger school context.

The School as an Ecological System

My research contributes to an ecological approach looking at schools at a systems level. As social beings, students and teachers connect and interact with each other and their environment of the school context. The way in which this occurs is comparable to an ecosystem. In an ecosystem everyone and everything is affected by what happens and they have a direct or indirect impact in return. EL is applied at an ecological systems level using Bronfenbrenner (1979) as the theoretical model. While Bronfenbrenner designed his model to explain the influences on a child in early development, my research utilised this theoretical model to examine the reciprocity between EL and well-being.

My investigation was designed to break new ground by aiming to develop strategies to embed change by developing EL, rather than to provide a social vaccine or a psychological crutch for students and teachers. The investigation and its methods encouraged students to look beyond themselves, to focus on others, and to be confident about their strengths. Earlier approaches to student well-being, such as the self-esteem movement, had the effect of enabling students to gloat about their own self-importance (Mruk, 2006). In contrast, my research draws on the areas of learning, well-being, and resilience in ways that enable students to recognise the contribution of both positive and negative emotions in navigating their way through difficult situations. My research involved developing realistic views about the capacity to control what occurs in relation to learning and one's experience through skills, beliefs, and habits integral to EL (Crocker & Park, 2004; Crocker, 2006; Martin, 2010; Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007). This study aims to make an important contribution to the field of EL in education.

Key Issues for the Present Study

Research in a number of different spheres has raised the issue of how relational quality in schools contributes to learning and well-being. This includes literature on positive emotions and student well-being (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002; Noble & McGrath, 2008; Seligman, 2011; Fredrickson & Tugade, 2004), care (Noddings, 1984), resilience and

personal approaches to learning (Dweck, 2006), risk and protective factors (Rutter, 1985), SEL and academic outcomes (Murray-Harvey, 2010; Zins & Elias, 2006) and teaching quality and the learning environment (Hattie, 2009; Hattie & Yates, 2014). It is clear in this body of research that healthy relationships within schools and connectedness to schools are underpinned by social and emotional knowledge, understanding, and skills (Roffey, 2006; Wear, 2000; Murray-Harvey, 2010; Resnick, Harris, & Blum, 1993; Resnick, et al., 1997). The field of positive psychology including the study of passion, positive emotions, and the role of gratitude offers a key perspective to aid the development of a school framework for EL. These spheres of research are explored in relation to the present study in Chapter 2.

Social-Emotional Competence and Schooling

There is currently a groundswell of interest emerging in the interdependence of learners' social and emotional competence and their well-being. Further, there are proponents of the need to re-conceptualise the goals of schooling to cater for social, emotional, and ethical competencies (Cohen, 2006; Bluestein, 2001; Zins, Bloodworth, Weigber, & Walberg, 2007). It has been noted that the provision of one factor in the school setting such as building a sense of connectedness can act as an EL lever for other factors (Fuller, A., 2001). There is also research that suggests schools do not always support students' sense of school belonging (Osterman, 2000). Therefore, knowledge about how to embed a framework of EL skills to encourage the development of well-being in students has potential to offer many advantages for students, teachers and schools.

Research has shown that students who behave in pro-social ways and demonstrate high levels of social competency and peer acceptance also achieve better academically and have a more positive academic self-concept (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Furthermore, socially competent students are more likely to have productive relationships with teachers and peers, which also helps the learning process and leads to satisfaction. In addition, social interaction enhances intellectual skills such as perspective-taking and problem-solving, providing confidence to utilise skills such as negotiation, compromise, and active listening (Fuller, A., 2001). The development of social competencies requires self-regulation in the form of managing negative emotions, controlling impulses, goal-setting, thinking about the rights of others, being flexible, and persistent. These skills also contribute to relational and academic success. Gains in schools in the areas of social and emotional development and well-being are now also regarded as markers of what 'value-adding' can mean in schools (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schelliger, 2011; Gillet, Berjot, Vallerand, & Sofiane, 2012).

Academic outcomes have become a national priority. In September 2012 the then Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced a goal for Australia to be ranked as a top-five country in reading, mathematics and science by 2025 (Grattan, 2012). However, the goal for schooling expressed by the Gillard government is at odds with the way students view school. Success at school begins early in a child's schooling, indicating that self-regulation and SEL skills are important. Today students are disengaged from school, reporting that they do not feel as though they belong, nor do they enjoy being, at school (Thomson, Hillman, & Wernert, 2012). The Government comment about schooling goals supports the need for schools to build a sense of connection between students and teachers – that is, positive relationships – to promote positive views about learning by students (Charney, 2002; Pianta, 1999). Current information about students' need to feel emotionally safe at school, combined with the government goal of advancing Australia's international educational standing, brings to the fore the need for change in EL.

Student Well-being and Learning

The Australian Federal and State governments have shown a willingness to invest in the area of mental health, well-being, and SEL over time. Government policy reflected in educational goals and directives indicates interest in the areas of EL, well-being, and learning. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment, and Reporting Authority (ACARA), the government organisation establishing a national curriculum, states in *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum version 2*:

The Australian Curriculum builds on the national Early Years Learning Framework and builds on its key learning outcomes, namely: children have a strong sense of identity; children are connected with, and contribute to, their world; children have a strong sense of well-being; children are confident and involved learners; and children are effective communicators (ACARA, 2010, p. 12).

The emphases on well-being, confidence, communication and engagement as a learner again support the national interest in how young people can become balanced, healthy, and productive citizens who build positive relationships.

Well-being and EL are recognised as symbiotic. The current government focus on well-being has a relational and skills foundation and my research may, therefore, contribute to what is known to enhance schooling in these areas. The South Australian Government Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) learner well-being project (2007)

developed a holistic approach to learning and well-being in their birth to Year 12 framework and stated “well-being is central to learning and learning to well-being” (Government of South Australia. DECS, 2007, p. 3). The interdependence of learning and well-being is used in my project scope by including learning as a key element of the school experience.

Academic Care as an Anchor

My research developed out of an interest in Academic Care (AC) and my consulting work on the Community Change Project (CCP) [Association of Independent Schools New South Wales (AISNSW), 2004]. The CCP explored the academic (learning, teaching, academic processes, policy, and pedagogy) and pastoral (case work, programs, strategies, interventions, processes, procedures, policy, and structures) domains involved in SEL and their impact on student well-being. Schools were tired of band-aid approaches to pastoral care and one-off events and wanted capacity-building and sustainable approaches.

The CCP was a year-long investigation involving four schools. It investigated the notion of marrying the pastoral and academic domains of education through the development of a construct that became known as Academic Care (AC). The AC construct advocates for a strengths-based and inclusive approach to teacher-leader and student-leader development in a team-oriented environment. This enables participants to draw on, and further develop, social capital, a sense of agency, and an atmosphere of high challenge and high expectation. The contribution made through the role of the principal and flexible school structures are considered as mediators of AC development. Approaches to leadership including leadership density for developing leadership capacity and distributed leadership are explored in terms of teacher and student well-being.

The definition of AC that was developed was “enhancing student learning, well-being and resilience through pedagogies sympathetic to student needs, and embedded in learning experiences” (AISNSW, 2005). It focused on the impact of learning experiences through the nature of dialogue with students, in shaping beliefs about learning, teaching and learning processes, and authentic assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

While the classroom was the focus of the CCP it was acknowledged that the notion of learning extends beyond its four walls. Experiences such as service learning, experiential learning, and all co-curricular events also contribute to learning. When all forms of learning are harnessed effectively the capacity for building strong relationships is more powerful. This exploratory work increased my curiosity about other frameworks that could be utilised by schools to develop the quality of relationships across the school, in particular, strategies that focused strongly on SEL, and the role of leadership in developing such relationships.

Embedded in this work were two other key elements. These were the process and management of change in schools and school leadership as a key driver in sustainable improvement. The CCP was outlined as a best practice model for Pastoral Care in *Pastoral Care* (Hearn, Campbell-Pope, House, & Cross, 2006). This investigation builds upon the findings of CPP.

Later research in the case study school by a teacher project team in 2006 developed a K-12 school-wide pedagogical framework. The research explored the nature and quality of learning, incorporating elements of the New South Wales Quality teaching model [Department of Education and Training (DET), New South Wales, 2003]. The school-wide pedagogical framework highlighted the relevance of classroom dynamics, time spent building relationships in and out of the classroom, and how the role of relationships between teachers and students influenced academic self-concept, self-efficacy, and protective factors, even in the absence of strong school leadership (Andrew & Crowther, 2002; Nadge, 2002). These factors supported previous research, yet it was acknowledged there were other specific factors such as the school ethos, philosophy, structures, and broader relationships that needed to be considered. In part, these were associated with a whole-school perspective, which is discussed in the next section.

Learning Dispositions and Academic Care

Work in the area of AC has created a strong interest in, and concern for, student well-being. It is generally agreed that student resilience and the capacity of the classroom to be inclusive are significant factors in student learning (Ainscow, 1998). This has been accompanied by the understanding that young people need to develop social-emotional competence in addition to positive relationships, to manoeuvre through school and develop positive learning dispositions (Zins et al., 2004; Costa & Kallick, 2008). Such habits of mind can enable them to experience a degree of success in learning, creating a foundation for ongoing success and a positive school experience (Claxton, 2008; Costa & Kallick, 2008). A habit of mind means having a disposition toward behaving intelligently when confronted with problems, the answers to which are not immediately known (Costa & Kallick, 2008, p.16). Habits of mind include skills such as actively listening to others and demonstrating empathy, managing impulsiveness and persistence. Habits of mind also raise self-awareness through positive relationships and therefore contribute to learning power (Deakin-Crick, 2006). A framework for EL that takes into account the students' mindset and the impact of the school as a learning environment in its broadest sense will, therefore, be useful for schools. The current investigation has the potential to expand on what is understood about EL and

classroom ecology for student learning power.

Also of interest to my research was the modelling of pro-social values such as empathy, co-operation, sharing, and helpfulness and how social-emotional competence can impact on a positive learning environment and build EL. The impact of multiple opportunities to develop and practise leadership skills in a range of forms for both staff and students and the shaping of behaviour by SEL in a coherent and comprehensive approach have been endorsed by previous research (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004; Gardner & Moran, 2006). These areas coupled with prior research related to AC formed a basis in the present investigation for investigating areas such as resilience in relation to EL.

Today educators, governments, and researchers see learning as being about promoting a culture of care in a warm and challenging, yet safe environment (Libbey, 2004; MCEETYA, 2011; Desautels, 2011). Education is changing and it is now more readily accepted that schools need to focus on the SEL of the whole person. Developing a 'pedagogy of care' raises a range of interesting questions about how teachers value the concept of care in their classroom (Elias, 2006; Noddings, 2005). The present investigation brings to the fore the contribution that EL can bring to all of the spheres of schooling, making schooling experience more meaningful and purposeful for all.

Whole-School Approaches

There is wide support for a whole-school approach to student well-being as it promotes sustainability and positive outcomes for students (Wear, 2000; McGuiness, 1989 as cited by Calvert & Henderson, 1998; Wyn, Cahill, Holdsworth, Rowling, & Carson, 2000; The Gatehouse Project, The University of Melbourne, 2002; Commonwealth Government, 2010). Whole-school approaches focus on the education of the whole person, including their physical, emotional, intellectual, moral, and spiritual development. A whole-school approach can be defined as:

A whole-school approach is cohesive, collective and collaborative action, in and by a school community that has been strategically constructed to improve student learning, behaviour and well-being, and the conditions that support these. [Department of Education and Training. (DET), Western Australia, 2013].

While a whole-school approach was not logistically feasible for my research, which was confined to teachers and students, wherever possible the thinking inherent in whole-school approaches has been applied through the approaches used. As a whole school

approach encompasses curriculum, the classroom and learning of the middle school learner, these have been important to my research (Australian Department of Health and Ageing, 1999).

Learning Environments

My research takes into account the learning environment since it impacts on EL and the way students interact with learning, their peers, and their teachers. Willis (2007) and Jensen (2000) outline that the amygdala, within the brain, is involved in the processing of emotions including fear. The amygdala is also responsible for determining what memories are stored and where the memories are stored in the brain. When a learner is anxious, this impacts on memory and the learning experience, meaning that what is taught is less likely to be learnt. The converse is also true. When learners feel safe and content with appropriate challenges and when learning is perceived as engaging, creative, flexible, adaptable, enjoyable, and memorable, learning is effective. When students are in a positive emotional state and have some sense of control over their assessment they will do better and perceive school more positively (Willis, 2007). The creation of safe and secure schools and learning environments is, therefore, a key factor for developing EL. In light of the current push for testing and the imperative for schools to provide caring, inclusive and positive schooling experiences, teacher and student views about their teaching and learning may offer valuable insights about EL

Thesis Structure

This chapter has provided the background to my research and the research's aim, and placed these within the context of Study 1 and Study 2, which comprise my thesis. Chapter 2 provides a framework for Australian and international research in EL, SEL and academic achievement, student well-being and expert teaching. It shows how this research differs from, or is aligned to, the present investigation. The chapter also provides a review of the status of EL, government policy and projects that validate this research. Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical basis of the present investigation. In addition to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, other relevant theories such as social capital (Putnam, 2000) are explored. Chapter 4 describes the study's aims, research questions and their rationale. Chapter 5 describes the research design and methodology. This includes a discussion of the epistemological and ontological perspectives applied to the research. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 present the results of interviews, focus groups and questionnaire analysis based on emerging

themes, and provide discussion of these themes and the issues raised in relation to new knowledge about emotionally literate schools. Chapter 6 reports the results of Study 1, which explicates key school stakeholders' perceptions about the nature of EL. Chapter 7 reports the findings from Study 2, specifically examining the nature of interventions to shape EL and the impact on EL derived from PAR, interviews, focus groups and questionnaire analysis based on emerging themes. Last, in Chapter 8 I provide a summary of the findings and their implications for theory, research, and practice in EL. In so doing I demonstrate how a new model for EL, drawing on positive psychology, social capital and relational professional learning, can foster EL in schools.

CHAPTER 2

THEORIES SUPPORTING EMOTIONAL LITERACY IN SCHOOLING

Introduction

This chapter frames the present investigation by examining the accompanying key terms and the underpinning theoretical lens for the present investigation. First, the background to EL is introduced by defining key terms and considering the development of emotional intelligence. Next, theories supporting EL in schooling, which inform this research, are examined. The first theoretical lens is positive psychology. By examining some of the major approaches suggested by positive psychology, I show how they are relevant to EL in schooling and provide an opportunity to bring together new learning in EL and positive psychology. Next positive psychology theory is applied to teachers in their need to succeed. The theoretical lens applied in this research is ecological theory. Ecological theory provides a basis for how seemingly disparate aspects of school life dovetail. Bronfenbrenner's work (1979), although based on a theory of child development, can be used to show how student, teacher, and school leader behaviour can be considered within the school as a system (Patton, Sung Hong, Williams, & Allen-Meares, 2013). The third theoretical lens applied in this research is social capital, which is regarded as foundational to an emotionally literate school community. The views of Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1995) are examined as to their relevance to my research. Finally, ontological and epistemological perspectives are discussed, showing the relevance of a social constructivist approach, social learning theory (Bandura, 1986), and the concept of a professional learning community (PLC).

Operationalisation of Terms Utilised in the Present Investigation

Overview

The key terms utilised in this study and discussed in the following sections are emotional literacy (EL), emotional intelligence (EI), well-being, and social and emotional learning (SEL). By drawing upon a multi-dimensional conceptualisation of well-being the relations between EL and well-being are also elucidated (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development [DEECD], 2010). Two further terms – EI quotient and foundational EL values – were developed while analysing the research results and are defined in the following sections. In what follows, a definition of each term is given after which the

proposed relations between the terms are discussed in more depth. The section ends with a discussion of why well-being and emotional learning are critical to effective education.

Emotional Literacy

One of the earliest references to EL was used in the context of describing emotions: *“to be emotionally literate we need to know what it is we are feeling and what the causes of our feelings are”* (Steiner, 1984, p. 165). Hence, early definitions of EL encapsulated the ability to reason about and use emotions to develop thought. Similarly, EL is now understood as an ability to manage emotions and respond to others’ emotions in mutually helpful ways (Weare & Gray, 2003). EL is also understood as interacting with others to build an understanding of emotions and applying these understandings to shape behaviour (Antidote, 2003).

Another definition of EL is as a *“values-based concept that includes not only the development of knowledge and skills within individuals but also the ethos of the systems and communities in which we live and work”* (Roffey, 2006, p. 2). Thinking about EL from the standpoint of values and ethos demonstrates how school philosophy and the way it is lived impact upon EL. Pro-social values and self-belief are believed to contribute to building positive relationships, which are vital for well-being and happiness (Layous, Nelson, Oberle, Schonert-Reichl, & Lyubomirsky, 2012). EL is also theorised to contribute to higher levels of achievement in school (McGrath, 2005).

Relational quality (RQ) is a term used in a variety of countries and contexts (e.g., Fassio, Rollero, & De Piccoli, 2013). RQ is demonstrated by teachers and students in their interactions and relationships; it is influenced by their beliefs, values, skills, and competencies. RQ also includes the internal processes for managing emotions for resilience. At an ecological level RQ means the degree of social and emotional competence that a person applies within a relationship and the reciprocal impact upon that person. Although the ecological thinking is not as obvious in the term RQ compared to EL, RQ is a key aspect of EL.

In the present investigation EL is defined as *“the quality of relationships determined by an individual’s relational beliefs, values, and skills as influenced by the ecology of school life and applied to social and academic pursuit at school”* (Nemec, 2014). In this definition, EL is conceptualised as a broader concept than that of managing ones’ emotions, or being aware of others’ feelings, as it incorporates a consideration of the school as a relational organisation. In the ecological view of schooling (Roffey, 2008), everyone is affected by what happens on a daily basis. Central to this definition are values such as respect, trust, and

integrity and character strengths such as resilience, optimistic thinking, and mindfulness (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). In the definition of EL employed in the present investigation, EL is regarded ecologically as a representation of interdependent relationships and dynamic factors, meaning it influences and is affected by everyone and everything that occurs in schooling.

Emotional Intelligence

Gardner (1983; 1999) proposed a multiple intelligence (MI) theory, which provided a framework for understanding intelligence. Gardner based MI theory on a broad spectrum of disciplines, rather than purely on verbal and logical/spatial abilities, which were the basis of psychometric and experimental psychology (Cherniss, Extein, & Goleman, 2006; Goleman, 2006). Gardner maintained his aim was to provide a description of a set of relatively independent, yet interacting intelligences, rather than a definitive description of human cognitive abilities. Gardner conceptualised intelligence as diverse abilities, including interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences which underpin the social skills needed for EL and relevant in learning and relationships. Interpersonal intelligence has been defined as the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people, whereas intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to understand oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears, and motivations (Smith, 2002).

Building on Gardner's work, Goleman popularised the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) (1995; 1998; 2002; 2003; 2007) bringing to the fore the importance of attributes such as self-regulation, empathy, self-awareness, and optimism. Within the literature there is controversy about whether EI refers to an innate ability or an array of skills that can be learnt and applied when interacting with others (Petrides & Furnham, 2001; Roberts, Matthews, & Zeidner, 2001; Roberts, Matthews, & Zeidner, 2010). Related to this debate is an approach that conceptualises EI dimensions as either ability EI or trait EI. Ability EI is theorised as cognitive abilities or skills, measured by performance (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). Trait EI is based on behavioural dispositions and self-perceptions concerning one's ability to recognise, process, and use emotion-laden information, measured with self-report measures, focused on areas such as self-management, optimism, and self-regulation (Petrides & Furnham, 2001; Bar-On & Parker, 2000; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008; Goleman, 1995; 1998). Furthermore, Mayer and Salovey (1997) have developed a four branch model of EI consisting of the ability to perceive accurately emotions in oneself and others, and the use of emotions to facilitate thinking, understanding of emotional meanings, and management of

emotions (Mayer et al., 2008). While the theoretical debates on EI are not the main concern of this thesis, the subsets of skills that comprise it, stemming from the model developed by Mayer and Salovey (1997), are influential in considering emotions and EL.

Well-being

Well-being is theorised as a complex, multidimensional term (Soutter, O'Steen, & Gilmore, 2012). As this research focuses on the outcomes of schooling for young people, the definition of student well-being used in this thesis is *“a sustainable positive mood and attitude, health, resilience, and satisfaction with self, relationships and experiences at school”* (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development [DEECD], 2010, p. 1). This definition recognises the integral role of relationships and social-emotional skills in schooling. It also points to student well-being, with healthy and more competent students having the potential to enhance their own learning. Hence, the development of student well-being is recognised as significant from preventative and proactive intervention perspectives.

EL skills integral to well-being as social and emotional well-being are concerned with the ability to be motivated and engaged in life while responding positively to challenges. *“Social and emotional well-being refers to the way a person thinks and feels about themselves and others. It includes being able to adapt and deal with daily challenges (resilience and coping skills) while leading a fulfilling life”* (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2012, p. 8).

Social-emotional Learning

As EL research and activity has developed, different terms have been used in different locations. In the USA, EL in schools is associated with social-emotional learning (SEL). SEL aims to develop social and emotional skills to promote social and emotional competence for building relationships, positive attitudes, prosocial behaviour, and academic outcomes (Zins, Elias, & Greenberg, 2003). SEL is associated with learning and the achievement of academic outcomes in schooling. Five key skill sets have been identified for SEL: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills (Durlak et al., 2011; Zins et al., 2004). Each skill set (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3) involves thinking about oneself in the context of social situations.

In the UK, EL in schools is commonly associated with the social-emotional and academic learning SEAL program. SEAL is a comprehensive, whole-school approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that are thought to underpin effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance, and emotional well-being (Department for Education and Skills [DES], 2005). It is a structured, sequential approach, which includes a

comprehensive curriculum. Similar to SEL, SEAL concentrates on developing self-awareness, the management of emotions, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Two Further Emotional Literacy Terms and Applications. During the course of this research, I developed some additional terms to help understand what contributes to EL in schooling (see Chapters 6 and 7). First, the term *EL foundational values* is used in this thesis to encompass the values of trust, respect, and integrity integral to relationships in schools. This triad of foundational values forms the basis of values for relationships between students and teachers in this research, and is core to EL. Second, the term *EL quotient* was developed to describe the degree of EL operating at all levels in a school. It encompasses factors such as a positive school social environment, the presence of collegial professional learning, and evidence of cohesion, coherence, and connectivity.

The findings suggested that EL might be applied on three levels, meaning there are three different types of EL. One is at an organisational level as seen in the way values underpinning structures, policy, and aspects of a school are operationalised. The second level is that of an emotionally literate school and the development of quality relationships throughout the school. The third involves the development of personal EL within individuals. Each of these levels contributes to what is called EL quotient, which is the combined impact of the three different levels. My research suggests that these three types of EL are desirable for high EL quotient.

A Comparison of Emotional Literacy Terms. This thesis primarily employs the term EL because it has been applied specifically to schools and learning (Roffey, 2007; 2009) and is a broad term that captures the ecological nature of this research. The terms RQ, SEL, and well-being, while associated with EL, are not as all-embracing as the ecological nature of EL in schooling. EI is also not the most relevant term to apply in this thesis as it does not focus specifically on schools and is not necessarily related to learning in schools, although it has been suggested that EI skills can be learnt (Goleman, 2005). SEL, conversely, is used in schooling and an analysis of the skills inherent in SEL compared to those in a definition of EI reveal the proactive, advocacy-based nature of SEL skills. In considering one example in action such as the ethical responsibility associated with responsible decision-making in SEL, there is an implied understanding that action is a necessary component of the process. The term EI does not necessarily have this implication of action. The importance of being active confirms SEL as another relevant term for use in this research.

Section Summary

This section has identified the constructs of EL, SEL, and well-being as fundamental to the present investigation. In the next section the theories underpinning the present investigation will be discussed.

Positive Psychology Approaches

Overview

Positive psychology is a field of psychology that goes beyond a focus on personal deficits and their remediation. It is the science of flourishing. It harnesses the skills of well-being and achievement to promote a positive life experience (Seligman, 2011). Huppert and So (2009) define flourishing in terms of positive emotion, engagement, and a sense of purpose. In addition flourishing involves the presence of three or more of six features: self-respect, optimism, resilience, vitality, self-determination, and positive relationships.

Positive psychology is currently expressed in some schools through an approach named positive education in which practices consistent with positive psychology theory and PERMA (positive relationships, engagement, resilience, meaning, and achievement) (Seligman, 2011) are applied. The United Nations Assembly has endorsed positive education by recommending *“that governments and other stakeholders [...] looking ahead and beyond 2014 [adopt] positive education for sustainable development”* (United Nations Assembly [UN], 2012, pp. 6-7). Positive education uses the skills for well-being and achievement to enable young people to lead satisfying lives. As an EL approach, positive education is proliferating in some Australian schools as a whole-school approach, targeting specific students for coaching, academic skills, or mentoring (Green, Oades, & Robinson, 2011). Positive education also involves proactive approaches to building mental health and fitness. When designed for K-12, positive education may enable individual and school EL enhancement. However, while many resource-rich schools are investing in whole-school approaches incorporating positive education (White, 2014; Cohen, 2011), most Australian schools are yet to benefit from applying positive psychology theory appropriate to their school context.

Positive Education

A number of high profile schools have adopted a positive education approach. Possibly the best known of these is Geelong Grammar School in Victoria. In 2008, Seligman and fellow researchers developed a school-wide approach to positive psychology (Cohen, 2011) with staff and 1,500 students at the school. The aim was to develop staff knowledge and

understanding of positive psychology applications for personal and professional benefits and to investigate whether the skills of well-being can be taught. Nine days spent working with teachers helped to embed the program into the K-12 curriculum through sport, pastoral counselling, music, and chapel and school policy. Positive psychology skills were therefore woven through every aspect of school life. The program was based on nurturing resilience, character strengths, gratitude, positive communication, and optimism. The findings provided good evidence to suggest that when children learn positive psychology skills, in conjunction with learning the usual school-based skills, they experience less depression, less anxiety, have higher levels of school satisfaction, and they do better in school (Seligman et al., 2009).

The implementation of positive education in this research appears to be ideal as it involved experts working on site and over time, a high level of involvement from staff, ongoing professional development for staff in the area of positive psychology, and public investment in the project. All of these factors are closely aligned with the Penn Resiliency Program (PRP) which is discussed in the following section.

Strengths and the Penn Resiliency Program (PRP)

The strengths-based approach used at Geelong Grammar School was based on the PRP, whereby, over twenty years, seventeen PRP studies were evaluated. Most of these studies used randomised controlled designs. Diverse sample groups including Australian children and young people, and a range of group leaders, were involved. A meta-analysis including many PRP evaluations posits that PRP reduces and prevents symptoms of depression, anxiety, and reduces feelings of hopelessness (Seligman et al., 2009).

A strengths-based approach is synonymous with positive psychology as is the notion of developing virtues. Roberts' (1995) proposition that virtues operate to help a person to live well among people is supported by research done by Seligman (2009). Seligman's research using the (PRP) in positive education and positive psychology is extensive and ground breaking. The impact of the program involving over 2,000 children found that the PRP reliably produced improvement in student well-being.

Through the identification and application of students' signature character strengths in day-to-day life, Seligman aimed to increase the experiences of positive emotions such as joy, love, contentment, and pleasure, as well as to stimulate involvement in situations that produced engagement, a state of flow, and a sense of meaning through positive connections with others. The PRP participants compared to a control group reduced the symptoms of depression, reduced hopelessness, and prevented the appearance of clinical levels of depression.

Seligman (2009) conducted other research involving 347 Year 9 students, looking at how they fared in relation to an in-school learning program designed to teach and help them identify their character strengths such as a love of learning, kindness, and a love of beauty. The program also targeted the development of social skills, aiming to solve students' behavioural problems and enhance the students' enjoyment of learning. The results showed that students had an increased sense of enjoyment of learning and improved social skills such as empathy, co-operation, assertiveness, and self-control. It seems that when teachers and students are focused on strengths, it is likely that the school climate and school culture will be more positively focused, enabling staff and students to work together more productively. It appears that teachers and students will feel they are known and valued if there is an emphasis on strengths. The ways that students and teachers are acknowledged and celebrated was examined in the present investigation through surveys, focus groups and EL intervention strategies.

A strengths-based approach can be used across many aspects of schooling such as in counselling services (Huebner, 2012) and in supporting student behaviour (Bear, 2011). Counselling and support are a vital part of student services. School psychologists can integrate a focus on personal strengths in assessments, interventions, and consultation as well as administration, raising the profile of positive character strengths. Approaches to behaviour support can align with positive psychology (Bear, 2011), thereby complementing what the school psychologist is doing. Teachers can aim to use student behaviour support to develop self-discipline and a sense of responsibility through classroom rules, correcting poor behaviour, and reinforcing social, moral, and behavioural competencies.

Positive psychology can provide educators with guidance about how to build positive emotions and strengths, rather than merely being less punitive or negative. To establish a framework for positive psychology, it seems a positive approach to school discipline has the following features: development of character strengths and virtues associated with self-discipline as its primary aim; emphasis on meeting three basic human needs: the need for competence, the need to belong, and the need for autonomy; emphasis on developing behaviours, thoughts, and emotions that reflect character strengths and virtues associated with self-discipline; and greater emphasis on techniques for developing self-discipline and meeting the basic needs of children, and on preventing behaviour problems, rather than on using techniques to correct misbehaviour. Behaviour support does not merely repair relationships, but can develop them, building a sense of connection to school (Bear, 2011). These understandings are vital to the current investigation as the approaches are consistent

with pro-social values and behaviours central to EL (O'Hara, 2011; Jones, Brown, & Aber, 2011).

In the current investigation a strengths-based perspective is applied in two ways involving interventions. One way is at the organisation level where strengths derived from a whole-school level within the school through student leader and teacher EL interventions are used and a second where strengths are applied through community service initiatives.

The Australian Positive Psychology Framework

The Australian Positive Psychology Framework – signifying a positive psychology approach to student well-being – consists of five foundations (Noble & McGrath, 2008). Foundation One, social and emotional competency, explicitly supports teaching social and emotional skills (Cohen, 1999; Sharp, 2000; Greenberg et al., 2003; Zins et al., 2004). It advocates teaching pro-social values, resilience skills, social skills, EL skills, and personal achievement skills. Explicit teaching of pro-social values and social-emotional skills via a universal prevention program is advocated by a number of researchers (McArthur, 2002; Gresham, Elliott, Vance, & Cook 2011; Allen, 2009; Bierman et al., 2010). Foundation Two focuses on positive emotions and the role of feelings such as belonging, safety, and optimism in school. Noble and McGrath (2008) posit that these and other positive emotions such as enjoyment and optimism play a key role in how students can regulate their behaviour and approach at school.

Foundation Three is that of positive relationships and the role played by teacher-student relationships in creating a culture of support and acceptance, thereby positively influencing achievement and motivation. Foundation Four involves students using their strengths to enable them to perform at a higher level, and to be more self-aware and more satisfied (Seligman, 2011). Foundation Five focuses on meaning and purpose within and beyond the school through achieving worthwhile goals.

This positive psychology framework is consistent with what seems to make a difference for developing EL and well-being in schooling (Roffey, 2008; 2010; Seligman, 2011) and draws attention to the best way to develop them by suggesting that schools have a key role to play in developing programs, policies, and structures that enable EL. Specific strategies suggested by positive psychology for positive education in schools include mindfulness, flow, positive emotions, gratitude, a strengths-based approach, optimism, and self-determination theory. These strategies are discussed in the following sections. The current investigation draws upon these as potentially potent interventions for developing EL

and overcoming existing barriers to EL. Consideration is given as to how these positive psychology strategies dovetail with EL.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness has been defined as *“the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally, to the unfolding of experience, moment by moment”* (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145). Attention anchors used during mindfulness enable enhanced clarity and physiological stability, thereby promoting a more positive perspective. Adopting mindfulness strategies can also build resilience (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). There is support for mindfulness-based teacher training initiatives suggesting that professional development in mindfulness skills can enhance teachers’ sense of well-being and self-efficacy, as well as their ability to manage classroom behaviour and build supportive relationships with their students (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). Mindfulness is also a useful strategy for students, enabling them to manage and regulate their emotions and heighten EL awareness. Through focus and paying attention students and teachers may increase their persistence and self-management thereby enhancing achievement (Goleman, 2013). In the current investigation mindfulness is considered for its potential to enhance EL.

Flow

The concept of flow, considered as optimal experience, is regarded as a theoretical foundation of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). When a person experiences a state of flow they are totally engaged in what they are doing, involvement is effortless, and time has no meaning. Flow has implications for learning and engagement in school. The key condition enabling flow to occur is challenge, matched to the ability level and interest of the student. If the level of challenge and skill is mismatched, boredom or anxiety can result (Shernhoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). In schools, teachers need to know students’ ability levels and interests, while students need suitable challenges to enhance self-efficacy, autonomy, and motivation. Teachers have a responsibility to construct a learning environment conducive to a state of flow. This includes constructing challenging work through scaffolding and promoting autonomy in students (Shernhoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). The concept of flow suggests an optimal state that follows or exists alongside mastery and achievement in specific areas. Factors in the current investigation that students perceive as promoting flow or a sense of achievement have, therefore, been examined to see how they are associated with EL.

Positive Emotions: Broaden-and-Build Theory

Another way to enhance experience is through building long-lasting resources that can be achieved by generating positive emotions. This is known as broaden-and-build theory. The theory claims that the experience of frequent positive emotions serves to broaden human thought and behaviour, resulting in the accrual of resources, including coping-resources (Fredrickson, 1998; 2001; 2009). These resources provide the impetus for upward spirals of emotional affect enabling a person to move towards future well-being.

Research results support the 'broaden-and-build theory' and the role of positive emotions in students' engagement at school and with learning. In a longitudinal study, the role of positive emotions was examined within a sample of 293 students in grades 7 to 10 (Reschly, Heubner, Appleton, & Antaramian, 2008). The results suggested a clear role for positive emotions in individuals' thought-action repertoires. In another study, experiencing frequent positive emotions during school was associated with higher levels of student engagement while negative emotions were associated with lower levels of engagement (Fredrickson, 2001). In agreement with Fredrickson's theory, positive emotions appear to be related to greater personal and environmental resources, such as greater student engagement in school activities and more supportive relationships with adults including teachers. Findings demonstrated that positive emotions, but not negative emotions, were associated with adaptive coping, and this was then associated with student engagement. The association between positive emotions and engagement was partially mediated by adaptive coping.

Positive emotions have also been shown to influence resilience, the rate of occurrence of negative emotions, and enhanced EL. Research involving university students ($n=87$) measured emotions over a one-month period (Cohn, Fredrickson, Brown, Mikels, & Conway, 2009). The results showed that positive emotions mediated the relation between baseline and final resilience, but life satisfaction did not. This suggests that it is in-the-moment positive emotions, and not more general positive evaluations of one's life, that form the link between happiness and desirable life outcomes. Change in resilience mediated the relation between positive emotions and increased life satisfaction, suggesting that happy people become more satisfied not merely due to feeling better but because they cultivate resources for thriving. In the current investigation there appeared to be a need for more frequent experiences of positive emotion and therefore the broaden-and-build theory is considered as one way to enhance personal and environmental assets in the current investigation. Positive emotions have been applied to EL intervention strategies to examine the impact on EL.

Gratitude

Expressing gratitude spontaneously and through planned interventions appears to be highly effective in promoting EL (Froh & Sefick, 2008). Research involving 221 early adolescents found that counting one's blessings was associated with gratitude, optimism, life-satisfaction, and decreased negative affect. The robust relations between gratitude and satisfaction with school experience, means that counting blessings appeared to be an effective intervention for well-being enhancement in early adolescence. Counting blessings is a strategy whereby a deliberate effort is made, for at least two weeks, to note the positive happenings in life. The research also found that for adolescents there is a statistically significant bidirectional relationship between life satisfaction and cognitive engagement. There was, however, a non-significant relationship between life satisfaction and emotional and behavioural student engagement (Lewis, Huebner, Malone, & Valois, 2011). This finding suggests that it is important to engage students emotionally and behaviourally in their learning by using pedagogy and setting learning goals that students see as valuable (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012). Self-management is a key EL skill and therefore suggests that EL and positive psychology skills complement each other (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2012). Gratitude and goal-setting techniques were applied through school-derived EL interventions in the current investigation, as they seem to have potential for developing EL.

Gratitude can also be conceived of as recognition for others (Howells, 2013). While also a feeling, gratitude seems to offer more benefits for developing EL when it takes the form of a practice or an action. Howells (2013) claims that students who are in the mindset of expressing gratitude through thanking others, think better. Therefore, gratitude offers promise as an educational practice for EL.

Optimism and Positive Emotions

Well-being for the future can be brought about through positive emotions and values such as optimism (Roffey, 2010). The notion of optimism can be targeted toward goal attainment and thus can be individualised or applied in the context of using interpersonal skills. Understandings of people who are optimistic thinkers and optimism as an attributional style emerged out of investigations into pessimism (Seligman & Peterson, 1987). Optimistic thinkers are characterised by their tendency to believe that negative events are irregular, external, and specific. Irregular means the negative event will not occur again. External means the person involved is not responsible for the occurrence. Specific means the occurrence was self-contained and therefore will not influence other activities. Optimistic

thinkers believe that positive events are more constant and frequent than negative ones. They think that they can avoid negative events in daily life and prevent them from happening. The result is that optimistic people cope better with stressful circumstances than pessimistic people.

A theory that is compatible with applying optimistic thinking is the expectancy-value theory (Bandura, 1997). In this theory, the higher the expectancy that particular behaviours can produce specific outcomes and the more value attached to those outcomes, the greater the motivation will be to achieve the goal by performing the required actions. There is evidence (Grenville-Cleave & Boniwell, 2012) that teachers perceive they have less control and well-being than individuals in other professions. It seems that teachers' efficacy beliefs and perceived organisational support influence teachers' behaviour, meaning that if a person did not believe they were capable, it was unlikely they would take on additional tasks (Onyishi & Ogbodo, 2012). Therefore finding ways to challenge the situation whereby teachers seem to underestimate themselves or think pessimistically seems worth exploring. In the current investigation the nature of teacher perspectives is examined in light of their EL and school factors.

Positive Emotions for Enhanced Self-Awareness

Johnson, Waugh, and Fredrickson (2010), conducted research suggesting that positive emotions can produce a broadened cognitive state, producing enhanced self-awareness and perceptual scope consistent with EL skills. A total of 116 university undergraduates participated in the experiment. Several measures of participants' trait affectivity and baseline affect were given at the beginning of the experimental session. Brief video clips were used to induce the targeted emotions. Early in the experimental session, participants were asked to identify past personal experiences when they had strongly felt emotions. Immediately after the emotion-induction video, participants were asked to spend one minute imagining the past emotional experience congruent with the emotion-induction video. Participants rated their subjective experiences during the emotion-induction video and the relived memory procedure. Facial muscle activity was recorded using electromyography (EMG). In order to determine whether the emotion inductions produced differences in self-reported emotions, one-way ANOVAs were performed for each emotion report item. Planned comparisons revealed significant differences for all ten emotion report items as a function of the emotion inductions. Positive emotion inductions (joy, contentment) produced significantly higher reports of positive emotion during the video and relived memory than the negative or neutral inductions. The results suggest that frequent facial expressions of positive emotion promote

more efficient holistic processing. By showing that enhanced cognition and self-awareness result from expressing positive emotions, this research indicates a connection between positive emotions and EL. As self-awareness is a key skill for developing EL (CASEL, 2012), the impact of positive emotions is applicable to the present investigation. These concepts played an important role in understanding key stakeholders' behaviours in the current investigation and in aiming to develop emotionally literate approaches.

Section Summary

The proliferation of robust positive psychology constructs and approaches for schooling have much to offer the current investigation as a way of providing greater understanding about EL. The current investigation draws on these constructs and approaches as a lens for understanding what occurs in the case study school, as a way of working in the PAR team and in developing EL intervention strategies to bring about change. The potential for synergy between EL and positive psychology constructs offer opportunities for what may come out of the research.

Teachers and Positive Psychology

Overview

Teachers play a vital role in the lives of students in schooling. An increased focus on teacher quality, teacher morale, and teacher development suggests that it is worth considering how positive psychology and EL may support teachers (Jensen, 2013; Jensen & Reichl, 2012). Teachers who develop their personal and technical skills tend to experience less absenteeism and more encouraging outcomes with their students (Jensen, 2013). The following section examines the role of factors such as teacher grit, positive emotions, and self-efficacy for teachers. Also examined is the research suggesting that such areas offer promise for teacher and student EL within school ecology.

Teacher Grit, Life Satisfaction, and Optimism

Teachers need to thrive in their role as they act as powerful models for their students. Grit and optimism promote resilience in teachers. Teacher attitudes are influential, as teachers who regard difficulties as challenges rather than hardships tend to be more successful. Such teachers have enhanced emotional competence, meaning they also tend to form positive relationships, taking that ability into the classroom (Tait, 2008). Traditional indicators of teacher quality, such as education level and certification, do not necessarily predict teacher effectiveness (Duckworth, Quinn, & Seligman, 2009). It is the teachers' positive traits that determine their commitment and resilience when confronted by adversity

and which predict their effectiveness (Duckworth et al., 2009). Research results indicate that *“grit, life satisfaction and optimistic explanatory style separately predicted performance as measured by the academic gains of students”* (Duckworth et al., 2009 p.543) in research among newly qualified teachers examining the contribution of grit (perseverance and passion for long-term goals), life-satisfaction (the cognitive component of subjective well-being), and optimism for teacher effectiveness (Duckworth et al., 2009, p. 543). The attribute of grit as an influential factor in teacher resilience suggests resilient teachers have an internal locus of control (Knight, 2007; Halpin & Halpin, 1985). It seems that when teachers believe they have more control over their situation they can be focused on achieving their goals. It is thought that grit may predict teacher effectiveness because it enables teachers to apply sustained effort in the face of adversity (Duckworth et al., 2009). This is information that cannot be ignored in schools or by researchers interested in EL.

Optimism enables teachers to sustain effort in challenging situations and maintain a subjective sense of well-being. Life satisfaction and optimistic thinking may lead teachers to engage students in similar ways of thinking about challenge. Students need some of the non-cognitive qualities such as grit, perseverance, and resilience if they are to achieve academically. Therefore, teachers need to model these traits if they are to lead effectively and prepare their students for academic achievement (Farrington et al., 2012; Shechtman, DeBarger, Dornsife, Rosier, & Yarnall, 2013).

Within the research literature, optimism is now incorporated in teacher beliefs about their ability to teach effectively. This new application, known as ‘teacher academic optimism’, frames optimistic thinking in reference to key aspects of teachers’ professional lives, including a belief that their students will learn and that teachers will develop meaningful supportive relationships with parents (Beard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2010; Ngidi, 2012). This new construct is grounded in a raft of theories complementary to this research. These are social cognitive and self-efficacy theories, social capital theory, work on school culture and climate, and research on learned optimism (Bandura; 1977; 1989; Coleman, 1988; 1990; Hoy & Smith, 2007; Seligman, 1990; 2002; 2011). The impact of academic optimism means that teachers can rebound from challenge because of their self-efficacy and feelings of mutual support in their relationships. Teacher relationships with students, teachers, and parents can be marked by respect, trust, and benevolence, making it easier to draw on the positive regard held within the relationships to tackle challenge with confidence.

Positive Affect for Success Outcomes

Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener, (2005) conducted a meta-analysis involving cross-sectional, longitudinal, and experimental research to examine how expressing happiness and positive affect influence success outcomes. This was based on 225 papers comprising 275,000 participants that found that individuals who expressed positive emotions such as joy, gratitude and hope exhibited six types of behaviour, applying to the workplace. Individuals who demonstrated a positive affect held positive perceptions of themselves and others. They were more optimistic and exhibited better problem-solving and creativity. They tended to have less absenteeism in the workplace and greater physical well-being and coping skills. Positive affect was associated with sociability, likeability and co-operation. Demonstrating prosocial behaviour meant people were drawn to individuals who exhibited positive rather than negative emotions. The implications of this research for the present investigation are that teachers who can develop EL and express positive emotions may enhance their work life and their students' experiences. Positive emotions, therefore, provide a lens for examining the research data and a focus for potential interventions.

Support for Teachers and Teacher Self-Efficacy

Positive psychology theory is consistent with teachers' needs for support and self-efficacy. If teachers are to meet students' social emotional well-being needs their own well-being needs should be acknowledged and catered for. Teachers often find it difficult to attend to their own social-emotional needs and may feel isolated and unsupported (Partridge, 2012). According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is defined as a person's perception of his or her capabilities to perform a particular task. Teacher self-efficacy and EL are different but related concepts and a teacher's level of EL is linked to his or her sense of self-efficacy. In practice this means that a teacher who possesses higher levels of EL is more likely to persist for a longer duration due to self-belief in his or her ability and the feeling that they are in control (Steele, 2010). A general willingness to receive or acknowledge positive feedback, a reflective approach to teaching in negatively charged situations, and the capacity to adopt a strategy to move forward are all strongly associated with high self-efficacy (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012).

Teacher self-efficacy and a consideration of the internal and external factors impacting teachers' belief that they are capable and effective have been reviewed through a range of research (Brown, 2012; McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978; Bandura, 1997). Processes such as self-organisation, self-reflection, and self-regulation are integral to self-efficacy. Providing time built into school structures or through professional development in a broader

sense, therefore, may be helpful to teachers' well-being (Bandura, 1997). Including positive interventions to develop attributes and traits connected with teacher resilience, grit, and academic optimism seems potentially useful to include in professional development of teachers. This raises challenges for school authorities and school leaders in terms of how best to implement approaches that foster emotionally literate skills and attributes.

Positive Emotions within School Ecology

A strong emerging theme in the literature is how teacher relationships with Principals influence teachers' feelings of personal and professional well-being, with both negative and positive effects reported (Peters & Pearce, 2011). When teachers perceive they are valued in ways that are meaningful to them, they tend to exhibit more positive responses. Moreover, if mutual trust and respect already mark the relationship between the principal and teachers, positive emotions are created from the principal's valuing practices, resulting in an upward spiral of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1998; 2000; 2001; 2004; 2009). When teachers feel valued, discretionary effort and contextual performance are promoted, meaning teachers tend to give more, thereby positively influencing staff morale (Iszatt-White, 2009).

Positive Psychology in School Research Projects. The Anglican Church Grammar School in Brisbane conducted positive psychology and EI research in partnership with the University of Queensland and a research partner Swinburne University (Wellman, 2010). The school used a range of strategies to develop EI within their pastoral school aspect. Their learning and development model, *academic, emotional intelligence, optimising performance, and understanding you* (AEIOU) was developed through action research. At the boys' school, students and teachers have their emotional intelligence measured using the Swinburne University Emotional Intelligence Test (SUE IT). Boys undertake a self-assessment, which is reported to parents and teachers, with each receiving a report and attending a briefing seminar on the results. Teachers discuss how the boys' strengths and weaknesses will influence learning, relationships, and school life involvement. Teachers gain insight into their own disposition and profiles, increasing their knowledge and understanding of the social and emotional components. This model draws on an ecological perspective.

Prior to 2009 a whole-school approach was adopted. Approximately 653 boys from Years 10 to 12, and their parents, were involved in EI measurement. This EI information was made available to teachers. The school EI team conducted presentations for teachers to understand the data and its implications. A Middle Project followed with selected teachers who were EI assessed to work with specific boys. Since 2009, the approach has deepened and gained recognition from within and outside the school. An expert team has been developed

within the school, the School Council has been involved, and boys are referred to external support where needed.

The school also devised strategies to improve academic outcomes through EI-specific language in the curriculum, and staff worked collaboratively to enhance their EI. This is a project 'in progress' which is noteworthy, not only because it involves boys and all dimensions of their care and development, but also because it embraces a whole-school approach and equips staff and students with valuable developmental strategies.

A limitation in the research conducted in relation to this strategy is the absence of the boys' voices. This void in middle school action research where the students' voices could be heard provides impetus and rationale for my research (Wellman, 2010). The present investigation addresses this void by involving the students in the research through focus groups, and by gaining their opinions through surveys.

Section Summary and Relevance to the Research

Research suggests that teachers' emotions and the mindset they adopt to tackle challenges is important in deciding how they experience work, and for their success. I suggest that approaches developing an internal locus of control, self-efficacy and trusting relationships in which teachers feel valued are worth exploring. The current investigation aims to explore such factors in teachers' roles as members of a PAR team, through a range of EL intervention strategies and in examining what contributes to an emotionally literate school.

In the above section positive education approaches and theory for students and teachers were discussed in order to provide an overview of research applicable to EL. The relationship between positive education, positive psychology, and EL offer the potential for teachers and students to adopt a heightened sense of acuity, positive affect and valuing for schooling. Positive psychology has a significant bearing on this research because it has the capacity to impact on the kaleidoscope of school relationships and domains (academic, pastoral, and co-curricular). During my research, the case study school undertook work in staff well-being, learning motivation theory, and a range of the EL intervention strategies. Including provision for teacher professional learning, teacher acknowledgement, and the expression of kindness aimed to make teachers' work more meaningful. Approaches included the intention to create and sustain positive emotions and an environment in which staff felt competent, valued, motivated, autonomous, and part of a community. A focus on student leadership and teacher professional learning session on academic care (AC) approaches provided teachers with opportunities to strengthen teacher-student relational quality.

Self-Determination Theory

Introduction

Research supports the view that teachers value autonomy, authenticity, connection, and resilience in their workplace (Grenville-Cleave & Boniwell, 2012). Teachers want to make a valuable contribution and to feel that their work is worthwhile. Never before has there been such public scrutiny of teacher competence (referred to as teacher quality) and the need for teachers to develop continually as seen in the introduction of the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework for schools to follow (Education Services Australia, 2012). Although teaching standards focus on EL, competence is relational, not one-dimensional. Self-determination theory (SDT) provides a valid way to consider teachers' overall experience and how it impacts students (Huntly, 2008).

Theoretical Overview

SDT provides a framework for understanding motivation and behaviour. The key contributors to feeling self-determined are experiences of competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT provides a framework for understanding intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and well-being. SDT is also concerned with intrinsic and varied extrinsic sources of motivation, and their roles in cognitive and social development. The psychological need for competence, autonomy and psychological relatedness impacts on teachers' perceptions about their work. Research supports the view that SDT can help explain work engagement and job satisfaction; thereby affecting the way teachers think and feel about their work (Timms & Brough, 2013). SDT thus helps account for individual differences involving motivation, goal orientation, and goal achievement relevant to learning and relationship building (Ryan & Deci, 2000) impacting on EL.

Ryan and Deci (2000) posit that all individuals have a basic psychological need to feel competent and autonomous, and to experience psychological relatedness, each of which we are intrinsically motivated to seek out.

In the teaching context, Brien, Hass, and Savoie (2012) suggest that satisfaction of these needs can create a sense of fulfilment, performance, and health and wellbeing. A teacher's ability to exercise and develop EL may either be compromised or enhanced by the extent to which these basic psychological needs are being met within the school context.

Relatedness with students appears to be a key element based on research findings linking SDT and EL. Adopting the SDT theoretical framework across three studies, Klassen,

Perry, and Frenzel (2012) explored the relations between the satisfaction of teachers' (N= 1049) psychological need for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, and their self-reported levels of teaching-related engagement, emotions, and emotional exhaustion. The research supports the view that teachers' satisfaction of the need for relatedness with students led to higher levels of engagement and positive emotions, and lower levels of negative emotions, than did their satisfaction of the need for relatedness with peers. This finding is relevant to the current investigation as the way teachers relate to students and their EL is an important aspect of this research.

When students experience empowerment as learners, through making choices in their learning, their self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and feelings of control are enhanced (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Consistent with my research is the contribution of SDT and how social and emotional factors facilitate or undermine initiative and well-being. Conditions supporting autonomy, competence, and relatedness foster the most volitional and high quality forms of motivation and engagement, including enhanced performance, persistence, and creativity. As a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness align with EL, SDT offers a vital perspective in my research. It was used to make sense of why teachers and students views portray certain emotions, desires and needs.

Section Summary and Relevance to the Research

SDT provides a key approach for examining the interconnections between key stakeholders' intra- and interpersonal psychological needs and the potential role that EL plays by looking at the effects of these needs on EL. Specifically of interest to my research is the extent to which teachers' self-perceptions of their psychological needs influence their views about their own and others EL.

Ecological Theory

Introduction

In this section, ecological theory as a way of understanding human behaviour and motivation is considered. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) seminal work is discussed, showing the application to students and teachers in a school setting at a systems level. As in a web, the interdependent relationships can cause conflict and disarray, but also harmony and cohesion. The importance of school ecology for my research is also addressed.

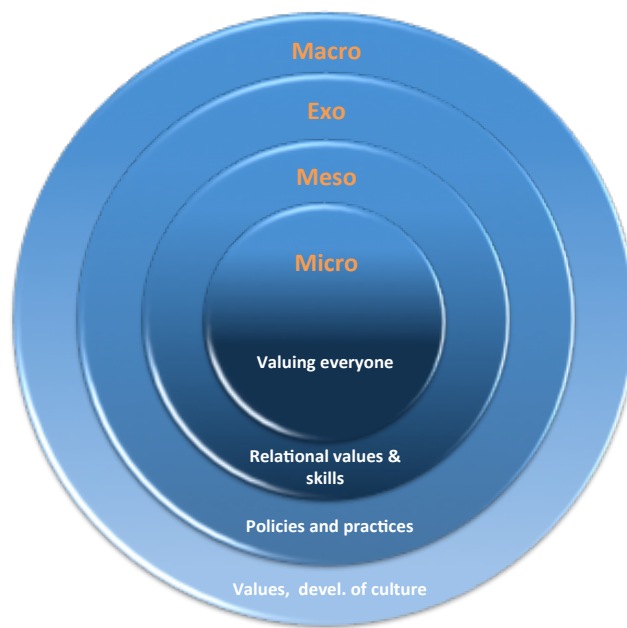
Theoretical Overview

Bronfenbrenner (1979) describes the ecological environment as a “*set of structures each impacting on each other and not dissimilar to a set of Russian dolls nesting one inside the other*” (1979, p. 3). Inherent in ecological theory – also referred to as an ecosystemic approach – is the belief that, in any environment, each person is affected and influenced by everyone and everything. There is an interconnectedness and interdependency between people, so that individuals, as members of a community, experience a level of integration of ideas, beliefs, feelings, and attitudes. A school can be conceived of as an ecological environment and is one major influence on a child’s development. Ecological thinking provides a useful way to conceive of interactions and relationships in a particular context. For example, reciprocated interactions in student classroom behaviour (Sullivan, Johnson, Conway, Owens, & Taddeo, 2012), bullying (Upton, Sung Hong, Williams, & Allen-Meares, 2013) and EL (Roffey, 2008) have been used to examine the influence of multiple factors.

The peer group, class, and school structures are central to the middle school student’s daily life. They are therefore the concern of this research. Ecological theory also takes into account the evolving nature of the individual and the dynamic nature of the immediate environment as affected by larger structures. The ecological view provides strong support for working with the students’ environment to develop EL. As applied in this research the teacher and the student make up the centre of the diagram in Figure 2.1, in ‘valuing everyone’. Therefore, it is vital that any plans to foster EL include working with staff prior to, or at the same time as, working with students. Bronfenbrenner’s theory demonstrates the interdependence and interconnectivity between different system levels. It demonstrates how interactions can apply to different parts of the system. When teachers work together it is an example of their role transactions. Molar activities can be seen in ongoing behaviour meaningful to schools such as the way teachers show respect for students by greeting them at the classroom door for lessons during the day and extending this practice outside of lessons. While each level of the system in an ecological perspective can operate independently, they also interact. A description of how each system can be applied is outlined in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Researchers' Adaptation of Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Ecological Model

System Level	Definition	Example and application
Micro	Involves the student - teacher immediate social, physical, and psychological environment. Structures for this research include, class, year group, and school.	Two children or a small group of children playing together. An application for this research is people demonstrating that they value others and looking for the positive qualities and signature strengths in other people.
Meso	Helps to connect two or more structures in the microsystem.	A student's teacher meets with peers from another class, or with the parents, and using conflict resolution skills, overcomes a relational issue.
Exo	Contexts that are experienced vicariously and yet have a direct bearing on the student or teacher.	A code of staff professional conduct based on school values, operating as policy in the school and incorporating mutual respect. The student experiences the code of behaviour through the teacher.
Macro	The broader set of beliefs, traditions, values, and rules in the school.	The development of school culture through the influence of positive education in the broader society and the way in which positive education impacts on both school climate and culture.
Chrono	Time relating to student or teacher environments. This can be internal or external, as in an historical context or a physiological change resulting from development.	The case-study school has a long history (more than a century). At the time of the research the school leadership was uncertain, and this impacted on the staff and students and the way they felt about the school.



Adapted from *The Ecology of Human Development* Bronfenbrenner (1979)

Figure 2.1 Adapted from The Ecology of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

Each of these levels can be expressed in terms of the organisation, behaviour, values, and structures that exist between subgroups of teachers and students. Matters in relationships rarely exist along a linear cause and effect continuum, but are instead circular and accumulative (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This means that each level of the system interacts and influences the other levels resulting in integration or effects. The impact is bidirectional; for example, the arrival of a new Principal in a school will impact on the culture, the policies, the ways in which people view each other and their relationships and the beliefs and attitudes that are held. It will also impact upon the Principal's self-perception. Elias (2011) provides insight into the nuances contained in the concept of interdependence and the complexity of what a systems view of EL in schools means when he states:

Schools are the central delivery system, and classrooms nested within schools. But other parts of the school ecology matter – the climate and tone from the moment students walk in the door, how they are treated regardless of background, status, abilities, etc., how staff treat one another, whether or not rules of human decency actually hold in hallways, lunchrooms, and bus rides, how harassment, intimidation,

bullying, and cyberbullying are responded to, the qualifications of staff members around the promotion of children's development, and the climate of respect and cooperation in every classroom – all these and more provide the developmental and ecological context within which school programs – academic or other – must be understood, planned, and evaluated (Elias, 2011, p. 2).

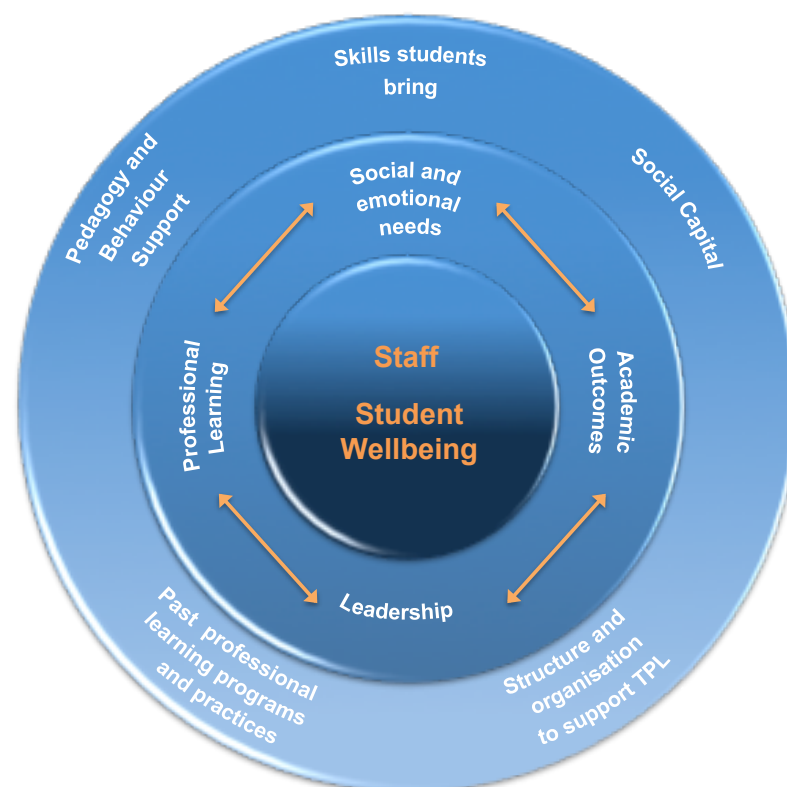
Elias's views validate the emphasis on teachers and students in and out of the classroom in my research. An ecological view of EL recognises that the variables and the outcomes of EL interrelate and are dynamic. This view is supported in the comment that *"the intelligent school is a living organism, it is a dynamic system that is more than just the sum of its parts"* (Groundwater-Smith, 2005, p. 2). With this in mind, when a school has some baseline data about factors such as communication, decision-making and SEL, it is well-placed to use EL as a lever to initiate positive change. This could involve efforts to decrease bullying or reduce absenteeism amongst staff and students, thus promoting a greater commitment to school. In considering how schools can strengthen their focus on EL, Bronfenbrenner's theory has strong relevance to my research and investigating EL, therefore, requires consideration as to how multiple factors exist and interrelate. In particular it is important to consider the leadership of change management processes in a school and how EL is impacted. These processes incorporate the diversity of bidirectional influences, globular, and synergistic factors within and beyond the school environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It is vital to understand how ecological factors operate within the school environment in order to develop the EL concept in this research.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model has been adapted for a range of EL and well-being research. Research involving teacher and student behaviour, and their interactions and their relationships as part of the ecology of school life (e.g., bullying, cyberbullying, and in-school behaviour) used an adapted Bronfenbrenner ecological model (Sullivan, Johnson, Conway, Owens, & Taddeo, 2013; The Children's Society, 2014; Graue, Delaney, & Karch, 2013; Doll, Spies, & Champion, 2012; Roffey, 2012; Pearce, Cross, Monks, Waters, & Falconer, 2011). The present investigation has adapted Bronfenbrenner's model to include factors such as teacher professional learning (TPL) (Durlak et al., 2011) and social and emotional needs (Roffey, 2010) (see Figure 2.2). A range of factors from across different domains of the school together with social capital impact on perceptions; on what makes a person feel connected, engaged, and valued; and on what helps build a positive, inclusive, respectful environment. Such domains include the school environment (culture and climate)

as well as academic, pastoral, co-curricular, and associated structures. An ecological perspective considers these factors and how they interact, encompassing the way a school develops, changing over time (Burns, 2011).

Relevance to the Research

Ecological theory helps to frame how EL can be perceived of at a systems level. Ecological theory demonstrates the interconnectivity between people, teams, and different elements of a school from an organisational perspective, thereby offering a valuable tool to impact on my thinking and the research methods undertaken. Ecological theory is consistent with the EL developmental aspects in the PAR team, meaning that as individuals sought to develop EL, others were influenced to do the same. Ecological theory scaffolded my insight into people, developments, and situations in the current investigation into the ways in which power, influence, and change processes might be consistent with an emotionally literate school. Finally, ecological theory enabled me to draw out the key elements of EL in the case study school by considering a diverse range of interconnections.



Adapted from *The Ecology of Human Development*
Bronfenbrenner (1979) – BEFORE AO = academic outcomes, PL =
professional learning

Figure 2.2 Emotional Literacy in Schools an Ecological View

Section Summary

Ecological theory provides the basis for understanding EL in the case study school. A framework for implementing change in EL and teacher development has been seen in a different way as a result of thinking about the interdependent and interconnected relationships derived from an ecological model underpinning the current investigation.

Social Capital

Introduction

In a school setting, social capital can promote the degree of support, goodwill, trust, and cooperation that exists between members of a school community, or groups within it, resulting in a positive outcome for those involved (Meier, 1999; Dika & Singh, 2002). Social capital facilitates positive outcomes for the common good, and in a school environment it is evident in congruent vision and values, the way people treat each other, and the level of reciprocity between, for example, teachers and students.

Theoretical Overview

While the theory of social capital originated prior to 1920 with John Dewey (1915) commenting on the school as '*a miniature community*', (Dewey, 2009) social capital theory came to prominence in the 1980s (Dika & Singh, 2002). Social capital involves students and teachers enacting a complex set of expectations and interactions, which can either enhance EL and SEL or detract from them. In my research, social capital theory provides a lens for understanding behaviour and the development of EL. Social capital can impact on the quality of the learning environment and the well-being of teachers and students, making a difference to relationships and student academic performance (Plagens, 2011; Blum & Libby, 2004). The following definition highlights the centrality of social capital to the way people form relationships for a fully functioning society.

Social capital refers to the internal social and cultural coherence of society, the norms and values that govern interactions among people and the institutions in which they are embedded. Social capital is the glue that holds societies together and without which there can be no economic growth or human well-being (Rossing-Feldman & Assaf, 1999, p. iii).

The potency of social capital comes in the form of enhanced self-efficacy and a sense of well-being, which are central to this research. This results from an increased capacity for productivity of thought, action, values, or beliefs through working with other people. Consistent with the broaden-and-build theory the result is an increase in personal and environmental assets. All of these potentially promote EL, providing powerful insight into ways in which to develop EL through PAR.

Several social capital constructs have been developed. In this section, the ideas of Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1995) are outlined as a theoretical basis for my research because they promote the relational values of trust, respect, integrity, and collective responsibility (Whalan, 2012). The relational values of trust, respect, and integrity can be born out of social capital. Collective responsibility is also consistent with an emotionally literate school. There is unconditional support between teachers, and high levels of collaboration, when collective responsibility is evident in a school. The sense that everyone acts for the common good is a part of the school culture. Collective responsibility may exist such as in cases where teachers are concerned about all students' learning and relationships rather than when, as sometimes occurs, teachers focus primarily on their own classes and their own students (Whalan, 2012).

Coleman. Coleman (1990) investigated the role of social capital in contributing to human capital (e.g., education, qualification) so that everyone could benefit. Coleman also views social capital in terms of structure and function. According to Coleman (1990), social capital exists in the structure of relations between individuals, which is largely intangible and therefore somewhat elusive. Coleman shows an optimistic view of the nature of social capital, in recognising that when trust exists it tends to benefit the community, enabling them to work together more effectively. While one interpretation of Coleman's view is that social capital is about using your network for personal gain, there are also potential gains for everyone.

Coleman (1988) outlines four forms of social capital. These include obligations, information, norms, and authority in relationships. First, obligations and expectations such as doing favours for, and receiving favours from, people as a way of repaying a kindness may drive social capital, resulting in greater positive affect. Second, informational potential drives social capital by, for example, sharing information that may inform some future action, or help others. Third, norms and effective sanctions such as the establishment of community values and shared standards of behaviour determine when and how support is provided for other people. Finally, authority relations, such as the relationship between the School

Principal and teachers, can impact on social capital because a Principal may motivate teachers to act in a positive way, meaning there are positive outcomes for other people.

Putnam. Putnam describes social capital in relation to “*bridging (inclusive) and bonding (exclusive)*” functions and likens these to “*sociological WD40*” and “*psychological superglue*” (Putnam, 2000, pp. 22-23). In a school each of these can strengthen school experience through the feeling of ‘getting by’ and ‘getting ahead’ such as managing challenging situations or workloads (Putnam, 2000, p. 23). This may apply to a faculty with a member who needs professional support through mentoring or coaching. It could also be evident in the way a school implements strategies to enable students from different backgrounds to gel.

Putnam’s (1995) research on trust as an organisational concept was inspired by developments in the theory of social capital. The central tenets are moral obligations and norms, social values, and social networks that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Putnam regards social capital as positive social control, which benefits everyone (O’Brien & O’Fathaigh, 2005). His theory is congruent with the collegial support seen in high-performing schools and the nature of PAR as the chosen research methodology employed in this research. Therefore social capital can be used to explain how the culture of a school develops and is protected so that it remains intact. Alternatively, a lack of social capital may explain why a school culture is negative or unproductive. If, for example, no shared ideology, vision, or core values exist, individualised approaches, rather than a dominant culture, may emerge. It is also conceivable that without social capital there would be a lack of relational trust (Putnam, 1995). Coleman and Putnam’s views about social capital have relevance in explaining the behaviour of teachers and students as well as their application to EL, and reinforces the way in which, in the present investigation, social capital complements ecological theory.

Social Capital and Change: The Role of Peer and Collegial Influence

Collegiality and elements of social capital, such as developing feelings of trust and safety, help teachers feel support through change processes that may otherwise generate feelings of loss and uncertainty (Mulford, 2008). School leaders who acknowledge this normalise these feelings. This enables teachers to be aware of the potential impact if negative emotions are more than an immediate response to change (Fullan, 2010). Well-developed social capital is a powerful force for stability and positivity in schools undergoing any kind of

change. Teachers who proactively adopt new behaviours and practices, and who share their skills and expertise, can help lift teacher morale and enhance social capital thereby influencing student achievement (Pil & Leana, 2009).

Gladwell (2000) provided a thought-provoking explanation of peer influence relating to the collegial influence of teachers and positive peer influence of students in the school context. Gladwell found that a few significant people can have a great influence on the social behaviour, trends, and fads of others. A further characteristic Gladwell describes is the ‘stickiness’ factor. The person with the potential to influence others is able to communicate a message in a manner that sticks, in a manner that is memorable to others. Engaging those with this potential and being aware who they are will assist in building capacity for change. Important for my research is that building on and harnessing positive social contagion is a way to help build EL (Christakis & Fowler, 2012).

Relevance to the Research

Social capital clarifies the complex web of interactions and interconnectivity that exists in schools, the place of trust, and the different drives, motivations, and expectations that impact on behaviours in school. The relational component of social capital evident within the case study school and the extent to which psychological needs are met, values drive behaviour, and beliefs inform views, demonstrates how barriers to EL can be overcome and strengths recognised. Interactions and relationships, and the way in which teams and networks operate, will help to amplify the impact of social capital for developing EL.

Section Summary

Social capital theory offers promise for my research because it provides insight into the impact of leader, teacher, and student behaviour, and helps to explain the types of forces affecting behaviour. Social capital theory draws out the role of shared values, norms, obligations, authority, and expectations, all of which have relevance in schooling. Understanding social capital may also be useful in evaluating the current level of EL. The thrust of my work is about the development of mutual trust and participation that enables people to work towards shared goals. Social capital theory elucidates how the quality of relationships and networks impact teacher and student well-being in and out of the classroom. The promotion of social capital strengthens in-school networks (Roffey, 2008; 2010). It therefore has implications for school policy and practice.

Social Constructivism

Introduction

First, the philosophies of being and knowing that are significant for this research in its qualitative methods are discussed – these are known as ontology and epistemology. As the researcher I was positioned in the research site. Because of this, issues of subjectivity are important. As the researcher and the person who created meaning from the research data my views and my way of thinking shaped the research analysis and findings. It was, therefore, important for me to consider what determined my knowledge of what was expressed in the research and to understand how everything and everyone in the case study school influenced me.

Second, social constructivism is discussed from the perspective of Bandura. Finally the contribution of professional learning is discussed as viewed within a professional learning community (PLC). Making sense of one's learning in a particular context is part of being a member of a social environment, as much learning occurs through partnerships, collaboration and co-operation with others. Professional learning in a PLC enables learning to be relational and is an expected and anticipated part of daily school life (Lee, Zhongha, & Hongbiao, 2011).

Theoretical Overview

Clarifying ontological and epistemological perspectives is essential for framing this research about EL. Ontology has been defined as: *“the science of what we know of things intuitively”* (M'Cosh, 1866, p. 313). This definition is not unlike the thinking expressed by Gladwell (2005) when he describes how, in the blink of an eye, we make judgements that are intuitive and draw on everything we know and have experienced. This is also a relevant way to think about this EL research project, although intuitive thinking in my research was backed up by deep reflection.

Epistemology is how we are able to know and make meaning of reality. Traditionally research has been wed to an empirical, positivist, rationalist stance, where reality is viewed as universal, objective, and quantifiable. This approach results in a shared sense of reality whereby there is a common view and people are holders of information (Darlaston-Jones, 2007). Alternatively, the constructionist view is one where individuals interpret and makes

sense of their world. Gergen explains reality as an “*artefact of communal interchange rather than a reflection or map of the world*” (1985, p. 1).

In this view, reality is a consequence of multiple factors constructed by the people who experience it. Factors include context as well as cultural, social, political, and historical norms. This view accepts that for each person there will be a different sense of reality, as we each hold different views, attitudes, and understandings (Darlaston-Jones, 2007). I take this approach in my research because it acknowledges the importance of the individual and the role of bidirectional factors encompassed in EL.

Using a Social Constructivist Approach

Social Constructivist theory has high relevance to this research as I take the view that context is everything in implementing programs or interventions in schools. Bandura’s theory recognises that learning occurs within a social context and that cognitive and information-processing capacities mediate social behaviour (Grusac, 1992). In my research, social constructivist methods enabled meaning to be co-constructed in the case study school. Bandura’s Social Learning Theory (1977) – a social constructivist approach – asserts that learning is an interaction between three factors; the environment, behaviour, and the cognitive domain. This has implications for thinking about how EL develops in schools between staff and students. The environment may reinforce certain behaviours so that a young person’s way of speaking, for example, changes to conform to a group and he/she is accepted by the group as a result.

Bandura (1986) dismisses as too extreme and simplistic the view that internal events are mainly the result of external events without regard for factors such as motivation, self-reflection, or creativity. On the contrary, he asserts that processes of abstraction and integration can be used to internalise and learn behaviour (Grusac, 1992; Bandura, 1989). This process of taking information, integrating it, and then internalising it acts as an interaction mechanism. The internalisation of causation, action, the affective, and other personal and environmental factors result in learning (Bandura, 1989). Therefore, by impacting on the school environment or any one of the elements of the triad, EL gains can be made. This theory is significant for approaches to develop EL in teachers and students because people learn such skills from one another, via observation, imitation, and modeling. Learning is enhanced if role modeling is positive. In the current investigation students’ and teachers’ views were analysed by reflecting on what each was learning from each other and what it meant for EL. Additionally role modeling and observation become even more powerful when individuals perceive the model as similar to themselves.

Building on this theory, Bandura (1986) also regards the exercise of agency as being impacted upon by self-belief, and motivational and affective processes. Learning may result in a change of behaviour or not. This means that internal changes may take place in terms of values, attitudes, ideas, or understanding. Bandura's learning theory is recognised as a conduit for behaviourist and cognitive learning theories as it encompasses attention, memory, and motivation (Bandura, 1977; Manz & Sin, 1981; Crossan, Lane, White, & Djurfeldt, 1993). Consistent with thinking about the student voice, the need for teachers and students to perceive a sense of agency is therefore crucial to this research. These elements of teacher and student voice were highly pertinent in the current investigation. As they needed development, they became a strong focus for teachers, students and the PAR team. In the current investigation the teacher and student voices were vital tools for gaining insight and understanding about how EL develops.

The Professional Learning Community (PLC)

As members of a PLC, teachers have the opportunity to enact a sense of agency in an inclusive environment. While there is not a universal definition of a PLC in the literature, there is consensus about some of the features that identify one (Stoll & Seahore Louis, 2007). PLCs tend to be collaborative, reflective, inclusive, sharing, development-oriented, and solution-focused (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006).

Positive relationships and a shared sense of purpose build connectedness and engagement and can provide the foundation for a PLC. These aspects are characteristic of schools as social organisations (Sergiovanni, 1994). Relational trust is vital to teachers' work, meaning that when teachers see work as contextually relevant, relational trust can help build collective responsibility (Whalan, 2012). Teacher efficacy and teachers' involvement in PLCs require teachers to work collaboratively to improve and develop their teaching practice (Cranston, 2011). In the discourse of PLCs, relational trust fosters collaboration and there is a feeling of safety, risk-taking is more likely, and there is willingness for change (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). This translates into the feelings that come with statements such as 'we are all in this together so let's support each other through the challenges', and 'we are one' consistent with the mutual support offered when there is a high level of social capital (Bryk & Schneider, 2011). PAR has the potential to build this trust and to have a positive impact on teachers and students in this EL research project.

Social and psychological support, shared values, and emotional connections, each of which helps to engage a person in taking on new challenges, are part of the ecology within a PLC (Parsons, 2009; Roffey 2011). Hallam and Mathews (2008) show that values such as

trust can be a powerful support for school improvement and suggest that to develop trust leaders must understand the determinants of a trusting organisation.

These aspects of school life influence EL and contribute to it. The theory behind learning with others, and how learning occurs, provides one with a lens for thinking about the development of EL in schools. Social constructivism provides another lens whereby through participation individuals draw meaning from what is experienced or learnt. Thus, this research takes a social constructivist approach.

Relevance to the Research

The research reviewed above suggests that social constructivism helps teachers and students make sense of their learning and relationships. Social constructivism acknowledges the role of learning in groups, making it relevant to the ecological stance and the way in which learning took place in the PAR team in the current investigation. Thus a social constructivism lens will help in my interpretation of data to establish meaning in my research. As members of a PLC, teachers have mutual support to make sense of their relationships and develop their professional practice. The concept of the PLC links with my research because its intended outcome is the good of all. It demonstrates teachers' care for their students' learning and underscores the teachers' drive for continuous improvement. This investigation examined the relationships between multiple stakeholders with reference to how and what they learnt from each other.

Section Summary

Relational values such as trust and a school environment conducive to exercising a sense of agency involve reciprocity typical of an ecological view of EL. The knowledge accompanying this view enables the current investigation to make a unique contribution using PAR. Social constructivism enhanced my understanding about how and why individuals and groups behave in particular ways, hold certain views, and thereby influence EL.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the key terms used in the present investigation and discussed a range of theoretical perspectives for promoting EL and a values-based and collaborative approach to education. Each theory contributes to the constructivist, ecological basis of this research, and to the ontological and epistemological perspectives taken in the research. The chapter draws together a range of theoretical perspectives for promoting EL. Consideration has been given to positive psychology theories and approaches, which have been applied

through ecological theory, thinking, and approaches, in the current investigation. SDT, social capital, and the concept of a professional learning community provide a window into the relational aspect of schooling for how EL can develop in a school. They also provide a lens of understanding about what may act as a barrier to EL.

The theory of school ecology and the interdependence of each person as part of a school add weight to the participatory processes that will be used in my research to impact on EL. The types of thinking and learning represented throughout the different theories outlined are key to my research as learning involves a repertoire of SEL skills (Seligman, 2011; Goleman, 1996, 2007, 2013), contributing to an emotionally literate environment for staff and students.

The social context of learning contributes to the knowledge and understanding and the value placed on learning, EL, and well-being. By looking across the structures, spheres and layers of the school and using theories about how and why people work effectively in a dynamic learning environment, this EL project is positioned to make a contribution to what is known about EL. In the next chapter EL research is examined.

CHAPTER 3

A REVIEW OF EMOTIONAL LITERACY RESEARCH

Introduction

This chapter discusses research about EL which supports students' success at school and the implications of this research for the present investigation. First a discussion of national and international attention to EL explains why EL has become a priority in education. Second, key research studies, examining the relations between social and emotional skills and academic outcomes is provided. Third, the concept of the importance of safety at school for learning and academic achievement is discussed. Fourth, an overview is provided of key SEL skills that can be applied to learning, academic behaviour, and relational contexts. Fifth, research examining the efficacy of SEL programs and interventions for developing student EL skills and inclusive school practice is reviewed. Sixth, factors that contribute to the support of teachers, and the teacher's role in student achievement and EL are considered. This is followed by a discussion of the role of leadership values and style, and thus of the potential impact of the Principal on teachers and school ecology. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the implications for the present investigation of the research reviewed in the chapter.

National and International Interest in Student Well-being, Learning, and Emotional Literacy

National Interest

The groundswell of interest in student well-being, learning, and EL is reflected in Australia in a number of government and institutional education initiatives. Gillies (2011) has noted that policy makers have moved their focus from structures and processes to personal skills and self-efficacy. Schools are now encouraged to monitor student well-being and explicitly teach social and emotional skills, by way of syllabus documents, universal programs, and targeted interventions. *Key Developments for Teachers.* Given the interest in well-being, there has been a focus on teachers and their professional growth and development. Teachers are now recognised for their key potential positive contribution to students' learning, development, well-being, and EL. This is timely for the development of

student EL. Unequivocal research supports the view that teachers account for the biggest factor, other than the home, in differentiating between student learning outcomes, (Jensen & Reichl, 2012; Hattie, 2009). The Australian government has responded by developing an *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development, and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA], 2011) and the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (APST), (MCEECDYA, 2011). The APST supports teachers in developing their knowledge and understanding about the social-emotional development of young people. Further, the development of the *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* (Education Services, 2012) means schools are moving to performance and development cultures, whereby they can reflect, develop, and set goals in areas of professional practice, including how EL can make a difference in the classroom and at school. Professional learning is a key component of the *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework*. Therefore, schools are seeking to use a range of approaches for professional learning. The participatory action research PAR methodology used in the present research investigation may contribute to what schools do to develop their teachers.

Key Government Documents and Resources

Other relevant government documents are the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (Australian Government Department of Education, Science, and Training, 2005), the *National Safe Schools Framework 2011* (MCEECDYA, 2010) and the *Guidelines to Support the Development of School-Based Drug Education Policy and Practices* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001). Additionally, Universities Australia (2011) released the *Good Practice Guidelines for Enhancing Student Safety*, which aims to ensure students have a safe place to study, learn, and live. With relational skills at their heart, each of these documents attests to the significance of EL.

The *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (Commonwealth of Australia, DEST, 2005) outlines nine values, providing an essential foundation for EL. These are: care and compassion, respect, doing your best, integrity, responsibility, a fair go, understanding, tolerance, and inclusion. Each value is relational and exists within a social context, making it pertinent to this research. The way in which the values can be applied to enhance learning and relationships has been considered through a range of professional activities associated with government policy. Some of this professional activity is particularly relevant to this research. From 2004-2008, eighty-five government

funded projects were conducted in schools across Australia using the nine values in the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* under the banner of the *Values Education Good Practice Project*. The project aimed to examine the association between areas such as values education, student well-being, and positive education (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010). The projects were analysed using qualitative methods. The impacts of the projects were seen in improved outcomes in areas including: values consciousness, well-being, agency, and connectedness. These impacts have helped identify the significance of values for the current investigation.

SEL on the National Agenda

Government resources

As a component of EL, SEL in particular is gaining a higher place on the national agenda in government programs across education jurisdictions, supported by the allocation of resources and SEL programs and initiatives. For example, within the Catholic sector, staff roles dedicated to developing SEL in the dioceses of Cairns and Melbourne demonstrate this importance. Another example is that SEL is embedded in key educational resources used nationally. Government resources such as: professionals to support schools, online materials, and a suite of teaching and support materials have been developed and made available. These resources promote resilience, personal, and relational skills. Substantial work is underway in the State systems through school programs involving the *National MindMatters Project* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000), the *KidsMatter Project* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009), the *Gatehouse Project* (Centre for Adolescent Health, 1995), *Response Ability* (Commonwealth Government of Australia, 2007), *The Revised National Safe Schools Framework* (MCEECDYA, 2011), *Resilience Education and Drug Information* (REDI) (Australian Government, 2004), the *National Centre Against Bullying* (Alannah and Madeline Foundation, 2014), as well as values education resources (Department of Education Science and Training [DEST], 2005).

The government continues to expand access to mental health approaches for young people including funding for *Headspace* (National Youth Mental Health Foundation, 2013) and to contribute to the ongoing implementation of *KidsMatter* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009) and *MindMatters* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000). The 2011–12 budget allocated \$197.3 million over five years, in addition to an existing commitment of \$133.3 million in 2013–14, to provide funding for ninety *Headspace* sites across Australia by 2014–15

(Commonwealth of Australia, 2011). When plans for these ninety sites are achieved, *Headspace* may help up to 72000 young people each year. *MindMatters* has also been implemented in secondary schools, with professional development being accessed by 83% of those schools across Australia. Under the *Mental Health: Taking Action to Tackle Suicide* package, the Australian Government plans to invest \$18.4 million over four years in funding for the expansion of *KidsMatter Primary* to a further 1700 schools by June 2014.

Some of these government initiatives draw on a conceptual framework, utilising a whole-school approach, whereas others link schools with community-based resources to protect young peoples' mental health. Consistent with the present research in applying a whole-school approach are the *National MindMatters Project* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000), which is a secondary program, *KidsMatter* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009), which is a primary program, and the *Gatehouse Project* (GHP). *Response Ability*, and *The Revised National Safe Schools Framework (revised 2011)* (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA], 2010) involve key stakeholders in initiatives to impact on EL values, skills, and the school environment. Each initiative has resulted in an abundance of EL school-based activities. These are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

The National MindMatters Project

The *National MindMatters Project* is one of the most significant school mental health programs in Australia, aimed at school leaders, staff, and community partnerships. *MindMatters* employs a whole-school approach (curriculum, ethos, and partnerships). It also aims to extend leadership and participation, link to other existing initiatives, and develop staff knowledge and understanding of well-being using evidence based practices and approaches. An evaluation of *MindMatters* 2002-05 conducted by the Hunter Institute of Mental Health (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 2014) found that mental health and well-being for students improved when a school undertook concerted staff training in mental health and well-being and/or a school curriculum review. The view that relationships and positive communication are pivotal to the development of a welcoming school and supportive school ethos is central to *MindMatters*. EL is very much regarded as an enabler within *MindMatters* and *MindMatters* recognises the ecological nature of schools. These features make it relevant to this research. While schools may struggle to put the issue of mental health on their agenda in a sustained way, and there is a potential lack of capacity

to embed the approaches within the school culture, the present investigation aims to extend the contributions of *MindMatters* to EL in schooling.

The Gatehouse Project

The *Gatehouse Project* (GHP), initiated in 1997 and rooted in attachment theory, uses a whole-school conceptual framework supporting a multi-tiered preventative approach, similar to *MindMatters*, and recognises the impact of school organisational climate on educational achievement (Bond et al., 2004). The GHP focuses on aspects of the school social context: security, participation, involvement, and communication. The GHP aims to enhance students' perceptions of school connectedness and therefore their well-being and health decisions.

Research (Bond et al., 2004) conducted as part of the GHP across twenty-six secondary schools revealed a more effective preventative, school-wide approach could be achieved. The key elements of the method involved the establishment and support of a school based adolescent health team; the identification of risk and protective factors in each school's social and learning environment from student surveys; and, using these data, the identification of effective strategies to address these issues. In addition, teaching resources, classroom lessons, and professional learning were implemented in each school. Using a randomised controlled design, longitudinal data were collected on a cohort of over 2,500 secondary school students. Students completed a self-administered questionnaire for mental health four times: twice at the beginning and end of Year 8 and at the end of Year 9 and Year 10. Implementation data about the processes was also collected.

Prevalence estimates and univariate and multivariate logistic regressions were performed for each outcome separately for each wave. Multivariate analyses were adjusted for baseline measures of each particular outcome and for variables considered potentially important confounders: gender, family structure, ethnicity, and parental daily smoking. The results showed that of the sample of 3,623 students, 2,678 (74%) participated in the first wave of data collection. At baseline 1,335 (81%) of 1,652 students on the intervention school rolls and 1,342 of 1,971 students (68%) from comparison schools completed the questionnaire. Intraclass correlations in the study ranged from 0.01 to 0.06. Intraclass correlations were generally higher for school engagement and substance use than the attachment measures and depressive symptoms (0.01 depressive symptoms and 0.06 peers' smoking at wave 1). The intraclass correlations were higher, and more variable across the years, than anticipated. The intervention group reported lower levels of risk factors such as parental separation compared to the control groups. Having arguments with many others, low school engagement, and being victimised were strongly related to substance use. The

connection between poor social relationships and self-reported depressive symptoms was stronger than with the health risk behaviours of drug use. A comparison of intervention and control groups for substance use, and friends' substance use, for waves 2 to 4 showed a comparatively consistent 3%–5% risk difference between the two groups in any drinking, any smoking, and regular smoking, and friends' alcohol and tobacco use. The largest impact as assessed by the odds ratios was the reduction in the reporting of regular smoking by those in the intervention group.

The GHP recognises the interdependent nature of staff and students in schools. It also recognises the unique needs that each school has and the need to tailor approaches to the specific environment. The research concluded that a broader focus on students' connectedness and school climate may be equally if not more effective in addressing health and problem behaviours than specific, single-issue focused education packages. This understanding is an important consideration for the present investigation as it suggests that multiple issues may produce an improved result. The research pertaining to GHP provides implications for the present research investigation. As the present investigation will employ a school-based intervention strategy, the notion of a multi-tiered preventative approach, with interdependent stakeholders, is potentially potent, based on previous research findings (Bond et al., 2001).

Response Ability

The resource *Response Ability* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009), developed for pre-service teachers by the Hunter Institute for Mental Health, raises awareness about the role of EL for teacher well-being. Prior to the development of Response Ability there was a void in teachers' preparation as their own well-being and social-emotional health were omitted from formal pre-service learning. The Hunter Institute for Mental Health has also developed a journal entitled *Connect* for teacher educators to cater for teachers' social and emotional learning. Teacher awareness and skills are significant for students' learning. However, most initiatives focus on student EL, providing an opportunity to consider the EL needs of teachers as well as students.

The Revised National Safe Schools Framework

Another government document influencing student EL is the *Revised National Safe Schools Framework* (MCEECDYA, 2010). The framework addresses four key issues – bullying, harassment, violence, and child abuse and endeavours - to help school communities build and maintain a supportive learning environment in which all students can feel safe. While Australian schools are amongst the safest environments in our modern-day society,

issues such as bullying, sexting, and cyberbullying can result in long-term psychological effects (MCEECDYA, 2010). Gaining understanding offers a critical path forward, therefore, to adopt empathic, co-operative approaches in the classroom to diminish bullying and to build EL in order to provide students with necessary skills and support.

Institutional Education Emotional Literacy Initiatives

A range of interest groups and independent organisations is also developing materials and projects in response to the growing area of EL and well-being. For example, the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) launched *The Nest: A National Plan for Child and Youth Well-being* in 2013. *The Nest* offers a practical response to evidence that Australia could do more to advance the well-being of children and young people. In 2013, ARACY also launched SWAN - the *Student Well-being Action Network* (ARACY, 2014) at the behest of DEEWR.

Other professional activity includes groups such as *Wellbeing Australia* (Wellbeing Australia 2013), projects such as the *Positive Schools Project* (Positive Schools, 2014), and a proliferation of consultants working in the field. This sustained focus on EL demonstrates that the current investigation is a timely addition to what is known about EL in schooling. Further, since 1994, the development of social and emotional health, utilising a whole-school approach, continues to be a focus of the Australian Health Promoting Schools Association (2014). The Association's approach is characterised by a constant strengthening of a school's capacity to provide a healthy setting for living, learning, and working (World Health Organisation. WHO, 1997). In addition, a range of Healthy Schools Projects has been implemented using the health promoting schools framework in Australia. The projects focus on areas such as obesity, physical activity, and healthy school canteens (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010) and affirm the place of EL in Australian schooling. These projects show the value of working across policy, curriculum, and involving key stakeholders such as students and teachers.

The Australian Curriculum: Social-Emotional Learning in the 21st Century

For the first time Australia is to have a common curriculum in all States and Territories with an emphasis on SEL and EL for living and working in the 21st century. ACARA is the government body responsible for the development of the curriculum. ACARA (2010) has developed a general capabilities document, which spells out the essential skills and competencies for the curriculum and lists personal and social competence as one of seven capabilities to be developed in young people. The document states that “*personal and social*

competence involves recognising and regulating emotions, developing concern for and understanding of others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams and handling challenging situations constructively” (ACARA, 2010, p. 20).

The subsequent areas for development presented by ACARA (2010) marry with the areas recognised as comprising EL: recognising and managing emotions, values and strengths; managing emotions and behaviour; perceiving and understanding other people’s emotions and viewpoints; and forming positive relationships. While it is up to individual educational jurisdictions to determine the content and approach taken when applying these capabilities within schools, there has been great interest and positivity from a number of States and Territories in response to the inclusion of these capabilities.

International Developments

Australian trends reflect educational developments in the USA and UK, which also involve a focus on academic results and EL. In the USA and UK, government investment in SEL and well-being through Acts of Parliament is intended to raise achievement levels, while catering to the needs of all children. However, despite the focus on student achievement, there is a disparity between the intended aim of inclusivity and equity for all students and the need to place a high priority on student EL and well-being in a cohesive way. At the same time, disparate approaches to EL, health, and academic outcomes can be prevalent, meaning that EL strategies through the academic area are dealt with in a less integrated way. Research evidence suggests the need for interrelated rather than disparate and individual approaches (Durlak et al., 2011; Martin et al., 2012; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg; 2004).

USA Legislation

In the US, legislation has been introduced to support students’ positive development and academic success through SEL. The *Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act* of 2013 (House of Representatives [HR] 1875), introduced in the 113th Congress, aims to expand the availability of evidence-based programs that teach students social and emotional skills such as self-control, goal-setting, collaboration, conflict resolution, and problem-solving (United States Congress Information, 2013). It is yet to be seen how this bid to implement changes to the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) are to be implemented.

Also in the US, the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act (2002) was passed with the purpose of developing school culture and enabling each school to be more accountable for its results. The NCLB legislation is intended to overcome inequity and enhance access to

learning for all students. The aim is to close the achievement gap between minority and white students, enabling all students to reach benchmarks and be regarded as academically proficient by 2013-14 (Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of American Congress, 2002). However, the Act has been criticised for its emphasis on the academic, rather than the personal, social, and emotional development of children (Dollarhide & Lemberger, 2006; Martens & Witt, 2004). The NCLB Act stresses the role of increased academic accountability, transparency, standards, and proficiency levels for all students in the core academic areas of Mathematics, Reading, and Writing (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Martens and Witt (2004), in considering the NCLB, acknowledge the place of academic success but contextualise it relative to the need for students to first have a base of psycho-social skills and attitudes.

UK Report and Legislation

In the UK, the government commissioned a report into effective practice in the areas of social and emotional competence and well-being (Weare & Gray, 2003). The findings provided the impetus for the *Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning* (SEAL) curriculum (Department for Education Schools [DfES], 2005), offered to all primary schools across England and Wales. Concurrently, government legislation was passed requiring compliance and statutory responsibility from all local authorities to enhance the mental health and emotional well-being of children, under the *Children Act* (2004). The Act was augmented by the *Every Child Matters* Agenda (House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2005), which established advantageous emotional development outcomes for children. These outcomes embrace a range of capacities including: being “*mentally and emotionally healthy; attending and enjoying school; achieving personal and social development and developing self-confidence*” (House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2005, p. 65).

The UK government's mandate for EL through SEAL has been complemented and substantiated by a range of provisions and groups. These include *Circle Time* (Roffey, 2006; Miller & Moran, 2007) and the *Circle of Friends Initiative* (Calabrese et al., 2008; Fredrickson & Turner, 2005), which are programs and interventions designed to give students a voice, thereby providing an inclusive environment. *Circle Time* and the *Circle of Friends* initiatives claim to facilitate social and emotional skills and self-worth development. The current government (UK Government, 2013) seems to be downplaying these elements of education for ideological reasons even though there is evidence of their effectiveness when program implementation is taken into account (Humphrey, Lendrum, & Wigelsworth, 2010).

There appears to be a gap between the current situation involving the way legislation is enacted and the need for an integrated EL approach. An integrated approach, with an understanding of the whole person, may achieve the goal of improved academic standards more effectively than a single-focus approach as I discuss in the next section.

The UNESCO View: The Four Pillars

The way in which social and emotional dimensions contribute to learning and the whole person are emphasised in a report *Learning: the Treasures Within* authored by Delors et al., (1996) for the United Nations, Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century. The report sees education as based on what it refers to as the four pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. These four pillars provide a strong platform for placing EL at the heart of the learning process. The report states: “*Education is also a social experience through which children learn about themselves, develop interpersonal skills and acquire basic knowledge and skills*” (UNESCO, 1996, p. 21). This quote demonstrates the integrated nature of SEL and helps to draw out the EL skills considered in the present investigation.

Section Summary and Implications for the Present Investigation

This section has shown that as government aspirations develop about what students can achieve through schooling, and as legislation is passed committing to changes in education, there are opportunities to develop Australian EL strategies. These developments would provide the impetus for schools to create safe, inclusive, and positive school environments. The opportunities to develop EL may include building teacher capacity, providing a more balanced approach between the academic and pastoral domains, and using the Australian curriculum as a springboard for implementing a range of EL strategies. An investigation into the place of EL and the features of an emotionally literate school could support the goal of developing the whole person by recognising the interdependence of relationships that is vital to my research. The next section examines the postulated benefits of social and emotional skills for academic achievement.

Research Findings: Social and Emotional Skills and Academic Achievement

Overview

This section reports first on a number of different studies linking social-emotional learning programs and academic success. Second, a variety of studies on factors for academic

success are discussed. Third, there is a discussion of the meaning and importance of safe schools in light of current academic priorities including a discussion of Australian research focused on positive approaches to behaviour for learning (PBL) and changing behaviour. Finally the implications of these research findings for the present investigation are presented.

Studies Linking Social-Emotional Learning Programs and Academic Success

Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011): Meta-Analysis

It has been demonstrated that social-emotional learning programs make a difference to academic outcomes and well-being throughout schooling. For example, a meta-analysis by Durlak, et al., (2011) of 213 school-based, universal SEL programs involving 270,034 students from kindergarten through to high school examined three types of school programs to ascertain which of these made the most difference to children. Compared to controls, SEL participants demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviour, and academic performance that reflected an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement. The programs were presented by the class teacher (53%); by non-school personnel such as university or research staff (21%); and through multi-component programs involving, for example, a parent or whole-school component (26%). Universal SEL programs that contain the features of being sequenced, active, focused, and explicit (SAFE) were included in the meta-analysis, as these features are regarded as key markers of a quality SEL program (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, [CASEL] 2012). ‘Sequenced’ means a systematic training approach (e.g., ways to build respect in the classroom are comprehensive, practised, applied, and reinforced). ‘Active’ refers to the application of skills learning through practising them (e.g., expressing feelings with a friend). ‘Focused’ means there is sufficient time devoted to skill development using specific learning goals (e.g., skills for communication are given adequate focus for learning over a period of time). ‘Explicit’ refers to programs targeting specific SEL skills (e.g., conflict resolution skills are clearly delineated and taught explicitly). Compared to controls, students in the study showed: enhanced SEL skills, attitudes, and positive social behaviour, fewer conduct issues, and lower levels of emotional distress. The results show staff adopting SAFE to be more effective in implementation and in achieving positive results. The four SAFE features together with implementation factors, such as whether there was monitoring during implementation, were potential moderators of the research outcome and accordingly programs were coded dichotomously (‘yes’ or ‘no’), according to whether or not each of the

four SAFE features were included. While providing a benchmark, this approach meant that other potentially meritorious features were not considered, suggesting further research about other features for effective SEL programs may be warranted.

The teacher-led programs were more successful than those delivered by non-school personnel, indicating the vital role of teachers in EL interventions. A prediction that multi-component programs would be more effective was not supported; increased program complexity may mean more can go wrong in terms of implementation and execution. Of the programs that conducted a follow-up, it was encouraging that the effects remained significant for a minimum of six months after the intervention. This research also suggests SEL programs need to be more than evidence-based; they need to be well organised, well designed, and well executed. Overall, such meta-analysis research supports the correlation between social and emotional skills and academic achievement as seen on achievement tests and grades (Durlak et al., 2011). It appears there were four interacting factors in a potential implementation framework vital to EL in the present investigation, which resulted in enhanced academic achievement in this meta-analysis. These are person-centred factors, interpersonal factors, instructional factors, and environmental factors.

While Durlak et al., (2011) suggested SEL programs have a vital role to play in achieving enhanced academic outcomes, the students' voices are missing from this research. Other research endorses the contribution of student voice in achieving effective EL outcomes (Spears, Slee, Campbell, & Cross, 2011). Shirley, Hargreaves, and Hughes (2010) suggest that students are more than change agents as they are partners in school change to the extent that they can help drive change in their own learning processes by making decisions about school curricula. My investigation aims to draw on the student voice to inform what makes a difference to EL and learning.

Dix, Slee, Lawson, and Keeves (2011)

The impact of SEL programs that use a comprehensive and cohesive implementation approach for academic achievement is confirmed in Australian research (Dix, Slee, Lawson, & Keeves, 2011). The Centre for Student Wellbeing and Prevention of Violence (2011) examined the *KidsMatters Primary* program and found evidence linking a high quality implementation of *KidsMatter* with improved NAPLAN outcomes. The implementation involved a whole-school approach underpinned by a conceptual framework, an implementation process, and the availability of educational resources for teachers involved in the intervention. The intervention was designed to support and involve key stakeholders –

school leaders, teachers, parents, and students – to improve student mental health and well-being, to reduce mental health problems among students, and to provide enhanced support for students experiencing mental health problems. The program was based on a four-component conceptual framework focusing on a positive school community, SEL for students, parenting support and education, and early intervention for at-risk students experiencing mental health difficulties.

The implementation processes used with *KidsMatters* enabled improvements in students' mental health, well-being, and academic performance over time. Schools that implemented *KidsMatters Primary* well had improved student learning outcomes, placing their students' average NAPLAN results up to six months ahead by Year 7. This impact took into account the influence of socio-economic background. The results were supported by anecdotal reports from teachers during the pilot study that the school's implementation of *KidsMatter Primary* resulted in improvements in students' school work. Therefore, it appears that involving teachers in implementation strategies and developing sound implementation processes for introducing SEL programs can make a difference. As teachers' participation is central to the current investigation their role cannot be underestimated.

Jones, Brown, and Aber (2011)

This study employed a school-randomised, experimental design with 1,184 children in eighteen elementary schools. The research evaluated the experimental impacts of a novel social-emotional learning and literacy intervention (the 4Rs Program of Reading, Writing, Respect, and Resolution) on a cohort of third grade children's social-emotional, behavioural, and academic functioning after two consecutive years of exposure to the intervention. Children in the intervention schools showed improvements across several domains: self-reports of hostile attributional bias, aggressive interpersonal negotiation strategies, and depression. There were also teacher reports of attention skills, and aggressive and socially competent behaviour indicating improved outcomes. Results indicated that the intervention had an effect on mathematics and reading achievement for those children identified by teachers at baseline as being at highest behavioural risk. These findings seem to support the value of universal, integrated interventions in the elementary school period for promoting children's social-emotional and academic skills. This study also supports other EL research that seems to suggest self-awareness, self-management, and social skills support academic achievement (Brackett, Rivers, Keys, & Salovey, 2012). As the integration of the social-emotional and academic areas is applied in the current investigation, reporting the impact

may add to what is known in the areas of social-emotional and academic growth.

Murray-Harvey (2010)

This study, involving 888 participants in Years 5-9, examined their psychological health (feelings about, and sense of, belonging at school) and social-emotional adjustment (relationship with peers and family and peers and teachers as sources of stress or support) as well as academic achievement and motivation. The students completed a questionnaire with items relating to these areas. Information was also obtained from teachers who randomly selected students in each of their classes and provided information regarding the same variables. Path analysis was used to further examine the significant associations revealed from correlation analysis between the relationship, psychological health, and social-emotional adjustment variables and academic performance. The analysis supported a strong connection between students' social-emotional and academic experience. The quality of relationships seemed to influence social-emotional and academic outcomes, strengthening the need to support teachers' social-emotional competence and professional skills.

The vital role of teachers in enhancing students' schooling experience was shown in the impact of quality teacher-student relationships, which exerted a stronger influence on well-being and achievement outcomes for students than did peers and family. This adds weight to other research about the tightly bound and reciprocal nature of psychological health, social-emotional adjustment, and academic achievement in schooling. It would be helpful to know what schools can do to support teachers more in their work and develop their EL. The present investigation aims to do so and find out what expert teachers do in and out of the classroom to engage, support, and nurture their students.

Martin and Dowson (2009)

This study examined the role of interpersonal relationships on student motivation, engagement, and achievement. Almost 1,500 articles were reviewed. The purpose of the study was to develop a framework which drew together relational, motivational, engagement, and achievement facets of schooling. By reviewing the role of influential theorising, including attribution theory, expectancy-value theory, goal theory, self-determination theory, self-efficacy theory, and self-worth motivation theory, a tri-level framework was developed indicating the integrative nature of social-emotional skills and the academic lives of young people. This framework encompassed student-level action (universal programs and intervention, targeted programs for at-risk populations, extracurricular activity, cooperative

learning, and mentoring), teacher and classroom-level action (connective instruction, professional development, teacher retention, teacher training, and classroom composition), and school-level action (school as a community and effective leadership). These research findings offer support for a whole-school approach to developing EL. While the study lends support to the centrality of classroom-based learning, it did not draw on new understandings about the impact of positive education practices for students or teachers, nor highlight the factors for academic success. This gap in the research using an EL and a positive education perspective provides additional scope to add to the field of knowledge about EL by undertaking the present investigation.

Factors for Academic Success

Early development

The early development of social-emotional skills has been shown to be vital for academic success. Early social competency, pro-social orientation, and behaviour also appear to pave the way for later social and academic success (Greenberg et al., 2003; Mitchell & Elias, 2003; Elias, 1997). The benefits of SEL skills have been seen from the beginning of schooling through associations between preschool emotional knowledge, kindergarten attention skills, and first grade academic competence in a sample of mainly disadvantaged children (Rhoades et al., 2011). The use of attention skills during kindergarten seems to be a significant mediator of academic success, even after accounting for the effects of variables such as maternal education, family income, and children's age, sex, and receptive vocabulary skills (Rhoades et al., 2011). In addition, social competence in Year 3 has been shown to predict variations in academic achievement in Year 8 more accurately than student's academic standing does (Capara et al., 2000). Bear and Watkins (2006) have also theorised that EL competencies enable a developmental progression resulting in a shift from being controlled by external factors, such as distractions in class and one's own impulses or the need to impress others, to an internal control. This is characterised by acting in accordance with an internal belief system and the values that are in keeping with that system, such as being compassionate and caring, taking personal responsibility, showing empathy, and respecting others. Other research suggests that EL programs may influence the central executive cognitive functions such as inhibitory control, planning, and set shifting that are the result of building greater cognitive affect regulation in the prefrontal areas of the cortex (Greenberg, 2006).

Acceptance

There is also a growing body of evidence about the relations between peer and teacher acceptance and academic achievement (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2013; Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2007; McGrath, 2005). Likewise peer rejection in the early years translates to lower academic achievement in subsequent years (Flook, Repetti, & Ullman, 2005). Social skills are needed to make friends and gain peer and teacher acceptance (Ve'ronneau et al., 2010; Walters & Bowen, 1997). These findings are pertinent to the present investigation as teachers' and students' views about their relationships and what happens in the classroom are involved.

Roussel, Andrew, and Feltman (2011)

Roussel, Andrew, and Feltman (2011) undertook two studies with 551 high school student participants, examining how achievement and friendship goals relate to instrumental help-seeking. It was thought that a focus on mastery and skills for mastery may result in more productive help-seeking behaviours in school. In Study 1, conducted in term 2, 317 students completed questionnaires to measure goal and mastery approach. One week later they completed a friendship goals questionnaire and a week later another questionnaire on instrumental help-seeking. The results across the studies demonstrated strong convergence, revealing that mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, and friendship-approach goals were positive predictors of instrumental help-seeking, whereas performance-avoidance and friendship-avoidance goals were negative predictors. Study 2 involved 234 participants and employed the same methods as in Study 1. Study 2 additionally demonstrated that attitudes toward help-seeking mediate the influence of achievement and social goals on instrumental help-seeking. These results add to the body of work investigating achievement and social motivation by adding to the understanding of motivational influences on academic outcomes. These findings endorse the development of EL skills for friendship and academic help-seeking skills as supports for learning and academic outcomes. The research suggests that enabling students to develop positive attitudes towards academic help-seeking may be useful.

Help-seeking is an important skill (Newman, 1990). Research suggests that students are often ineffective as help-seekers (Marchand & Skinner, 2007) and that they tend to revert to peers for academic help. This suggests that the relational context of the classroom for such learners is vital (Ryan & Shim, 2012). High academic achievers, however, tend to extend friendship to students who are also high academic achievers and low academic achievers

extend friendship toward other low achievers (Flashman, 2012). This research has implications for the tone of the classroom, the way all students potentially interact from an EL perspective.

This research supports other findings such as Ryan and Shin (2011), which showed that social skills aligned with EL make a difference. They examined the motivational correlates and achievement consequences of students' help-seeking tendencies during sixth grade (N = 217). In their study, first quarter grades and academic self-efficacy were positively related to adaptive help-seeking and negatively related to avoidant help-seeking. In addition, a social demonstration-approach goal was negatively related to adaptive help-seeking. Help-seeking tendencies predicted third quarter grades, controlling for first quarter grades. Valuing the relationship with teachers, communicating with teachers and how this affects students' EL features in the research is also a key part of the current research (McCollum & Yoder, 2011; Davis, 2001).

Self-Regulation

Another highly desirable skill for learning and academic achievement is self-regulation. Self-regulated learners possess a repertoire of strategies for problem-solving, self-monitoring, self-correcting, and revising when problems occur; metacognitive thinking processes; and motivational strategies (Schmidt, 2011).

Dignath, Buettner, and Langfeldt (2008)

Dignath et al., (2008) conducted a meta-analysis which examined the effects of self-regulated learning on academic achievement, cognitive and metacognitive strategy application, as well as motivation. In the research, self-regulated learning/training programs among primary school students were analysed. The interventions showed that the most effective characteristics of an SEL program should be based on social-cognitive theories and train cognitive strategies (especially in elaboration and problem solving). These programs also train metacognitive strategies (especially planning), and motivational strategies (especially feedback), and provide knowledge about strategy use and its benefits. Key factors for the success of strategies were noted as the quality of implementation and the level of instruction for group work, where it was involved.

EL Skills

EL skills also promote academic achievement in adolescents. When scaffolded by the teacher, effective class-based social interaction enhances intellectual skills such as perspective-taking and problem-solving in learning (Elias, 2004). Today, classroom-based learning involves diverse opportunities for students to be involved in active learning and create their own meaning through an array of learning approaches including inquiry based learning (Raes, Schellens, De Wever, & Vanderhoven, 2012), group work, collaboration, discussion, information communication technology (ICT), and independent project work. Experiential learning as in field work, the practical application of concepts and experiments, as well as service learning, provide further ways students can apply EL skills. Campbell, Faulkner, and Pridham, (2010) used student enterprise learning teams involving one Year 8 class. The students engaged with the school and the community in a project drawing mainly on agriculture, as well as other curriculum areas. Results showed students gained a sense of responsibility, well-being, and academic skills. As they worked in a team their social skills were also enhanced. Such approaches to learning enabled students to develop social-emotional skills, which appear to lead to academic skills and achievement. Co-operative, interactive approaches can develop and enhance EL, contributing to academic achievement when students possess such skills.

Goal Setting

Goal setting for academic endeavour seems to promote persistence and pro-social skills, resulting in academic achievement. Goal setting in the form of a personal best (PB) can result in social cohesion, motivation for learning, and positive views about peers, leading to further academic achievement. A PB is a personalised, challenging and competitive academic goal, involving specific and targeted outcomes (Martin & Liem, 2010). Liem et al., (2012) administered PB goal items to 249 high-school students at the beginning and end of their school year. PB goals were shown to significantly predict students' deep learning, academic flow, academic buoyancy, positive teacher relationship, and positive attitudes toward peer cooperation. These research findings therefore suggest that there are sustained benefits of PB goals in students' academic and social development as applied through an EL intervention in this research.

Growth Mindset

In terms of grappling with difficult concepts and setting goals it is also helpful if students have a growth mindset rather than a fixed mindset (Dweck, 1999; 2010). Such views can be encouraged through positive psychology strategies. Students with a fixed mindset tend to look at results only, whereas those with a growth mindset will accept challenging work as a way of improving and are more at ease with making errors as a way of learning. It has been shown that the attitudinal component is significant.

Students with a fixed mindset do not like effort. They believe that if you have ability, everything should come naturally. They tell us that when they have to work hard, they feel dumb. Students with a growth mindset, in contrast, value effort; they realize that even geniuses have to work hard to develop their abilities and make their contributions (Dweck, 2010, p. 17).

Incremental learning associated with a growth mind-set is linked to the person-centred factors contributing to academic achievement include areas such as persistence (Duckworth & Seligman, 2006), a positive mindset about the ability to improve (Dweck, 2010), and self-management (Ocak & Yamac, 2013). Confident, self-regulating learners who are encouraged to set challenging learning goals seem to be more disciplined and self-motivated, resulting in enhanced academic achievement (Liem et al., 2012).

Section Summary and Relevance to the Research

This section presented the research basis for the relations between SEL and academic outcomes, demonstrating the importance of a number of SEL skills for academic achievement, personal and school success. The approach of integrating academic and social-emotional learning and then examining the effect on both domains of development seems to offer promise for students' EL and schooling success. In the present investigation academic care and teacher professional development is used to further understanding about the interrelated nature of the academic and social-emotional domains.

Safe Schools and Emotional Safety for Academic Achievement

Overview

Students need to be in a safe, empathic, cohesive environment if they are to set themselves challenging academic goals, take risks in their learning, accept academic

challenge, and achieve academically (Bluestein, 2001; Hattie & Yates, 2014; Mayer, 2007). Safety in schools refers to physical and emotional safety in the way people behave towards each other around the school and in the classroom.

A Safe Learning Community

Research supports the view that positive relationships at school enable students to feel they are part of a safe learning community and promote learning (Osterman, 2000; O'Neil, 1997; OECD, 2011; Elias, 2003; Tew, 2010). The following quotation by a student clearly describes some of the factors that contribute to emotional safety at school.

Emotional safety means seeing a smile on my teacher's face the first day of school instead of a list of rules that is taller than my arm is long. It means being able to use the word "Neanderthal" instead of "caveman" and not be made fun of because my vocabulary is too big. It means being able to go through the lunch line without fear of somebody grabbing my money or my cupcake. It means having a teacher who hands back papers privately instead of reading grades out loud as I pick up my test. Emotional safety is unconditional acceptance of me. Emotional safety, first and foremost, allows me to wear my natural face instead of a fake one (Bluestein, 2001, p. 8).

A safe learning environment is marked by consistent behaviour management policy and procedures (OECD, 2011; Elias, 2003). This is crucial to enable students to take risks in their learning, ask questions, or to go and see a teacher for help. When students associate positive emotions with learning, rather than a stress reaction, and feel that teachers listen to them, students' motivation towards a particular subject enhances readiness for learning and builds their repertoire of EL skills (Jenson, 2000). Mayer (2007) contends that a safe school will result in less conflict, less vandalism, and less negative behaviour towards adults and other children. Hence an aspect of the intervention for the present investigation was to promote safe schools.

Emotional Safety for Learning

The level of emotional safety in the classroom is a crucial factor to learning. A student who is anxious, stressed, or alienated cannot learn because the ability to use information is diminished and the ability to make clear decisions is impaired (Jensen, 2000). Students who present as anxious, stressed, or alienated could be supported by developing coping resources and drawing upon positive emotions and experiences of success to build a sense of satisfaction (Cohn et al., 2009).

In a situation where a student perceives a threat, information reaches the amygdala and the perception of an associated threat means that cortisol and adrenaline are released in the 'fight' response. This overrides the cortex, meaning it will not be able to process and take in information effectively (Buggy, 2004). Developing a consistent, positive approach to behaviour and learning is one way to enable students to feel at ease in the classroom which was also a goal of the intervention in the present investigation.

Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL)

Positive behaviour for learning (PBL) is one behaviour support system aimed at changing the school and classroom environment to enable positive outcomes for students. It is used school-wide as a framework for effective decision-making about student behaviour by guiding selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioural practices for improving outcomes for all students (*Positive Behaviour Interventions and Support*, 2014). PBL promotes an explicit, structured, team-based, problem-solving process for developing schools' capacities to assess behaviour to build student responsibility and ownership of their behaviour. Australian research shows PBL enables a positive impact on academic achievement (Yeung, Mooney, Barker, & Dobia, 2009). PBL has relevance to the current investigation, as it is integral to SEL and learning.

When student behaviour improves, students are more likely to gain positive feedback and therefore their good behaviour is reinforced. As a result, students will feel and act more positively in their approach to learning. Educational outcomes are likely to be improved when emotional well-being is enhanced as occurs when students start to take responsibility for their behaviour and their learning (Zubrick et al., 1997). Satisfying the social and emotional needs of students prepares them to learn and increases their capacity for learning (CASEL, 2003). In addition, as commitment to school improves, so does morale in students and staff, time devoted to school work, attendance by students and staff, prospects for

constructive employment, and there is an accompanying reduction in suspensions and expulsions (Hawkins et al., 1999; Elias, 2006; Tew, 2010). The present investigation examines views about classroom climate including behaviour in relation to EL.

Bullying and Anti-Social Behaviour

Ongoing, highly publicised acts of violence and aggression, bullying, and anti-social behaviour by young people in schools have influenced a range of interventions to address positive values, character development, and social emotional skills development (Park, 2004). Systemic bullying between students and teachers at all levels in the school has been featured in the literature for some time (Rigby, 2002; Slee & Murray-Harvey, 2006). Student bullying is a perennial issue. It can be difficult to detect and has an insidious impact on school culture. Covert forms of bullying (Barnes et al., 2012) can lead to proactive, non-violent, positive approaches where bystanders, the suspected perpetrator, and the target are called to take action and be accountable through the shared concern method (Pikas, 2002; Rigby, 2011). The extent to which these factors impact on EL will be examined in the current investigation.

Section Summary and Implications for the Present Investigation

A safe school environment backed up by emotionally literate student behaviour and a positive focus on learning and behaviour can help students form positive relationships and enhance environmental and personal assets. Research suggests that the implementation of positive behaviour interventions and support at the classroom level that encourage students to be active on-task participants in learning, results in students feeling more satisfied and engaged in their schooling and forming more positive relationships (De Jong, 2005; Waters, Cross, & Shaw, 2010; Murray-Harvey, 2010). Such research provides a meaningful basis for the current investigation, as it promotes the interrelationship between school factors for EL.

Skills for Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

SEL competencies developed in the USA by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) form the basis of recognised SEL programs (CASEL, 2003). This research has utilised contributions to school-based EL (Goleman, 1995; CASEL, 2003; Roffey, 2006; Seligman, 1990, 2011; Noble & McGrath, 2011) by aiming to integrate some key skills and competencies for developing EL. The development of five key SEL skills can help turn students around who are at-risk and provide a universal learning basis (CASEL, 2012). The following section provides an overview of these five SEL skills.

Self-Awareness

The first of these SEL skills is *self-awareness*. It involves identifying emotions and developing self-confidence as well as self-efficacy. The process of developing greater self-awareness means building a vocabulary for feelings and a repertoire for how the body responds; knowing and understanding the relationship between thoughts, feelings, and actions; knowing whether thought or feeling is ruling behaviour; understanding and recognising success and self-discipline; applying practices such as examining signature strengths and keeping a gratitude/kindness journal; and establishing a sense of identity. The journey towards self-identification means that self-awareness in learning is a key skill for young people.

Self-Management

The ability to manage emotions continues to make a difference, as students get older. In two studies involving 118 college students and investigating the relations between managing emotions and the quality of social interactions, an association was found between the ability measure of emotional management and the quality of social interactions, as evaluated by self and peers (Lopes et al., 2004). The findings provide partial support for the criterion and incremental validity of EI and suggest that developing a better understanding of emotion management strategies may contribute to the quality of social interactions.

Social-Awareness

The third SEL skill, *social-awareness*, centres on developing awareness through perspective taking, empathy, appreciating diversity, and respect for others. The underpinning value of respect is also a relationship skill. Social-awareness interrelates with relationship skills as it acts as a primer for establishing relationships. The multi-cultural nature of society necessitates social-awareness for peaceful, amicable, and inclusive relationships at school.

Relationship Skills

The fourth SEL skill, *relationship skills*, involves communication, social engagement, relationships, cooperation, resolving conflicts, seeking help or helping, and appreciating and relating positively to people from diverse backgrounds. Relational values – trust, respect, and integrity – are pivotal to relationship skills. Pro-social beliefs, understanding others' emotions, and taking another person's perspective also act to build a foundation for relationships. Communication skills for relationships are essential for all students. For

example, sending “I” messages instead of blame and being a good listener can foster mutual understanding. Applying group dynamic skills such as cooperation, leadership, and followership, as well as knowing when and how to lead or to follow can promote synergy and a sense of team cohesion among students. Likewise a repertoire of other relational skills can build positive relationships between students and teachers at school: positive peer pressure; emphasising the positive and issues rather than personalities; conflict resolution – how to agree to disagree; disagreement as a healthy outlet; de-escalation strategies, the role of assertiveness; win-win models for negotiating compromise with peers, parents, and teachers; and empathy – walking a mile in someone else’s shoes, learning how to recognise the feelings and needs of others.

Responsible Decision-Making

The fifth SEL skill is *responsible decision-making*. It involves problem-solving skills, ethical responsibility – considering a process for making decisions; reflecting upon actions and evaluating their consequences; applying this to a range of sensitive issues within a social context; and reason versus impulses. There are decision-making models that students can apply through scenarios, dramatisation, and story-building to examine the consequences of possible decisions they may be called upon to make (Dusenbury, Zadrazil, Mart, & Weissberg, 2011).

The Application of SEL Skills

SEL skills can be applied by students in numerous ways: to navigate through every day situations; as a preventive mechanism when faced with decisions that require personal and communication skills; in service or leadership situations; or to develop or maintain relationships through understanding themselves and others (Durlak et al., 2011). One of the most significant applications of SEL in schools is the enhancement of students’ coping and protective skills to counterbalance negative factors (Kim, Walden, Harris, Kawass, & Catron, 2007) and to prevent emotional and behavioural difficulties. As Kannan and Miller, (2009) show, initially resistant, fearful, and/or anxious students can use emotionally unpleasant experiences to transform themselves into more autonomous and successful learners, through being persistent and courageous.

Applying grit and tenacity appears to build a positive work ethic that can help young people achieve academically. Grit, tenacity, and perseverance are multifaceted concepts encompassing academic goal-setting and ways to meet and manage challenges. It seems that

academic mindsets, effortful control, and strategies and tactics can help motivate and engage young people in their learning (US Department of Education Office of Educational Technology, 2013). Therefore, a student may utilise academic resilience, and peer or teacher feedback, to transform a range of situations.

Another approach refers to using “*performance character, which includes values like effort, diligence and perseverance*” (Tough, 2013, p. 78). Tough (2013) regards performance character as one part of a dual approach that students can use to achieve at school. The second is “*moral character embodying ethical values like fairness, generosity and integrity*” (Tough, 2013, p. 78). These approaches align with EL and positive psychology theory discussed in Chapter 2.

Section Summary and Relevance to the Research

SEL skills programs and approaches in schools can assist students to know themselves, including their strengths, to be cognizant of and manage their emotions, and to communicate more effectively (Gillies, 2011; Cohen, 2006; Greenberg et al., 2003; Callan Stoiber, 2011). SEL enables students to care about others, build relational values, and promote responsible decision-making skills. It gives students the skills to solve problems, deal with conflict constructively, and maintain positive relationships (Roffey, 2007; Seligman, 2011). SEL skills are central to the present investigation as one part of the basis for EL under scrutiny.

SEL Programs and Interventions

Overview

In this section effective SEL approaches – including the role of teachers and of implementation – are discussed (Durlak et al., 2011; Bierman, 2010; Brown, & Aber, 2010; Yeung, Mooney, Barker, & Dobia, 2009; Ruby & Doolittle, 2010; Wyn et al., 2000). Finally some research projects detailing effective approaches to quality implementation of SEL interventions are discussed in terms of their relevance for my research.

Features of Effective SEL Approaches

What makes SEL programs effective involves a combination of features and school factors. Effective programs enable review and practice to integrate cognition, emotion, and behaviour. They are supported by the school leadership and enable the school to unify and

coordinate the program activities. While a range of what is referred to as ‘person-centred’ factors contribute to the success of SEL programs, school and classroom ecological factors also contribute a great deal (Greenberg et al., 2003). Key features of successful developmental settings are positive social norms, addressing physical and psychological safety, appropriate structure, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, support for efficacy and ongoing opportunities for skill building (Eccles, Gootman, & Appleton, 2002). Moreover, effective school innovations take into account evidence-based EL learning, focusing on prevention, multi-component interventions, and flexible implementation. School context and student needs drive the innovation, hingeing on stakeholder participation and a systems change perspective (Callan Stoiber, 2011). This means SEL programs are not a one-size-fits-all undertaking (Humphrey, 2013). The implications of these effectiveness features warrant collaborative planning and shared responsibility in a school setting.

EL approaches are most effective when they are developmentally appropriate, and they take into account the relationships among the student, family, school, community, and society and the ecological context (Inman, Van Bakergem, LaRosa, & Garr, 2011, Humphrey, 2013). A range of theoretical bases is applicable to EL such as the health belief model (Rosenstock, Strecher, & Becker, 1988), the social learning model, which emphasises social norms and significant others as determinants of behaviour (Bandura, 1977), and the self-efficacy theory of behaviour change (Bandura, 1986).

Further research information about what makes for effective SEL programs has identified three key factors (CASEL, 2012). In a year-long review, CASEL found programs needed to be well-designed and systematic, enabling adequate opportunity for building social emotional competence. CASEL recommended that programs be supported by high quality training and implementation and to be evidence-based. Three principles were developed to enable schools to select suitable programs. First, engage stakeholders in the program selection process. Participatory processes, which give others a voice, enhance the likelihood of program success. Second, ensure that the program has a sound evidence base. Third, consider contextual needs in order to identify the program that matches school needs. These principles provide useful guidance for my research.

Today there is an array of stand-alone and integrative programs that schools can adopt to develop EL. From a student perspective, an ideal SEL program engages students as active partners in creating a classroom atmosphere of high expectations for all learners where care, responsibility, trust, and commitment to learning can thrive (Reicher, 2010). Reinforcing the program through a range of aspects of school life and across the curriculum by skilled

teachers, who continue to gain support for their professional learning, can produce greater sustainability (Elias, 2004; Haynes, Ben-Avie, & Ensign 2003).

Teaching Skills for SEL Programs

Skilled teachers who can model EL skills in their teaching may hold the key to SEL programs (Tait, 2008; Duckworth, Quinn, & Seligman, 2009). Teachers who recognise the teachable moment and who transfer SEL skills, knowledge, and understanding to differing contexts, do so through processes such as cueing, prompting, and freeze-framing. This means unpacking situations as they occur and linking them back to the relevant social-emotional skills, exploring ways that situations could be managed differently in future, and promoting student input in such discussions. SEL instruction uses a variety of teaching practices such as experiential learning, role play and dramatisation, scenarios and debates, modelling, cooperative and interactive learning, as well as methods to actively promote multiple domains of intelligence (Lopes et al., 2004)

Features of a Quality Implementation. Literature supports the notion that quality implementation of programs and interventions is crucial to success (Greenberg et al., 2003; Rigby, 2002). Implementation success factors are the context, the level of implementation, and the conditions of implementation (Durlak, 1998; 2010; Gager & Elias, 1998). School factors involve resources, school capacity, and readiness. An effective SEL program supports school needs and can be implemented effectively using agreed-upon implementation principles in light of other commitments. Ongoing staff support is a key component of quality implementation. By supporting teachers with high quality professional learning, they will have greater ownership to implement and evaluate the program (Cohen, 2011). In terms of evidence-based programs six stages of quality implementation have been identified. These include exploration, installation, initial implementation, full implementation, innovation, and sustainability (Fixsen & Balse, 2009).

At each stage Principal and School Executive support may enable the best measure of success through mentoring, coaching, and monitoring. Research has shown that disparity in the perceived outcomes of an intervention may impact successful implementation. This factor needs to be considered carefully in my investigation. In the schools where the classroom teacher opted out, or was uninterested, or the principal did not brief all of the staff, or only some classes participated, the results of the intervention were not viewed as effective over time. Longer lasting results – for example less aggressive behaviour observed in the

playground – were experienced when the teacher and the school were viewed as supportive and interested (McCarthy, 2009).

Humphrey (2013) suggests there are identifiable factors which determine successful implementation. Based on research (Carroll et al., 2007; Durlak & Du Pre, 2008; Greenberg, Domitrovich, Graczyk, & Zins, 2005) he surmised that factors such as fidelity (adhering to the intended treatment model), dosage (time and frequency), and quality are important. Humphrey (2013) also regards participant responsiveness, program differentiation, program reach, and adaptation, as well monitoring to be key factors. It seems that success in any program carries with it factors unique to a school context.

Research Projects

A proliferation of research projects is being conducted in EL, in Australia and internationally, from which there is much information to be gained about the benefits of EL for students and their teachers. For example, research in the primary context found statistically significant evidence of a positive impact in at least one SEL domain examined (Humphrey et al., 2008). The SEL domains included the areas of self-awareness, self-regulation, goal achievement, and social skills. There was also found to be a decrease in pupil rated peer problems. While such projects are insightful, there is a need for longer-term Australian studies that can build on earlier work. However, these approaches are useful to consider for this investigation, as they show the scope of possible ways to build EL.

Enhancing Relationships in School Communities Project

In 2004-2006, the Enhancing Relationships in School Communities (ERIS) project was conducted. The aim was to improve relationships and the processes for managing conflict in the school community. Twelve Melbourne primary schools from the government ($n = 7$) and Catholic ($n = 5$) systems participated in the project, each represented by a small team ($n = 3-5$) of teachers and school leaders. The project supported school staff in conflict resolution and cultural diversity in relation to professional development, made site visits to support school implementation (four visits to each school), provided curriculum resources in conflict resolution and cultural diversity, and provided resources for core teams to deliver on-site staff professional development.

The project was planned to enhance implementation and program maintenance, reducing potential barriers to change by working with core teams from each school. Core team and comparison teachers (staff from the project schools who were not part of the Core Teams) were compared to evaluate relevant teacher skills and attitudes; implementation of

curricula; and use of skills in relating to children, staff, and parents. The extent of professional development initiated by the Core Teams with other staff in their schools was also examined. While both the full and partial program formats resulted in positive changes in schools, the full intervention appeared superior on factors including teacher skill development and curriculum implementation. The study supported the belief that, to determine the ways in which conflict in school communities is managed, and build on that knowledge, sustained professional development (seven days) for Core Teams results in better outcomes for both the individuals and schools, than the more usual one to two day intervention does.

The project demonstrates that school staff responds positively to learning effective ways of resolving conflict, examining their own assumptions and actions in relation to cultural diversity, and enhancing relationships when the opportunity is provided to participate in sustained quality professional development. The development of an expert Core Team in each school provides an effective way to foster relationship-enhancing approaches, embedding the approaches in broader school structures, policies, procedures, and processes.

There were project limitations, as details of the type of conflict experienced, how barriers to change were managed, and detail on methods of conflict resolution were missing. In addition, information about how students or staff believed that they benefited, and information about the level of conflict occurring was absent. As the study was set in primary schools it would be helpful to explore similar issues within a middle school context but to look at broader factors within a framework for EL. At this point there seems to be a gap in this area, which the current research can help to illuminate. Also of relevance was the use of a Core Team and teacher professional development.

In Victoria the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne collaborated with the Catholic Education Office Melbourne in a training and research partnership, known as the Student Welfare Wellbeing Action Partnership (SWWAP). Areas such as restorative practices are being implemented as part of student management, such as using restorative justice in circle time. Another project involves Year 8 boys in creative thinking to re-engage the students in history (Melbourne University, 2007).

Circle Time Action Research

An action research project was conducted in K-6 classrooms of eight primary schools in Sydney, New South Wales (McCarthy, 2009). The research project involved the universal, evidence-based intervention of Circle Time (CT). School staff facilitated the project with

eighteen University of Western Sydney (UWS) students (trained as CT facilitators) undertaking a Learning Through Community Service course also participating in the Circle Time (CT). The objectives of CT were to develop a supportive class ethos, increase the social and emotional skills for all students, and strengthen connectedness, resilience, and well-being. Each school also had two teachers who had undertaken professional learning in CT, prior to a pair of facilitators beginning in the school. During CT, participants sit in a circle and begin with a welcome and a rule review. The rules included *“Everyone has a turn and listens when someone has their turn. You may pass when it is your turn. There are ‘no put-downs’ only ‘push-ups’”* (McCarthy, 2009, p. 2). McCarthy (2009) demonstrated that the skill of the CT facilitator/teacher was shown to be an important factor as the following quote demonstrates: *“In classrooms where the effort was made to link CT elements to school values, the students saw the connection between what they learned in CT and its relevance to the larger school community”* (McCarthy, 2009, p.17). Another facilitator recorded that, *“We must model and foster good communication, acceptance, belonging and healthy relationships in order to carefully guide the emotional well-being of our students”* (McCarthy, 2009, p. 22). CT offers great promise as an intervention and an approach to developing EL. CT enables challenging issues such as bullying to be managed through positive pedagogy. It would, however, have been of interest to revisit the schools over a longer period to examine how practices were embedded into school life (McCarthy, 2009). Of high relevance to my research is how the teachers involved view the way their EL impacts on students, and the way that values are used to create meaning and engagement.

Well-being Research Project

In 2007 a small group of teachers from three primary schools in northern New South Wales collaborated with a researcher in an action research project. The teachers acted as co-researchers to investigate teacher attitudes, values, and beliefs regarding children’s well-being and social and emotional competencies. Early information prior to the research indicated teachers wanted students to respond positively to feedback, be resilient, and gain in confidence. Teachers were concerned about bullying, poor relational skills, anxiety, and ADHD and often felt they did not know what to do (Thornton, 2008). The research involved examining whole-of-school strategies, individual classroom practices, and then observing the interactions in the classroom and how things changed. While Thornton did not provide a detailed account of what was observed, teachers’ feelings and experiences were elucidated. Comments included *“[it is] my own reactions, feelings and responses which often prevent me*

from engaging in children's social and emotional difficulties" (Thornton, 2008, p. 25) and *"sometimes it's not our place, sometimes you open up a bigger can of worms; sometimes you have to get on with the lesson"* (Thornton, 2008, p. 26) and *"Once upon a time children used to gather around the desk and the teacher would listen, but now listening and talking with children has been replaced with busyness"* (Thornton, 2008, p. 26).

SEL – The Missing Piece of the Jigsaw

Another case study shows how a faith-based P-12 girls' school in an affluent area of Brisbane, Queensland, grappled with what they termed as 'the missing piece of the learning jigsaw' (Park, 2006). The school investigated approaches involving learning styles and pedagogy and then explored work done through CASEL. The school was open to change as there was a new Principal and the school was keen to progress. A school-developed Pastoral Care SEL program was used and complemented the Religious and Life Education Programs. Following some initial work, the findings were presented to the Educational Leadership Team meeting with approval. Subsequently, a SEL program was introduced to the Year 8-12 students as a weekly lesson. Following this, the school explored how to implement a P-7 version of the program.

Relationship, Well-Being, and Learning Research Project

A middle-years' project entitled the Relationship, Well-being and Learning Project (RWL) was conducted in 2006-2007 with the support of an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant and the Catholic Education Office of Melbourne (Freeman, Frydenberg, Begg, & Care, 2010). A collaborative team investigated the effects of a strategic professional learning team intervention to enhance relationships in the middle-years 5-9, elected for the project as the years with a marked decline in student self-esteem, motivation, engagement, achievement, and emotional well-being. Current strategies of English teachers from four schools were acknowledged and added to over time through the development of a research-based framework for building relationships. Teachers participated in professional learning teams over five to seven months and in total attended five or six sessions. They collaborated and reflected on their own approach to teacher-student relationship-building strategies. A review was conducted on teaching and learning relationship-building strategies and data on the teachers' perceptions of the interventions was collected. Teachers generally reported that relationships improved, helping classroom learning of all students. The key strategies employed from the developed framework included connecting, respecting, understanding,

and providing feedback. Strategies were adopted in out-of-class contexts with teachers making more effort to talk to, and connect with, students. The curriculum was effective in achieving academic, social, and emotional outcomes and the teachers felt that students were more engaged in the lessons. It would have been helpful to know more about the students and their views of the changes over time. This action research project is relevant to the present investigation as it recognises the role of relational quality in the classroom for learning but it does not provide great insight into the processes of teacher or student reflection, nor does it clarify any of the characteristics about the teachers, other than that they were English teachers.

Promoting Alternative Pathways Thinking Strategies Research Project

A study involving the Hong Kong University and three schools utilising the Promoting Alternative Pathways Thinking Strategies (PATHS) Curriculum was reported by Greenberg and Kusche (1993). PATHS is a multiyear, universal, evidence-based program (Kam, Wong, & Fung, 2011). As an SEL program, PATHS promotes emotion understanding and regulation as well as problem-solving skills. First grade teachers teaching 316 students in four classes across three schools participated in a four month intervention.

The program aimed to teach social and emotional skills directly, creating supportive classrooms and a school climate conducive to teaching social and emotional skills. It focused on awareness and understanding of emotions and impulse control. The sixteen program sessions are based on group discussion, role-play, art stories, and educational games. Although the teachers were trained there was little control over the project implementation and therefore the level of intervention varied. This meant some teachers taught the lesson once a week, rather than three to five times as recommended, and in one case the school Counsellor took all sessions. The lack of opportunity for skills to be reinforced or transferred without the classroom teacher being involved was a limitation of the study as was the absence of a control group, making it difficult to determine the impact of the intervention.

Pre- and post-measures were taken of teacher rating scales of children's behaviours, behavioural risk scores, assessment of children's emotional scales, and an emotion recognition scale. Teacher and coordinator program evaluation rated the level of support for the program within the school. The children demonstrated improvement in their emotion understanding. They also showed improvement in their emotion regulation and prosocial behaviours, as measured by their teachers' ratings. However, the teachers reported no

improvement in children's internalising behaviours and an increase in children's externalising behaviours (Kam et al., 2011).

Overall, the study found possible positive effects on emotional understanding and social competence with no impact on children's problem behaviours. This may have been linked to the sporadic nature of the intervention and the fact that the teachers chose not to include the sessions on self-control, but rather focused on emotions. The researchers recommended that SEL should be introduced into kindergarten classes, as there is more parity between the Hong Kong kindergarten class and the US pre-school, which was the recommended setting for the program. Cultural differences between students in Hong Kong in terms of students' disposition, level of self-control, and management of aggressive behaviour may make comparisons difficult with Australian students. The research was quite brief and did not follow up on whether there were any lasting changes to student behaviour. It demonstrates, however, the key role of implementation and draws attention to the importance of context for interventions. In the current investigation an implementation process was used to match school contextual factors.

SEAL Research Project

In the UK, research was commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to conduct a national evaluation of primary SEAL small group work (Humphrey, Lendrum, Wigelsworth, & Kalambouka, 2009). The purpose was to assess the impact of small group work on children requiring more support in developing their social and emotional skills and to draw together information on successful implementation of small group interventions. The study was carried out in three phases. The first phase comprised interviews with SEAL leads in twelve local authorities across England. The second phase involved a quantitative evaluation of the impact of SEAL small group work, involving 624 pupils in thirty-seven primary schools. The third phase took place at the same time as the second phase and involved detailed case studies of five local primary schools. Data collection comprised interviews with school staff, children, and parents, observations of intervention sessions and other settings, and document analysis.

Data was analysed using NVIVO. The process showed that successful implementation is dependent upon a range of factors, ranging from the skills and experience of the group facilitator to the availability of an appropriate physical space to conduct the sessions. Key aspects of the delivery of small group interventions included setting achievable targets for children, providing constant reinforcement of desirable behaviour, and providing

opportunities for pupils to verbalise their emotional experiences. There was synergy between the research findings and wider research information. This included the value of investing in key principles among leaders and staff in a school and a strong need for a supportive ethos and climate within which to explore new ideas and ways of doing things (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006). This research is similar to mine in that it involved qualitative methods and a number of phases although it is focused on younger children and does not incorporate an action research model.

Section Summary and Relevance to the Research

It appears there are some common features underpinning effective EL interventions that are very useful for building a case for EL in schools. Quality implementation features deserve considerable attention. A range of research projects show that EL can make a difference in schools for teacher and student well-being, provided there is adequate support and the intervention is based on stringent selection criteria. SEL programs and EL interventions also need to be timely, and a good match for the school context and students' needs. It seems that most research projects are of relatively short duration, with little opportunity for sustained follow-up over time. The present investigation contributes to this body of research and offers a rare study examining the impact of EL interventions over a three-year period.

Teacher Factors

Overview

An ecological consideration of EL in schooling requires an examination of some key teacher factors which have the potential to increase student resilience, connectedness to school, school engagement, and well-being (Windle, 2011; Roffey, 2008; Frydenberg, Care, Freeman, & Chan, 2009). First, in this section factors that sustain teachers will be discussed. Second, as teachers are one of the most powerful influences on learning (Hattie, 2009), the technical skills which expert teachers use in the classroom and the EL basis of these will be evaluated. Thirdly, the way teachers build the pastoral capacity of the classroom and promote an optimal classroom climate by building positive relationships with students is discussed.

Factors that Sustain Teachers

Teaching can be rewarding, but it is also associated with occupational stress, burnout, and fatigue (Vesley, Saklofske, & Leschied, 2013; Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). Teacher

well-being is worth exploring since teacher EL provides positive outcomes for students (Vesley et al., 2013).

Teacher Resilience and EL Skills. Resilience theory and views about teacher resilience have become prominent as teacher retention and the need to understand what keeps teachers in the teaching profession have become major issues. The dilemma of teacher retention is indicated by the average age of teachers, teacher retirement rates, and increases in teacher shortages (Ramsey, 2000; Ewing & Smith, 2003). In addition to major teacher shortages in areas such as Mathematics and Science, it is estimated that twenty-five to forty per cent of teachers burn out in the first five years in the profession (Johnson & Johnson, 2008). To develop a successful teaching career, teachers need a range of EL skills to sustain themselves and develop positive relationships with students, staff, and parents. Teacher resilience, grit, life satisfaction, and optimism comprise some of the essential EL skills to help teachers stay in the teaching profession.

Resilience theory aligns with teachers' ability to develop support systems and use individual skills such as coping strategies (Van Breda, 2001). Howard and Johnson (2004) commented that resilient teachers are those who can resist pressure by using protective factors and learned strategies. Relational cultural theory posits that teachers are drawn to connections from which they can further develop (Jordan, 2010; Doney, 2013). The strengths and skills teachers use to deal with stress include: transforming the stress through coping skills, problem solving, or using humour; maintaining a sense of self-efficacy; as well as drawing on their hardiness, temperament, and intelligence.

As perceived by early career teachers, teacher resilience develops over a teacher's career. A study of 200 graduating and early career teachers' views about teacher resilience by Mansfield, Beltman, Price, and McConney (2012) showed that teacher resilience involves multi-dimensional, interrelated characteristics. Mansfield et al., (2012) examined the attitudes and behaviours of teachers who remain in the teaching profession and who are engaged and committed professionals. A four dimensional framework of teacher resilience was developed from the research which consisted of motivational, emotional, profession-related, and social dimensions. This teacher resilience framework may help raise awareness about how teachers can develop their resilience.

Building Teacher Resilience. A range of models indicates the multiple aspects of teacher resilience. For example, the *MindMatters Program, Staff Matters*, was based on the 'thriving self' model, encompassing interpersonal, professional, and organisational domains (Commonwealth, 2010). In another model, Knight (2007) perceives teacher resilience as the

manifestation of personal characteristics, skills, and attributes for healthy development with a framework consisting of emotional and social competence as well as a futures orientation. While numerous studies mention attributes such as flexible thinking, adaptability, resourceful, and positive thinking (Knight, 2007, McGrath & Noble, 2003), few mention teacher grit and few report teacher views on the topic, as the present investigation aims to do. Teacher grit, life satisfaction, and optimism are worth considering as they are consistent with current frameworks of teacher resilience and align with positive psychology, which is explored in the current investigation.

Teacher Morale. Research suggests there is low teacher morale (Devi & Mani, 2010; Willis & Varner, 2010; Lumsden, 1998). Teachers do not believe they get the recognition they deserve, and do not feel respected (Huysman, 2008) or valued (OECD, 2009; Buchanan, 2010; Maloney, 2009). They want greater opportunity to be involved in participatory decision-making yet feel they have inadequate support from senior management as well as excessive workloads. They feel more time is needed to share their work with colleagues, undertake planning, and assist their students. When teachers feel the core business of teaching, learning, and assessment is at the centre of collaborative staff room conversation and they have time to prepare their work, they are likely to feel more satisfied with their work.

The realisation by teachers that they have unmet needs often results in poor emotional responses and poor performance (Willis & Varner, 2010). The school can lift teacher morale if teachers do not feel overburdened by administrative duties. Introducing additional approaches or strengthening existing ones for teacher recognition and time spent together may help teachers feel valued, respected, and recognised (Holmes, 2005; Rogers, 2006). The current investigation will examine the impact of school culture, respect, decision-making, and support for teachers.

Teacher Engagement and Well-Being. Teacher motivation and drive are reliant upon enabling mastery, autonomy, and purpose so that teachers feel more in control and valued (Pink, 2009). When teachers believe they have some choice in, and ownership of, their work, their engagement, satisfaction, and self-efficacy will be enhanced (Abraham, 1999). Often, however, teachers feel overwhelmed by the demands of school life and responsibilities in addition to those directly linked to classroom teaching. Workplace politics, ongoing change, curriculum changes, demanding parents, and dependent students can mean that energy stores and sense of well-being need to be replenished and restored. Feelings of frustration, depression, and dissatisfaction may follow teachers home unless they have EL skills they can

use to help them cope (Cephe, 2010). If staff and teachers are exhibiting signs of poor self-concept or burnout, this may present as apathy, poor communication, and poor modelling for students. Such teachers may feel isolated and may experience depersonalisation, emotional exhaustion, and a lack of personal accomplishment. As stress and burnout have become serious issues for teachers (Howard & Johnson, 2004), there is a real need to mentor young and beginning teachers. EL skills could be one major component of a mentoring program for the mentor and the mentees (Buchanan, 2010; Cenkseven & Sari 2009). In the current investigation a PAR team is formed and interventions targeting teachers are implemented.

Teacher Preparation and Professional Learning. Teachers may also benefit from a range of pro-active retention strategies and pre-service teacher programs that help develop a view of the whole child, thereby contributing to a positive school environment. Recent research offering promise involves undergraduate teacher preparation, which aims to develop future teachers' skills to activate their cognitive and emotional empathic capacity, using skills such as perspective taking, mindfulness, empathy, and communication. Teacher skill development can then transfer to students through working positively to develop and support students' behaviours (Barr, 2011). Teacher education and ongoing professional learning may be key drivers for student EL as teacher skill and motivation are linked to effective implementation of SEL and the development of an effective, caring, and productive learning environment. Professional learning to develop teacher resilience skills can help. Research has demonstrated that advancing teacher resilience is dependent upon teacher mental health and well-being, providing an avenue for the contribution EL can make to teachers and their students (Vesley et al., 2013). In the present investigation teacher professional development helps to develop EL.

Technical Skills in the Classroom for EL

Expert teachers have higher EL skills and make a greater contribution to student academic achievement and EL. Therefore, it is prudent to examine how expert teachers make a difference to students through their technical skills. Teacher quality within schools can account for up to twenty-one per cent of the variance in student achievement gains (Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004.) Hattie (2003) conducted a review of literature and a synthesis of over 500,000 studies and found that expert teachers could be distinguished in their professional practice by dimensions and attributes, many of which can be linked to EL. A number of these attributes are discussed here as technical attributes with other attributes discussed in the following section on the pastoral capacity of the classroom to promote an optimal climate and build positive relationships with students. The expert teacher is one who

can “*identify essential representations of their subject; guide learning through classroom interactions; monitor learning and provide feedback; attend to affective attributes, and influence student outcomes*” (Hattie, 2003, p. 5).

Feedback as Emotionally Literate Practice. Expert teachers are proficient in creating optimal classroom climates for learning, particularly in increasing feedback (Hattie, 2003). Feedback is the key to effective assessment practice. Expert teachers involve students in formative assessment and assessment for learning and draw on their understanding of pastoral approaches to build up in-depth knowledge of each student as a learner. In so doing, they build trust with students, enabling them to construct meaningful learning experiences and to provide feedback that will enable learners to improve. This includes explicitly unpacking the success criteria and learning intentions inherent in the questions, “*Where are you going?*”, “*How are you going?*”, and “*Where to next?*” (Paterson, 2009; Wescombe-Down, 2009). Assessment for learning principles and practices combined with formative classroom assessment that enables students to talk their way to understanding and gain insight into their own learning – supported by learning rather than performance – can support progressive improvement (Hopkins, 2007; Parsons & Harding, 2011; Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Learning Through the Students’ Eyes. Expert teachers perceive learning from a student perspective (Hattie, 2009). They concentrate more on what students do and say, rather than on behaviour, whereas novice teachers take longer to manage disruptions and student behaviour. Expert teachers will continue to teach while managing and supporting student behaviour, drawing all students back into the lesson, while deepening students’ understanding. The ability to multitask enables expert teachers to direct the multidimensionality of the classroom. While demonstrating deep content-knowledge and promoting student thinking, expert teachers utilise superior pattern recognition to scan student behaviour (Hattie, 2009).

Student behaviour reinforcement, feedback to students, and the use of highly skilled approaches to questioning are strong features in the expert teacher’s classroom. Feedback to students is achieved by using peer, self, and teacher verbal or written feedback in ways that students understand and know what they need to do next to continue improving. Expert teachers ask many more questions each lesson of their students. They also use a repertoire of questioning strategies to involve students, deepening their understanding and knowledge. They use wait time, probing, building upon others responses, and hands down response approaches to engender involvement from all their students (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

As expert teachers are highly skilled, they are more focused on student learning and the language of the classroom. Expert teachers tend to be context-dependent rather than content-dependent. As they are more adept at monitoring student problems and assessing their level of understanding and progress, they provide much more relevant, useful feedback. In effect such skills ‘buy the expert teachers time’ to focus more on learning and student progress (Ayres, 2000; Hay & McBer, 2000; Hattie, 2009). There is also greater opportunity to build a positive rapport and establish positive patterns of communication.

Promoting Productive Mindsets. Expert teachers engage students in learning and develop mindsets, behaviours, and skills aligned with EL (Hattie & Yates, 2014). Expert teachers support differences between students by developing habits of mind such as perseverance, self-regulation, and empathy (Patrick & Ryan, 2007; Costa & Kallick, 2008; Hay & McBer, 2000). Students in expert teacher classrooms are guided towards self-regulation, self-organisation, self-help, and self-evaluation, meaning they take more responsibility for their own learning and are adept at monitoring their own learning. As a result, students are more likely to be involved in mastery learning, have enhanced self-efficacy, and self-esteem as learners (Hattie, 2009). Some of these approaches are seen in expert teachers aiming for more than achievement goals; they aim to motivate their students to master rather than perform; they enhance students’ self-concept and self-efficacy about learning through appropriately challenging tasks; and they aim for both surface and deep outcomes. To enable such outcomes expert teachers are more likely to set challenging goals, accompanied by challenging work, with opportunities to reflect and use metacognitive skills to enhance the quality of their work (Hattie, 2003; 2009). Support for metacognitive skills that enable students to manage themselves is established in the comment: *“Metacognitive skills enable students to develop the capacity to monitor, evaluate and change the way they think and learn. There is clear evidence that the acquisition of these skills can significantly increase achievement”* (Hopkins, 2007, pp. 62-63).

Pastoral Care, Classroom Climate, and Relationships

Expert teachers develop the pastoral capacity of the classroom by personalising learning and using simple classroom routines such as welcoming students to class and smiling at students. They also use students’ names and treat them with respect in how they speak and act toward them (Matsumura, Slater, & Crosson, 2008). Expert teachers develop caring, trusting, and respectful as well as compassionate relationships with students (Hattie, 2003; 2009; Powell & Kalina, 2009). In so doing, an open and safe classroom climate is created where relationships can thrive and approaches such as constructivism are used to

build EL skills. Care in the expert teacher classroom can be seen through instructional, pedagogical, and assessment approaches. Expert teachers engage and connect with students through their values, emotions, and communication (Noddings, 2008; Bartram & Bailey, 2009; Kennedy, 2011).

Classroom Climate. Classroom climate is defined as the learning environment that the teacher creates by teaching in a teacher-centred or learner-centred way (Peters, 2013). Classroom climate can determine the level at which students operate in their learning and socially-emotionally (Hargreaves, 1998; Cohen, 2006). An implicit element of the expert teacher's practice is the creation of an optimal classroom climate for learning. This means a place where mistakes are seen as a way to move forward and feedback effectively communicates – in ways the learner understands and can act upon – how the learner can improve. Relating to students as individuals and building a mutual respect enables the teacher to detect and manage potential barriers to learning. The language of the classroom can promote EL and promote a 'we' mentality rather than the teacher as being someone who tests what students can do and stands apart from them.

Teacher behaviour towards individual students can shape student perceptions of classroom climate. Peter and Dalbert (2010) conducted a study with 401 Grade 8 and 9 students and found that students' sense of justice was mediated by teacher behaviour. This means that if students personally experienced justice in their interactions with their teacher, they tended to rate the classroom culture more positively. A positive learning environment and classroom climate enables students to participate in discussions and class activities with greater depth and quality, and to build upon classroom understanding and therefore learn more effectively (Matsumura, Slater, & Crosson, 2008).

A positive classroom climate is an open environment, allowing the expert teacher and students to show their emotions and express themselves. Expert teachers show more emotionality about successes and failures in their work because they care about what they do – they are passionate. The capacity to show emotion and a passion for teaching and learning are vital (Beutal, 2010; Sutton, 2005; Collinson, Killeavy, & Stephenson, 1998). Strong relationships in the classroom and at school build a positive classroom climate that will enable students to take on challenge and achieve learning outcomes because they have someone who believes in them (Kitchen, 2005; Beattie, 2001).

Building trusting teacher-student and student-student relationships as well as believing in students and showing them respect will enable students to navigate difficult

situations and feel at ease (Deak, 2002; Smith-McIlwain, 2006; Giffin, 1967; Whitely, McCabe, & Savery, 1998). When schools support time and space for relationship building and there is emotional safety for relationships, people will feel more connected and capable, listened to, accepted, safe, and included (Antidote, 2010). Conversely, when there is dysfunction and disharmony in teams, staff can feel depleted and have little energy to engage with teaching, learning, and their students (Tew, 2010).

For students the relational aspect of learning and schooling is evident in the following quotation: *“It is obvious that children will work harder and do things – even odd things like adding fractions – when they feel listened to and supported”* (Noddings, 1988). Emotionally literate practices marked by respect and responsibility acts as a lever for building effective relationships (Grove, 2004). The contribution of the affective domain in the classroom to a student’s sense of connectedness and willingness to engage in learning and as a feature of effective teaching are well researched. The potential to contribute to the protective factors in regard to resiliency is also widely acknowledged (Ayres, Dinham, & Sawyer, 2000; Fuller, 1998; Hargreaves, Earl, Moore, & Manning, 2001; Hay & McBer, 2000; Nadge, 2002; Rowe & Rowe, 2002).

Not all teachers are experts, but it is vital that all teachers develop positive relationships with their students. Therefore, schools cannot point to student intake as an answer to poor student performance and inadequate EL (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979). The interest in school relationships is evidenced in *Educational and Child Psychology* Volume 27 Number 1 (2010) from the British Psychological Society, which is devoted to the issue of in-school relationships and their outcomes. Current research has become more explicit about the classroom and the role of the teacher as outlined in this chapter.

Relationships matter because they influence mental health, social and emotional competencies, and academic outcomes (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010). Further, psychological health and social-emotional adjustment provide a strong measure of the quality of the schooling experience, connected to academic achievement. EL is strongly influenced by the quality of in-school relationships (Murray-Harvey, 2010).

Section Summary and Relevance to the Research

Teachers need to be mentally fit. When they are mentally fit, teachers can act as powerful environmental assets to each other and to their students. Teachers are key influencers. They influence the quality of students’ learning and relationships by building the pastoral capacity of the classroom and using expert teaching skills, thereby contributing to

school ecology for student benefits. In the present investigation EL interventions aimed to enhance teacher-student relationships and enable teachers to have greater involvement by encouraging them to suggest their ideas and opinions. Teacher involvement in the PAR team provided teachers with a valuable opportunity for their professional growth.

Leadership Practices and Approaches

Overview

From an ecological perspective, the quality of the symbiotic relationship between the Principal and teachers has an impact on students and the school community and its EL. The Principal therefore plays a key role in helping to establish school conditions conducive to innovation (CASEL, 2008). This section examines leadership practices for an emotionally literate school environment, specifically how leaders and teachers can support each other and build each other's self-efficacy.

Relational Values and Support

Relational values such as trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hallam & Mathews, 2008; Hurley, 2006; Lambert, 2007), respect, and integrity form the basis of the relationship between teachers and school leaders and underpin any leader's capacity to engage teachers in school EL change. As change agents, Principals challenge current processes. When a Principal inspires a shared vision and enables teachers to act in ways that enable them to see how they will benefit, teacher well-being can be sustained (Kotter, 1996). The relational aspect of a

Principal's role is therefore paramount to enhancing student learning outcomes (Theakston, 2009).

Unconditional support of teachers by the school leadership will impact on teacher responses to Principals' requests for action (Abbey & Esposito, 1985). Support can be provided through access to school resources such as administrative support, access to professional development and professional feedback, and the allocation of adequate time to cater for students' needs. It can also be provided through meeting psycho-social needs. Feeling supported and valued can enable teachers to thrive professionally, work collaboratively, and impact more broadly on the school as change agents.

While a leader's values can be aligned with cultural norms, often more is required in

schools to bring about change and make people feel valued and part of the process (Howley, Woodrum, Burgess, & Rhodes, 2009). To be in a position to provide the support teachers need, Principals need to be resilient. Principals can have a direct impact on teacher self-efficacy and resilience through modeling attributes of personal efficacy and personal energy, a realistic sense of optimism, and personal strengths (Mansfield, Beltman, Price, & McConney, 2012).

What is required for greater EL in a school is for the Principal to model the way and encourage the heart (Kotter, 2006; Sabatelli, Buck, & Dreyer, 1983; Whiteley, McCabe, & Savery, 1998; Muhlfelder, Klein, Simon & Luczah, 1999; Giffin, 1967). Modeling the way implies that the Principal leads by example in their values and behaviours. Encouraging the heart involves motivating teachers and gaining their commitment and willingness to act. This understanding is significant to my research on the need to understand the quality of relationships in particular environments and how this impacts on student, staff, and leader behaviour.

Leadership Style. While it is clear that EL skills are central to effective leadership, it is also worth exploring leadership style and impact (Scott, 2003). Much has been written about the difference between management and leadership. Managers are concerned with doing things right while leaders are concerned about doing the right thing. Managers control, leaders facilitate; managers reflect on fate, leaders reflect on destiny; managers work in the organisation while leaders work on the organisation (Ellyard, 2001). As Hoer (2006, p. 7) states *“Good leaders change organisations; great leaders change people. People are at the heart of any organisation, particularly a school, and it is only through changing people – nurturing and challenging them, helping them grow and develop, creating a culture in which they all learn – that an organisation can flourish. Leadership is about relationships.”* Without strong relationships trust will be lacking, people will feel disinclined to ‘go the extra mile’ and may put energy into potentially undermining activities.

In the current climate it is essential for the Principal not to lose sight of the centrality of human relationships in the efficacy of an organisation. It is possible the principal could act as a compliance manager given the demands for rational processes, and is at risk of not concentrating on learning and well-being as core business. There is strong evidence (Goleman 2002; Rogers 2006; Scott, 2003) that relational issues are implicated in the culture and efficacy of an organisation and the well-being of those who work within it. The vision, values, leadership style, and emotional skills of the leader are central.

Leadership styles range from instructional, democratic, transformational, pace setting, pragmatic, pedagogical to coaching, commanding, affiliative, visionary, moral, strategic, servant, situational, participatory, and transactional (Hoer, 2005; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2004; Parkes, 2002; Greenleaf, 1977; Goleman, 2002). The features of the relational leader align most closely with EL, together with the ability to distribute leadership and draw on moral leadership. Features of servant leadership are also congruent with relational values and a proposed model for relational leadership (Marzano, et al., 2006). Servant leadership is primarily concerned with a desire to help others and acknowledge their needs and their feelings (Greenleaf, 1977). Coaching and mentoring are integral to relational leadership enabling others to achieve their goals. Behavioural characteristics epitomising the values held by the leader include effective listening skills, developing the skills of all members of the school, repairing any rift caused by conflict, and demonstrating a caring attitude towards people. In the model of relational leadership proposed here, the principal is aware of existing relationships and how they affect other people including the students. The relational style of leadership mobilises other people to improve their practice and develop collegiality and collaborative practices. The relational leader also builds a culture of support, integrity accompanied by responsiveness and responsibility, promoting open dialogue (Cunliffe & Erikson, 2011).

Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003): Meta-Analysis

Principals can facilitate effective change in schools by establishing conditions for change. Support for the significance of the Principal in this capacity was demonstrated in a thirty-year research involving three meta-analyses (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty; 2003). Waters et al., (2003) evaluated the Principal's role in establishing first-order and second-order change. First-order change does not involve a break with the past as it draws on knowledge and skills that people already have. It also draws upon prevailing norms, values, and attitudes. Second-order change breaks with the past, involving a new paradigm and is implemented by the stakeholders. This concept of second-order change has been analysed in relation to what is needed to create conditions for systemic change (Reeves, 2009; Kotter, 2006; Fullan, 2007; Reigeluth, 2006). Common to each is the notion of enlisting a guiding coalition, building capacity, communicating, and making change meaningful. The Principal's role is a key one for using EL skills to promote cohesion, cooperation, well-being, collegiality, and a shared understanding of purpose. These conditions for systemic change

may enable the PAR team to develop coherence as they develop the PAR interventions (Reeves, 2009; Fullan, 2001; Mazarno, Waters, & McNulty, 2006; Hoer, 2006).

Section Summary and Relevance to the Research

Principal leadership demonstrated through values, alignment, and a relational leadership style can enhance the school environment, impact on EL, and enable teachers to thrive professionally. School change and school improvement strategies hinge on reciprocated relational trust between school leaders and teachers, and between teachers and students, further evidencing the significance of the ecological approach used in the current investigation (Bryk & Schneider, 2004). Relational values, teacher quality, and leadership style need to frame any examination of the relationships between teachers, the school environment, and students. These school elements also provide the targets for the EL interventions in my research. My research will build on these understandings of principals by putting in place an EL intervention strategy contextualised to school EL needs, which draws on teacher needs to thrive, and to feel supported and valued.

Chapter Summary

Using an ecological perspective, this chapter explored the current developments in school-based EL approaches. International and Australian research on SEL have established the centrality of positive school relationships for achieving academic outcomes and well-being. The research base identifies how SEL contributes to academic success and to a positive schooling experience. The research shows that there is much that schools are already doing to address students' needs but also that there is more that can occur. Expert teachers and school leaders can make a difference, impacting on classroom climate, school culture, and the broader school environment. Some clear approaches to developing and implementing SEL programs and interventions have provided insight into what seems to be effective. In the next chapter, the research aims, research questions and rationale for the present investigation are presented.

CHAPTER 4

THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION: AIMS, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AND THEIR RATIONALE

Introduction

This chapter outlines the aims and research questions of the present investigation and their rationale for guiding it. The central focus of the present investigation was to add to existing knowledge about EL for Australian schooling in light of developments in EL and positive psychology (Roffey, 2010; Seligman, 2011; Cohen, 2011; Green, Oades, & Robinson, 2011; Noble & McGrath, 2008). To achieve this goal the present investigation comprised two interrelated studies. The purpose of Study 1 was to explore the nature of EL from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders including the Principal, School Executive, School Counsellor, teachers, and students. Study 2 aimed to evaluate these stakeholders' perspectives of the nature and importance of EL in schooling, the impact of a PAR model, and associated school-based EL interventions.

Each research aim and research question is labelled with a three-digit identifier. The first digit represents the study while the second digit refers to the aim, and the third digit identifies the research question (e.g., Research Question 1.1.1 refers to Study 1, Aim 1, and, Research Question 1).

Study 1: A Critical Investigation of Key School Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Nature of the Emotionally Literate School

Introduction

Schools have different approaches to EL and what it means to be a relational organisation (Nadge, 2005; Wyn et al., 2000; Morrow, 1999). Exploring how different stakeholders within the case study school view EL and the nature of an emotionally literate school are key to establishing benchmark data for designing EL intervention strategies. Examining different perceptions in Study 1 about EL will contribute to establishing a snapshot of the current school situation. To gain a valid snapshot data is required to inform

views about EL in the case study school. Gathering views from different groups and individuals including ‘the student voice’ in the school forms the basis for developing a school EL snapshot. My aim was to go beyond simply listening to students, but rather as Shier (2001) highlights in his model of children’s participation to take their views into account. In doing so, there are tensions that result between the readiness of an organisation to act upon children’s opinions and the child’s ability to articulate opinions based on their knowledge of issues, self-esteem and communication skills (Shier, 2001, 2010). It has been proposed that:

the benefits of involving children in decision-making include increasing children's sense of ownership and belonging, increasing self-esteem, increasing empathy and responsibility, laying the groundwork for citizenship and democratic participation, and thus helping to safeguard and strengthen democracy (Shier, 2001, page 114).

Thus, the notion of involving the student voice may in itself be a strategy for enhancing EL.

Although schools have the will to move EL and student well-being forward, a range of barriers may exist to developing EL. It is important to name and understand these barriers to developing EL as the first step to overcoming them. The ways in which the case study school prioritises EL in relation to a multitude of competing agendas will also be evaluated.

Aims

The aim of Study 1 is to develop and expand upon current theory, research, and practice in EL in Australian schools in order to explicate, compare, and contrast multiple stakeholders’ (Principals, School Executive, School Counsellor, teachers, and students) perspectives of:

- 1.1 The value and place of emotional literacy in schooling;
- 1.2 Current emotional literacy strengths;
- 1.3 The barriers to developing emotional literacy in schooling;
- 1.4 Potentially potent emotional literacy intervention strategies; and
- 1.5 Potential strategies for overcoming emotional literacy barriers.

Statement of the Study 1 Research Questions

Research question 1.1.1: The place of EL in schooling. What do multiple stakeholders perceive is the value and place of EL in schooling and to what extent are their perspectives similar and different?

Research question 1.1.2: Current EL strengths. What do multiple stakeholders perceive as the key strengths of the school approaches to EL and to what extent are their perspectives similar and different?

Research question 1.1.3: Barriers to developing EL in schooling. What do multiple stakeholders perceive as the barriers to EL in schooling and to what extent are their perspectives similar and different?

Research question 1.1.4: Potentially potent EL intervention strategies. What do multiple stakeholders see as potentially potent intervention strategies in relation to developing EL in schooling and to what extent are their perspectives similar and different?

Research question 1.1.5: Approaches to overcoming Barriers to EL.
What do multiple stakeholders perceive as potential strategies for overcoming barriers to EL in schooling and to what extent are their perspectives similar and different?

Rationale for Research Questions

Rationale for research question 1.1.1: The value and place of Emotional Literacy

EL skills and competencies can be seen in the Australian goals for schooling young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008) which informed the development of a new Australian curriculum for schooling. It is now a priority that young Australians:

“have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical well-being; have a sense of optimism about their lives and their future; develop personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect; relate well to others and form and

maintain healthy relationships; and make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and accept responsibility for their actions” (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 8).

It is therefore timely to examine how these goals within the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians translate at school for students’ and teachers’ EL outcomes. Further, the Australian government aims to be in the top five nations for literacy, numeracy, and science by 2025 (Grattan, 2012). This ambition drives the need for a balanced approach and improved EL for student well-being. The potential of EL to build social-emotional competencies and motivation in the classroom justifies the current investigation into the value and place of EL (Cohen, 2010; Shindler et al., 2010, Martin & Dowson, 2009).

EL skills can enhance social standing and life outcomes (Sharp, 2000), as well as academic outcomes (McGrath, 2005; Zubrick et al., 1997; Elias, 1997) thus supporting the goals of schooling (MCEETYA, 2008). These issues are important to explore given the current interest and substantial expenditure by the Australian government on EL programs. Therefore this research aims to provide insight from multiple stakeholders about how they believe EL can contribute to schooling.

Rationale for Research Question 1.1.2: EL Strengths

Teacher and student voices will inform what constitutes the EL strengths in the case study school. It may be the case that some unexpected aspects of EL emerge as strengths based on the views of some groups or individuals. Gaining such insight will provide a rich picture of EL in the case study school. Stakeholder opinions will provide key information that can be used to celebrate school strengths. The information gained from multiple stakeholders can also act as a lever for change in formulating a contextually relevant PAR EL intervention strategy. The data and findings based on divergent opinions will act as reference points for the ways in which positive psychology and other theories are viewed in the case study school (Seligman, 2011; Fredrickson, 2001; Park & Peterson, 2008). Using diverse opinions the current investigation aims to evaluate strengths of EL in the case study school such as students’ connections to school, rapport with their teachers, and readiness to learn (Murray-Harvey, 2010; Libbey, 2004; Zins et al., 2004).

Rationale for Research Question 1.1.3: Barriers to EL

Students, teachers, and the school environment are potential barriers to EL. Students mental health presents as a barrier to EL. Mental health is a key health issue for young people aged twelve to twenty-four years in Australia. Most young Australians self-report that they have good health yet mental health problems and disorders account for the highest burden of disease in Australia amongst young Australians (AIHW, 2011). Therefore EL offers young Australians the opportunity to enhance their well-being through developing skills and applying knowledge of their strengths through positive education approaches to daily life.

Teachers and an Ecological Perspective. In a school teachers at all levels need each other's support. Barriers to EL can hamper this need, meaning the need remains unmet. Lack of collaboration between teachers coupled with the emotional labour (Yin, Chi Kin Lee, Zhang, & Jin, 2013) associated with teaching can further diminish teachers' EL. Teachers who lack EL can affect other teachers and students in the ecology of schooling (Roffey, 2012). A lack of teacher EL in turn affects teacher self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) and thereby affects students negatively. The extent to which teachers' EL impacts on students' views about themselves (and vice versa) and their development of psychological assets is worth exploring because it can make a difference to students' quality of schooling, thereby affecting their quality of life.

The School Environment. Safety at school is an issue for students and their teachers. A safe school environment helps students and teachers feel that they are part of a safe, respectful, and connected community (Bluestein, 2001; Mayer, 2007; MCEECDYA, 2011). When there is an unsafe school or classroom environment students and teachers feel disconnected from each other. The ways in which relational values such as respect or a lack of respect is lived out at school impacts on behaviour and safety at school (Roffey, 2005). Negative behaviour in schools is commonly associated with bullying and poor classroom behaviour (Barnes et al., 2012; Rigby, 2002; Slee & Murray-Harvey, 2006), which can impact on students' ability to learn and their confidence. Conversely, developing coping skills and positive relationships enables students and teachers to feel connected in the classroom and to promote student academic outcomes (Murray-Harvey, 2010; Frydenberg, Care, Freeman, & Chan, 2009). The present investigation intends to examine the influence of these and other barriers to developing EL within the case study school.

Rationale for Research Question 1.1.4: Potentially Potent Intervention Strategies

Approaches to teacher and student EL are often fragmented, reactive, and lack coherence. One-off, segmented student approaches targeting at-risk students or specific student groups do have a place in schooling but often a focus on such groups is at the expense of approaches that target all teachers or all students. The approach of targeting all teachers or students is known as a universal one. Universal approaches are best achieved through a whole-school approach (ethos, curriculum, and partnerships). Universal programs and approaches targeting all teachers and students recognise that all teachers and students need to develop their EL (Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth, 2013; Fuller, 2001; Liao, Liao, Teoh, & Liao, 2003; Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, & Resnick, 2003; Commonwealth of Australia, 2010). This research aims to examine approaches that can be applied across school domains, including the academic and the pastoral domains with relevance to students and teachers.

Teachers need to develop students' EL and they can do so most effectively when they focus on their own well-being (CASEL, 2012; Murray-Harvey, 2010; Coombs Richardson, Tolson, Huang, & Lee, 2009). Productive classroom environments promote quality teaching using the cognitive and affective domains (Hattie, 2003; 2009; Downey, 2008; Ladd, 2003). Therefore teachers and their students are in a prime position to provide information about EL and act as a source of information about potent EL interventions.

Rationale Research Question 1.1.5: Approaches to Overcoming Barriers to EL

Within the literature there are three key areas worthy of consideration for examining approaches to overcoming barriers to EL. These include research on Principal support of teachers, developing expert teachers, and positive psychology theory and practice. Involving key stakeholders in providing their opinions about how to overcome barriers is likely to provide an abundance of other approaches that are worth examining in this research. Once a range of opinions is gathered the data and results will inform the actions taken in Study 2 to build EL.

Leadership. School leaders need to communicate a clear school vision and goals for the school (Kouzes & Posner, 2009). If teachers are to learn about EL it has to be articulated through the school goals. Teacher involvement in professional learning can build teacher EL when it is aligned with their membership of a professional learning community (PLC). The ways in which school leadership and teacher professional development enhance relational

values and develop a more positive school environment will be examined in this research to develop potentially potent intervention strategies (Lee, Zhongha, & Hongbiao, 2011; Stoll & Seashore Louis, 2007; Huffman, 2001) that will underpin Study 2, which is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Study 2: Interventions to shape and impact emotional literacy and the impact of emotional literacy – How can interventions shape and impact emotional literacy?

Introduction

Study 2 aims to appraise the impact of EL interventions on key stakeholders in the case study school context. Using PAR a group of volunteer staff will help to develop an EL intervention strategy designed to impact on EL. PAR members' experience and the school climate as perceived by school leaders, the school Counsellor, teachers, and students are analysed. Interpersonal dynamics and their impacts within the PAR team and more widely in the case study school will be explored to determine how social-emotional skills and learning influence EL and vice versa.

Ecological factors are analysed for guidance in creating a positive impact on EL. Attempts to increase the school focus on EL will be evaluated by considering stakeholder views about EL values and skills in action. Features of an emotionally literate school are also examined in order to add to our knowledge and understanding about EL.

Aims

Study 2 aims to identify a PAR team in the case study school to investigate a range of interventions in order to:

- 2.1 Elucidate the impact of school-derived interventions on the development of emotionally literate relationships amongst multiple stakeholders; and
- 2.2 Explicate the features of an emotionally literate school from multiple stakeholders' perspectives.

Statement of Study 2 Research Questions

Research Question 2.1.1: Impact of Interventions on the Development of Emotionally Literate Relationships. What do multiple stakeholders perceive as the

impact of school-derived interventions on the development of emotionally literate relationships amongst multiple stakeholders?

Research Question 2.1.2: Features of the Emotionally Literate School. What do multiple stakeholders who have participated in school-derived interventions to develop EL perceive as the key features of an emotionally literate school?

Rationale for Research Question 2.1.1: Impact of Intervention on the Development of Emotionally Literate Relationships

In the Australian context, qualitative EL research over three years in a secondary context is not common. Therefore, exploring the application of EL to a range of school domains in light of existing theory can inform the development of emotionally literate relationships (Gager & Elias, 1997). Knowledge about what makes a difference to emotionally literate relationships can offer hope in the future, providing the impetus for further research.

A Focus on the Whole Person. One potential area of interest is the academic care construct (AISNSW, 2004). Some schools including the case study school are utilising academic care to expedite the classroom's pastoral capacity in the academic sphere and promote social and emotional learning. Academic care and current theory can advance EL practice. The academic care construct warrants attention as one indicator for emotionally literate relationships within an EL intervention strategy (Nadge, 2002; Hattie, 2003; 2009; Child Health Promotion Research Unit, Edith Cowan University, 2006). The use of a positive education perspective provides another perspective (David, Boniwell, & Conley Ayres, 2013). Informed by multiple stakeholders' perspectives this research aims to gain a valuable insight about the relationship between EL and academic outcomes with a focus on the whole person.

The Ecological Perspective. Another area that warrants attention is the myriad of relationships in a school informed by multiple stakeholder views, as their views will represent a spectrum of potentially different relational experiences. As relational organisations, schools are concerned with the quality of their interactions and relationships to promote higher levels of collaboration, collegiality, and cooperation in the classroom and across the school (Styron & Nymon, 2008; Soini, Pyhalto, & Pietarinen 2010; Johnson, Johnson, & Roseth, 2010). There will also be other unanticipated impacts of the EL interventions on relationships worth sharing for the benefit of schooling. Hence a research

question was posed to explore how a range of stakeholders view EL interventions for developing emotionally literate relationships.

Rationale for Research Question 2.1.2: Features of the Emotionally Literate School

In light of positive education practices and theory it is vital to examine the proposition that an emotionally literate school is one where people feel more satisfied and valued, as this may improve students' lives (David, Boniwell, & Conley Ayres, 2013; Gilman, Huebner, & Furlong, 2009; Gordon & Cabtree, 2006). While it may be possible to provide greater substantiation for those factors that have been highlighted through previous research for advancing EL, much of the current EL research involves younger children in SEL learning or interventions (Kam, Wong, & Fung, 2011; Humphrey, Lendrum, Wigelsworth, & Kalambouka, 2009; McCarthy, 2009; Thornton, 2008). Identifying features of the emotionally literate secondary school will, therefore, add to current knowledge through research focused on EL interventions in a secondary educational context. Hence a research question was posed to explore features of the emotionally literate school.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented statements of the aims, research questions, and their rationale for each of the two studies that comprise the present investigation. The next chapter presents the methodology and methods employed in each of the two studies to address the research questions presented here.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to elucidate the research methods and approaches used in conducting the present investigation, which comprised two synergistic studies. Study 1 aims to examine the status of EL in order to determine EL strengths, and the nature of the barriers to developing EL, as areas that can benefit from school-derived EL interventions. Study 2 aims to implement the school-derived EL interventions explicated in Study 1 and elucidate the impact of the EL interventions on the development of EL and stakeholder relationships. In so doing, Study 2 also aims to identify the features of an emotionally literate school in order to develop an EL School Framework. In this chapter, Participatory Action Research (PAR) is discussed first. Second, the research methodology is outlined for Case study 1 and Case study 2. Third, the themes and potential interventions are identified, including the school-derived EL intervention strategies. Finally, the approach to developing a school EL framework is discussed.

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Overview

In this first section conceptualisations of PAR are discussed, showing how PAR can bridge knowledge and action by engaging participants in areas of their daily work, which are meaningful to them (Khan, Bawani, & Aziz, 2013). PAR has gained credibility as an approach to research, which has relevance for the school context as the inherent learning involves a process of engagement. Second the historical development of PAR is discussed beginning with the action research model of Lewin (1946). The ways in which PAR promotes deep thinking, learning, and participation are discussed, showing the relevance of PAR to the current investigation (Freire, 1970; Lave & Wenger, 1991). A parallel is drawn between PAR and a Community of Practice (CoP) showing the relevance of PAR for

contemporary schooling. Next the benefits of employing PAR are evaluated based on the inclusive and egalitarian research processes involved whereby participants are active and contributing members of a research team. Team members are regarded as competent and capable of participating in the research process, according to their different strengths and abilities (Ampartzaki, Kypriotaki, Voreadou, Dardioti, & Stathi, 2013). PAR can help raise the level of consciousness of all involved in the research, as it focuses not so much on challenges as on how team members can take action to meet and solve challenges together. Finally PAR for teacher development is examined, showing how teacher learning builds capacity and environmental assets.

Conceptualisations of PAR

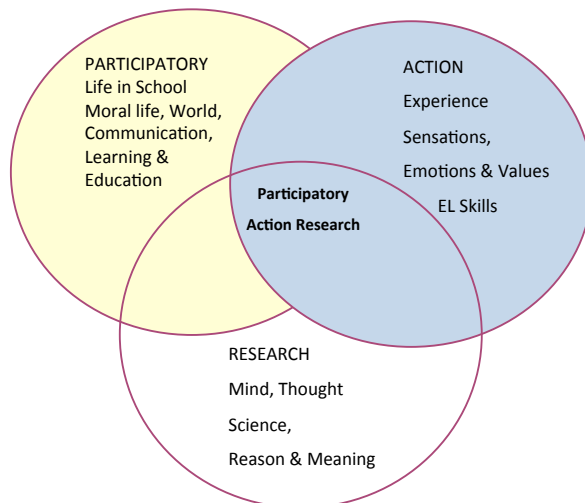
In my research PAR is defined as:

an investigation, where as a result of rigorous self-appraisal of current practice, the researcher focuses on a 'problem' (or a topic or an issue which needs to be explained), and on the basis of information about the people who will be involved and about the context, plans, implements, then evaluates and actions, then draws conclusions on the basis of the findings (Macintyre, 2000, p. 1).

This definition shows that the researcher has a key role in the PAR process. In my research PAR involved working with, rather than on, teachers and students and recognised knowledge as a product of collaboration and action (Ainscow & Southworth, 1996; Ainscow, 1998; Weire, 2004). Further, central to the process of PAR is the on-going opportunity for reflection, planning, and evaluation which enables conclusions to be drawn about the actions taken (Camic, Rhodes, & Yardley, 2003).

My research adopts the stance, similar to that proposed by Chevalier and Buckles (2013), whereby PAR involves three intersecting planes: action, research, and participation. Action is regarded as the plane of experience, drawing on experience, sensations, and emotions as well as values to shape and form action. People are at the centre of the action and their EL skills play a vital part in the research process. The next plane is the mind and research where there can be tension between the need to adhere to theory and the process of learning and finding meaning. The third plane is participation and life in school, how messages are communicated within the school and how interventions are implemented,

managed, and evaluated. This third plane takes on a different meaning in my research. I propose to consider the social dynamics within the school whereas Chevalier and Buckles (2013) viewed it from a globalisation and social movement stance (see Figure 5.1). This application of the social dynamics is relevant to a school setting. It also suits the accompanying constructivist and ecological lens applied to the present investigation.



Adapted: Chevalier & Buckles (2013)

Figure 5.1 Conceptualisation of PAR

Historical Development of PAR

PAR has been influenced by the need for social action as a way of solving problems within society and in education. Lewin (1946) developed the first model of action research (Figure 5.2). Lewin's model emphasised a strong connection between theory and practice and the processes of monitoring and review as integral. In the Lewin model, participants engage in a cycle of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting to improve their approach to solving problems. While the conceptual basis of PAR can be traced to Freirean ideology (Freire, 1970), the concepts of class struggle, self-liberation, and relations of domination and oppression can operate differently in a school context. However, the concepts of participation and action as well as dialogical reflection and action which are involved in Freire's thinking are just as relevant today and align with contemporary approaches such as Communities of Practice (CoP) (Ampartzaki, Kypriotaki, Voreadou, Dardioti, & Stathi, 2013).

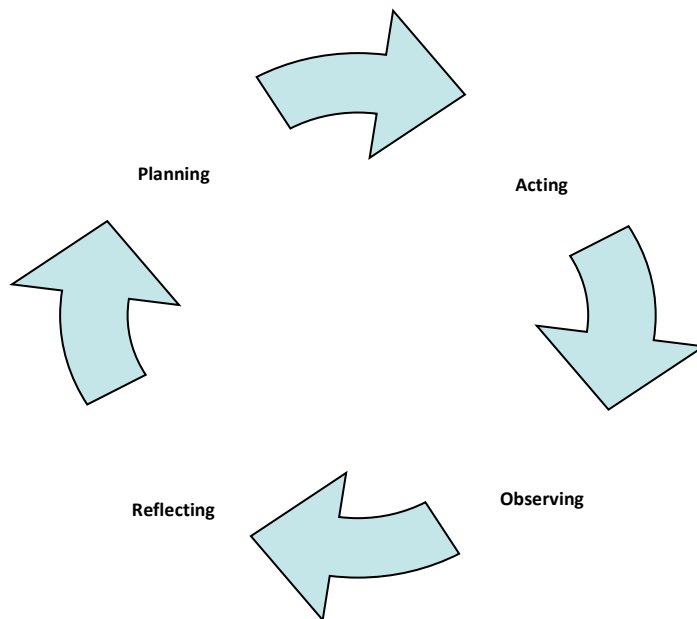


Figure 5.2 The Kurt Lewin Action Research Model (Lewin, 1946)

In contrast to the Lewin (1946) action research model, which involved one cycle of reflecting-planning-acting-observing, Carr and Kemmis (1986) proposed that action research is cyclical in nature (see Figure 5.3). There are multiple cycles, each involving the continuous processes of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

The difference between PAR and other types of action research is found in the level of collaboration and the level to which the participants have the capacity to direct change processes and interventions (Whyte, 1989; Denzin, & Lincoln, 2011). Using PAR, participants in my research have an opportunity to grow and develop as they help formulate solutions to influence the quality of their own environment and EL. The degree of reflection in PAR is also seen in the action of each cycle (Figure 5.3) as it intersects with others, while the cycles continue to be thought about and developed. As such, the process of PAR creates new knowledge.

PAR was considered the most appropriate way to explore meaning in relation to EL because of the periods of reflection, planning, action, and observing. This process enables staff to collaborate and students to interact and co-operate (Brydon-Miller, Kral, Maguire, Noffke, & Sabholk, 2011). Building in reflection time is a vital aspect, as time is a limited resource in schools. Hence, the actions taken by the PAR team and the interventions were interpreted in accordance with social and historical factors and the school context.

There has been criticism of PAR with the processes referred to as ‘participation as tyranny’ (Cook & Kathari, 2001) whereby participatory consultation is contested as leaving the *status quo* intact as it fails to act on broader systemic issues. However, within this research project, ecological factors such as the impact of EL skills, leadership approaches, and policy and practice on how teachers and students interact were also considered.

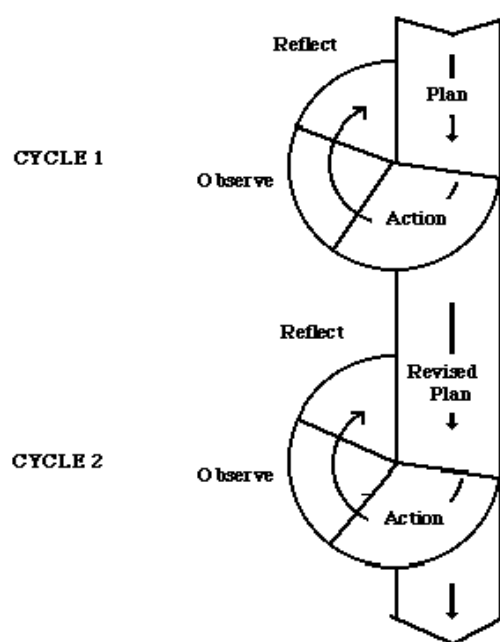


Figure 5.3 Carr and Kemmis (1986) Model of Action Research

In my research, my aim was to create an enabling team, thereby empowering the team members to have a voice and to shape the implementation of EL interventions, to direct and then evaluate the EL interventions. The PAR team also helped to propose future ongoing EL interventions but they did not have complete agency in relation to the research project as I drew from their feedback and comments to make the final judgement about solutions and EL approaches.

Community of Practice (CoP)

These ideas about PAR, learning together and aiming to improve the social context are consistent with the ideas behind a CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991). While learning can be ubiquitous, occurring in everyday life embedded within activity, context, and culture, the processes inherent in PAR offer promise as they make learning explicit. PAR helps to draw

out the learning as an intentional, planned, and systematic process (Lave & Wenger, 1991). PAR and a CoP aim to improve the social context. A CoP involves groups of people with a passion or concern for something they do and with a commitment to learning how to do it more effectively as they interact frequently (Wegner, 1998). Further to this, a CoP and PAR can be a valuable asset, providing a school with an approach to improving professional practice. A CoP can be everywhere in a school, ranging from a group of teachers working on a new program through to a clique of students learning a new skill together. Situated learning and the CoP complement the theoretical framework of this research, and PAR.

Benefits of PAR

As further support for selecting PAR as a research method, a number of research studies using PAR were found to provide the impetus for positive change. PAR can impact on teacher quality because the teachers involved in change processes work on challenging problems as part of their daily work and became partners in solving the challenges (Sax & Fisher, 2001; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). This research aimed for participants to be equal partners and provided an opportunity to make a difference. There is a continuum to describe how participants function in PAR from contractual through to collegial states (Bagnoli & Clark, 2010). Contractual refers to participation that is delineated, usually within a narrow scope of action and influence for the participants whereas collegial is described as a state whereby the participants work alongside the researcher. In PAR the aim is to function as a cohesive team, however issues of power in relationships can still exist due to structural positions in a school such as in the present investigation, wherein Deputy Principal roles were held by two members of the PAR team (including myself), which is a limitation of PAR. This role status also afforded opportunity, as there was greater opportunity to influence others. While the risk was minimised through open communication, this issue of positional status remained as a potential barrier to the process of development.

While teachers can find the teaching profession isolating, due to the inherent collaborative and collegial processes of PAR, there is a range of benefits that teachers can experience through their involvement. These benefits involve meeting personal and community needs. This view is supported by Goonough (2011) who reported on teachers' experiences of participating in PAR:

Experienced teachers engaged in teacher-directed action research and reported many positive benefits related to their understanding of themselves as teachers, the nature

of their subject matter and student learning, and their classroom practice. Collaborative action research provides one means to engage teachers in communities of practice that foster teacher reflection on their perceptions, beliefs, and practices, which is critical for classroom-based change and personal and professional growth (Goonough, 2011, p. 83-84).

This quote captures the link between teachers' work and the benefits that flow on to students in the classroom. The impact of PAR is also captured in three aspects, which make PAR a worthwhile form of personal and professional development for teachers (Draper et al., 2011). These aspects are: the interchange of self-interest and community engagement; the development of respect, trust, and camaraderie among community members; and the spirit of collegiality expressed in the robust discussion of ideas. Trust between PAR team members enables them to openly express their opinions and place themselves in what could otherwise be a vulnerable position. One of the key potential outcomes of PAR occurs when teachers construct new knowledge based on their own interpretation of their experience and reality (Chevalier & Buckles, 2013). Each of these outcomes equates in a positive way with the development of EL in schools.

PAR is valuable as it can make tacit knowledge explicit, while enabling a sense of agency through the process, which has benefits for teachers and students (Somekh, 2006). PAR enables teachers to tackle what they see as their real work, improve professional practice, and embed change through a cycle of planning, acting, and reflecting. Thus a PAR cycle involves identifying a problem or an issue, gathering data, interpreting the data, acting on evidence, evaluating the results, and taking the next steps to enable progress (Ferrance, 2000; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). Practitioners, learner teachers, and school leaders who are reflective and promote ongoing enquiry may be more likely stimulate these metacognitive processes in their students, thus giving learning more meaning. As such, this metacognitive function of PAR provides another potential. The PAR element of the study required teachers to inquire into their professional practice and EL, and be reflective. The need and capacity for inquiry into professional practice is aptly described as part of being professional, rather than its being used only for a short-term project (Reid, 2004). As such, a benefit of this research was to foster an inquiry approach for building the rapport, mutual understanding, and relationships between students and their teachers.

The PAR methodology employed has the capacity to bring together teachers, students, and staff from different parts of the school including different faculties and year

groups. This is in keeping with an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), whereby people who operate across different layers within an organisation impact on each other because of their interactions, relationships, and the decisions they make. PAR helps illuminate what is needed to develop EL in the case study school and schools more broadly. Further, it gives research participants a voice and a sense of purpose in relation to the project outcomes that flow into other areas of their professional practice (Minkler, 2000).

PAR provides teachers with an opportunity to combine the complex work of research with their day-to-day teaching because it entails an accessible framework (Abdal-Haqq, 1995). This framework involves periods of planning, action, and reflection that are embedded in the teachers' classroom practice processes. For example, teachers evaluated teaching units, adjusted or modified them, and then taught them before reflecting on them again. Teachers move in and out of these steps and therefore PAR is a logical and coherent process in which to involve teachers in thinking about EL as an area that could improve their own and their students' experiences of schooling. PAR can help teachers to bridge the divide between theory and practice. It engages teachers in reflective practices that help to increase their confidence about their practice, building collaborative processes, and acting as an effective form of professional development (West, 2011). Teachers can see and discuss the results of their work and make changes at key times as they reflect on what they were doing.

Section Summary

As discussed above, there were a number of other benefits from using PAR for this research. In my research PAR aims to enable the growth and development of the participants in the case studies in relation to areas such as: teacher acknowledgement, teacher professional practice, academic care, and building positive emotions for teacher and students. Additionally, employing PAR meant that, as a researcher, I was a co-learner and a guide, working collaboratively with the members of the PAR team (Minkler, 2000). The literature supports such an approach for building EL since it can facilitate stronger relationships through increased collaboration, communication, confidence, collegiality, and understanding (Ferrance, 2000). Given that PAR enables participants to create meaning and reality, PAR can also enable the case study school to nominate areas of need and develop interventions to match the specified areas. Thus, this research involved working with rather than 'on' the school. Such an open approach enables staff and students involved to maintain some measure of control over the direction of the research, rather than following a predetermined path. Such an approach is congruent with EL as it models trust and respect, which are central to EL.

Research Methodology

Overview

This section explains the general research aims for Case study 1 and 2. First the relations between the constructivist approach and the qualitative basis of this research are explained. Second, key research information about the research context, participants, data collection processes, and data analysis methods for each case study are outlined. The same school was used for both case studies. This was essential as the Case study 1 research findings inform the approach adopted for the EL interventions in Case study 2.

Case study 1 examined the status of EL to determine EL strengths and the nature of the barriers to developing EL. Baseline data was collected to inform the PAR about the areas that may benefit from a school-derived EL intervention strategy, based on these strengths, barriers, and potential areas for development. Case study 2 was designed to plan, implement, and evaluate a school-derived EL intervention strategy. In so doing, Case study 2 aimed to identify the features of an emotionally literate school in order to develop the EL School Framework presented in Chapter 7.

Theoretical Methodical Underpinning

A social constructivist approach was chosen for this research and informs the methodology as it aligns with the aim of looking for meaning and how meaning is created (Potter, 1996). Similarly, the qualitative methodology selected for this research is about finding meaning and how it applies to EL. A qualitative basis was most appropriate since the research seeks to harness the nuances of EL across the spheres of teacher and student relationships. Such nuances could not be identified unless through qualitative means. To further describe patterns found to be noteworthy to the qualitative data, the use of a questionnaire provided quantitative data.

The methodology used in the two case studies is congruent with ecological theory underpinning the research (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The need for social connections, interactions, and the way people view and develop through their environment are central tenets to Bronfenbrenner's theory and therefore key factors determining the methodology

selected for the two studies. The ecological approach chosen for this research explores teacher and student lived experiences and how these were influenced across different levels of the school system (Cooper & Upton, 2004; Single, 2006). The intent of the methodology therefore, is to mirror a range of collaborative and evidence-based approaches akin to a situational analysis (Annan, 2005) that take into account ecological theory. Darlaston-Jones (2007) elucidates the relations between epistemology and theoretical frameworks, and how these can influence the choice of research methods. This relationship is vital for the coherence of my research and in ensuring that it is valid. Epistemology is also essential from the perspective of gaining the rich data that is synonymous with qualitative research methods. As a researcher I needed to make sense of the social realities that impact on what schooling is about and ensure my methods match this intent.

The research methods for this investigation hinge on the premise that constructivism is of relevance to EL. The impact of a communal construction of knowledge means that people reach an understanding about reality through being involved in a community (Gergen, 2001). Individuals construct local truths through their interactions and relations that are relevant to their community. Thus, constructivism means that realities are contextually based, local, specific, and constructed based on personal meanings. Realities are also socially and experientially based and are contingent upon the groups and individuals who hold them (Gergen, 2001). In my research a common commitment towards the school goals, in addition to the cultural, historical, and economic environment within the school context will each have an impact on how meaning is made (Jones & Bader-Araje, 2002). Finally, in making sense of a person's own values and assumptions, factors such as experience, intellect, and attitudes will shape any sense of reality (Raskin, 2011). However, it should also be noted that realities are created by socio-cultural factors and a person's attitudes cannot be separated from the discourses and experiences that created them. These factors support the use of a constructivist approach towards this exploration of EL in schools.

Research Context

The research was conducted in a K-12 non-denominational, independent girls' day and boarding school in Sydney, Australia over three years. The school philosophy is based on the Christian tradition and up until the time of this research the school has had relatively few Principals: eleven in its more than 125 year history. There were, however, four Principals leading the school during the research period. This was a disadvantage for my research, as it was difficult to determine whether changes occurred because of the EL intervention strategy

or as a result of the changes in school leadership. The period of leadership unrest coinciding with the research placed a limitation on the case study context in relation to factors such as change, staff morale and the capacity to embed EL interventions. Teachers appeared to be experiencing change fatigue (reference observational notes). This influenced how teachers responded to change and the way in which the PAR team implemented the EL interventions. A pervasive feeling of uncertainty, mistrust, and low staff morale meant that staff turnover was very high and the staff unstable. This situation was challenging and it led to questions about EL by the school's Board of Governors. The positive aspect of this case study situation is the unique opportunity to explore leadership as a component of EL. Leadership can enhance or detract from the environmental and teacher psychological assets and can therefore impact students. It is clear that leadership is of prime importance for the present research.

Even in a known research context, unexpected events or circumstances can change the context, making it complex and unpredictable (Chevalier & Buckles, 2013). In my research, teachers' and students' perceptions and opinions about their experiences were shaped by a dynamic context. Darlaston-Jones (2007) provides insight into the unique set of factors that impact the interpretation of any reality. These include politics and micro-politics, power struggles, and the way a person is positioned within or alongside such struggles (Nelson, Poland, Murray, & Maticka-Tyndale, 2004). Further, the school ethos and the extent to which the ethos influences communal and individual values will affect why people act the way they do, or say what they say.

The school says that it aims to provide a well-rounded and liberal education. The majority of the school student population is from high socioeconomic backgrounds, with some scholarship holders. The student population is approximately 920 across kindergarten to Year 12. There is a strong focus on service and making the most of the opportunities available both within and beyond the school. The school has a strong academic record and standing in a range of extra-curricular activities such as sport, debating, and the performing arts. The school markets itself as a technology-rich school and the students are known for their success across a number of endeavours including academic, sporting, and community involvement. Students participate at high levels in school life and across domains such as sport, music, and debating (reference observational notes). The school provides an academic environment where there are demands on students and teachers for their time, their skill, and their ongoing contribution (reference observational notes). The high expectations placed on students come from a range of sources: parents, principal, school council, peers, self, teachers, school executive, old girls, prospective parents, and reputation. Likewise there are

high expectations placed on teachers to achieve excellent academic results, to use blended learning approaches and to connect with students in a positive way. Within the school community, students are seen as articulate, confident, and aware of social conventions and expected behaviour. The students are skilled at presenting themselves appropriately in a range of situations and are socially adept.

High expectations can positively affect motivation and performance depending upon student and staff work ethic, ability, coping skills, mental health, and overall well-being. At times of high-pressure, some staff and students in high performing schools do not cope and their mental health is affected (reference observational notes). Teacher work satisfaction and teacher morale can also be adversely affected in schools where demands on staff are high and they feel they have little autonomy over their work or what they are doing (reference observational notes).

Participants

Participants in the research were Year 7-12 teachers, the Principal, the School Counsellor, and members of the management team from across the school as well as middle school students aged 11-15 years in Years 7-10. Teaching staff from predominantly Anglo-Saxon backgrounds mirrored the ethnographic background of the students. The students in the research were selected based on their developmental phase during middle school. During adolescence, girls experience development on every level. Adolescence is a time of rapid physical, spiritual, social-emotional, and cognitive change. The intensity of student relationships is one characteristic of this phase of development. Other challenges confronting girls are changing relationships and learning needs, the development of independence, and a search for self-identity, all presenting the need for EL skills. As a result, it seems girls aged eleven to fifteen could gain a great deal from their involvement in my research.

The participants in Case study 1 included 174 students (100%) who completed the student questionnaire and thirty teachers (40% of the total teaching staff) who completed the teacher questionnaire. Four students participated in the focus group and three teachers participated in the teacher group interview. Four individual staff interviews were conducted: one with the Principal, two with two members of the School Executive (referred to as the management team in the questionnaire and the executive team in the results), and one with the School Counsellor.

In Case study 2, teachers and students completed 384 questionnaires in two waves of data collection; once following the EL intervention strategy and a second six months later. In

the first wave twenty-five teachers (33%) and 157 students (100%) participated. In the second wave twenty-eight teachers (25%) and 174 students (100%) completed the questionnaire. The Principal and two members of the school executive completed interviews, as did the School Counsellor. One teacher gained her qualification as School Counsellor between Study 1 and 2 and therefore two School Counsellors were interviewed. A student focus group of four students and a teacher focus group of three teachers were also interviewed across the two waves of data collection.

Data Collection

Table 5.1 summarises the research timeline, processes, and methodological approach of this research involving data collection and the associated processes across three calendar years. In year 1 prior to the research commencing, letters were written to the chair of the School Board and the principal, detailing the aims, methodology, and timeframes for the research. Approval was sought and gained from the Principal and the School Board for the research to proceed.

Time	Case study 1 - The Place of EL	
	Processes and Procedures	Data Collection Methods
Year 1, Terms 3 & 4	<p>Initial planning, meeting with the principal</p> <p>Letters and communication regarding EL research to go out</p> <p>Results of baseline data identified school needs</p> <p>Initial report written</p>	<p>Observation and Reflection</p> <p>Reflective journal</p> <p>Collected baseline data</p> <p>(August) – EL questionnaire (teachers/ students)</p> <p>Interviews/ focus groups held</p> <p>- current situation and barriers to EL</p>
	Case study 2 – PAR	
Year 2-3 Week 5-7	<p>PAR Team established.</p> <p>Planning meeting and workshop with PAR Team.</p> <p>Summary of PAR processes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Built understanding of PAR process, EL, and best practice; 2) Initiate processes: reflecting- planning- acting-observing; 3) Developed knowledge about school change process; 4) Identified strategies to minimise barriers to EL development; 5) Shaped the intervention/s and evaluation methods; 6) Identified areas within a whole-school approach of interest; 7) Consolidated and clarified school needs; 8) Evaluation workshop <p>Action: PAR Team met and finalised</p>	<p>Reflective Journal</p> <p>Meeting / workshop notes</p>
Year 2		<p>Reflective Journal</p> <p>Meeting notes</p>

Year 3 Term 1	intervention planning - workshop reflection. Terms 2 and 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interventions process defined. - Interventions implemented. - Monitored and reflected on the interventions. Term 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of the process and intervention. - Action: shared the review stage and resources. - Planned the term 1 process and refined the intervention/s. Terms 1-3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PAR team meeting. - Reflection & review: process and outcomes to date. - Planned: next steps for EL. 	Term 4 Collected T2 data – EL questionnaire Term 3 Collected T3 data EL questionnaire (third time). Interviews / focus groups.

Table 5.1 Research Timeline, Processes and Data Collection Methods

PAR in this Research

All teachers were given information about PAR and extended an opportunity to volunteer to participate in Year 1 of the research. This was done verbally at a staff meeting and in writing via an invitation in teachers' pigeonholes so that teachers had time to consider their involvement. They also had the opportunity to sign up via a notice pinned to the staff notice board. The aim was to have a range of staff volunteer to participate in the PAR team. This resulted in PAR members from across the school including one member of the management team, the School Counsellor, one HSIE teacher, two English teachers, one Mathematics teacher, and myself, yielding a total of seven members.

Once the PAR team was identified, a welcome and initial meeting was organised. At the meeting people had an opportunity to identify what they hoped to contribute to and gain

from their involvement in PAR. An explanation and discussion followed about the meaning of PAR. Some guidelines were established for how the team would operate through open discussion. These guidelines included the following: that the group would aim for high levels of trust and respect; that the team would function in an open way; and that PAR team members were to maintain confidentiality about any sensitive matters which might arise in discussions at PAR meetings. PAR team members were invited to share their knowledge and views about EL. This discussion was captured through a mind map which started by writing the words: “student + social and emotional skills” on the white board.

An overview of EL and the underpinning theory was outlined at the conclusion of the mind map activity and an overview provided of some key findings from the teacher and student questionnaires. The ensuing discussion made it clear teachers felt that their needs were not being met on a number of levels. Teachers did not feel valued or recognised for their strengths and achievements, morale was low, and teachers felt that they did not have a voice. All PAR members agreed that the place to start, therefore, was with the teachers, building their self-efficacy and sense of being valued by building a more positive school environment.

Potential EL Interventions

Potential interventions proposed through the questionnaire, interview, and focus group data highlight the scope of what could be implemented to possibly build EL (see Table 5.4). The interventions were diverse and had the potential for far-reaching effects. At the second PAR meeting the intervention menu was presented and discussed. It provided the stimulus for a brainstorm. Because of the discussion the major and contributing intervention focus areas were identified. These encompassed approaches to: teacher voice, teacher professional learning, and well-being strategies. For students, interventions related to giving to others, student voice, student leadership, academic care, care in general, and student well-being. These are matched to the three themes of leading, learning, and social capital (see Table 5.5).

Information was provided to members of the PAR team about the philosophy behind how PAR operates. This was not a new concept to members of the team. The value of the inherent processes of reflection, planning, action, and observing were discussed and team members provided input about how they were currently using approaches in their professional practice. Current approaches to school change were considered in light of best practice and change theory. Meetings were held as EL interventions were implemented in

line with PAR processes. An evaluation workshop enabled participants to examine the PAR processes applied and to discuss their impact based on their perspective.

Ethical Considerations PAR Team

The PAR team members were reassured that they could express their opinions openly in the workshops and planning meetings. They were asked to maintain confidentiality if sensitive or personal issues were raised. Participants were asked to follow up with an outside counsellor about personal matters if they experienced a strong emotional reaction requiring professional help. Additionally, team members were asked to be constructive in their verbal contributions and where possible to avoid mentioning colleagues or students by name.

Observational Analysis

Observational analysis was initially conducted over a six-month period and recorded using a written journal. From the beginning of the research I was a key source for data collection in the study, undertaking focused observations in the case study school up, together with the administration of the first questionnaire, in-depth interviews, and focus groups (see Table 5.1). This observation process involved purposefully looking, listening, writing, thinking, and analysing my observations of EL in relation to teachers and students. Observations were made about how teachers and students related to each other, what values were demonstrated, what types of communication and decision-making processes were used, and how the style of leadership influenced and impacted on students' EL. The aim of this was to refine my thinking about what makes a difference to EL in schools.

Reflective Journal

A reflective journal was maintained throughout both case studies. The contents of the journal included my thinking about the research constructs as well as my own and others' actions, attitudes, beliefs, and values. I also reflected further about my own thinking and considered my stance and its influence on the research. I thus acknowledged my own bias, assumptions, and prejudice and how these affected the purpose and outcomes of the project.

In-depth Interviews

Interviews were used to provide data about respondents' experiences, opinions, and perceptions of EL. The approach used for the interviews was based on set questions to guide the discussion with subheadings and flexibility in following lines of inquiry raised by the respondents in their answers (Appendix G, H, I & J). The aim was to capture epistemic and

doxastic perspectives through the interviews, providing qualitative data. I was aware of the need for objectivity but I have to acknowledge my own subjectivity in the research, as it was impossible to be fully objective. Further, the nature of EL is subjective as well since teachers and students are all individuals and have unique perceptions of experiences, events, and relationships.

The in-depth interviews were recorded and then transcribed. In addition, notes were made during each interview. The Principal, members of the management team, the School Counsellor, and teachers were interviewed once during Study 1 and once during Study 2. The interviewees provided written consent to be interviewed and volunteered their time.

Focus Groups

Students were invited to participate in a focus group discussion (Appendix C). They were informed about it in the daily notices, which were read to them by their teacher, or accessed via their student-owned laptops or via notice boards around the school. Students who expressed interest in participating were given a letter for their parents detailing the research and seeking permission for their daughter to be involved, following the appropriate ethics provisions (Appendix D). Four students participated and met three times. While other students expressed interest, they failed to return parental permission slips by the due date. The duration of the two focus group meetings was planned for approximately one hour. The response from the students may have been indicative of a number of factors. First, students led full lives and may have been forgetful in this situation. Second, they may have been tentative due to my role in the school as Assistant Principal. Thirdly, there may have been peer pressure not to participate, or other opportunities such as spending time with friends at lunch time, which may have seemed more appealing.

At the beginning of each focus group, students were advised that if they experienced any feelings of discomfort or had an emotional response to a question or to the content of others' responses at any time, they could either refrain from answering and/or be excused from the remainder of the session. Students were also told that they could choose whether to answer particular questions and there would be no judgement made based on their responses. In addition, students were advised of the availability of the School Counsellor if they felt the need to speak to someone following the session. Students were also requested not to mention teachers or other students by name but rather to say something such as: 'I know someone who ...'. This device was necessary to protect anonymity and prevent bias.

The students were a vital part of this research as their development as a whole person was at the heart of this research. The focus group enabled students to use their EL in expressing opinions, feelings, and perceptions. The focus group participation gave the students a voice and enabled them to contribute to a vital school project.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires (see Appendix N & O) were used in both case studies to gain benchmarks about the case study school and were given to middle school students and the senior school teaching staff of Years 7-12. The same questionnaire was completed three times across the two case-studies: once in Case study 1 and twice during Case study 2. In Study 1 the data provided information about the current EL situation, barriers to EL, and potential EL interventions. In Study 2 the questionnaire provided data about the impact of the interventions. These differences were reflected in open response sections of the questionnaire.

Teacher questionnaire

Teachers received a letter about the research, its aims, and the purpose of the questionnaire along with the questionnaire in a sealed envelope (Appendix A). To ensure confidentiality, each teacher received a return envelope for the completed questionnaire. They were given two and a half weeks to complete and return the questionnaire. This gave part-time teachers adequate opportunity to be involved. Teachers were reminded of the return date via email and a reminder slip in their pigeonhole. An email was sent to all teachers thanking them for returning the questionnaire. The same procedures were carried out on each of the three occasions the questionnaire was used. This consistency defined how the teachers received the questionnaire and the follow-up communication.

The response rate for the teacher questionnaire was 42% for Study 1, and 33% and 25% for Study 2. The teacher questionnaire contained forty-four items and used a five point answer scale ranging through 'low', 'never' or 'not at all', 'high', 'always' and 'absolutely'. It included (Appendix N) five items for the values construct, fourteen for school climate, eight for communication, nine for leadership, and eight for embedding social and emotional learning in class and school practices (See Table 5.4). There was provision for open-ended responses in relation to school strengths, priorities for change and development, and the type of environment needed for EL. A further section of the questionnaire enabled teachers to take the opportunity to develop and propose an action plan, in terms of what needed to be done in

relation to EL. This provided largely qualitative data, however a number of aspects of the results were quantified by tabulating the frequency of key themes identified in the data. The structure of the teacher questionnaire is summarised in Table 5.2 which demonstrates the scope of different scales included in the teacher questionnaire.

Scale Number	Item Focus Area and Number of Scale Items	Example of Item
1 – 5	Values – 5 items	A high value is placed on positive relationships
6 – 19	An emotionally literate climate - 14 items	Everyone takes responsibility for maintaining a positive climate
20 – 27	Communication – 8 items	Adults speak calmly and respectfully to students
28 – 36	Management – 9 items	Staff feel that their views matter and are taken into consideration
37 – 44	Embedding social and emotional learning in class and school practices – 8 items	Social and emotional competencies are modelled by all staff
Open response	Action Plan – 3 items	Your views about how to strengthen any areas outlined above – What are the first steps that might be taken to address these?

Table 5.2 Teacher Questionnaire – Scale Numbers and Items

Student Questionnaire

The student questionnaire contained thirty-six items (Appendix O). The shorter questionnaire enabled students to stay on task and aimed to ensure that the task was not too arduous and that it was accessible. It was completed individually and in silence during English classes.

The English department agreed to administer the questionnaire to participating students as two members of the PAR team were in that department and offered to be involved. In addition, due to more frequent face-to-face access to students, it made sense that the English department was involved in this way. Clear instructions were provided to the English teachers administering the questionnaire. The same teachers administered the student questionnaire, meaning they became familiar with the format and requirements. They also anticipated and addressed student questions that arose.

Each student received a parent letter about the research project, the ethics requirements and a request permission to be involved. Students were asked to return permission slips prior to participating in the research. Wording in the student questionnaire was adapted to ensure it was accessible. The student questionnaire (Appendix O) included the same constructs as the teacher questionnaire, however, the word ‘management’ was substituted for ‘staff’. The student questionnaire also included open-ended questions about EL strengths and areas for development and change.

A five-point answer scale was used with the responses labelled ‘low’, ‘never or not at all’, ‘high’, ‘always’, and ‘absolutely’. The questionnaire included four items for the values construct, thirteen items for school climate, five items for communication, eight for staff, and six for social and emotional learning (see Table 5.5). Students wrote free response answers about EL on the last page of the questionnaire. Most students used the entire page to answer.

The Study 1 student questionnaire response rate was ($n = 174$) 100% of the students who were attending English classes on the day of administration. This excluded students with a music or speech lesson. The structure of the student questionnaire is provided (see Table 5.3) as it informs the results chapters where results from data of items on the questionnaire are reported. The information (see Table 5.3) also demonstrates the scope of different scales included in the student questionnaire.

Scale Number	Item Focus Area and Number of Scale Items	Example of Item
1 – 4	Values – 4 items	I feel respected and valued in all classrooms
5 – 17	An emotionally literate climate - 13 items	I feel emotionally safe and I know people want to look after me here
18 – 22	Communication – 5 items	Adults speak calmly and respectfully to students
23 – 30	Staff – 8 items	Staff are committed to the well-being of students
31 – 36	Social and emotional learning – 6 items	Behaviour policies and strategies enable me to develop values such as respect
Open response items	Strengths and priorities for change and development - 2 items	What are the social and emotional strengths of the school?

Table 5.3 Student Questionnaire – Scale Numbers and Items

Researcher Meeting Notes

Notes were kept from the PAR meetings. These notes covered the main points of the meetings. While the meeting notes did not constitute meeting minutes, they did help direct and provide organisation to meetings. The meeting notes were also useful to show the level of knowledge and understanding in the PAR team of EL.

Data Analysis

This research design involves a triangulation between the researcher, the participants, and the different research methods. The variety of methods used produced both qualitative and quantitative data with rich meaning about the nature of an emotionally literate school environment. Each type of data was analysed with reference to the research questions and with reference to my knowledge and understanding of the developing area of positive education and EL. I also looked for new meaning and insight to add to current knowledge and understanding about EL.

A manual coding process was used to identify themes and sub-themes in the data. These themes are further explored in Chapters 6, 7, and 8. This was a visual and tactile approach as information was colour coded and then arranged on file cards, under sub-headings and headings, which equated with the sub-themes and themes. The strengths of this approach are the deep thinking and reflection that accompanied the process, enabling me to gain an intimate understanding of the data. Another strength is that I was able to gain a picture of the whole situation through a visual snapshot and also relate to particular aspects of the results such as student voice, the need for students to feel that they are known and the way that an awareness developed across the two case studies of the need to experience positive emotions. A further strength of this approach was that it enabled me to examine how my thinking developed. As I redefined what the data meant in some instances, I could see easily how making changes impacts the other data.

The outcome of the preliminary data analysis provided meaningful and multifaceted data that explored the nuances of relationships. This included interactions and experiences through a range of standpoints such as: the school environment, change theory, leadership, social capital, and positive education processes and practices. Data was read and grouped and a preliminary report prepared for the school.

In the questionnaires, I looked for patterns, themes, and differences in the responses both within and between the groups of teachers and students. There were some striking similarities and differences in a number of questionnaire items. As a result of the analysis, a menu of negotiated interventions based on the common themes that arose in the data was drafted for discussion with the PAR team. Based on a full data analysis three key themes were identified. These were *leading*, *learning*, and *social capital* which are discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

Themes and Proposed Interventions

Using the research questions and the themes and sub-themes that emerged through the case studies a framework was developed. The framework is intended as a guide to make decisions about the current EL in a school and to evaluate areas for developing EL. The development of the framework is informed by the data associated with the themes of positive education, leading, learning, and social capital. The mixed methods were influential as information was drawn from a number of data sources. A range of proposed EL interventions

(Table 5.4) and EL intervention strategies (Table 5.5) aligned with themes of positive education, leading, learning, and social capital.

Theme	Proposed Interventions
Positive education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategies to value and respect the staff. - Student leadership practices and approaches.
Leading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional development for teachers and the management team. - Enhanced capacity to value school contributions formally and informally. - Endeavours to increase staff morale and involvement in decision-making. - Enhanced ability to articulate school vision. - A re-evaluation of procedures, policy and practice for welfare and student support.
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of academic care practices. - Building values such as respect and empathy through the classroom, around the school and via complimentary programs or initiatives. - Classroom practice to raise levels of student autonomy and choice. - Skills for managing and resolving conflict. - Staff Meeting presentation. - Skills procedures and practices for effective responses to high levels of emotion / potential confrontation.
Social Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An exploration of and change in communications between staff, between staff and parents, staff and students, students and students. - Implementation of Circle Time to develop social and emotional learning and a more positive ethos. - Development of and support for a ‘no put-down’ ethos and learning environment. - Philosophy for children. - Introduction and development of support networks. - Involving parents in developing EL skills.

Table 5.4 Proposed EL Intervention Menu

Theme	EL Interventions
Positive Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategies to value and respect the staff – staff academic journal – Dimensions, Men & Women of Spirit Awards, Women of Spirit Assemblies - Positive daily messages – quotations. - Kindness Board, Greetings and Collegial support.
Leading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional development for teachers and the management team – EL as part of middle management session. - Enhanced capacity to value school contributions formally and informally. - Endeavours to increase staff morale and involvement in decision-making – staff suggestion box. - Student leadership practices and approaches – EL session as part of student leadership preparation and middle management session, embedding EL in selection criteria for Peer Support Leaders. - Enhanced ability to articulate school vision – embedding EL in all speeches, assemblies and public person-to-person messages. - A re-evaluation of procedures, policy and practice for welfare and student support.
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of academic care practices. - Circles of enquiry: school-wide pedagogical approach, differentiated learning approaches, assessment for learning, ICT, study skills. - Building values such as respect and empathy through the classroom, around the school and via complementary programs or initiatives – History Women of Spirit Teaching Unit. - Classroom practice to raise levels of student autonomy and choice – differentiated learning approaches. - Skills procedures and practices for effective responses to high levels of emotion / potential confrontation – resilience skills/EL in Peer Support, school assembly and Year assemblies.
Social Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction and development of support networks. - Revised student leader structure.

Table 5.5 EL Intervention Strategies

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the methodology and research map for this qualitative research, which comprised two case studies. Case study 1 involved a total of 215 teachers and students. It aimed to examine the status of EL in order to determine EL strengths, and the nature of the barriers to developing EL, in order to implement a school-derived EL intervention strategy. Case study 2, involving 396 teachers and students, aimed to implement the school-derived EL intervention explicated in Study 1. Case study 2 also elucidates the impact of the EL interventions on the development of EL and stakeholder relationships. In so doing, Study 2 aims to identify the features of an emotionally literate school in order to develop an EL School Framework. The constructivist theory on which the research framework is created is both coherent and credible. It provides a strong platform for studying everyday experience and the difference EL can make to schooling (Higgs & Tichen, 1995). In the next chapter the results of Study 1 and an accompanying discussion of the results are presented.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF STUDY 1: A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF KEY STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS OF EMOTIONAL LITERACY

Introduction

This chapter analyses and synthesises the findings of Study 1, addressing the five research questions (see Chapter 4) concerning the place of EL in schooling from multiple stakeholder perceptions. Also presented are the strengths of, and barriers to, EL, EL interventions, and approaches to overcoming those barriers. The themes that emerged from the data were drawn from interviews with school leaders (referred to as the Executive Team); the School Counsellor, teachers, middle-school students, questionnaire responses (see Chapter 5); and from my observation notes. The EL intervention responses that were adopted in Study 2 to address the issues raised by stakeholders are outlined where relevant. The applied EL interventions derived from this study also took into account the findings of previous research outlined in the literature review (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3).

First the research findings are outlined, and key sub-themes discussed. The school social environment is the most common sub-theme according to the open ended questionnaire responses and interview comments. Key aspects of the school social environment – trust, bullying, emotional safety and learning, and the place of relational values – are presented.

Second the findings are discussed through a synthesis of all data types beginning with understandings of the place and strengths of EL, followed by the barriers to EL, and EL interventions, and approaches to overcoming barriers to EL. In so doing each research question is answered in turn. Within the discussion about barriers to EL, eight sub-themes are presented through the themes of leadership, learning, and social capital. Finally, a model for school EL development is presented (see Figure 6.6), which incorporates the combined findings.

Overview of Findings

Stakeholders' views about EL strengths and barriers were often in contrast to the point where, at times, it is hard to believe these views all relate to the same school. Stakeholders' own levels of EL and their psychological needs as individuals and members of a learning community impacted on their views about EL. Tensions within the case study school between key stakeholders centred on three intersecting, interdependent factors that could either expedite or diminish EL. These factors stemmed from the major themes of leadership, social capital, and learning that arose from the data (see Figure 6.6). A number of sub-themes also emerged. The next section first discusses the three main themes, and then addresses the sub-themes.

Major Themes Identified

Leadership

Leadership approaches including negative or absent EL skills (Armstrong, 2012), negative morality (Molina & Franklin Klinker, 2012), a poor level of democratisation of leadership (Karaagiorgi, 2011), and the politics of power (Burgh & Yorshansky, 2011) which were apparent in the data were perceived as undermining EL. There was a disconnect between the rhetoric and the lived school leadership values and practices evident in the school's hierarchical structure. There was also a lack of coherence between the school leadership practices that teachers experienced and those that teachers valued (see Figure 6.6). Further, the leadership values and practices that students were encouraged to pursue were not perceived as being modelled by the school's leaders. These leadership factors impacted negatively on stakeholders' EL.

My research supports the view that leadership is essentially a moral process as a leader embodies, models, and espouses organisational and relational values such as respect, trust, and integrity. The link between school values, ethos, and leadership is important to teachers as my research showed that they looked to see how school leaders lived out their values and ethos (see Tables 6.1 and 6.2). Values guide the development of relationships within and beyond the school. If the rhetoric surrounding values is not matched by practices, organisational EL is undermined as was perceived to be the situation in the case study school. The democratisation of leadership enables teachers and students to feel that they are part of school decisions as they are treated as key stakeholders, enabling them to own what happens.

The politics of power appear to have determined how people were expected to behave and leadership followed an autocratic style.

Leadership provides the conditions for teachers to thrive, or creates barriers that cause teachers to recoil, undermining change processes, and the achievement of EL goals. In the case study school, priorities for many teachers diverted to micro-politics, negative rather than positive dynamics, and feelings of alienation. The leadership style in the school I researched affected teachers negatively resulting in poor teacher morale and a lack of willingness to be involved in the discussions at staff meetings. A lack of cohesion, consultation, connectivity, and a lack of congruence between idealised and lived values also undermined change processes. This undermining also seems to have also thwarted creativity and collective responsibility (Whalan, 2012), which are important for organisational EL.

I found that leadership was thwarted due to overwhelming demands made of the Principal. This meant that EL and development for school improvement was compromised. The essential role of leadership for EL and school improvement is supported through research (CASEL 2008; Waters et al., 2003). The idea of leadership as heroic and individualistic, as was suggested in the case study school, has been replaced by the understanding that leadership is a qualitative rather than technical skill that can help others to grow (Armstrong, 2012). Armstrong's (2012) image of spirited leadership utilises positive psychology, painting a picture of leadership as one of mutual influence, mindfulness, responsiveness, and social awareness. The case study school was reportedly dominated by earlier autocratic approaches to leadership in which only lip service was paid to the concepts of teamwork and democracy, meaning the hierarchical, cultural, and political milieux stunted team growth (observation notes). Teachers thrive, however, when they are in an environment where the school leadership emphasises the human side of the enterprise through mutual unconditional support, collegiality, and a feeling of being valued in a professional learning community (Rogers, 2006; Kruse & Seashore Louis, 2009).

Teachers, the School Counsellor, and students provided comments on the link between school leadership, school tone, and teacher-morale. These factors appear to have had ramifications for the way teachers and students felt about each other and their place in the school, thereby influencing personal EL skills.

Social Capital

A visual representation of the overall data for social capital (see Figure 6.1) depicts the sub-themes for social capital. These include building and celebrating strengths, personal and collective psychological needs, a sense of agency and EL skills, qualities and values. The data suggests a strengths-based approach that involves staff and students. The provision of support for staff and students was seen as vital by multiple stakeholders to overcome EL barriers.

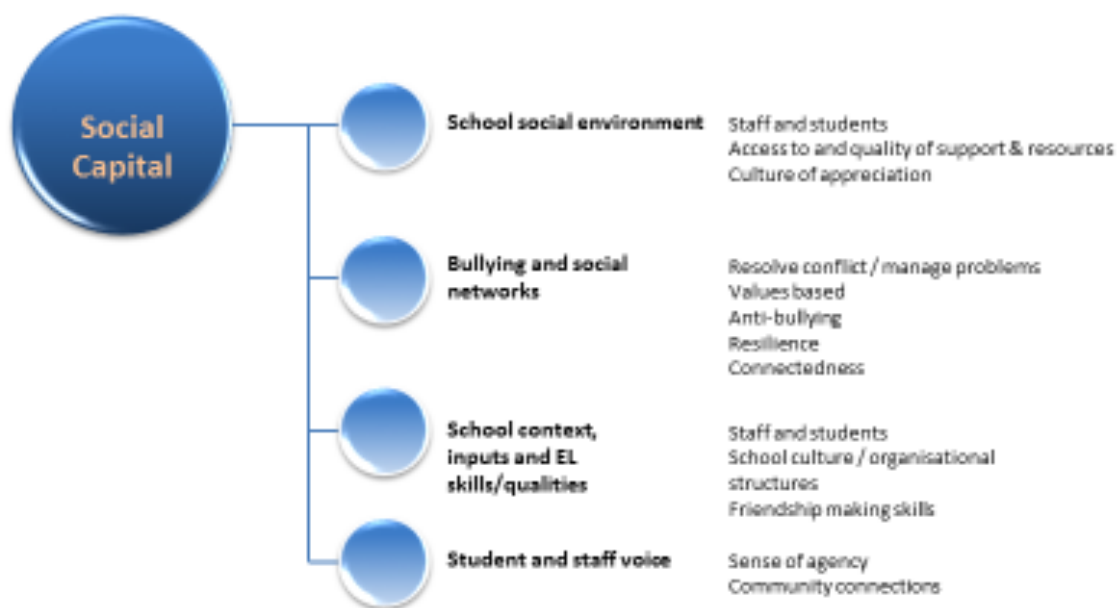


Figure 6.1 Social Capital Theme and Sub-themes

The lived experiences of social capital in the school displayed evidence of Bourdieu's (1986) model of social capital as essentially self-serving with importance given to the size and volume of the network connections that can be rallied for personal gain. This form of social capital may explain teachers' self-serving interests and students' vying to be part of

socially influential peer groups. The results suggest that these self-serving interests undermined EL. By contrast, examples of Putnam's (1995) and Coleman's (1988) models of social capital were also evident in the positive relationships developed through the co-curricular life of the school, and students' care of others. The value of positive support, positive networks, and the role of care to enable outcomes that benefited everyone emerged as subthemes that seem to be essential for an emotionally literate school.

A sense of student agency and social capital. A sense of student agency contributes to social capital, as students then believe they are empowered and can make a difference in their school. Previous research reports the importance of student voice, student empowerment, and building connectedness in recognising the impact of involving students in the decisions that affect them (Hall, 2010; Mitra, 2008). My research supports the view that authentic opportunities contribute to social capital. In the present investigation a sense of student agency remained strong within the House structure of the school but was constrained with respect to the real school issues in which students wanted to engage. Students' input was limited to specific topics or events, creating a feeling of powerlessness. Students were not authentically involved in the planning of school initiatives, which would have involved their collaborating with adults to address significant school challenges, embarking on action research projects, or undertaking independent learning based on negotiated parameters as reported by Toshalis and Nakkula (2012).

Activating authentic student voice was found to be challenging in the case study school and the views of students and teachers that the student voice was not valued detracted from social capital. The biggest issues were the lack of teacher expertise in negotiating the socio-political constraints embedded in the school culture (e.g. teachers' inability to influence change due to pre-existing, negative school views about the Student Representative Council) and the inherent difficulties in student consultation where tension between organisational gain and personal gain resulted in apparent public student compliance rather than enabling a platform for real discussion. Similar findings have been reported in previous research (e.g., Ruddock & Fielding, 2006).

Social capital is built upon developing skills, environmental assets, and acting in ways that help everyone. Behaviours such as bullying are, therefore, counter to developing social capital. Bullying and negative relationships were revealed in the data and were shown to have a negative impact on students' EL. Whereas students reported a desire for connection, trust, support, and helpfulness many described themselves as bystanders while bullying and cyberbullying continued. For students who were bullied, a fractured and fragmented form of

social capital seemed to exist as they sought to survive with the support of whoever possessed enough EL to show empathy.

Bullying was pervasive and continued unabated, creating two realities in the school: one where bullying was rife and one where teachers were not able to see what was happening because it had become normalised. The sub-culture of bullying seemed to be accepted as part of the culture by some students, as a mechanism for determining which students would join particular peer friendship groups. As in the broken windows theory (Wilson & Kelling, 1982), the cycle of anti-social behaviour was ubiquitous, as was the way friendship groups seemed to be sorted according to a pecking order of influence and popularity. This school situation resulted in students who were unsure of themselves and their place in the school. In this way the school social environment was the antithesis of a school social environment conducive to promoting social capital.

Learning

Learning in the case study school was seen as inherently valuable and as a commodity for attaining future life outcomes. As academic success was a prized commodity, students keenly sought to attain the best outcomes in the classroom. Students regarded the quality of their classroom relationships as vital to their learning. They associated learning with the way in which they felt their teachers and peers treated them. Students were attuned to the classroom climate and classroom dynamics as influences on how they learnt and developed EL. Teachers valued their classroom relationships with students and the ways that learning contributed to EL, although there were contradictions between students' and teachers' views about EL.

The focus on academic achievement raised questions of equity as students claimed that teachers gave preferential treatment to students who were perceived as more academic and, in the students' eyes, the school continued to publicly recognise academic excellence rather than improvement and effort. Students who did not identify as part of the academic group wanted the respect of their teachers, and to be known and understood as learners. In contrast, students had good self-knowledge about learning, yet desired greater involvement, consultation, trust, and leadership in their learning. A similar result was also reported by Pedder and McIntyre (2006) who found that students were willing to contribute ideas about what made learning effective when they believed the teachers would respond to their input and take it into account in their teaching. In the present investigation students also sought rich opportunities to learn outside the four walls of the classroom through experiential learning,

but were confined by policy, thereby relinquishing opportunities for building peer connections and social capital.

Sub-Themes Identified

Within the main three themes discussed above, sub-themes were identified. The most common sub-themes by percentage across the Study 1 data for teachers, the school Counsellor and students are listed in Table 6.1 and Table 6.2, respectively. Table 6.3 lists the most common sub-themes for teachers and students combined, as derived from the data. Frequency of comments was calculated from the open-ended responses and interviews. The response rate for the questionnaires was 40% for teachers ($n=30$) and 100% for students ($n=174$). Leading was the sub-theme most commonly reported by teachers as they reported it affected their EL and well-being. The students reported the impact of leading on them indirectly based on their relationships with their teachers. The major sub-themes of resources and support and the school social environment directly involved the students' relationships with their teachers. This recursive dynamic in the leading-teacher-student triad appears to support the systemic theoretical perspective underpinning my research. The reciprocity evident in relationships also supports the need for teachers to be part of a caring, professional learning community.

Table 6.1 Most common sub-themes, Study 1 – Teachers ($n = 37$)

	Overall	Percentage
Leading	35	94%
School social environment	33	89%
School values and ethos	30	81%
Teacher qualities and attributes	27	72%
SEL skills	26	70%
Academic care	25	67%
Student/staff voice	21	56%
School features and structures	14	37%
Building relationships	13	35%
Resources and support	7	18%
SEL programs	6	16%
SEL applied in learning	6	16%
Friendship	5	13%

Table 6.2 Most common sub-themes, Study 1 – Students (n=178)

	Overall	Percentage
Resources and support	105	58%
School social environment	87	48%
School features and structures	83	46%
SEL programs	64	35%
SEL applied in learning	62	34%
Friendship	56	31%
Building relationships	53	29%
Student voice	49	27%
SEL skills	34	19%
Academic care	28	15%
Teacher qualities and attributes	22	12%
School values and ethos	17	9%

Table 6.3 Most common sub-themes, Study 1 (N = 215: teachers = 37, students = 178)

	Overall	Percentage
School social environment	120	55%
Resources and support	112	52 %
School features and structures	97	45%
Student/staff voice	70	33%
SEL programs	70	33%
Building relationships	69	32%
SEL applied in learning	68	31%
Friendship	61	28%
SEL skills	60	28%
Academic care	55	26%
Teacher qualities and attributes	49	23%
School values and ethos	47	21%
Leading	35	16%

School Social Environment

The most commented-upon area by teachers and students combined (55%, see Table 6.3) was the school social environment. This sub-theme is part of the social capital major theme. Of the students, 48% regarded the school social environment as the second most

influential factor while 89% of teachers viewed it as having a key impact on EL. The school social environment provides the context for social learning (Bandura, 1977). What students observed and experienced in the school environment appeared to contribute to their learning about EL. Teachers and students expressed both positive and negative views about the school environment and views demonstrated the level of discord evident in the school. Underpinning the discord is the nature of the relationship between teachers and students tightly constrained by the hierarchical nature of the school, as reported by teachers:

To change the EL ...for the better I believe we need to begin by redefining the ...community, putting parents, teachers and students in a three-way relationship in which fewer promises are made to 'clients' and language is found that allows us to share the truth. This would not be easy and would involve all three sectors often feeling outside their comfort-zone. If communal rules were evolved that allowed us to broaden the range of territory of the emotional space in the community, it would lead in the long run to a much more mature and stronger enterprise. Trying to refine and perfect the current model forward to infinity will only result in the school ceasing to exist. Without an emotional soul it has no purpose, this is one reason why it is hard to see how the School shares its values, because it actually doesn't have many, and the most public one, if we measure public behaviour, is deceit.

This is a powerful statement as it shows the reciprocity between the 'emotional soul', school values and the school social environment. The statement also suggests that the school culture - the 'communal rules' - undermine EL.

Trust

In presenting findings about the school social environment the role of trust emerged as an essential requirement for EL. Trust appeared to underpin the school social environment. It also acted as a conduit across all areas of schooling, thereby making it foundational to EL. An absence of trust between stakeholders was evident in the impact of bullying on the school EL quotient, the role of emotional safety and learning, and the need for personal relational values and EL. Each factor impacted on the way in which stakeholders saw the relational quality of their school and their place in it. The school social environment appeared strained, as evidenced in the following quotes:

On one level, staff feels intimidated and not confident to speak out for fear of reprisal. This climate of fear was particularly evident [during the recent] dispute over the proposed changes to conditions of employment.

[The school needs to] reduce the level of secrecy and make decision-making transparent. Develop confidence and trust in senior management from above and below. Address the notion of some students believing they are in control of others.

This lack of transparency and an absence of open lines of communication impacted on the school environment negatively as it was seen to impact on the trust between the teachers and the school management. The lack of trust and perceived culture of intimidation prompted teachers to behave in inappropriate and undermining ways. Lobbying other teachers, sharing confidential information, and building relationships for self-gain were some of the ways that EL was undermined.

Trust is a complex, multidimensional, and dynamic construct vital to developing relationships (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). McKnight and Chervany (1996) identified six trust constructs which are relevant here: trusting intention, trusting behaviour, trusting beliefs, system trust, dispositional trust, and situational decision to trust. These all encompass cognitive and affective domains. The lack of trust in the school appeared deep-seated at the system level, matched by deficits in other trust constructs identified by McKnight and Chervany such as intentions, behaviours, and beliefs. This lack of trust expressed in the case study school led to shallow, and uncomfortable interactions between teachers, leaving people on guard and afraid.

Bullying and Social Networks

Bullying and social networks are parts of the social capital major theme. Some students did not view the school social environment in a positive way due to their perception of the way in which they were treated. It seems these students were bullied and felt oppressed by the rule-bound environment as explained by one student: *“School could be a happier place if the rules were relaxed. The rules make us nervous”*. The way students felt about school impacted on their emotional state, making them reluctant to be open.

By cultivating social-emotional learning (SEL) skills such as drawing on student strengths and using theory-driven SEL, more positive relationships and feelings about school

may be developed (Domino, 2013). A student in the focus group described the school social environment as isolating and discriminatory:

The students in my year share a very tight bond, but some groups or loners might need to be included more. Most students have their groups but there are different groups: the cool group, the nerdy group and the geeks, the social rejects, the group who tries to get on with everyone and the emo type group. Then there are the random types of students who wander from group to group until they get kicked out. They are the ones who don't fit in. It is a shame because from Year 7 it all seems to be sorted out like this.

This comment suggests that students lacked control over their friendships. The opinions expressed about bullying seemed to be a measure of students' willingness to be open in the focus group interview, or they may reflect the level of seemingly accepted discord in the school. Broader opinions expressed through the student questionnaire marry with generalised discord in the school impacting on EL. Students expressed concern about their peers and their relationships. Their desire for their peers to have a positive school experience aligns with social capital theory (Coleman, 1988). Students also expressed concern about the way people treated each other for example: *"I always try to be respectful yet many people are not. If you are not popular, you are treated with false niceties and sarcasm"*. The lack of an inclusive culture and the apparent existence of peer groups whose membership was strongly guarded suggest that if students did not establish their place in a peer group they became known as isolated and alienated. Students believed that teachers were either not aware of students' social-emotional issues, or chose to ignore these issues, or did not take adequate steps to integrate all students in the classroom environment.

Student and teacher relations were impacted on by staff dispositions, attitudes, skills, and values that contributed to, or detracted from, the school social environment. Good staff EL was an environmental asset, which impacted on how students learned about relationships and developed EL (observation notes). Teachers' modelling of values such as kindness, compassion, and empathy encouraged students, and helped them gain the confidence to solve problems and take on challenges in the classroom (observation notes).

Teachers seemed to view themselves differently from the way students viewed them, as they perceived their relationships with students as EL strengths, a view not shared by the students. Teachers appeared to place a positive value on their own contribution to the school

social environment, the students, and the school ethos, as the following teacher quote shows: *“Students value their teachers. There is a positive learning environment. There is a supportive ethos, which can be felt in all areas of the school.* Students held conflicting views about teachers. Some students acknowledged teachers’ positive attributes and qualities, stating that: *“The teachers are encouraging and kind. They encourage you to make friends”.*

Other students did not appear to have positive relationships with teachers, including those who believed they could not express their opinions and be heard by teachers and expressed a lack of connection with them. Students’ perspectives indicated that teachers did not all model emotionally literate behaviours claiming that:

“The teachers tell us to shut up and get over it. Teachers don’t give us as much respect as we give them. They never let us explain things without telling us to be quiet. We aren’t really given a chance. We are always screamed at and things are too ordered. Sometimes we need a break.”

Relational quality (RQ) seemed to be lacking between students and teachers, undermining any positive school ambience and the capacity for students to feel affirmed.

Resources and Support

Falling under the social capital major theme, the second most common sub-theme expressed by teachers and students combined (52%, see Table 6.3) was that of resources and support. Students viewed support in terms of the school Counsellor, and the role and responses of friends, teachers, and other students in the school (see Table 6.2). Each of these provisions can be seen as a factor of social capital and RQ. Help or support also involved support beyond the immediate school social environment. Due to the high academic performance environment, some students felt they were under pressure to succeed (observation notes). Students sought academic support, and support with social-emotional issues. EL skills, values, attributes, and qualities were commonly mentioned.

Teachers were mainly concerned about their lack of support from the school management as expressed through dissatisfaction with school leadership (see Table 6.1). Teachers who felt under pressure made comments such as: *“Teachers need support. Too much is expected of teachers from the school”* and *“Students are supported well but teachers are not”*. Additionally, teachers who were middle managers expressed concern about their

ability to cope, as they apparently felt they were stretched beyond their ability (observation notes).

There also appeared to be an association between the way teachers said they felt and the way students perceived their behaviour. For example, some of the behaviour displayed by teachers gave some students the impression that teachers were not coping “*Teachers always scream at us, they tell us to shut up, and they give us detentions*”. It is unlikely such students would feel they could approach those teachers for help or support. Some teachers were aware of the dynamics and social issues faced by students but many were not. As one student commented: “*Teachers are friendly but they do not recognise when social/emotional problems persist within the classroom. They ignore it*”. Despite these negative views there were some positive student views about the school Counsellor, tutor groups, and support such as “*Most of my friends support me. I can talk to the teachers and my tutor about things*” and “*We have support. The Counsellor is good and staff is approachable*”.

The types of resources and support that students commented upon extend into the academic area yet remain connected to social-emotional aspects as the following student comments show, “*Because we are a high achieving school, peer pressure to do well is high. Students feel stressed with all the pressure and amount of work given*” and “*I would like encouragement for tutoring and extra work. Teachers need to encourage higher marks*”. As students connected EL to RQ and academic performance, support for learning emerged as interrelated to the sub-themes of resources, support, and academic care in the current investigation.

In contrast, teachers do not share the sentiments about EL in relation to academic performance expressed by students, which suggests a misaligned school social environment where teachers thought students were coping when they were not. This is concerning as research has shown that teacher and peer support influence the way in which students view their academic progress and motivation (Murray-Harvey, 2010; Noble & McGrath, 20010). McLaughlin and Clarke (2010) posit that alongside peer-peer relationships, teacher-student relationships play a major part in student well-being, developing school connectedness, and a supportive school.

School Features and Structures

Combined teacher and student comments (45%) about another aspect of social capital; school features and school structures, occurred in relation to issues such as the small size of the school, its boarding community, connections, and reputation. The small size of the school

was largely seen as an advantage in developing relationships, but a negative influence on confidentiality. The comments about school structures were made about how EL fits into school structures, or to put it another way, about school structures needing to be flexible enough to develop teacher-student relationships and meet other EL needs.

Tutor Group. The Tutor structure is a grouping of students consisting of students from Year 7-12: eighteen to twenty students in all. The group meets daily for administrative purposes and they have a longer session once a week with the tutor, known as tutor time. During tutor time, a structured program operates, complementing other programs in the school. Tutor time covers areas related to learning, study, and personal development. Under this structure, students in Years 7-9 do not meet as a year group. Students viewed the Tutor structure and their tutor group positively. Tutor group is a positive part of the day for students where they found *“the teachers are encouraging and kind and help you to make friends”*. Students also thought that *“all staff and other students are approachable if assistance is needed”* and felt *“very safe and secure in the school”*. Overall students concluded that, *“Tutor groups [were] a great idea”*.

The school structures and their EL role that gained most comments from teachers and students were the benefits of the vertical tutor groups, tutor time, school assembly, house assembly, and the boarding system. Teachers saw these as benefiting students because *“Tutor groups are like a small community where everyone looks out for one another”*. Some students saw school structures such as tutor groups as a way to build bonds and feel comfortable around friends and people from other year groups.

Students suggested teachers needed professional development in supporting students in and out of the classroom. Additionally, students perceived inequity and a lack of consistency in the way tutor groups and house meetings operated. One student stated that, *“Some tutor groups are like lessons with no time for fun. Other groups get to talk to each other. It is the same with House meetings. We all do different things”*. It seems that students were looking for consistency and coherence in the way school practices, values, and programs were implemented. Students needed a safe and structured environment with consistent teacher leadership.

Student and Staff Voice

Student and staff voice falls under the social capital major theme. Teachers and students combined (33%, see Table 6.3) agreed that more opportunities are needed to voice opinions and be involved in decision-making, therefore enabling greater involvement in

school life. Teachers and students expressed feelings of powerlessness that impacted on their sense of autonomy and self-efficacy. This is shown in teacher comments such as *“Teachers and students have very little opportunity to share their opinions and have a real say about things that matter. This affects the way people see their role and their ability to make a difference, or just be heard.”* It seems that without a voice, teachers and students can give up or become despondent about their capacity to make a difference. Teachers valued professional collegiality as members of a professional learning community, yet opportunities were not always available to teachers in the ways that they wanted (Stoll & Seashore Louis, 2007). As a result some teachers seemed to feel frustrated and annoyed.

Teachers felt they had little opportunity to influence what was happening in the school or in the decision-making process. This appeared to have an impact on their sense of agency and self-efficacy, and as a result there tended to be a lot of staff apathy observed within the school. In the context of SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2002), teachers’ need for autonomy was not being met, which in turn negatively influenced teachers’ motivation and engagement. Teachers’ perceived lack of voice and autonomy also undermined their feelings of competence.

Just as teachers wanted to be listened to by the school executive, students echoed this desire to be heard and respected. When describing priorities for change at school, students wanted *“teachers that really listen and take in what you say...ask for students’ opinions when making whole school decisions, as they apply to us”*. According to students, some teachers were over-controlling, and they wished teachers could be *“less official and stiff”* and give them more *“opportunities to make decisions in class about their learning”*.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs

Under the major theme of learning, SEL programs and initiatives mentioned by both teachers and students (33%, see Table 6.3) focused on interventions, current programs, and possible approaches. The school Counsellor spoke about the continuum of responses from case work to SEL for all students. Interestingly students saw many of the schools’ social-emotional strengths contained in the co-curricular, outdoors, and sporting programs, as well as the Peer Support program. Teachers also saw benefits for EL in the Peer Support program, camps, and barbecues which could be used to enhance skills such as conflict resolution and personal development, as well as in-house and tutor group activities. Students viewed the SEL programs and approaches as helpful, although there were mixed opinions and perceptions. Teachers regarded the Peer Support Program as a key way for students to

develop leadership skills and EL (observation notes). Students in the focus group also recognised the contribution of the Peer Support program and, similarly to students' questionnaire responses, saw potential to improve the program voicing suggestions such as *"I think we should have personal development classes. Teach us to take responsibility to make the school have a more positive environment"* and *"I think there should be more programs between seniors and juniors – improve Peer Support"*. It appeared that there was scope to enhance the SEL programs already in place in the case study school.

Social-Emotional Skills Applied in Learning

Under the theme of learning, where social-emotional skills applied to academic learning as communicated by teachers and students combined, (31%, see Table 6.3) SEL was applied in learning. Most teacher and student comments were focused on the SEL aspects of classroom learning, teaching, and the learning environment. Some teachers appeared to understand the link between SEL and learning and commented *"Learning in the context of relationships is critical. Each student should ideally feel that some connection is made with each teacher"*. Students saw this in relation to how they work with their peers and commented *"Students need to feel more comfortable when working with other students they normally wouldn't work with. They need to feel comfortable when they are out of their zone."* This comment suggests that students wanted their EL skills to be challenged yet supported in the classroom.

Social-Emotional Learning Skills

Also under the major theme of learning, there were similar perspectives expressed about discrete SEL skills and values by teachers and students (28% combined). Teachers commented about values aligned with SEL in describing the school as *inclusive, caring, and respectful*. Again teachers and students seemed to be part of one or other disparate groups whereby schooling was either challenging or overwhelmingly positive. The positive stance appeared to be at odds with other teacher comments such as *"We need a more positive approach to conflict management and communication with students."*

While collegiality was encouraged, it seems that during times such as report-writing periods some teachers behaved in less emotionally literate ways (observation notes). Teachers indicated they wanted to work more cohesively yet when they did not model EL, they appear to have modelled less emotionally literate behaviours. Students, like the teachers, commented on the level of conflict in the school between staff and students. Students

identified that changes were needed due to conflict between students and conflict in the boarding house, and they sought the teaching of constructive ways to solve conflict. The findings indicate that key issues seemed to be of concern to students. For example, a student commented *“Make people want to come to the school, stay, [at the school] and not leave [the school] after a few years because they don’t like it.”*

Teachers and students also expressed the desire to share more positive emotions. It seems that among teachers and students there was a lack of self-awareness and self-regulation, leading to negative emotions and negative perspectives. Consistent with well-being theory, positive emotions are an important component of well-being. The lack of positive emotions impacted on everyone as shown in the following teacher comment: *“At times we seem to be shrouded in negative emotions. Unfortunately this can affect everyone. Some people seem unaware of how they affect others at times of pressure.”* This comment suggests there was a desire for greater development of EL, which is supported by the student comment, *“Some teachers need to be nicer. They seem to take things out on students. In some classrooms we need better discipline.”*

Building Relationships

Under the major theme of social capital students commented on their desire to build relationships (32%, see Table 6.2). Students commented *“I barely know anyone in my year group”*. This situation was due to the way school structure affected relationship building. Students had few opportunities to interact as a year group as they spent most of their time in the same class groups. Students’ sentiment about this issue was quite strong therefore it seems valid to report this finding separately. Students wanted to know their teachers better and have more opportunities to know students in their year group in a relaxed way. Teachers commented *“staff have excellent relationships with students”*, yet there were comments from students such as *“Some teachers shout and get cross and think you ask silly questions when you really don’t understand. This makes you scared to ask any more questions.”* Students also perceived the need to build relationships with students across year groups, in the tutor group with their teachers, and in the boarding house.

Friendship

Allied to relationship building is the sub-theme of friendship (28%, see Table 6.2). Students viewed friendships as an EL asset and a way of enhancing schooling. Some students recognised friendship as an issue they needed to navigate due to its challenges and conflicts.

Teachers and students commented on how EL skills influenced friendships and RQ. Students wanted EL professional development for teachers, to help students with friendship issues and model EL.

Divergent experiences and opinions about friendships suggest that within teacher and student groups, individuals possess a different level of EL. Psychological relatedness is a vital psychological need for students (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Students' developmental needs to spend time with their peers, try out new ideas, and exercise increased independence mean they need opportunities to develop positive relationships that enable these psychological needs to be met. Peer relationships play a key part in school connectedness, mental health and students' ability to cope, and build resilience, as well as their academic outcomes (Brachenreed, 2010; Greenberg, 2006; Knight, 2007; Rutter, 1985; Stoiber & Good, 1998; McLoughlin & Clarke, 2010).

Academic Care

Under the major theme of learning, academic care comments by teachers and students combined (26%, see Table 6.3) were diverse, indicating that schooling offered differing levels of satisfaction for them in relation to EL, again showing apparent discord in the school. Academic care encompasses the strategies and procedures in and out of the classroom in place to help students achieve as learners. Comments about academic care ranged from the way motivation and care were engendered to the approaches for providing students with support, enabling them to achieve their learning goals. Learning opportunities beyond the classroom and their EL benefits were linked to a range of activities. Teachers and students commented on EL characteristics and values applied in the classroom and to relationships outside the classroom. Teachers focused on the classroom and the quality of care shown to students, whereas students wanted opportunities to learn outside the classroom on field trips and excursions, which were denied to them. Similar to staff views, the students quickly connected EL and academic endeavour in a positive way, suggesting EL is essential to learning as *"EL helps you develop your academics. It helps you to believe in yourself"*.

Teacher Qualities and Attributes

Under the major theme of social capital, the percentage of comments on teacher qualities and attributes was similar to that on academic care (23%, see Table 6.2). Comments articulate the contribution teachers make to EL values in roles such as that of tutor. Teachers and students understood how teachers contribute to the students' experience. As one teacher

noted: *“Teachers are assets. Many are highly skilled and love teaching. They are caring, generous and always willing to support the students”*. Students could see both positive and negative aspects of their teachers’ qualities and attributes as expressed in the following contradictory views: *“My tutor is kind and respects students. I feel like my tutor is always there for me such as when we have exams”*. In contrast, another student stated that *“teachers are too grumpy and official”* and that teachers have *“no respect for students... [and] favour the smart ones”*.

Views about teacher qualities suggest a reinforced culture of contradiction and discord. A theory that helps to explain this situation is activity theory (Vygotsky, 1920). Activity theory is attuned to ecological theory in that it considers the relationship between individuals and their social reality. Consistent with activity theory, Engestrom, Miettinen, and Punamäkil (1999) posit that it is rare that social systems are in a state of equilibrium and it is more likely that conflict and contradiction result. Activity theory is helpful for understanding the findings as it considers mediating activity within a social context based on motives. Students wanted to learn and excel to gain the respect of their teachers and be in the company of positive teachers who promote a friendly atmosphere.

School Ethos, Vision and Values

Under the major theme of leadership school ethos, vision and values were identified. Participants stressed the need to redefine how school values were lived out. School ethos, vision and values were expressed in comments about service, the school vision, and approaches to care. Teachers and students regarded it as vital that students live up to the school motto in more meaningful ways through service (21% combined comments, see Table 6.3). Teachers’ views were similar on this issue: *“Service is an important part of what we do and who we are. It seems to be tokenistic at times. We should get the girls’ input more about what might interest them.”* Similarly a student commented, *“Mufti days and bringing in a gold coin are fun but I think we can do more.”* As the school motto is synonymous with service, teachers, and students were aware that service could be developed further.

Summary of Students’ and Teachers’ Perspectives

The results indicate that students seek supportive relationships consistent with their being in an environment with positive social norms, psychological safety, and appropriately supportive, responsive school structures. Students seem to want opportunities to belong, support for efficacy, and ongoing opportunities for EL skill building. They also want to be in

an environment where they feel they are known, valued, and appreciated (Seligman, 2011). Teachers and students seek support and social capital (Putnam, 1995; Coleman, 1988) where there is a constructive, positive, and affirming acknowledgement.

The data also revealed that students valued school structures, SEL programs and the capacity for SEL to make a positive difference to their relationships. They placed a high value on their relationships with their teachers and the opportunity to make friends with older students as well as students in their year group in order to build their psychological assets and skills. Students and teachers felt they needed a voice and a sense of agency if they were to have authentic opportunities for involvement in school decisions.

Students saw the role of EL in academic care in the pedagogy, level of engagement, and teacher EL. Students wanted equity and respect to be shown towards them by all teachers. Teachers did not focus on these elements but rather worked from the assumption that they had positive teacher-student relationships. Teachers also sought empowerment through a democratised approach to leadership, consistent with the values of trust, respect, and integrity (referred to as foundational EL values, see Figure 6.6). Teachers also valued a consistent leadership approach between articulated and lived values. This section has presented the key themes, and related sub-themes, that emerged from the data. The next section presents the combined findings for research questions 1 and 2: the place of EL in schools and the strengths of EL in the case study school.

Understandings of the Place and Strengths of Emotional Literacy

Introduction

In this section further combined findings related to the place and strengths of EL in the school are discussed. The findings suggest that EL is multi-dimensional, and that it is not limited to a particular domain of schooling, but rather, it is woven through all relationships, formal and informal learning, and school activities, as well as programs. Staff and students saw EL in terms of teacher qualities and needs, the ways teachers work with students, and EL programs and approaches. Students also talked of EL in their relationships, mainly with other students.

Findings for Research Question 1.1.1: The Place of Emotional Literacy in Schooling

Research Question 1.1.1 asked what multiple stakeholders perceive as the place of EL in schooling and to what extent their perspectives are similar and different? Key stakeholders articulated the role of EL in their relationships and stated that they perceived EL as being at the heart of their school experience. Many students appeared to enjoy school and were

emotionally literate, expressing a sense of connection and belonging. Key stakeholders saw EL as integral to teacher and student relationships, programs, structures and the school ethos. Students viewed EL in friendships, and peer and teacher relationships, in addition to the academic domain. Students viewed EL in the academic domain in terms of pedagogical, relational, and motivational aspects of their lessons, whereas teachers focused more on the quality of the relationship they had with students. They also saw how EL influences classes, learning, and classroom climate (Hattie, 2009). Students seemed to understand that EL can provide a bridge between the cognitive and affective zones as they articulated how SEL helps them learn in the classroom.

The school social environment and the associated feelings of support were developed through the foundational EL values. Teachers were seeking EL in positive peer, collegial and school management relationships and support as in a professional learning community just as students seek their teachers' support. Other research such as that of Stoll & Seashore Louis, 2007; Murray-Harvey (2010), supports my finding.

Findings for Research Question 1.1.2: Current Emotional Literacy Strengths

The research question 'What do multiple stakeholders perceive as the key role and strengths of the EL in schooling?' received a range of opinions. The contradictions in the data and the findings suggest that it is possible for two opposing EL realities to exist in the same school, suggesting further evidence of discord. Staff, including the school Counsellor, believed that the school caters for students' EL by employing strategies and approaches at both ends of the continuum, from reactive to proactive. The reactive end of the continuum relates to helping students at the point of need or to help at-risk students, whether in a social-emotional or academic sense. The proactive end of the spectrum enables students to achieve more than they expected across areas of schooling. The 'ripple' effect of supportive students and dedicated teachers' EL is one way of thinking about the findings from an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Summary of Students' and Teachers' Perspectives

Key stakeholders perceived the major strengths of EL in schooling as the nature of the school social environment, as in the bonds created with peers, friends, students and teachers. These EL strengths are conducive to social capital. Key stakeholders also appreciated a strengths-based perspective, and the way values such as respect are put into practice. The findings in my research about values, is supported by other research, for example, Lovat, Toomey, Dally, & Clement, 2009. Social capital (Coleman, 1988, Putnam, 1995) supported the development of EL for some students, as they believed they could rely on their friends

and teachers to support them through structures such as the House group. Despite being seen as an EL strength by more students than teachers, the ambience of the school environment was regarded as calm, friendly, and warm. Teachers believe students enjoy their learning and suggest they are engaged, motivated and challenged. Some key stakeholders believed that an array of students' achievements were celebrated, meaning there was positive affect created in the school.

Barriers to Developing Emotional Literacy – Students' and Teachers' Perspectives

Introduction

This section examines the research question about barriers to EL in the case study school. Eight sub-themes were derived from the data about EL barriers as seen in Figure 6.2 and 6.3. The data indicating key barriers to developing EL perceived by students and teachers were derived from the open-ended responses to questionnaire items, and student and staff interviews. The frequency of responses was tabulated and is represented in the pie graphs. First, a summary of the EL barriers identified by students is presented. These EL barriers are elements of the school social environment, rules and discipline, student voice, and bullying. Then an overview of teacher EL barriers follows. These include a lack of leadership for EL, student/teacher voice, the need for better communication between school management and teachers, and a lack of staff cohesion and commitment. Second, the combined results are discussed for the themes of leading, learning, and social capital, considering multiple stakeholders' views including closed questionnaire items demonstrating how barriers to EL impede the development of emotionally literate practices. The discussion includes the role of social capital for EL, the impact of not having an inclusive school ethos with everyone belonging, and the ways in which unmet students' and teachers' psychological needs can act as EL barriers. Third the research question about EL barriers impacting EL development is answered.

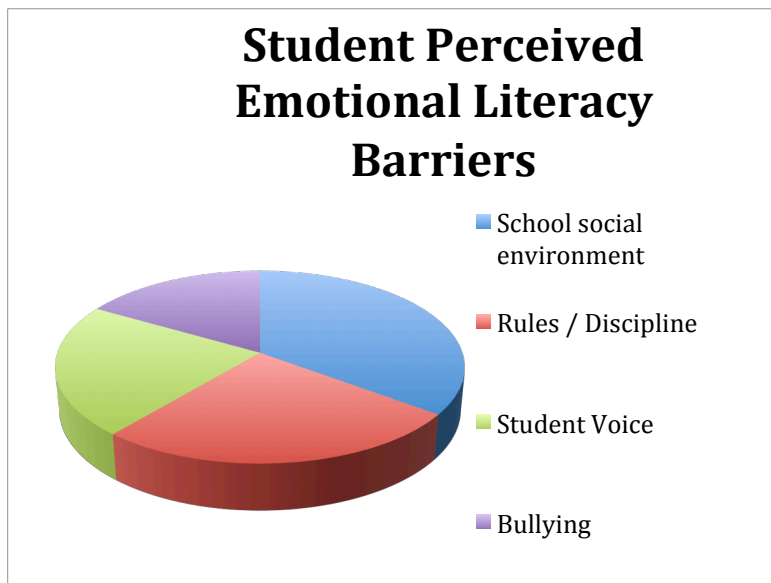


Figure 6.2 Student Perceived Emotional Literacy Barriers

Overview of Emotional Literacy Barriers

The school social environment was the major EL barrier for students (35%, see Figure 6.2) as represented by students' views about their teachers and other students. School rules and student discipline (26%, see Figure 6.1), student voice (22%, see Figure 6.2) and bullying (17%, see Figure 6.2) were the most common EL barriers perceived by students. These factors provided a negative ambit to the school social environment, undermining EL by negatively affecting student self-efficacy, organisational values, and feelings about who belonged at school and who did not. There were differences in students' and teachers' views about EL barriers, despite similarities in that each group had unmet psychological needs: teachers (28% leadership EL modeling, see Figure 6.3) and students. While students focused their comments on a need for respect and approachability, teachers focused theirs on the need for more constructive communication with the school management (28%, see Figure 6.3). Teachers wanted greater trust between themselves and management. Students and teachers each wanted a voice. Teachers were also aware that students needed a voice (22%, see Figure 6.3). A lack of teacher cohesion and perceived commitment to school strategic goals (22%, see Figure 6.3) was regarded by teachers as an EL barrier, meaning a lack of engagement and satisfaction resulted in a downward spiral of negative emotions.

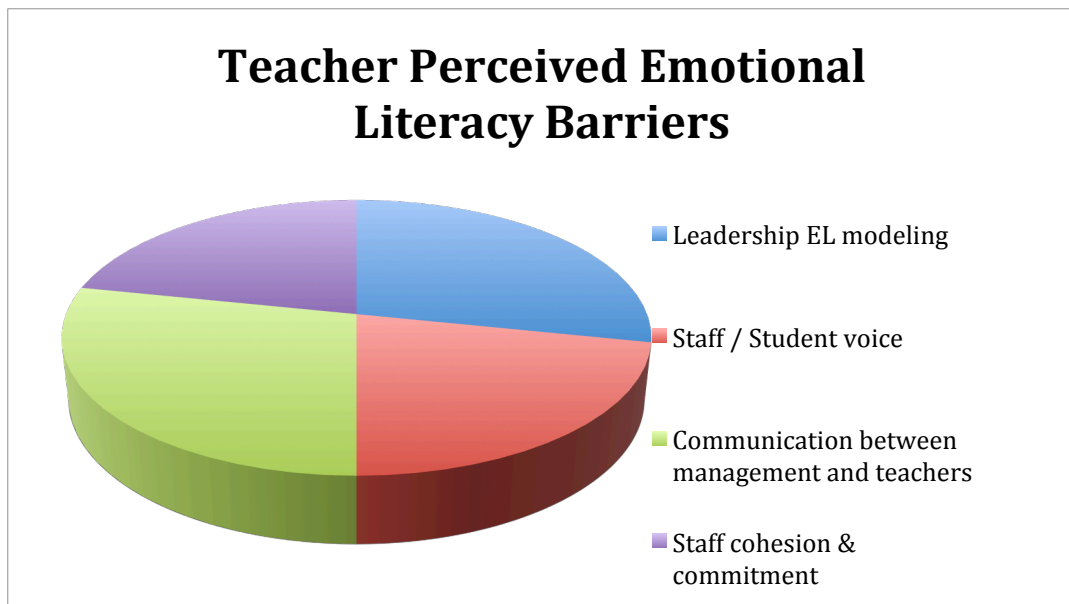


Figure 6.3 Teacher Perceived EL Barriers

The discrepancy between teacher and student views about EL barriers in relation to their views about each other was an impediment to EL. Teachers and students seemed out of sync on student friendship issues and teacher-student relationships issues, and as a result teachers did not comment on them as EL barriers. This contrasted with the views of the students for whom relationships were a high priority. They were affronted that teachers did not seem to understand the extent to which relationship issues affected their well-being. Some teachers were aware of unmet student psychological needs yet teachers mainly focused on personal psychological needs, indicating a lack of awareness about the ecological nature of the school social environment.

Almost one fifth of the students did not record any EL barriers (16% made no comments and 3% stated everything in the school was very positive), compared to a higher percentage of teachers (36%) who failed to perceive any barriers to EL. The remaining students, however, made comments across a range of areas concerned with interpersonal, structural, and intrapersonal issues (81%). Similarly, 64% of the teachers provided detailed responses on interpersonal, structural, and intrapersonal issues. The impact of a perceived communication void between teachers and management (28%, see Figure 6.3) and teacher-student opportunities to be involved in decision-making appeared to cascade through the school as EL barriers, affecting everyone.

Leadership and Emotional Literacy Barriers

A range of EL barriers associated with school leadership undermined the school EL quotient and negatively influenced the school social environment. There was no agreement among different groups of teachers about the key EL barriers. Leadership teachers were able to focus on bigger picture issues and included concern about external influences, whereas other teachers focused on internal matters and personalised the way in which EL barriers affected them. Teachers perceived foundational EL values, the leadership style associated with school leadership, and teacher well-being as key barriers to developing EL. Additionally, because students believed school leadership was focused on negative approaches to student management, such as the use of power, they thought the school leaders contributed to the negative school social environment. There was also concern from teachers about the way behaviour policies impacted EL.

Communication, decision-making, and the values of trust and respect that accompany leadership processes appeared to be lacking. Teachers were not confident about the communication channels (76%). Lack of communication appears to be an EL barrier between management and staff and within certain groups of teachers, particularly the lack of opportunities for open, informal communication. As the Counsellor explained, *“Teachers find the lack of communication about what is happening in the school difficult to move on from at times”*.

Teachers wanted more consideration and involvement. As one teacher commented, *“Transparent decision-making is obviously not always appropriate, but valid reasons are not always given [for lack of transparency] and therefore there is fear and insecurity”*. Findings indicate that students were also dissatisfied about the lack of opportunity to be involved in school decisions (as expressed in the teacher questionnaire and the student focus group). Teachers were, however, more vehement in their views about the lack of consultation, particularly in terms of their teaching, *“Staff are rarely, if ever, consulted before changes that affect their classroom practice are put into place. This creates a high level of professional disempowerment and leads to low morale.”* Traditionally teachers have seen the classroom as the final bastion of their professional autonomy. Teachers’ feelings about losing their power to make decisions and manage their own classrooms indicated that teachers perceived the EL quotient as damaged. Encouragingly, teachers are clear on what is needed from leadership to overcome the barriers to EL and retain staff as shown by the following teacher comment: *“Staff need to be treated with respect and their opinions should be valued. Democracy is the*

solution. As long as you have a totalitarian/authoritarian approach, you will only create tension and resentment amongst staff. Staff will just leave.”

A model for EL provided by the school leadership team was needed. Democratic, participatory approaches that involved staff were seen as the answer. Instead of open processes and personable school leaders exhibiting emotionally literate leadership, however, over half the teachers indicated that senior management were unapproachable (53%). Unlike the views revealed by the comments from the Executive Team members, teachers believed they needed an environment which recognised their achievements, offered active teacher support networks, and promoted EL skills. While there were approaches in place to recognise teachers they did not appear to meet the needs of all teachers.

Views about school leadership seemed to carry through into the issue of power in school leadership. The use of power was at times ceremonial, based on rituals and associated with positions in the school. For example, the custom of standing when some members of the leadership team entered the assembly area was an element of tradition but it also demonstrated who held the power. Furthermore, associated with the hierarchical nature of the school, there were also unofficial rules about which members of the leadership spoke in assembly and which did not.

Assemblies are an important part of school leadership, particularly the beginning and end of term assemblies. The school Principal used assembly as a way of forging school direction and imparting key messages and it was therefore seen as an important part of leading. Students had negative views of the leadership in assembly: *“I don’t like the way we are treated in assembly. Everyone is told off. I would like more opportunity to hear about the good things we do because most of us do the right thing”* and *“It seems as if at the start of each term we spend the whole assembly on a lecture about uniforms and behaviour in the street. Girls really don’t like it. It makes us feel as if we can’t do anything right.”*

Summary of Students’ and Teachers’ Perspectives

As in expectancy-value theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 1995), students’ beliefs and internal systems were influenced by the believed outcome of doing the right thing or not in relation to the school rules. As students believed their efforts would not change the outcome in terms of how they were treated, it led to a state of amotivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The impact of students’ belief patterns undermined the school leadership approach and negatively impacted on motivation and social capital potential. This section described some of the barriers to EL and how they impact on important facets of school life such as leadership and

the creation of social capital in the schooling context. Students commented on barriers to EL based on the way in which school leaders, teachers, and students interact with students in a range of school structures. There appear to be differences in the way students experience the school, as there were concerns about the way some were fitting into school and how they were treated.

Learning and Emotional Literacy Barriers

An array of learning sub-themes emerged as factors that were seen as EL barriers. These sub-themes involved classroom learning, student voice, support and provision of care in classrooms as well as in boarding. The learning associated with community living was a valuable yet challenging learning experience for the students. Additionally students perceived teachers' EL as a barrier, as students reported that teachers lacked respect for them, did not identify their EL needs, or model emotionally literate behaviour. Students expressed genuine concern about teachers' ability to manage them. Achievement in learning is a high priority for students and therefore it is not surprising that the students raised academic factors involving EL. They wanted their teachers to be approachable when they asked for help and to respect their input and ability. Some students reported that they felt only the academic high achievers received adequate attention.

The students' opinions about low expectations may have affected their academic self-concept, as students believed they were capable of more than the teachers expected. Also relevant to the academic area, students referred to the pressure caused by homework and expressed the belief that teachers should be easier on them when they did not complete it. An alternate view, however, was expressed that teachers needed to follow up homework not done and impose sanctions where appropriate. This conflict of interests suggests that teachers were preoccupied with their own interests and that there was work to be done to ensure that academic expectations were consistent.

With regard to student voice and opportunities for students to build responsibility, teachers agreed that students were not offered a means of participation in decision-making in class and they wanted greater opportunities for students. One teacher commented: "*A greater integration and acknowledgement of student opinion. Consultation/mediation [is needed].*" Teachers were concerned about the students. Students held high expectations of their teachers and expressed disappointment when teachers did not involve them, used mundane pedagogical approaches, and used predictable behaviours that teachers thought were innovative. These ideas are reflected in the student focus group quote below:

I would like to be more involved in what happens in the classroom. Some teachers don't involve us much. They just come in, do what they do, and that's it. Most care if we enjoy it and try different ideas, but using the alphabet to put us into groups and seats is boring. All teachers do that and think it's fun. It's not. They seem to think they have come up with something new every time they do it. I really like ... class because we can choose different activities and the... department have put a lot of thought into what we do. Everyone likes it!

The students had definite ideas and opinions about what made their learning effective, yet did not appear to have opportunities to share their thoughts. The students also wanted to feel included so that they had choices and were able to be challenged at their own level.

Students wanted more say in what happened at school and in their learning *"I would like to have a discussion group and make decisions with the teachers about the school."* When students have a sense of agency it helps them feel empowered and motivated. Like teachers, students sought involvement in decision-making and communication. They wanted ongoing involvement in giving their feedback about their lessons *"Some teachers ask us how we like their teaching, but not many. We are the ones who know best because we are the students."* It seems that when students feel their teacher is interested enough to ask for their opinions they would give them, thereby strengthening the learning potential and the trust required to build the student-teacher relationships. Collectively, these findings suggest that teachers and students need democratic and autonomous ways of conducting themselves if they are to develop EL.

There was concern about teachers' EL and what kind of impact this had on students' views of their teachers and themselves. Few teachers believed that they knew how to reduce confrontation (30%), which seems at odds with the skills needed to manage relationship conflict. Compared to teachers, students undervalue the impact of their teachers on their EL as well as the impact of teachers on organisational EL. Teachers rated themselves more highly than students; 85% versus 51% for how they made a positive difference to their students. Reasons for the discrepancy are seen in student comments about teachers *"Teachers are intimidating and scary"*, *"Teachers need to be more sympathetic and aware of the students' social-emotional needs"* and *"There are teachers who refer to us as clients."* Teachers' responses to students appeared to have an impact on student well-being because they were intimidating or did not show them empathy.

Students were looking for more positive reinforcement from the school about the things they do right, rather than what they saw as a continued focus on negative aspects. This discrepancy suggests that, from the students' point of view there were factors teachers were not seeing. A discrepancy between student and teacher views suggested that some teachers' awareness of student needs was not as developed as teachers thought it was as fifteen percent of students commented on teachers' lack of EL. Teachers and students experienced school differently but there were similarities in their views such as the perceived lack of democracy.

Social Capital and Emotional Literacy Barriers

Teachers and students believed a lack of support undermined EL. On a closed questionnaire item almost three quarters of the teachers did not agree that there were active support services for staff (70%). Additionally, more than three quarters of teachers were either unsure or disagreed that the school provided psychological safety and well-being (77%). Similarly, over half the teachers did not agree that staff who are struggling were offered non-judgmental support (62%). This result appeared alarming given the school premise that it provides a high level of care and support for teachers. Further, half the teachers did not agree that there was acknowledgement of a range of staff achievements (50%).

Furthermore, in the student questionnaire only 5% of students felt there were active peer support networks. This suggests that on the surface students appear amenable but there are other dynamics operating. It is possible that students confused the words peer support with the Peer Support program, which concluded earlier in the year. Students wanted to feel they could ask for help and talk to people when they wanted to. Approachability appears to be a key issue for students and how they make judgments about their teachers as seen in the comment *"Teachers need to change their attitude and be more approachable"*.

Findings for Research Question 1.1.3: Barriers to Developing Emotional Literacy in Schooling

Research question 1.1.4 asked "What do multiple stakeholders perceive as the barriers to EL in schooling and to what extent are their perspectives similar and different?" This research question deals with the barriers to EL in schooling. Intrapersonal, interpersonal, structural, strategic or philosophical barriers to EL are examined comparing and contrasting multiple stakeholder perspectives.

Results indicated that the nature of the school acted as a barrier to EL. A substantial number of the teachers felt isolated and unsupported and the hierarchical school structure of the school did not enable key stakeholders to experience a sense of agency (Bandura, 1989),

autonomy, competence or relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A lack of trust between teachers and the school management influences teachers' feelings of personal and professional well-being. Students and teachers sought democratisation, empowerment, and a safe environment. Bullying makes school seem difficult for some students. Teachers and students need to be in a safe, cohesive environment to develop EL (Bluestein, 2001; Mayer, 2007) and to promote engagement and a sense of belonging. A proportion of students did not see their teachers as respectful or caring towards them. The next section presents potential EL inventions and approaches as ways of overcoming these EL barriers as described by the students, teachers and the school Counsellor.

Summary of Students' and Teachers' Perspectives

Students want to connect with their peers, other students and their teachers in ways that are respectful and enable them to feel valued. They are concerned about friendship issues, bullying, and ways to resolve conflict. Students see the school rules as repressive. The school environment and its structures appear to compromise the capacity for EL through a lack of communication and through teacher-student interactions that students felt were not respectful.

Teacher EL skills and values warrant further attention. Students find the school social environment difficult due to a perceived lack of respect and inequitable treatment by teachers. Students want to feel emotionally safe and be in an environment where they feel their academic and social-emotional needs are met. Students want a voice, to be acknowledged for their effort and achievements, and be supported in controlled risk-taking.

Overall, there was a lack of cohesion and collegiality between teachers and their students. Teacher and student beliefs about each other's interactions, EL skills and behaviour, influence opinions about the overall school ambience and classroom climate for EL. Communication was viewed as an important sub-theme as the way it is managed makes students and teachers feel devalued. School policies for student behaviour were not popular with students and they wanted a voice to express their opinions, as did the teachers.

Emotional Literacy Interventions and Approaches from Multiple Stakeholders

Introduction

This section examines the combined data for multiple stakeholders' views about EL interventions and approaches to overcome EL barriers. First there is an overview of the themes of leading, learning, and social capital and the associated sub-themes in relation to the

major EL interventions and approaches proposed by students and teachers to overcome EL barriers. Second, approaches to change are examined with respect to the type of change that may enable a positive outcome given the hierarchical nature of the school. Included here are the approaches adopted in Study 2 that are reported in Chapter 7. Third, research questions about EL interventions and approaches are answered. This is followed by a discussion about a school framework for EL that was developed based on all the data.

Overview of Emotional Literacy Interventions and Approaches

The findings indicate interest in two main types of interventions for the three themes of leading, learning, and social capital: those predominantly student-directed and those predominantly teacher-directed. The delineations are arbitrary as teachers or students are frequently implicated directly or indirectly due to the interdependent nature of schooling. While social capital strategies were regarded as the most important, all three themes are involved.

Table 6.4 Proposed Emotional Literacy Interventions - Students

Suggested Emotional Literacy Interventions and Approaches Proposed by Students	Theme	Number	Percentage
SRC/Student voice	Social capital	48	22%
Excursion/camps/year-based activities/groups and activities to meet people	Social Capital	40	18%
Teacher EL development/ teacher values	Leading	36	17%
Cater for all learners/Academic Care	Learning	31	17%
Tutor Group	Learning	15	8%
SEL teaching	Learning	12	6%
Anti-bullying programs / Student values	Social capital	10	5%
Peer Support variation	Learning	8	4%
N = 215			

Table 6.5 Proposed Emotional Literacy Interventions -Teachers

Suggested Interventions and Approaches Proposed by Teachers	Theme	Number	Percentage
Teacher voice	Social capital	20	54%
Teacher support/valuing	Leading	15	40%
Acknowledging teachers	Leading	12	32%
Professional development	Learning	8	21%
Develop collegiality/communication/ cross faculty teams and projects	Learning	8	21%
Assembly Program	Learning	4	10%
Audit/ ongoing community renewal /committee	Leadership	4	10%
Principal/management team/school board	Leadership	3	8%
Appreciative strategies	Social capital	2	5%
Academic care strategies	Learning	2	5%
N = 37			

Social Capital and EL Interventions and Approaches

Multiple stakeholders regarded a sense of agency (see Figure 6.6) as an approach for overcoming EL barriers. A sense of agency contributes to building a trusting school community as in a professional learning community (PLC), prompting teachers to be innovative, to be creative, to take risks, to build trust and open communication, and to challenge themselves and their colleagues (Stoll & Seashore Louis, 2007). PLCs are collaborative, reflective, inclusive, sharing, development-oriented, and solution-focused (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006). Figure 6.6 depicts the overall sub-themes drawn from all data from key stakeholders for social capital, including a sense of agency. The findings support the view that a strengths-based and supportive approach facilitates a sense of agency, whereby students feel more able to support each other and create social capital.

Views about trust, open communication, and the need to feel valued were received from teachers and students. Students' views about overcoming EL barriers involved their relationship with teachers and fellow students, rather than the school management as applied to teachers. Students recognised their potential to enhance the school EL quotient through the development of an inclusive and harmonious school culture. They valued the contribution of

programs such as the Peer Support Program but felt more could be done to refine it and to build student leadership (4%, see Table 6.4). In so doing students seemed to believe bullying behaviour could be curbed and values developed for respectful relationships between students and their teachers (5%, see Table 6.4). Some students personalised the need for an inclusive school, whereas others saw it as a collective psychological need. Students regarded an inclusive and harmonious school as a factor in the way student friendship groups functioned and as powerful mediators for developing EL skills, qualities and values. They wanted groups to be open-minded and willing to accept different students rather than appearing to be based on exclusionary criteria such as power and influence.

A member of the School Executive shared this view:

We need to review and highlight the character and tone of the school. We need to look at positive qualities and emotions and create a culture with an etiquette for relationships. This would mean all the students who do the right thing have a way of showing us they are doing the right thing – living out our ethos and values in a positive way. Taking this approach can be at odds with parents and the wider community. We need to take control of student behaviour – manners, rituals, symbols and the respect they show for each other.

The language used by this member of the School Executive suggests that there is a strong value judgment made about what constitutes ‘the right thing’, yet the statement fails to acknowledge the degree of discord in the school.

Teacher and Student Voice

Overwhelmingly, students and teachers mentioned student voice and teacher voice interventions as the major way to make a difference to EL development and as a means to overcome EL barriers. The desire to be heard, to connect with and know other students and teachers, and to feel valued, appear to be basic requirements for developing EL aligned with the need for both student voice (22%, see Table 6.4) and teacher voice (54%, see Table 6.4). Multiple stakeholders believe that the students need a student representative council (SRC) to express their views.

‘Teacher voice’ (45%) and addressing ways to increase teacher ‘comfort’ were a concern for teachers. By comfort, teachers seemed to be referring to teacher emotional, social, and physical comfort levels which were affected by the style of leadership and how school decisions were made. For example, teachers begrudgingly participated in the outdoor

education program some finding it difficult to participate for a variety of reasons (e.g., age, physical health). They were told about staffing changes with little notice, and in ways they found difficult to accept. Therefore, finding ways to recognise teachers' needs and their achievements is a practical avenue for intervention, provided teachers believe any acknowledgement of achievements are genuine. Accordingly, it may also contribute to raising staff morale.

The need for the teacher voice stems from a need and desire to be involved in the quest for competence and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Possible interventions were posed for teacher voice and student voice. The school did not have an SRC and rarely consulted with students about their views on school matters. This was noticed by teachers in responding to the questionnaire, but was not mentioned in the staff interviews. One teacher commented on the questionnaire *"Staff need a voice – we are teaching girls to be critical thinkers yet we are put in situations where we can only be passive recipients."* The anonymity of the questionnaire provided what was probably seen as a safer way to comment, given the school culture.

Students are leaning towards democratisation; they want greater involvement and a sense of autonomy about what happens in their school. Students want to be involved in whole-school decisions in a way that enables them to know adults are listening, and they want to feel trusted. *"Students having a means of participating in whole school decisions would make a big difference"*, as it would foster a spirit of working together as occurs in activating social capital.

The school had recently lost teachers, including some who were pursuing a career outside teaching. The proposed interventions focused on senior management taking action with teachers and staff to build EL. Teacher comments advocate for *"Senior management [...] to address staff input and 'comfort' levels."* and *"Active, regular encouragement, validation, and recognition of the staff by management for their achievements, no matter how small and on a personal level."* These suggestions provide advice about approaches to involve and acknowledge staff and to retain staff.

Response and Next Steps

A way to address the need for a sense of agency is to give teachers and students a voice. Efforts were made to activate students' voices in relation to their learning and student leadership through academic care sessions and the student focus groups. The approaches taken in this investigation support the findings of research regarding student voice and are

reported in the next chapter (Groundwater-Smith, 2011; see also Mitra, Serriere, & Stoicovy, 2012)

Learning

Teacher professional learning, academic care/endeavour and SEL were proposed as possible approaches to develop EL. The teacher/professional learning was proposed as being more valuable if it were based at the school and incorporated into teachers' every day work. Based on the inherent value of collegiality, collaborative practices, and unconditional support that can occur through professional learning opportunities, teachers identified the potential for RQ associated with professional learning (see Figure 6.4). Teachers believed that through productive professional activity and learning, EL could be developed (21%, see Table 6.4). Teachers also regarded professional learning opportunities as ways to build trust and communication. They valued cross faculty teams and projects as two approaches to develop EL. One teacher said *"You could run a session for staff at a staff meeting and tell them about EL at the same time and get them involved in it"*.

Teachers spoke about the role of developing a range of interventions and approaches acknowledging a whole-school approach and one where teachers act as powerful exemplars for their students. As one teacher commented:

EL should infiltrate all parts of the school. It needs to be placed at the centre so that students or staff who need to manage conflict have a reference point. To be successful we need a groundswell of action and programs for staff to understand their own strengths and how we can use this for teaching and learning and to develop ourselves and the students. The students need to have teachers who are effective role models. EL needs to be embedded in the academic, the curricular and the non-curricular areas.

Response and Next Steps

The need for positive relationships as integral to the classroom for learning, EL development, and wellbeing has been clearly articulated in previous research (Hattie, 2009; Roffey, 2008; Windle, 2011; Frydenberg, Care, Freeman & Chan, 2009). Skilled teachers who can model EL skills in their teaching and who understand how to weave SEL skills into teaching pedagogy can impact students in positive ways (Tait, 2008; Duckworth, Quinn &

Seligman, 2009). In the case study school a focus on relationships in the classroom was tackled through teacher professional learning and collaborative work with middle managers.

Academic Care

Academic care was integral to views about learning and EL received from multiple stakeholders. Figure 6.4 depicts the overall sub-themes drawn from all data from key stakeholders, also demonstrating the place of academic care for learning and EL. Students perceived that teacher EL skill, values, and qualities as well as the type of pedagogy selected had the capacity to contribute to or detract from EL for the sub-theme of academic care/endeavour. Students valued the relational skills necessary for learning and working with others necessary for EL such as communication and co-operation. They also seemed to understand how classroom climate affected academic endeavour and EL. The students also felt the impact of how the school rules were implemented and affected the school environment. They suggested that being consistent about what the rules are and how they are implemented would help students to feel more comfortable:

To improve this school I think we need to relax some of the rules – we get detention for everything, even if our school shoes come undone. The prefects are too strict and they are not very friendly. Some teachers are too scary and I think it is an intimidating environment. The students feel unsafe and the rules are inconsistent.

At the time of this research, the school was exploring academic care and recognised how the Tutors could fulfil an important role:

Academic care is the perfect construct to use because it takes in the pastoral and academic and it is already tagged in our planning. Stronger mentoring and modelling of values are needed whereby we address EL from the inside out and use a problem-solving approach.

The tutors need to move into a different gear and we need to look out our mode of delivery for how things happen in our tutor time and pastoral programs. We need staff development so that staff have a better level of understanding of their role as a tutor.

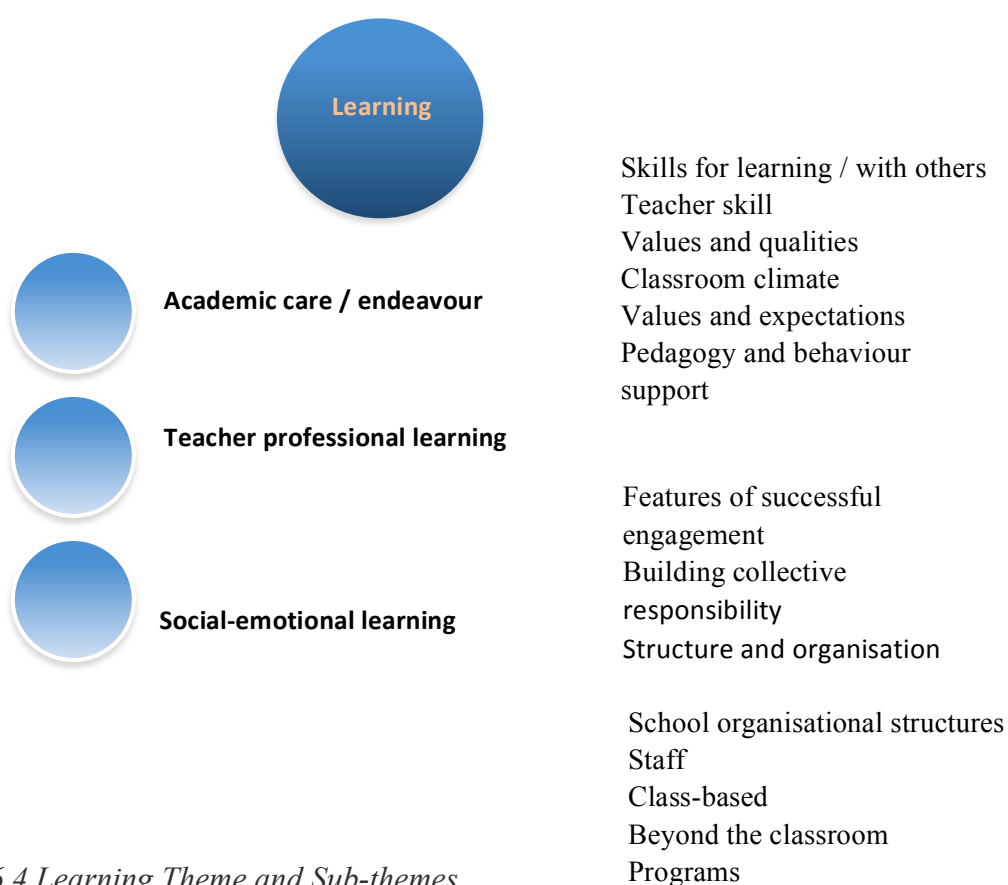


Figure 6.4 Learning Theme and Sub-themes

Due to the academically-oriented nature of the school, the students associated academic care with ways to develop EL. Students regarded academic care as a vital part of learning and EL (17%, see Table 6.4). On the other hand teachers felt that the school should cater more readily for the broad spectrum of students rather than catering for the academically high-achieving students. Teachers wanted to see inclusive academic care strategies (5%, see Table 6.4).

Students raised interventions linked to specific aspects of their lessons, whereas participants in staff interviews tended to look for applications across the entire school. As one student mentioned, they wanted a voice in the classroom, and to be involved in authentic and innovative ways. Students wanted to expedite EL capacity in the classroom “*We could have different ‘groups’ in the classroom so we can all get to know each other better*”. Also discussed was the incorporation of student choice in lessons through student-led design which would satisfy student desire for autonomy and challenge. Students also wanted to heighten social capital through the academic sphere. They expressed a desire to broaden their network through changing class compositions to interact with different students. It seems that

students regard break times as the only opportunity to mix with a variety of students and recommended that it would be beneficial to *“switch people for each class so they have more of a chance to interact with a different variety of people rather than just at recess and lunch”*. The student groupings for lessons are based on English and Mathematics ability and are constant, although reviewed each year until students begin a broader elective program in Year 9.

Response and Next Steps

In the current investigation, self-regulation, feedback, and academic goal-setting were utilised to empower students and enhance EL. Self-regulated learners have more positive perceptions about their learning and their ability to improve through their own efforts (Schmitt, 2011; Dignath et al., 2008). Self-regulated learners possess a positive mindset and will work to see incremental improvements (Dweck, 2010). Academic goal-setting targeting an academic personal best (PB), has been associated with academic buoyancy and positive teacher relationships (Martin & Liem, 2010; Liem et al., 2012). The processes involved in developing and then achieving academic goals can positively affect self-efficacy and EL skills (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Teacher feedback has been shown to have the potential for a powerful effect on learning (Hattie, 2009) therefore the intention in responding to the issues raised is to draw on the pastoral capacity of school structures to enhance the relationship between students and teachers, thereby developing EL.

Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning (SEL) was a sub-theme of learning that emerged (see Figure 6.4) and is evident through the suggested interventions and approaches by students in terms of how the tutor group functioned (8%, see Table 6.4) and the need for explicit SEL teaching (6%, see Table 6.4). These suggested interventions are also represented in Figure 6.4 through reference to school structures, class-based approaches, and programs. Students targeted structures such as Tutor Group for intervention (19%, Table 6.5) stating that they wanted more consistency between tutors and time to get to know each other better. Students were also seeking skills to solve conflict and further develop their EL. Students and teachers suggested ways that school structures such as assembly could be developed to better serve the development of SEL. As one teacher stated: *“We need to raise awareness through speakers at our whole-school assembly. Tutor groups can unpack what it means and gain student input through tutor groups. We could do follow up sessions and develop a program of topics to*

use.” The suggestion to use time flexibly was adopted in the research and is reported in the next chapter. Whereas teachers focused on the use of assembly for SEL (10%, see Table 6.4) through the program of speakers and values-based proceedings, students wanted a more positive approach to assembly.

On the other hand teachers also endorsed explicit SEL teaching. Interventions to support the development of EL were noted as one of a number of holistic approaches as shown in the comments from another teacher “*The girls are not always resilient, they often don’t think before they make decisions and are not always able to manage themselves. We can still do more with some of these areas.*” Teachers also described the support needed from staff to help students develop their EL in friendships. For example, one teacher said:

I am surprised by the number of girls I see who need help with sorting out their friendship issues. I expected them to be clue-ier. With different degrees of scaffolding they can usually sort it out with varying success. Some of the skills they need can be taught through our pastoral program.

These views support the need for teacher professional learning to build teachers’ skills and to strengthen the way they assist students.

Comments about SEL suggest that teachers need to model resilience and build positive emotions. This can be achieved in three ways: through strengths immersion in professional practice (Seligman, 2011), capitalisation (Gable & Reis, 2010), and positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2000). First, by linking character strengths to elements of teaching and learning, teachers may use positive psychology as a reference point for professional growth (Seligman, 2011). They could feel more satisfied in their work and mindful of how they conduct themselves (McGovern & Miller, 2008). It seems that applying a strengths-based approach to teacher professional growth may enable teachers to appreciate what they do, producing a more positive ambience for students (Seligman, 2011). Second, stemming from positive responses to student and colleague good-news stories, teachers and students may build greater feelings of trust, commitment, and subjective well-being as reported by Gable and Reis (2010). Through active, constructive responding, teachers could promote positive emotion in line with the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001). By using a model known as capitalisation where teachers and students use active, constructive, responding, teachers and students feel affirmed and optimistic, thereby creating a heightened awareness about the benefits of positive rather than negative emotional responses. Third,

building positive emotions such as gratitude, optimism, and kindness could also help generate further positive regard.

Response and Next Steps

The approach of building positive emotions was used in the current investigation by focusing on gratitude, kindness and teachers' strengths, then focusing on student leadership to develop positive EL skills. The students' leadership capacity was enhanced, as will be reported in Chapter 7. The opportunity for student leadership teams to influence their peers in positive ways is another reason why leading emerged from the data as a vital theme for EL. The development of SEL skills in students is vital for academic outcomes, EL, and wellbeing (Durlak et al., 2011).

Leadership

With social capital, the theme of leadership represents one of two major concerns held by teachers about EL. There were suggestions about valuing teachers through practical interventions. The interventions involve bigger picture issues, forecasting long-term change. It appears that deep-seated micro-politics, power struggles, and leadership styles combined with misaligned values and practices to influence opinions about EL interventions. It seems that values such as integrity need to be at the centre of EL interventions. Whole-community change is needed to overhaul EL. It seems *“changing a culture in a school takes many years and it can only happen from the top”*, starting with the School Board as they employ the Principal and set the school direction.

Teachers focused on changes to the school environment with an open communication as the basis for overcoming EL barriers.

[We need] a confident, trusting, happy, and polite environment (without complacency) with awareness of the importance of EL. Non-judgmental, constructive criticism without the ‘whole staff’ criticism. [We need to] work together towards common (articulated) goals.

Teachers commented on the need for an *“open, supportive and non-judgmental”* [and], *“safe and empowering environment”* and a *“positive, focused and caring community”* These characteristics seem to hold the key to developing greater EL. Teachers wanted to feel accepted and relaxed, like students.

Teachers felt that current EL practices needed reviewing (21%, see Table 6.4) and Executive Team teachers shared these opinions about the need for review processes. A range of comments exemplify the scope of strategies to overcome EL barriers by teachers *“Communication needs to be effective, ‘more’ is not ‘better’. Staff need to be treated with respect and their opinions should be valued. Democracy is the solution.”* Communication seemed to be a major issue as teachers felt that they received outdated news and were not considered as key stakeholders by the school management. This view was connected with decision-making and the sense of urgency and finality involving decisions *“We need transparency in decision-making and to address the present climate of paranoia and fear. Teachers need facilitation to collaborate in an open, non-threatening way.”* Teachers were aware of how power operated in the school as indicated by the teacher comment [we] *“Need to create power with rather than over. A rationale to deal with student discontent.”*

Response and Next Steps

Personalised approaches to acknowledging teachers and a teacher forum appear to be realistic EL strategies that could be adopted in Study 2. Building teachers’ knowledge and skills about EL also seems feasible. Other specific approaches suggested by teachers to counter these negative perceptions and to develop EL included an audit of current practices, ongoing community renewal and the formation of an EL committee. The subsequent formation of the Participatory Action Research team met this need and gave teachers a voice. Another group of teachers believed that the approach to EL development lay with the School Board, the Principal, and the Management Team (8%, see Table 6.4). These suggestions about the approaches to overcome EL barriers seem to reflect the current school culture of top-down driven change and the fact that some teachers were not open to the possibility of change. The earlier suggestions propose more democratic options.

Congruence between Rhetoric and Reality

The need for congruence in leading also had an impact on teachers. They seemed to believe that school leaders catered for students’ needs, but not theirs. The disparity between stated values and lived practices suggested that there were two realities: the espoused and the actual reality, and the two were not congruent. From the combined data, a model showing the theme and sub-themes for leadership was developed (see Figure 6.5). Congruence involved values and communication. Again, while there was rhetoric from management about

communication, the dominant approach was seen as one of information-giving rather than involvement based on democratic practices. One member of the Executive Team stated:

We need to be more consistent about what we say we do and what we actually do. We have contradictions and gaps in the way we act, where we need to review what we do more thoroughly and find time to appreciate what we do well, then plan how we can continue to develop.

As solutions, staff were seeking a strong articulation and modelling of the school vision and values, as these are crucial for overcoming barriers to EL (see Figure 6.3). Teachers believed that it was time to revisit policies and practices and strengthen how the school ethos is articulated and lived out.

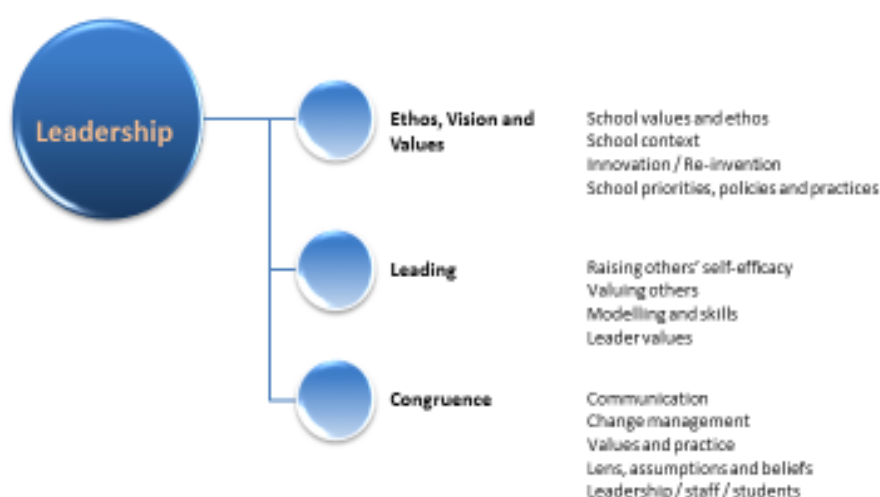


Figure 6.5 Leadership Theme and Sub-themes

Approaches to Change

Examining what is *not* spoken about within the school can be just as insightful as examining what *is* spoken about. Unspoken topics therefore provide another powerful lens

for analysing the research findings. One of many areas not mentioned in the interviews was the underlying approach to change, which is at the heart of sustainable approaches to change. Perhaps it was assumed that there was only one approach and people were too immersed in the school culture to step outside it. Current projects underway in the case study school were using a team based approach to change, however the usual approach was a top-down driven change approach. Change can take on different forms based on leadership style and organisational culture. Top-down driven change typifies an urgent change process using an authoritarian leadership style as was typical in the case study school.

To introduce a different form of change is to break with the culture, which was the intention of the current investigation. Another approach, bottom-up change, occurs when a sound idea from an individual gains support and is adopted (Senge, et al, 2000). Such processes occur more often in democratically based school cultures with a distributed leadership style, unlike the situation in the case study school.

Fullan (2008) analysed success factors for change related to engaging teachers. It was found that both top-down and bottom-up change require another factor to enable change. It seems that the social lubricant for change is peer interaction; it can produce focus, coherence, and cohesion. Fullan (2010) perceives the role of the leader as creating opportunities for peer interaction through facilitation and enabling. Another success factor is considered to be collective responsibility whereby the Principal is immersed in learning with teachers (Fullan, 2010). My current research shows that when the Principal is distant or absent teachers may still take up change provided they believe in it.

There is an imperative to enable positive change outcomes for EL associated with implementing suitable strategies and approaches. Fullan (2001) in some of his earlier work suggests that, “the single factor common to every successful change initiative is that relationships improve. If relationships improve, things get better. If they remain the same or get worse, ground is lost. Thus leaders must be consummate relationship builders with diverse people and groups – especially with people different than themselves” (Fullan, 2001. p.5). All of the suggested changes and interventions for EL rely on social capital to facilitate them and without social capital they cannot be effective.

Summary of Students’ and Teachers’ Perspectives

Recursive and interrelated sub-themes emerged across the social capital, learning, and leading domains from the data. EL for teachers and students, student voice, friendships and building connectedness are sub-themes that continue to be noteworthy when developing

approaches to overcome EL barriers. These themes function within and across the layers of the school environment. Congruence between values and practice, decision-making, and communication at the leadership level all influence student self-efficacy and sense of involvement in school life and cannot be ignored. Students and teachers propose strategies to address core aspects of schooling to enhance their sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Findings for Research Question 1.1.4: Potentially Potent Intervention Strategies

What do multiple stakeholders perceive as potentially potent interventions in relation to developing EL in schooling and to what extent are their perspectives similar and different?

Positive education interventions to promote satisfaction, positive affect and self-efficacy are perceived as potentially potent interventions by key stakeholders (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005; Gilman, Huebner & Furlong, 2009; Seligman, 2011; Norrish, Williams, O'Connor, & Robinson, 2013; Waters, 2011). Interventions offering promise use positive emotions thereby celebrating teachers and enhancing teachers' feelings of being appreciated, known, and valued. Key stakeholders' perspectives and theories such as social cognitive, self-efficacy, social capital, and well-being provides the impetus to focus on developing teachers' and students' EL skills, resilience and ability to enhance their relationships (Bandura; 1977; 1989; Coleman, 1988; 1990; Hoy & Smith, 2007; Seligman, 1990; 2002; 2011). Students enjoy their learning and are motivated to achieve, therefore Academic Care strategies targeting self-regulated learning, academic goal setting (Martin & Liem, 2010; Liem et al., 2012) and developing a growth mindset (Dweck, 1999; 2010) match the school context (Dignath et al., 2008) and help support teacher-student EL. Teacher and student voice interventions (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012), teacher professional learning, and a focus on values in leadership match the contextual needs, offering opportunities to develop a sense of agency.

Findings for Research Question 1.1.5: Approaches to Overcoming Barriers to EL

What do multiple stakeholders perceive as potential strategies for overcoming barriers to EL in schooling and to what extent are their perspectives similar and different?

The findings support the view that students wanted teachers who were EL leaders, whereas teachers sought interventions and approaches to promote congruent leadership and vision and values. Students and teachers proposed EL approaches that are implicit in positive education to enable them to feel that they were supported, valued, and satisfied. Multiple

stakeholders proposed approaches to learning and social capital in order to promote a more connected and cohesive school community. Teachers and students sought to create a positive social school environment with positive social norms, a consistent values framework, physical, and psychological safety, appropriate support and learning structures, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, support for efficacy and ongoing opportunities for skill building (Eccles, Gootman, & Appleton, 2002). While teachers see the universal application of EL for students and teachers, they seemed to report being focused on their own psychological needs and therefore distracted from seeing everything affecting students.

Key stakeholders advocate for approaches to overcome barriers to EL that engage them in authentic school issues, give them a voice and enable them to participate. They seek approaches housed in foundational EL values to enhance staff morale and teacher satisfaction (Iszatt-White, 2009). They seek approaches to strengthen the school ethos, activate AC strategies and connect teachers with the school management. Students suggest that teachers need professional development and that teachers model EL. Developing teacher EL, (Brown, 2012; McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978; Bandura, 1997) through processes such as self-organisation, self-reflection, and self-regulation is integral to self-efficacy.

Teachers also advocate for continued professional growth mutual unconditional support, collegiality, and a feeling of being valued in a professional community (Rogers, 2006; Holmes 2005; Kruse & Seashore Louis, 2009). They value autonomy, authenticity, connection, and resilience. An ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and implementation success factors such as the context, the conditions of implementation (Durlak, 1998; 2010; Gager & Elias, 1998), and responsiveness (Humphrey, 2013) were key factors for the approaches to overcome barriers to EL in the present investigation.

A School Framework for Emotional Literacy

Study 1 findings reveal the importance of social capital, learning, and leadership using theories such as self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000), social capital (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995), well-being (Seligman, 2011), strengths-based approaches (Park & Peterson, 2008), ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Leadership, social capital, and learning provide a powerful lens for analysing the lived experience of key stakeholders in the case study school (see Figure 6.6). The foundational EL values act as a lynch pin between leadership, social capital, and learning, providing the basis for establishing care and valuing other people. In the case study school, stakeholders'

disparate experiences of the foundational values determined their ability to engage in emotionally literate practices, sometimes creating disharmony, ambiguity, and introspection. Teachers and students who did not have positive experiences supported by the foundational values found their EL was thwarted.

The major themes identified are part of the social capital learning and leading dimensions represented in a school framework for EL and shown in Figure 6.6. The circle with multiple layers represents the way in which different layers of schooling impact on each other in line with the ecological nature of schools. Social capital influences, and is influenced by, learning and leading. Another feature of the framework is that a number of factors, which emerged through the data, have the potential to either detract from, or enhance, EL. These factors represented by plus or minus symbols involve oppositional features, for example, valuing others versus the degree to which a person feels devalued or relational trust versus mistrust.

School Principals are represented at the base of the model as they hold the key to EL development in their school. The eight Cs represent the development of processes that underpin EL. These are care, collegiality, connectivity, collective responsibility, consultation, cohesion, consultation, and community. Each process develops EL. The findings suggest that when these elements are incorporated into interventions, barriers to EL will be overcome. The model is intended to act as a guide for schools for assessing, developing, and evaluating EL.

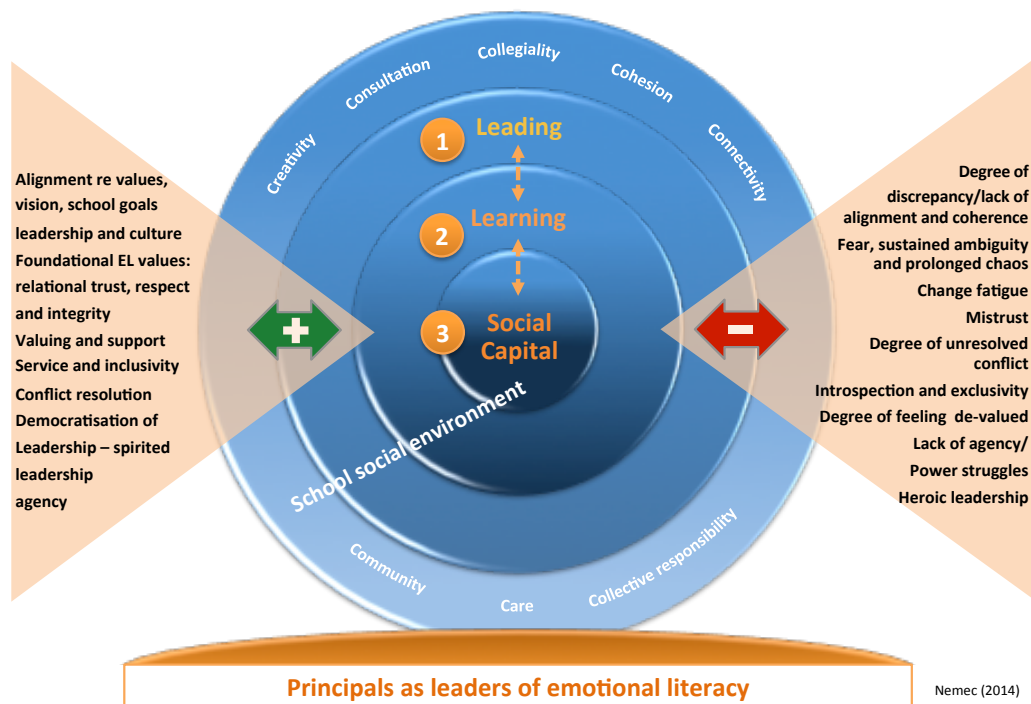


Figure 6.6 School Emotional Literacy Framework

Chapter Summary

Study 1 outlined multiple stakeholder views pertaining to key issues and themes arising in the findings in light of other research findings. The research questions identified the place of EL, EL strengths, barriers, potent interventions, and EL approaches by drawing on research findings identified in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. The findings indicate that stakeholders recognise the role of EL in schooling but have differing opinions about EL. Key stakeholders are clear about a range of EL strengths and barriers impacting on teachers' and students' experiences. In answering five research questions, issues involving democratisation, trust, and empowerment seem to pave the way for a more emotionally literate school. Using strategies drawn from the findings of Study 1 aligned with positive education, EL intervention strategies will be adopted and evaluated in Study 2.

CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION STUDY 2: STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL LITERACY INTERVENTIONS AND THE NATURE OF EMOTIONALLY LITERATE SCHOOLS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of Study 2. Using qualitative methods, Study 2 answered two research questions. The first examines how multiple stakeholders perceive the impact of EL intervention strategies on relationships (2.1.1) and the second analyses how multiple stakeholders perceive the features of an emotionally literate school environment (2.1.2). First, overall findings for the two waves of data are discussed. Second, findings and discussion of the PAR team, school-derived EL intervention strategies designed in response to the Study 1 findings are presented. Third, teacher and student findings and discussion are presented for the different methods utilised in Study 2. Finally, the model for EL proposed in Chapter 6 is refined in light of the Study 2 findings, prior to discussing a holistic model for teacher EL development based on the findings incorporating self-theories, EL, and positive psychology.

Overview of Data Analysis

Data from staff interviews, a student focus group and questionnaires, combined with data about the PAR processes, and my insights, provide enriched understanding about EL. Responses to closed questionnaire items and answers to open-ended questions from teacher and student questionnaires were analysed, coded, and ascribed meaning for two waves of data (see Chapter 5). The teacher and student questionnaires show how values, school environment, EL competencies, and skills apply in the case-study school. EL between school

management, students, and teachers are also examined. Student focus group transcripts and interview transcripts were analysed and coded for the research questions. Interview responses to questions from the Principal, Executive Team teachers, the school Counsellor, a teacher group interview, and a student focus group were analysed and coded (see Appendices for in-depth interview schedule; See Chapter 4 for full explanation of aims, research questions, and rationale). Notes kept about EL in the case-study school, meeting records, and information involving EL interventions were used to make judgements and inform the findings. In developing an EL framework the themes, sub-themes, and notes were taken into account.

Research Context

I was a member of the PAR team for the major part of Study 2. As an inside researcher working in collaboration with others, my goal was to determine, implement, reflect, and review. In doing so I made an initial evaluation about the impact of the EL intervention strategies. I also investigated the features of an emotionally literate school. For the latter part of Study 2, I was an outsider studying the insiders as to how EL developed and was influenced by school-devised EL intervention strategies.

During Study 2, two Principals and an Acting Principal led the school, resulting in school change. The school rhetoric and reality changed considerably during this period as the school looked for stability to reinforce organisational and community confidence. School leadership changes influenced the nature of the Principal interview data, as there were several Principals in the school during the research. During the research period, staff and student retention rates were low. More than thirty students including boarders left the school. In an eighteen-month period, one hundred and seventy-eight staff left the school. Some staff positions were replaced two or more times. Large-scale, top-down educational, administrative, and structural change occurred in the school. The change encompassed role restructures, a revised curriculum, and a reconfigured physical environment. EL intervention strategies and professional learning circles of enquiry were also implemented. Further changes involved developing a new executive structure and team. Student care and support services were remodelled for Middle School students. The pace and extent of change in the case-study school had implications for the teachers and for gathering data.

When the final wave of data was collected there were sixteen additional new teachers in the school. There were also new teachers replacing departing teachers. The new teachers did not experience the EL interventions and those who completed the questionnaire would

not have had an understanding of how EL had changed over time. As the questionnaire was completed anonymously, these factors will presumably have influenced the data. The pastoral executive leadership role was vacant, following the resignation of the post-holder, which further impacted morale and stability (meeting notes).

Findings and Discussion Overview

Teachers and students completed a total of 349 questionnaires in two waves of data collection; one following the EL intervention strategy and a second six months later. In the first wave, twenty-five teachers and 157 students participated. In the second wave, twenty-eight teachers and 174 students completed the questionnaire. Interviews were conducted with the Principal, two Counsellors, three Executive Team members, three teachers, and four students as part of the data Wave 2 collection.

The PAR Team. The PAR team planned, actioned, observed, and reflected upon elements of the EL intervention strategy in a cyclical manner. While co-learning and developing a common understanding of EL, an associated discourse developed. Team members experienced their own learning while participating in the research. I aimed to build trust and respect through open communication and mutual support, which influenced team members' other interactions and school relationships. The PAR team's work provided the pre-requisites for social capital through the relational and professional values and qualities within the team dynamics. Social capital borne out of professional learning was replicated and mirrored in other teacher professional activities (Reeves, 2010). Social capital was seen in a myriad of interactions and relationships across the school (observation notes). PAR team professional learning aimed to benefit students and teachers (Putnam, 1995).

The PAR team carried its own set of power relations influenced by team members' positions held within the school. These relations formed one part of the complex set of micro-politics influencing the school as an organisation. Micro-politics is one factor that impacted on the EL quotient (Ballenger, 2013). As teachers felt devalued, they sought affirmation as the school leadership changed, using approaches such as lobbying to gain influence. The dynamics of some individuals within the school modelled Bourdieu's (1993) social capital theory in which self-interest and privilege, rather than action for the common good, motivates behaviour. The PAR approach was in conflict with individuals seeking power (observation notes). This meant that there were two philosophically opposed mindsets at work, one based

on self-interest and one whereby everybody could gain benefit and feel a stronger sense of community.

Changes in the school leadership meant the school environment also changed, affecting the *status quo* among teachers (observation notes). Staff were attempting to self-correct behaviours and attitudes in response to the changing school environment, thereby resisting change. The self-correcting factor of the school culture meant it was a challenging time to embed change. It seemed that as teachers felt less confident about the school's future and their self-efficacy, they focused more on the vital role played by EL in leadership (meeting records). As a social system the school context shaped the PAR team approach to implementing EL intervention strategies. The school Counsellors were also integral to the PAR approach and their focus on resilience and well-being emphasised their expertise and demonstrated the high regard in which they were held in the school.

Overall Findings Wave 1

The themes of positive education, leading, learning, and social capital emerged from the data Wave 1 in Study 2 (see Table 7.1). New ways of looking at the same situation developed and dynamics forged on trust and respect through the work of the PAR team rippled out to the students and teachers, raising awareness of possibilities in an emotionally literate environment. The PAR team interventions seemed to heighten an awareness of the need for positive emotions and enhanced EL. Most themes that emerged in Study 2 related to those raised in Study 1 yet were more nuanced in the way they were represented.

Themes are associated with SEL (96%, see Table 7.1) and the key skills of self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2013). The school social environment and friendships emerged as vital themes as teachers and students sought to feel valued and competent (38%, 16 %, see Table 7.1). Positive education approaches emerged in the data including a focus on strengths (Bandura, 2008; Park & Peterson, 2008; McGovern & Miller, 2008) and positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1998; 2001; 2009) for teachers and students (9%, see Table 7.1). Academic care and values that aligned with positive education, resilience, and well-being were evident (13%, 9% see Table 7.1) (Deakin-Crick, 2006, Claxton, 2007). Resources and support involving the availability and access to specialist services such as a Counsellor and to friends, and teachers were valued highly (15%, see Table 7.1). As a student commented: "*A social-emotional strength is that we have friends and counsellors to talk to.*" The emphasis by students on help-seeking skills is aligned with a strengths-based perspective as it empowers students by allowing them to gain the support needed (Hammond & Zimmerman, 2012).

These areas are more strongly evident in the data Wave 2 collection, appearing to be the result of the EL intervention strategies and other factors (see Table 7.2).

Table 7.1 *Most common themes Study 2 data Wave 1*

	Overall	Percentage
Social-emotional learning	214	96%
School social environment	85	38%
Friendship	37	16%
Resources and support	35	15%
Academic care/engagement	29	13%
Leadership	25	11%
Student/staff voice	24	10%
Values	22	9%
Strengths/positive emotions	21	9%
Communicating/decision making	18	8%
Care	15	6%
Bullying	11	4%

n = 22

Teachers' and students' need for a sense of agency, social capital, and a strengths-based approach was reinforced by the negative response of teachers to the changing school leadership (Bandura, 1979; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995). The findings suggest that the more negatively teachers perceived their situation, the more clarity they gained about what was needed for EL. Teachers and students wanted ongoing, authentic ways for them to be involved in areas of school decision-making that they felt were important to them. Teachers and students believed the teacher and student voice was represented, but that improvement needed to go further. The psychological needs for effective and open communication and democratic approaches to decision-making associated with a sense of agency continued to be important emotionally literate practices that were valued by teachers and students.

As a sub-theme care involved the relationships between students and teachers across different school domains and structures (Nodding, 1998). Students expressed different opinions about the care shown by teachers. Either they were satisfied with the level of care or they felt their teachers lacked EL. Students wanted their teachers to care about them and felt that their teachers needed to develop their EL skills. When it came to student care some

students felt they experienced the care of friends and peers, but others were concerned about the bullying behaviour of students.

Teacher Questionnaire Findings

Leadership

Teachers' focus on leadership in their questionnaire comments meant the issue of leadership appeared to overshadow other areas because it impacted upon teachers' feelings, behaviours, and self-efficacy (96% see Figure 7.1). The feelings of uncertainty and ambiguity were prompted by the relentless push for change and the re-alignment of the culture, vision, and values accompanying new school leadership. The outcome was a negative ripple effect. Teachers seemed effete, expecting negative outcomes as in expectancy theory (Bandura, 1977). The school context required teachers to draw on their EL skills, (Vesley, Saklofske, & Leschied, 2013) leaving some teachers exposed, as they did not model resilience skills and their EL skills required development (observation notes). There were signs that the school situation was improving as a result of the EL intervention strategies. Teachers noted:

“The focus on emotional literacy although recent, is making a difference. The leadership is also more positive and this is good for teachers and students.”

“Structural changes seem to be occurring which appear motivated by a desire for increased emotional literacy.”

Other positive signs were aligned with the PAR team intervention strategies. There were increased opportunities for teachers to self-nominate for involvement in a range of teaching, learning, and Middle Schooling committees. These opportunities increased teachers' self-efficacy and level of engagement. As I noted:

“Since beginning in the PAR team X appears to be much happier and more connected to the workplace. It seems her involvement has opened the door to more positive communication with other colleagues.”

“Y commented that she had wondered what the school-wide pedagogical framework had to do with her and her work but now she realised that it had everything to do with it every day.”

There were also indications that some staff did not feel cared for nor as involved as they would like to be in school issues and decision-making processes. As one teacher noted: *“The welfare of staff is not considered in many circumstances.”*

Teachers’ comments about SEL ranked third, with almost three-quarters of teachers mentioning it (72%, see Figure 7.1). Comments were made in reference to senior management modeling EL: *“The senior management of the school must model excellent communication skills and demonstrate emotional literacy in their dealings with staff and students.”*

It seems teachers used a deficit-based dialogue rather than a needs assessment or strengths-based perspective and projected their unmet needs onto the Executive Team (Gergen, 2001) (observation notes). Within the deficit dialogue there seemed to be a cycle of negativity, rather than positivity. The deficit cycle seemed self-perpetuating and it affected others. It appeared that due to previous negative experiences, such as teachers feeling insecure, negative teacher behaviours resulted, with a focus on deficits, setting up further negative expectations. As a result some school change interventions, such as those involving study skills, were blocked by negative attitudes, a culture of blame, and negative behaviour, establishing another negative cycle (observation notes). Rather than negative cycles, positive cycles were needed to change the tone and teacher expectations. A positive cycle is based on a strengths dialogue whereby assets are identified, enabling meaningful experiences, positive expectations, and positive outcomes to promote positive experiences and behaviours. The positive experiences and behaviours could reinforce a strengths-based perspective (observation notes).

Appreciative inquiry complements a strengths-based approach by involving teachers as partners to shape a positive future (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2008). Four processes of discovery, dreaming, design, and destiny are used. Each process can provide teachers with a sense of autonomy and greater self-efficacy as they have a voice in what transpires. Unfortunately in the case study school, as teachers had little say in school decisions, they adopted blaming behaviours and a skewed perception of the Executive Team’s EL. If teachers had been given the opportunity to consider what might be possible through focusing on strengths and dreaming about the ideal situation and had then been provided with an opportunity to be involved in designing such a situation, the resulting situation might have been different.

Seligman, Railton, Baumeister, and Sripada (2013) propose that a skill they term prospecting, or looking optimistically into the future, has the potential to build hope and

therefore meaning, offering another possibility for enhancing teacher experiences. Appreciative enquiry and prospecting may have helped turn the school culture around, although they were not proposed during the research.

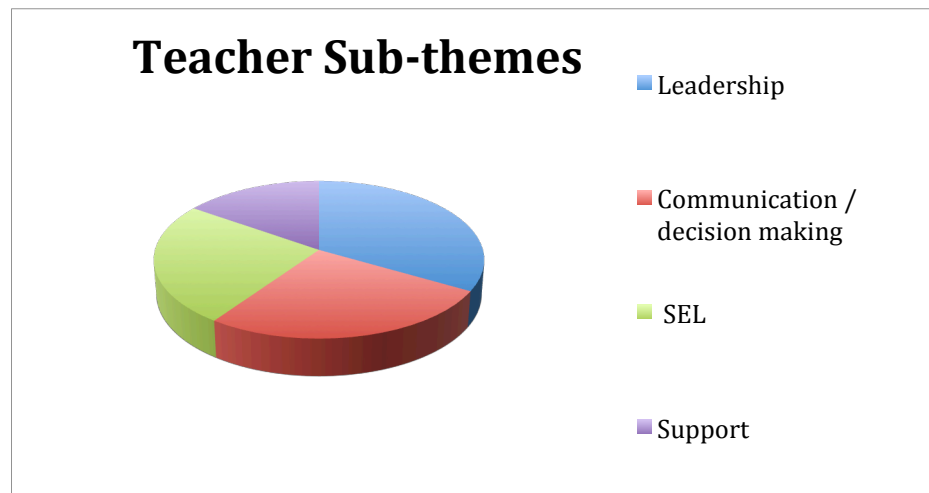
Communication and Decision-Making

The negative focus on leadership was linked to the second most common sub-theme of communication and decision-making (see Figure 7.1). Teachers perceived they were not part of the decisions made, undermining their view of EL:

“We need more open understanding of staff needs, more communication of school matters, staff need to be valued and listened to. Decisions need to be made collaboratively between staff and management.”

“Staff need to be kept involved in the decision-making process – not simply informed of changes.”

Teachers saw school leadership as problematic for their EL, and well-being and that of the school. This view was in part due to the way decisions were made and communicated. Teacher views about communication and decision-making were constraining factors resulting in a diminished EL quotient. Underpinning the negative school culture, teachers perceived a lack of trust, respect, and integrity at organisational and leadership levels: *“The school needs an honest purpose – the foremost purpose at the moment seems to be survival in the market”*. Teachers saw the association between leadership and school decisions yet they were not privy to the pressure the Principal may have been under to implement change. Teachers’ sub-themes based on their responses to free response items on the teacher survey and interviews for data Wave 1 are depicted below in Figure 7.1 indicating the key role of emotionally literate leadership and its role in EL.



7.1 Most Common Teacher Sub-themes Data Wave 1

Teachers perceived that the school was in fight or flight mode and it seems a situation evolved whereby the morality of the organisation was questioned partly because there was no democratic participation in change (Raelin, 2012). It seemed inevitable that the strongly guarded school culture and teachers' distress would clash with change agents if the culture seemed to be threatened (observation notes). The ecological impact of perceived clashes between the espoused and lived values influenced everyone in the school. Perceptive students and teachers were able to detect inconsistencies in the school culture. For example as teachers and staff left the school, teachers noted: *"Why did Q get such a bad send off? She has been here for a long time – just as long as R yet R got thanked so much and Q didn't. That stinks!"* It seemed that when teachers were no longer aligned with the school as a system, as determined by the school, the rejection of the teacher by the school was demonstrated by the standing of their farewell from the school.

Teacher Support. Another key sub-theme that emerged was teachers' need for support (44%, see Figure 7.1). Teachers indicated that support involved three elements. These were valuing teachers, teacher voice, and openness with each integral to teacher well-being:

We need more open understanding of staff needs. We need more communication of school matters, staff needs to be valued and listened to.

We need the opportunity for discussion without repercussions.

These teachers' comments demonstrate that teachers appeared to feel downtrodden. This meant that despite attempts by teachers to portray a positive image, they were

dissatisfied (observation notes). These findings offered a mixed opportunity for the PAR team. They risked adding to the burden of change fatigue experienced by teachers but they also offered a new approach for ways in which to develop school change in EL.

Student Questionnaire Findings

There are differences between the major sub-themes that arose in Study 2 data Wave 1 for students and teachers.

Social-Emotional Learning. Students' major concern was with SEL in learning and programs, whereas teachers focused on leadership (48%, see Figure 7.2). Students were optimistic about their SEL: *"There is an emphasis on the development of our social-emotional skills as well as our academic skills."* Students saw the tutor group structure as integral to what they valued in SEL programs, as it was similar to a family group. They used the questionnaire as an opportunity to protest about changes to the tutor group structure. A major concern was the way the changes were initiated, as students did not feel involved:

Tutor groups are great. They give us a chance to know older people. They don't need to change because we will then not be able to meet older students.

The social strengths are having tutor groups with older and younger girls. Don't change the tutor groups because it is good to socialise with older years. They also give us more advice and friendship.

Students perceived the tutors groups as their 'social glue' alongside their friendship groups, creating a sense of belonging (Noble & McGrath, 2008). Students' tutor group relationships were a central part of their school day. Dismantling the tutor structure caused the students distress as it undermined their sense of belonging and made them feel powerless. Just as teachers blamed the school executive for their problems, the students blamed the teachers and in so doing undermined the ecology of EL.

Students' perceptions of teachers mirrored the distress felt by teachers about the executive team as a key element of their school environment. Students experienced raw emotions as seen in their questionnaire responses where many had written in large print:

"DON'T CHANGE THE TUTOR GROUPS." These findings had negative implications for everyone's well-being.

School Environment. Students' views about the school environment were dominated by their thoughts about teachers. Students made general comments about teachers, mainly in reference to their approachability and the relational values inherent in their relationships, which were included in the data about the school environment (37%, see Figure 7.2):

We need stronger, respectful relationships between students and staff.

I think the staff needs to be more approachable because lots of us even get nervous answering a question.

Diverse findings about the level of trust and respect in the school impacted on social capital and the way that teachers and students felt they could have control over how their ability to influence their school environment. These findings suggest that affiliative needs go to the core of EL. Students' sub-themes based on their responses to free response items on the student survey and interview responses for the data Wave 1 are depicted below in Figure 7.2.

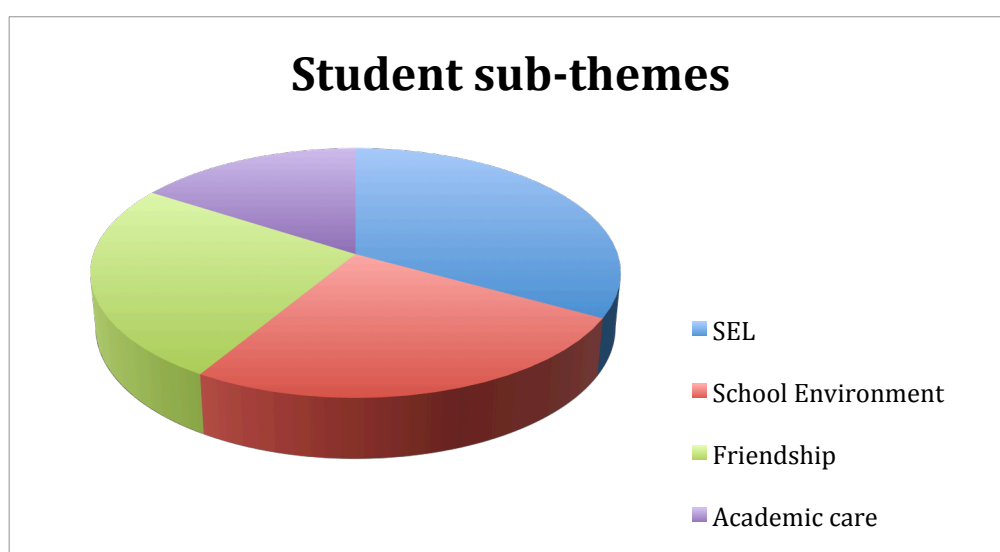


Figure 7.2 Most Common Student Sub-themes Data Wave 1

There were also contradictory findings between what teachers believed about their relationship with students and what students thought about it. For example, teachers commented on their relationships with students as a social-emotional strength:

There is a good relationship between staff and staff and students (excluding management).

Teaching staff have a caring attitude towards students.

The differences in the perceived student-teacher relationships from the student perspective meant that there was a culture and a discourse of contradiction between students and teachers. This was not universal, as a few student comments indicated positive views about relationships with teachers:

Some teachers are more approachable. I can talk to them.

We get along with some teachers.

Teachers were offered support via colleagues, Heads of Department, and professional development opportunities, yet these provisions did not appear to be enough. It seems that teachers were not able to manage their own emotions given their perceived oppression. A student commented, “*We need more helpful and approachable staff. I feel that a lot of staff are stressed out and angry and take this out on you.*”

Teacher emotions and the level of teacher EL skills influenced students’ views about EL and their schooling experience. While the student and teacher findings may appear different, they both represent views about a hierarchical approach to leadership and power within the school bound up with emotions and social skills. As I noted in my journal:

There is a strong code of behaviour for Executive Team members. This means we stay within the bounds of the Principal’s leadership style and approach, which was based on an autocratic approach.

Students felt they could not expect support from their teachers yet they experienced connectedness to their House groups and other groups as they commented on the social-emotional strengths in the school environment:

We are very connected and have strong House bonds.

Peer Support, tutor groups, Counsellors, and other groups that we belong to in the school make us a community.

Friendship. Friendship emerged as a key sub-theme for students (37%, see Figure 7.2). The students commented on the strong bonds of friendship, which existed and how friendships affirmed them and were an important part of their lives. In talking about the social-emotional strengths students wrote: *“Friends created are friends kept.” “I am happy to come to school because of my friends.”*

Students commented on difficulties involving other students who felt left out or bullied:

I don't think there are many true friendships. People feel excluded.

We need to make an anti-bullying campaign. People still bully at [this school] it's just better hidden.

Students were also seeking ways to build a network of friends and older students with whom they felt comfortable. They were interested in ways to make friends within and beyond the school. This view seemed instrumental to students' EL perception. Few teachers or staff commented on student friendships. The mismatch between teacher and student priorities provides a window into an area of potential future teacher EL professional development.

Academic Care. The fourth most commonly mentioned sub-theme for students was academic care (23%, see Figure 7.2). The findings appear different for the lived experience of teachers and students, yet they possess similarities. Both groups wanted to feel they were cared about and respected. As students advocated:

Certain teachers should be calmer and respect students by noticing their strengths, not just their weaknesses.

There should be respect for all marks in examinations and achievements.

Students wanted engagement and academic challenge with support. They felt pressure to achieve academically and commented that *“...less focus on achieving high marks and fewer rules and punishments”* were needed. Teachers also wanted reasonable demands placed on them, and to feel valued and respected. Both stakeholder groups wanted a voice

and a greater measure of autonomy. Consequently teachers and students needed EL skills and a positive approach aligned with positive education to counteract the intensified, contradictory school environment (Green, Oades, & Robinson, 2011). Positive education practices would help to allay the emotional contagion (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994) associated with the negative practices undermining EL. Skills such as disputation of negative thoughts, positive self-talk, and thoughtfulness all provide useful approaches (Meiklejohn, et al., 2012; Cohen, 2011; Noble & McGrath, 2008; Seligman, 2011).

Overall Findings Wave 2

The themes of positive education, leading, learning, and social capital emerged from the data Wave 2 in Study 2.

Leadership

Stakeholder comments focused on school leadership (11%, see Table 7.1 compared to 26%, see Table 7.2). It seemed there was a falling off in EL leadership from the start of Study 2 to its conclusion as the following teacher comment suggests: *“I feel since the last survey the wheels have gone backwards and the focus is more academic (may be due to registration?).”*

Accompanying the increased focus on leadership towards the end of Study 2 was a focus on values and vision as stakeholders looked for emotionally literate leadership (26%, Wave 2, see Table 7.2 compared to 9%, Wave 1, see Table 7.1).

Table 7.2 Most common sub-themes Study 2 Data 2

	Overall	Percentage
School environment	165	76%
Social-emotional learning	108	48%
Values	102	47%
Positive relationships	90	41%
Support	64	29%
Leadership	57	26%
Student/Teacher voice	51	23%
Academic care	49	22%
Strengths-based approaches	34	15%
Positive emotions	10	4%

N = 215

Teacher Findings

Leadership

Teacher sub-themes depicted in Figure 7.3 demonstrated that teachers associate emotionally literate leadership with EL. Teachers expected school leaders to provide them with a model for EL, to build relational values, and relational quality. Relational values were seen as the key to positive relationships and leadership. Findings from data Wave 2 showed that leadership dominated teachers' descriptions of an emotionally literate school environment by associating leadership with values (125%, see Figure 7.3). Over time the way people thought about leadership, values, and vision changed as the school leadership evolved.

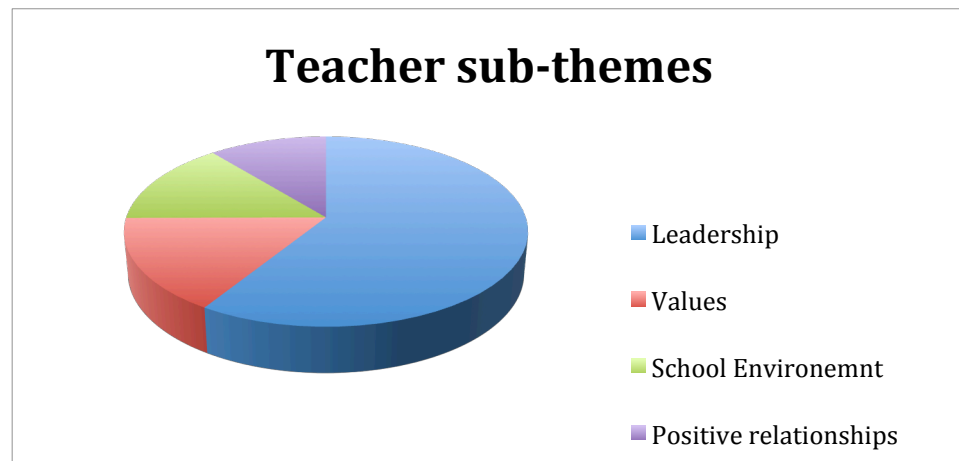


Figure 7.3 Most Common Teacher Sub-themes Data Wave 2

New leadership practices overshadowed EL developments, which saw the quality of leadership plummet according to teachers. There were no positive comments about leadership in the data Wave 2, but many negative comments (162%, see Figure 7.3) as noted by teachers:

Staff morale is not high. Staff is distrustful of management in dealing with emotional literacy.

[The school] provides an excellent framework for providing emotional literacy to students but not to staff.

Staff feeling respected would help restore the current balance and then staff could truly model emotional literacy.

Teachers were more focussed on the benefits of positive emotions and positive relationships and the resultant impact when these were not in place. As a teacher commented: “We need leadership that cares about teachers.” Hence care emerged as another vital element for EL. Teachers are at the centre of developing care due to their key role with students, yet the findings indicate they need to feel cared for, in order to model care to students. Noddings (1998) suggested that care can be recognised by four key processes: modelling, promoting dialogue about care, enabling students to practise how to care, and confirmation. Each process contributes to the overall culture of care evident in schooling. Modelling is when staff act in ways that inspire a positive view of care. Noddings (1998)

suggests that students need opportunities to practise and demonstrate what it is to care through the curriculum, every day lessons, projects, relationships, and outreach in the community. These approaches can infuse and overlay strategies to complement what is already occurring in EL. Education about care means raising awareness of care and ensuring people talk about it often across a range of different contexts. Another approach for modelling care in EL is confirmation. Confirmation involves affirming and encouraging the best in others, similar to strengths-based positive psychology approaches (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Gable & Haidt, 2005; Peterson & Seligman, 2011; Seligman, 2011; Fredrickson, 2009). The findings indicate that developing a school environment where teachers feel cared for is central to developing care in their students.

Values

Teachers identified key values of trust, respect, and honesty or integrity. These values appear to provide the foundation for developing emotionally literate relationships and a school environment where people feel safe. One teacher commented: *“We need trust, respect, and honesty. We also need positive, friendly and happy people.”* It seemed that despite changes in school leadership, or perhaps because of them, teachers did not feel comfortable.

Environment

In describing the type of school social environment needed for high levels of emotional literacy, teachers commented on the need for: *“A supportive environment where staff feels valued and part of communication processes.”* Teachers continued to raise the same types of issues about the school environment and communication suggesting there were deep seated issues involving the school culture, preventing the type of communication teachers expected as professionals (expectancy theory, Bandura, 1997). It seems that the incessant school change processes alienated teachers, resulting in a lack of coherence (Hess, 1999). Fullan (2008) analysed success factors for change related to engaging teachers. It was found that both top-down and bottom-up change require another factor to enable change. It seems that the social glue of change is peer interaction; it can produce focus, coherence, and cohesion. Fullan (2010) perceived the role of the leader as creating opportunities for peer interaction through facilitation and enabling. Another success factor is considered to be collective responsibility whereby the Principal is immersed in learning with teachers (Fullan, 2010). These suggestions had implications for the PAR team, as they were able to assert the collegial influence necessary to promote change.

Positive Relationships

Teachers' comments about relationships support the view that teachers' feelings of emotional depletion prevented them from modeling EL. Teachers continued to describe their relationships with students as the schools' key emotionally literate strength, although other factors were now recognised:

*We have social opportunities for staff to get to know each other out of the classroom.
A strong sense of values is modelled for students.*

In the data Wave 2 , priorities for EL and the way teachers perceived themselves and their school environment shifted again (39% see Figure 7.3). Teachers described the emotionally literate strengths of the school as:

The staff and student well-being committees, the strong sense of belonging and the schools' smallness, which lends to communication between members and the increased care and empathy.

New ways for teachers and students to have a voice were implemented, impacting on how teachers saw EL in the school.

Student Findings

Students were aware of the need for a strengths-based approach, although, like teachers, their thinking seemed to be influenced by some negative views.

School Social Environment

The school social environment was the key EL priority for students (70%, see Figure 7.4). They wanted a positive environment and commented on: "...improving the strengths we already have" and the desire for "...teachers who can recognise my strengths and not just my weaknesses". Students wanted to be affirmed and feel valued by their teachers and peers. Students felt that the school was insular and did not share social events with other schools, as the following student comment shows:

The school as a whole is very anti-social towards other schools and does not attend socials or anything.

We need dances/socials with other schools to develop our social skills in different situations.

Hence the school environment was not meeting students' social desire, being a girls' school, to broaden their social network because the students wanted more social interaction. Coupled with these issues, students felt they were in an environment where they were unimportant. Students commented on the desire for "...some way for students to feel their ideas were heard and recognised". To develop EL further, students advocated "...the idea of being equal with teachers". The EL assets that students were seeking align with the positive environment, positive relationships, and positive purpose domains that have been recognised as central to positive education (Norrish, William, O'Connor, & Robinson, 2013).

Similarly, student understanding about the role of EL in school and student leadership functions aligned with positive education. As time passed, teachers and students commented more about student leadership opportunities and how EL had become embedded in student leadership programs and EL custom-designed year-group based activities. This appeared to increase student sensitivity, empathy, and self-awareness. Contrasting these views was the continued student dissatisfaction with the Student Representative Council (SRC): "*Fix the SRC. They don't really involve the rest of the school. They need to actually do something.*"

Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning (SEL) remained as one of the top four sub-themes (48%, see Figure 7.4). It seems that students were concerned about other students' and teachers' SEL:

*The girls need to be educated about their acceptance of others and diversity.
Shy students don't get enough opportunity to speak up.*

As seen in Figure 7.4 the school social environment continued to represent the school EL quotient most strongly. However, compared to the findings in the first data wave students appeared to be more other-centred as they expressed greater concern about how others were treated and the impact of SEL on the school social environment and tone of the school.

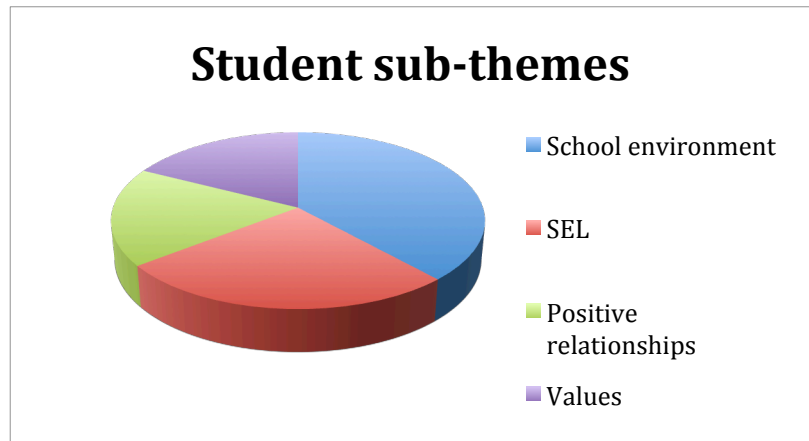


Figure 7.4 Most Common Student Sub-themes Data Wave 2

Students commented that: “*More people need to understand the concept of empathy. Then we would be more understanding and emotionally accepting with less bullying.*” These comments indicate that students were aware of the social-emotional skills that needed to be developed:

Teachers need to be more aware of bullying, even if it is minor.

Teachers should treat you like an actual person.

We need staff who are not so uptight and judgmental.

These comments suggest that teachers lacked awareness of others, empathy, and valuing skills. As another student stated:

I would regard teachers as needing to be more encouraging and more approachable. They should give you good feedback and praise instead of just focusing on the bad.

Teachers are significant adults in students’ lives. Therefore, in the classroom the quality of feedback (Hattie, 2009) and nature of interactions with teachers mattered to students as it shapes students’ academic self-concept (Chen, Thomson, Kromrey, & Chang, 2011).

Student comments suggest that teachers, like students, needed to develop positive emotions such as joy, gratitude, and hope (Froh & Sefick, 2008; Sheldon & Lyobumirsky,

2006) associated with positive education (Norrish, Williams, O'Connor, & Robinson, 2013). Student insights also suggest that teachers needed to undertake a process of professional learning encompassing positive education approaches and social-emotional skill development.

Positive Relationships

Students placed a high priority on their relationships with other students and with teachers. There were positive comments about relationships with teachers and the fact that “... people are willing to help each other.” Students also commented that: “*There are some really strong friendships – students and teachers get along.*”

Students wanted positive relationships even though their relationships were often not expressed as being positive (33%, see Figure 7.4). Students articulated a fuller range of values and were aware, for example, of the importance of diversity and inclusiveness for EL compared to teachers’ apparent lack of awareness. The desire for positive relationships and values overlapped as seen in the following student comments:

Our school is full of people who put others down. Respect is a giant issue that needs to be taught.

Staff need to be a lot more respectful, less negative and less rude

The school seems to have been confronting for the students, judging by the nature of their experience. The negative undertones of relationships between students and teachers undermined the positive relationships. As a result the pivotal role played by positive relationships was drawn into focus (Seligman, 2011).

Values

Similarly to teachers, students saw values such as respect, trust, and honesty as a major concern. For example, students commented:

I think a priority for change and development is for more communication and honesty between staff and students.

Recently some teachers have been talking disrespectfully to students, which annoys me.

Values, including integrity, empathy, and diversity, were seen as key to an emotionally literate school environment. As one student commented: *“Our school is racist. We have only one black girl! Fix it!!”*

Results Research Question 2.1.1 The Impact of School-Derived EL Intervention Strategies

Overview

Research Question 2.1.1 asked what multiple stakeholders perceived as the impact of school-derived intervention strategies on the development of emotionally literate relationships among multiple stakeholders.

This section answers the research question by drawing on data about teachers and students and their relationships. The way the PAR team relationships developed provided an important lens through which to view relationships. Interview, focus group, and questionnaire data were used to elucidate the changing nature of relationships in the data Wave 2.

Findings Research Question 2.1.1

Across the two waves of data within Study 2, there were unexpected changes to relationships. School leadership changes influenced the findings. The contradiction of views and discrepancies in student opinions about EL in relationships showed that ongoing teacher development, and a change in leadership practices (Robinson, 2011), may have been needed. It seems that the involvement of more teachers in EL by broadening the processes of the PAR model could produce beneficial outcomes. Teacher development incorporating positive psychology theory and practices (Seligman, 2011; Duckworth, Quinn, & Seligman, 2009; Fredrickson, 2001; Gable, 2010; Green, Oades, & Robinson, 2011; Huebner, 2012; Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005; McGovern, & Miller, 2008), combined with pedagogical and instructional practices were valuable in promoting student social-emotional competencies (Yoder, 2013).

PAR Intervention Strategy and Relationships

A small, but critical mass of seven school staff, comprising the PAR team, built their knowledge about EL for implementing school-devised EL intervention strategies. An EL

workshop for PAR team members aimed to enhance understanding and build a common language about EL. A discussion about the place of EL and the potential of the PAR resulted in team members proposing a definition for EL. Based on the contributions a working definition was agreed upon:

Emotional literacy is the intra- and inter-personal awareness, knowledge and skills needed at individual and organisational levels to put relational values into practice, promote wellbeing, foster resilience, and maximise the effectiveness of the learning environment.

The team discussed relational values in practice and what respect, care, and acceptance look like, sound like, and feel like in schooling. As a team we talked about how these applied to teachers and students. One member gave her opinion:

Trust and respect go hand in hand for building our relationships: teachers with students, students with other students, teachers and teachers.

I remember thinking how big the divide was between teachers and the management team. I thought how odd it was that the teacher did not mention the relationship between the teachers and members of the management team, when she was speaking. This was not an aberration (PAR notes).

Other team members shared their thoughts:

We used to think that a good classroom was a quiet classroom, now it's different. We are looking for collaboration between the students, teachers who work alongside students, and the noise that comes through a productive and respectful classroom environment.

The school has everything it needs to shine, but as the leadership at the top becomes more withdrawn and uncertain, it is as if the school is losing its heart and soul.

Engaging the PAR team in the intervention processes was essential to success. So, too, was enabling the team to bond. Time was taken to share perspectives about EL, before making decisions. Outside meetings, PAR team members had the capacity to be powerful

advocates for the interventions and EL in general, as one colleague mentioned: *I have been talking with the department about what we can do. They seemed enthusiastic.* The PAR was an important professional opportunity for team members who were looking for ways to develop professionally. Team members were valued for their contributions and expertise through active listening and communication. As I recorded in my journal: *“My involvement in the PAR team is an opportunity to model EL skills and values. Active listening, valuing, and mindfulness play a part. So, too, do trust and respect.”*

PAR team members’ suggestions for the EL intervention strategies were discussed and considered. Initially, the team was presented with an outline of the PAR research process and the principles of PAR. The PAR team discussed the processes of reflection, planning, implementation, and review; including the cyclical nature of the processes. Together with a preliminary analysis of the Study 1 data the team gained an understanding of the research scope, purpose, and methodology. In my journal I made a note about the PAR team and their response to the workshop:

Team members responded enthusiastically to the workshop. It was as though they had been welcomed to a new world. Eyes continued to widen throughout the workshop about how we would work together and maintain an open and respectful approach. It seemed that for some team members this would be a very new and much-needed professional experience.

Discussion about approaches for EL intervention strategies led to an agreed approach of aiming to impact on teachers by weaving EL interventions through their daily experience. The intention was to produce a ‘ripple effect’ in line with the systems theoretical model and the idea that bi-directional forces are at work (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

After a PAR team meeting I made a note:

If we can turn the pervasive, undercurrent of toxicity and ill feeling around through positive initiatives with a strong values-base it will make a difference. It wouldn’t take much - even a ripple could do it.

Given the changing school leadership situation some PAR members suggested EL intervention strategies approaches seemed out of reach, requiring a substantial budget and outside resources. It was agreed the place to start the EL intervention strategy was with teachers because, if they were unhappy, everyone felt it. As one member of the PAR team

stated, *“She [the Principal] does not even know who I am or what I do. She just walks straight by me without saying anything. It makes me feel bad.”*

The PAR team was a barometer for the relational quality within the school. Despite the self-selecting nature of the team, teachers were from a range of faculties and positions. It seemed that as a group the relational aspect was skewed in a positive direction. I recorded in my journal:

The team seems cohesive, however this is to be expected. There are three distinct features – high EL, teachers who hold leadership roles in the school - either middle management or executive - and teachers who were looking for an opportunity to grow professionally. Our team has the capacity to make a difference.

Positive belief was expressed in this journal entry. The prerequisite skills such as effective communication and active listening were evident within the PAR team. As I noted about the team: *“... there seems to be a genuine positive regard for others. It is particularly satisfying to hear team members affirming each other as we reflect upon recent happenings and developments in the EL interventions”*. PAR team members were authentic in their desire to make the school a happier place. At one meeting it was decided to go out of our way to greet more people than usual warmly each day. The next time we met they made some interesting comments:

When I was focused on speaking with people, particularly ones I had to go out of my way to speak to, it seemed to become easy to do. Making sure I said something positive in greeting teachers and giving a smile to people I don't usually have a lot to do with opened my eyes to how we all affect each other. I felt good too because I made an effort.

I made another note in my journal: as X spoke about the greetings, others nodded and smiled. Another person said: *“I agree. The other thing that happened was I noticed how I continued to think positively about things that would usually annoy me.”* It seemed the PAR team were creating positive emotions and adopting mindfulness through the simple act of greeting their colleagues. Team members were more aware about using mindfulness. A conversation in the meeting continued as one member spoke and I noted: *“Imagine if every teacher had such positive conversations with each student every day. What a difference it would make!”*

One of the PAR team members suggested including a positive-affirmation daily bulletin and every week. As I noted, one of the PAR members said *“Let’s treat this in the same way: if we each tell five people why the quotation is there it will be much more effective than hearing about it in a staff meeting”*. Everyone agreed. Unconsciously we were drawing on an essential element of change management: that of the power of peer influence (Gladwell, 2000). By influencing each other positively, we wanted to spread positive sentiment to teachers and students.

Collegial influence seemed the right mechanism to use. So it was for a number of the initial aspects to the teacher intervention. The suggestion box, cards that some teachers started to give each other and acknowledging how others made a positive impact flowed from the positive greeting initiative. There were a number of positive education initiatives, focused on positive emotions such as gratitude, kindness, respect, and care. The PAR work seemed effortless, not because there was an absence of robust conversation, but because care and concern were pivotal elements for how the PAR team worked together. PAR team members stated:

I have appreciated your sensitivity to our workloads and the way we have been able to continue the PAR work on the ground. I found it is enabling me to become more emotionally literate.

Our interventions and [new Principal] have done more than expected during a rocky period for the school. I like the model of reflection, action, and review.

It seems that PAR team’s relationships developed positively through the PAR processes. Team members commented how *“... the opportunity to be involved in the PAR team has given me a new way to interact with my colleagues and students. I seem to be more patient and considerate – perhaps because I am thinking more about skills such as empathy”*. Another commented: *“... our EL work has affirmed my EL skills and encouraged me to pursue more incidental learning opportunities with my students”*. PAR activity acted as a catalyst, enabling positive relationships as in social learning theory (Bandura, 1997).

The way the group functioned seemed to be a contradiction to the way other groups in the school functioned. The ongoing positive collegial influence and professional peer encouragement enhanced social capital (Coleman, 1988). It bonded the group and extended to others (Putnam, 1995). As I noted in my journal: *“Being part of the EL team is affirming*

and energising". This stood in stark contrast to my membership in other groups. For example, one member of the middle management commented about her perception of the management team: *"So, the management team is nothing more than a yes club, whereby anyone with a different opinion is punished. Can't anyone express a different opinion?"*

A lack of democracy and the desire for power was expressed in different ways. In my journal I noted: *"One department's infighting, intellectual jealousy, and arrogance detracts from its effectiveness"*. Teachers seemed to lack resilience at key times as I noted: *"In volatile departments when the pressure mounts, tension escalates between teachers. There seems to be a lack of teacher EL and well-being."*

Opportunities within the PAR team appeared to contrast with these departmental dynamics. PAR team professional learning appeared to be a key for EL capacity. As noted in my journal:

The PAR team are instinctively challenging each other by reading widely and encouraging each other. They seem more open, collaborative, and communicative. This extends beyond their immediate role in the team. The teachers seem confident and purposeful.

The EL intervention strategies aimed for a realistic approach, whereby through a 'grass roots' effort there would be sustainable EL development. The sense of purpose was important. As I noted in my journal: *"With X involved, we have a teacher with the highest level of EL I have ever experienced. This should afford a good result for the team. It will mean growth within and outside the team"*. Building blocks for effective change were in place although challenges involving the changing school context impacted on how team members interacted and relationships developed. Due to the challenging situation the PAR team's relationships seemed to become stronger. As I noted: *"Team members are resilient and courageous. These qualities and the sense of perspective that people are taking helps bond the team"*.

Other opportunities for EL interventions were identified. As a PAR team member commented: *"The assembly offers a great opportunity to build our approach. It's already there each week, so it makes it a very practical way to move things forward"*. By engaging through the everyday life of the school, it seemed the scope to build EL was expansive. This type of EL school activity influenced all student and teacher relationships through a call to action. School assemblies focused on topics including manners, respect for others, and

showing consideration. One focussed on resilience, optimism, and showing positive emotions, inspired by the Dr Seuss book *Hooray for Diffendoofer Day*, whereby students celebrated their teachers. Sessions on resilience for students led by, or involving, PAR team members seemed to enhance the school ambience and the grass roots activity seemed to be taking hold (observation notes).

Top down EL approaches would not have worked. There was change fatigue in the school; meaning teachers were averse to the relentless push for change such as information communication technology (ICT). It was not that they did not see the benefit or want to be involved, but they felt stretched. Another pressure in the school involved people believing there was a punitive culture aimed at teachers. This pressure was felt throughout the school. As I noted:

Teachers seem fearful. They know teachers who fall foul of the system don't last – they are moved on quickly. This means teachers lack trust. They present an image, which is unlikely to be genuine. It is passive aggression in a number of cases.

This sentiment was ingrained into the teachers' belief system and needed a sustained long-term approach to overcome it. Because of fear and mistrust, there was a two-way approach needed for EL: one approach was to break down fear and mistrust and the other was to build positive emotion. Subsequently, the responsive approach to creating a positive environment for teachers and the PAR team dovetailed with ongoing work involving relational aspects, rather than adding pressure to teacher workloads. One target area was acknowledging teacher professional practice.

Acknowledging Teacher Achievement

Volunteer teachers worked as a committee to implement a staff journal to celebrate teacher achievements. The journal, written in an academic style, was distributed widely in digital and hardcopy format to parents and board members. This professional learning opportunity built trust and mutual respect between the teachers involved (Reeves, 2010) (meeting records). Project-based, cross-faculty, and within-faculty work was occurring in pockets all over the school, using a circle of inquiry approach, building capacity for collegial work. It contained an EL basis. As I noted in my journal:

The Dimensions of Learning work is providing deep reflection for the teachers involved. Teachers are experiencing shared professional learning and are engaged in what they are doing building a sense of collegiality. By design, each person is using expert skills, which should result in an excellent journal. Of equal importance is the contribution to creating an emotionally literate environment.

Teacher self-efficacy, (Bandura, 1979) and collegiality seemed to enhance group members' relatedness and sense of purpose (Seligman, 2011), enabling professional learning to fulfil key social-emotional needs.

School-wide Pedagogical Framework

There was productive and innovative professional work underway in the school, merging with EL intervention strategies. A teacher working-group developed a K-12 school-wide pedagogical approach. Ongoing work in this area promoted collaboration. A year-long pedagogy project involved teams and whole-staff professional learning. An ongoing focus on a pedagogical framework for the relational aspect of learning took place at cross-campus meetings, Heads of Department meetings, and staff days. The sustained approach to professional learning enhanced the capacity to apply the framework to teaching, learning, and assessment across the school (Observation notes). It was relevant to the Middle School students, as their teachers were not constrained by the high-stakes Higher School Certificate testing. The pedagogical framework drew on the Quality Teaching framework (DET NSW, 2003).

The school-adapted pedagogical model consisted of four rather than three lynchpins. These included academic care, intellectual quality, a quality learning environment, and pedagogy that makes explicit to students the significance of their work. The aim of the quality-learning environment was to develop structures, routines, and pedagogy involving high expectations and positive relationships between teachers and students (Deakin-Crick, 2009; Claxton, 2007). The pedagogical focus heightened the need for each teacher to build a positive and productive classroom climate. As such, learning and teaching were not on the periphery of the EL work but were central to it.

The Kindness Board

Staff wrote on a kindness board, expressing gratitude about kind acts shown to them by colleagues. Members of the PAR team commented on the use of the kindness board by staff:

I have seen teachers standing at the kindness board and talking about how teachers have been supportive. It was nice to see teachers thinking about the positive difference they make for each other.

If we can promote appreciation and gratefulness using the kindness board, there will be more goodwill, positive thoughts, and actions. That has to be good for everyone.

Initially the kindness board was empty for almost a week. Once a few people used the board others followed. An entry in my diary states: “*All staff, not only teachers, were talking about the kindness board. Its use is spreading - the maintenance and administration teams asked if they could use it.*” The kindness board was used for appreciating and valuing other people. Both writer and recipient appeared to benefit as did anyone who read the comments. All seemed positively affected. As I wrote in my journal:

I have been watching people at the kindness board and who read what is written. People may not be adding anything, but are reading and seem affected positively as they leave the area smiling.

The kindness board helped spread positive feeling. Below are some extracts from the board.

B has been a wonderful mentor and friend since I started, ensuring I haven't missed a trick!

C always smiling and always helpful. Thanks!

D for being flexible under pressure – the video guru!

E thank you for being everywhere, all the time!

To the good fairy at the photocopy machine!

The whole [Science] department for doing things without being asked and being supportive!

G for going on D of E in your holidays. Super good!

J for going beyond the call of duty and finding me a resource!

K shared her lunch with me the day I forgot mine.

L bought me a surprise coffee when I went to help her use the portal.

The kindness board showed positive and selfless acts of kindness were occurring. An entry in my journal shows how a space can be transformed: *“The pigeonhole area has been transformed from a place where teachers moan about getting extras. Teachers still grumble but hearing someone laugh or make a positive comment at the kindness board offsets the negativity.”*

Positive Affirmations and Quotations

Another EL strategy involved positive affirmations. A new quotation was posted weekly and placed in the teacher common room in a prominent position on the staff noticeboard. For example:

Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.

How you do one thing, is how you do everything. Be aware.

Each day tutors met with their tutor group to complete administrative tasks and encourage their students. A positive affirmation was included in the daily messages to promote positive communication, re-engaging tutors with students through a conversation about the quotations. Teachers discussed the quotations and how it made them feel. This prompted action in the tutor groups. As PAR team members mentioned:

The girls have noticed the positive affirmations in the morning messages and are discussing them each day.

The Mathematics Department has always loved positive affirmations. We now have a weekly one that we share, in addition to the permanent ones on the door and the wall.

It creates a positive feeling in the staff room. We talk about the quotes and what they mean. We all support each other.

I know of one tutor who is linking the quotation to actions students can take so they have a good day. We are lucky to have proactive tutors who have taken this on.

It was unclear how many tutors were using the quotation as a discussion stimulus. It appeared there were productive conversations making a positive difference to how students and teachers saw each other. As a student said to a teacher in the PAR team: “*You have made tutor time fun and I enjoy the way you give us a positive thought for each day.*” The impact of this EL strategy changed thinking and the nature of interactions between tutors and students, providing a more positive way of looking at the school environment. However, it seemed that groups in the school that were influenced by groupthink teachers influenced others’ views (Macleod, 2011). Groupthink involves tight-knit groups who are seeking concurrence, which impacts on their decisions and opinions. As I noted:

Despite many positive factors, people seem unhappy. They also seem to stick together. They don’t seem to have much to say, but it seems they have a great deal to say when they are in their own space.

The overriding culture of fear expressed by teachers in the Study 1 findings meant the emotional labour was high (Yin, Chi Kin Lee, Zhang, & Jin, 2013). Teachers indicated they were looking for support and some did not seem to be coping, meaning teachers were struggling to hold back emotions, putting them under pressure. This emotional labour appeared to influence the way teachers interacted with students in the classroom, as student questionnaire comments indicated teachers were ‘mean’, ‘angry’, and ‘unable to cope’.

The Suggestion Box

A further EL intervention strategy was to provide teachers with an opportunity to make suggestions. They were provided with a suggestion box. Teachers were slow to use the suggestion box. They seemed to be wondering about how it might affect them. Teachers were fearful about speaking out. I made a note in my journal:

Apparently after the staff meeting when no one would speak there were lots of comments and discussions. HODS freely tell me this. It is as if they want me to do something about it but realise that I can't.

Once the suggestion box was used the suggestions were about practical issues affecting staff. Teachers requested items such as a cappuccino machine, a zip hot/cold water tap, and a water fountain pump for the staff common room. They made suggestions to impact upon collegiality, requesting a teacher discussion forum, ongoing teacher pedagogical sharing opportunities, and provisions for teachers going on the school camp. My journal entry suggests that the suggestion box made an impact:

Teachers are using the suggestion box in a practical way. It would be great to see even one of the suggestions being approved. The fact that suggestions are making it to management meetings and being considered is a step in the right direction.

PAR team members heard colleagues being sceptical about the suggestion box, venting about perceived communication failings. The suggestion box symbolised a contradiction, as teachers did not believe management wanted to listen. This seemed to be a deeply entrenched belief. I noted the comment in my journal made to a PAR team member “*A suggestion box – I’ll tell ‘em what I think! No-one ever listens anyway!*” Fortunately, a number of the teacher suggestions were followed up and the teachers received their requests, restoring some faith in the communication processes. The suggestion box brought teachers together, thinking optimistically about what might be possible. In this way it enhanced their relationships, replacing despair with hope.

Men and Women of Spirit

An EL intervention strategy entitled the Men and Women of Spirit Award involved a celebration of teacher character traits. The awards acknowledged teachers who were positive role models for their peers. Women of Spirit is part of the school philosophy directed at being courageous and acting with integrity. Recipients were awarded with a certificate. Publicly, the initiative seemed to meet with teacher approval. Casual conversation with a PAR member who said “*X is a great choice and such a wonderful person, who always is spirited and passionate*” confirmed my view. In my journal I made entries about the Men and Women of Spirit Awards:

P is such a worthy recipient for a Men and Women of Spirit Award. He is a real salt of the earth type person. He is humble, kind, and giving. It is great to start with a male colleague.

The second Men and Women of Spirit recipient has shown courage in her personal life. Her colleagues have rallied around her in a great time of need. She has proved herself as optimistic and resilient.

Men and Women of Spirit was operating on a number of levels in the school with what seemed to be a cumulative effect. It was included in teacher induction workshops and involved students. As a member of the PAR team noted: *“The Men and Women of Spirit Awards approach parallels what the prefects are doing in assembly and their meetings. It is current and tied to our school philosophy”*. Students devoted a school assembly to Women of Spirit, speaking about how women of spirit could be modelled. Providing a strong focus on values in this way was new. The way the students presented women of spirit undersold the concept. This seemed to make teachers and students more interested. As I wrote in my journal: *“... the Women of Spirit prefect assembly needed to be backed up by authentic examples of values in action. The prefects created interest but it came across as shallow because of the students’ demeanour”*. The discourse of women of spirit continued to develop over the course of Study 2. A teacher who was not a member of the PAR team shared her intention to action it:

I want to tie Women of Spirit to a History teaching unit with Year 9 or 10 and look at women with strong values and their courage. There is no shortage of examples. It is going to be an exciting area of study. I have drafted out the teaching unit and we would like to trial it next year.

This work was taken on as a professional project of the teacher’s volition. Additionally, the innovative teaching unit influenced the teacher’s faculty positively. The teacher’s optimistic disposition seemed to help keep teachers in her department buoyant. The Women of Spirit gained another expression. The aim was to celebrate members of the school community who embodied the values inherent in women of spirit. Using the school portal students could nominate their mothers and provide support for why they were women of spirit, reflecting on

the values involved. This activity showed how one part of the EL intervention developed and became integrated into the school culture in new ways. Moving between the past, present, and future within a focused EL learning approach helped foster positive relationships. When integrated into student learning, powerful metaphors for contemporary EL role models were developed.

Student Leadership

Student leadership was targeted for an EL intervention strategy. As a member of the PAR team commented:

We need to tie EL skills into the criteria for selecting the Peer Support leaders and include a session on EL at the student leaders' weekend. Many students will benefit. By developing the skill set of a critical mass, we can herald a new awakening for all the students.

The new approach articulated the role of EL in the Peer Support Leader selection criteria stating:

A Peer Support Leader must be able to demonstrate and/or show developing skills in the following areas:

Ability to show empathy, relate to younger children, and value their perspective;

Strong social skills and an ability to make others feel comfortable;

An ability to connect with others, identify and articulate emotions; and

Strong communication skills.

Students were asked to address the selection criteria in a written application to be considered as a Peer Support Leader. Peer Support Leader training sessions focused on EL skills and values. A similar development was used in student leadership training. Creating positive memories and a shared experience provided a change lever for students and teachers. It focused attention on the key role of EL in leadership for the student leaders and the PAR Team. As I noted: *"The leadership weekend seemed to bring unity to the group and developed mutual understanding, resulting in a positive dynamic between the students and staff. My involvement in working closely with the principal was also affirming"*. So, too, in the case of the PAR team the notion of a shared positive experience provided a foundation

and the momentum for other positive work (Draper et al., 2011). Student leaders undertook a skills-based EL session using scenarios, role-play, and dilemma situations, focusing on conflict resolution, communication, empathy, team building skills, and values. The values of empathy, trust, respect, courage, and integrity were pivotal to the workshop. As indicated by the students' evaluations, the EL focus seemed to provide a shared sense of purpose and helped student leaders bond.

Student leaders built upon their EL skills, through after-school sessions, meetings, and events. As such, this was an important PAR EL intervention strategy, starting with PAR team members and spreading through the student body. Student leaders used their skills to manage issues involving their peers and younger students. Each tutor group had an assigned student leader. They impacted on the younger students as a student commented: *"I like interacting with older girls in my tutor group especially the Prefects and House Captains. They are friendly and encouraging."*

At the student leadership camp, the student vision for the year emerged. The vision was to develop the student voice through an SRC and a boarding committee, social experiences, and community participation. The thinking behind these ideas filtered out to other students. When prefects attached to Houses and tutor groups visited groups, they aimed to build connections, motivating students to participate in school events. Due to the student leaders, the work of the PAR team was recognised broadly. This included a Middle School committee implemented later in the study and peer support leaders who had been the focus of EL-based selection criteria (meeting notes). EL embedded in learning as part of the EL intervention strategy could also be seen within other school structures, impacting teachers and students. For example, a significant development was to include a focus on EL in all speeches to parents, staff, and prospective parents ensuring that EL was a central component of the school public message.

Academic Care

Academic care was part of the school strategic plan, providing an opportunity for the PAR team to develop a strategy. Academic care was used to engage tutors and students in discussions about school involvement and academic progress. Each student received a learning journal, which began with a positive education approach. There was an opportunity for students to identify their passions, interests, skills and qualities in order to focus discussions with their tutor on their strengths. Identifying strengths led to provision for students to think and write about how they could apply their strengths. For example, a

reflection page gave students and their teachers the opportunity to explore the notion of service and “*what kind of ‘spirit’ or ‘approach to life’ will help me fulfil my school’s motto?*” Time within structures was planned to enable conferencing between teachers and their students.

Students tracked their involvement in school co-curricular activities, evaluating their learning habits and dispositions. The learning habits and dispositions included areas such as: academic resilience, class work, and respect. With their teachers, students examined the degree to which I “*persist in my attempts to understand new work*”, “*bounce back from disappointments involving group work: feedback, apply feedback from my teachers, and let teachers know when I have concerns about my work.*” In an item on respect, students considered peers, teachers, and school property.

Within the school-wide pedagogical work, the dialogue of the learning journal aimed to increase student motivation and enhance learning power. Other parts of this initiative focused on self-management, building responsibility, and planning skills. The learning journal helped students gain control over their learning, enabling them to set goals (Dweck, 2010). The impact of the academically-focused EL intervention was to focus student-teacher conversations on personalised expectations and to give academic care sessions a sense of direction and goal orientation. Some students named the learning journal as a social-emotional strength within the school, meaning it made a positive impact on them.

The negative aspect of the EL strategy was that tutors were not engaged early enough in the planning phase to feel that they owned the strategy. Previously some tutors had expressed that they felt disconnected from their tutor group “*because often Heads of House take over and don’t give us an opportunity to have the time we need with our group*” (observation notes). This quote shows tutors felt the Head of House that led their team had usurped their autonomy. This type of belief was exacerbated by the use of tutor time without their consultation, which created tension. The lack of consultation resulted from tight timelines, which made greater communication impossible, if deadlines and expectations were to be met. Despite the implementation issues, tutors made the effort and “*were engaging with students in a meaningful and sustained way to really make a difference as to how students viewed themselves as learners and potential leaders*” (meeting records). This quote supports the value of the EL intervention. As an extension of the interaction between teachers and students when preparing the semester student report, the student learning journal proved to be a successful EL approach. It combined a focus on learning power, values, and EL skills with learning and co-curricular involvement.

Teachers were attuned to the need for positive emotions and the role of trust and respect in emotionally literate relationships. As I noted:

The tone of the school seems to have changed again. Recently this was typified by the male teachers' involvement in the Movember charity event. There is more laughter and positive regard. People seem more relaxed and willing to get involved.

The feeling of fear that was evident in the school seems to have lifted and there is more joy. People seem to be more satisfied in their work environment.

Sustainable EL intervention areas involved the Women of Spirit initiative via the student leaders and the teacher initiatives to embed EL into teaching units, thereby impacting across a teaching department. Other gains were made in the ongoing development of tutor-based activities drawing on the academic and pastoral realms through the learning journal. The impact of the learning journal was to provide a stimulus for teachers to have productive conversations with their students in the tutor-student situation. The approach enabled teachers to talk with their students in a holistic way about their strengths, interests, and qualities while also getting to know them as learners. Further, it provided the vehicle for teachers to mentor students in regard to the mind-set with which they approach their academic work (Dweck, 2006). Study 1 findings indicate students had mixed opinions about how tutors interacted with their group. The learning journal and academic care activities gave all students the opportunity to seek academic support. This met a need expressed in the Study 1 findings.

Middle Leaders' Professional Learning

The perception of EL growth during the first part of Study 2 accompanied the EL intervention strategies and new school leadership. This was seen in the collaborative work that went into planning a middle management conference. Over thirty members of staff attended the weekend conference. At the conference there was a session presented on academic care. In the feedback about the conference, participants were asked: What did you learn at the conference? One teacher responded: *“that as a team we can make a difference and shape the culture of the school community – as one”*. Another responded: *“positive steps to create a better working environment for staff, improving the students' learning, and overall 'life' at [the school]”*.

It seemed this professional learning opportunity enabled middle managers to understand each other. The conference also enabled new initiatives for tutor time, such as the learning journal, to be introduced. It appeared that the conference provided the opportunity for key teachers to build emotionally literate relationships that would carry forward when the new Principal arrived. Towards the end of the school year in a PAR team meeting, plans for the next school year were discussed. The process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting helped to inform future planning.

Changing Leadership

A shift in school leadership involved a school review during the implementation phase of the EL intervention strategy. One of the Principals in the implementation phase of Study 2 conducted her role with people to build ownership and involvement. An example of the new approach was the introduction of a student boarding committee as a key EL initiative for student voice, opening communication about things that affected boarders. The Principal explained they talked about *“what the food was like, the outings coming up and what they would like in the boarding house”*. She added, *“I am going to organise access to the swimming pool and library over the weekend”*. The Principal stated: *“This is their home and they need to feel that it is their home”*.

Initially student voice provisions did not extend into other areas. Changes to school structures proceeded with the introduction of a Year 7-9 Middle School. There was a teacher working committee and professional learning for teachers involving the neuroscience of girls’ learning. Planning for the introduction of a Middle School did not involve students, perhaps in a bid to maintain the hierarchical school structure. In aiming to be innovative and responsive to student needs, it seemed odd that the middle school development neglected the student voice. The new approach to leadership had a marked impact on teachers and students. As I noted in my journal:

We are enjoying the new Principal as an educational leader. Her personal qualities are obvious: listening, deep thinking, curiosity, and a personable manner. She appears to enjoy consultation, ensuring she has all the people involved in an issue in the room at the one time.

We have a Principal who leads convincingly! The new approach focuses on people. The new-look newsletter is comprehensive, detailed, and sustained. Personally addressing students in assembly was simple and obvious, but it signalled a new

expectation – assembly was about them. The powerful combination of commentary about the historical, social, and religious and service aspects of the school were celebrated through word, song, and prayer.

Pictorial Representation of Emotional Literacy

Based on my observations and reflection as a member of the PAR team I developed pictorial representations to explain EL. The first was based on an observational analysis and encompassed an ecological perspective. The whole child and teachers as learners and leaders were encircled by a sense of purpose and shared experiences and values based on trust and respect. These values seemed to bind teachers and students together and draw on positive education approaches (Figure 7.5).

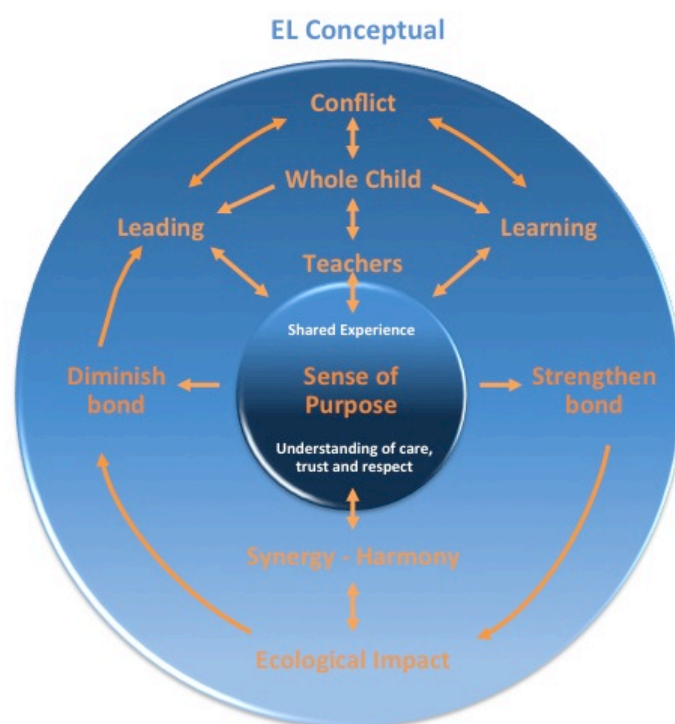


Figure 7.5 Observational Analysis – Factors Influencing the PAR Interventions

Based on a preliminary analysis of data, my journal entries, and observations, I developed a pictorial representation (Figure 7.6). The pictorial representation encapsulated my beliefs about factors influencing the success of the school-based PAR strategy and the school capacity to develop emotionally literate relationships. Key factors appeared to be:

communication, the school context, teachers and the Principal as leaders, and well-being based on internal and external psychosocial factors. Teacher resilience stood out as an internal factor (Mansfield, Beltman, Price, & McConney, 2012; Peters & Pearce, 2012; Tait, 2008; Berkowitz & Meyers, 2013; Cohn et al., 2009; Doney, 2013; Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011). The school context, including social capital and the lens or mental models by teachers used to perceive and pay attention to the world seemed to inform other factors in the model (Busche & Coetzer, 2007).



Figure 7.6 Factors Influencing School-Based Emotional Literacy Intervention Strategies

Outcomes

A range of EL intervention strategies were conducted prior to collecting the data Wave 1. The intervention strategies encompassed approaches to help teachers feel valued, increase positive emotions, and enhance their sense of meaning. Student intervention strategies involved EL skills development using structures such as assembly, student

leadership initiatives, and academic care. Students appeared to benefit from the intervention strategies although concerns about teacher EL deficits influencing relationships remained. The student intervention strategies were conducted prior to the data Wave 1 and continued following that period.

In the changing school environment collegial influence was central to implementation of the EL intervention strategies for developing emotionally literate relationships. PAR processes seemed to enable team members to reflect on how EL developed and to enhance their relationships with each other. The school-based PAR EL intervention strategies seemed to confirm the place of trust and respect as foundational values for developing emotionally literate relationships. These values act as a lever for developing the school EL quotient. Democratisation based on these values and expressed through open communication and decision-making processes has everything to do with the success of the PAR intervention strategies for emotionally literate relationships. Likewise, the processes of deep reflection, planning, implementation, and review gave the EL intervention strategy integrity. In addition, finding ways to express values – such as gratitude, generosity through service, and kindness – appeared to lift morale and school ambience. Further, expressing joy and evoking a sense of meaning through collegial and peer support helped build a more positive school environment.

For school change initiatives, a combination of vision, incentives, skills, resources, and applying an action plan were key factors. Not all of these were available in the ideal way so an organic implementation process was used. By advancing EL areas that team members felt passionately about and which had been expressed as needs in the Study 1, dynamic and engaging professional activity was generated that met the needs identified. As this research is using systems thinking it is also important to note that there were many possible interventions across a number of the school layers.

Teacher Questionnaire

Wave 1. Teachers completed the same questionnaire as in Study 1 for the data for Study 2 Wave 1. There were indications that relationships were improving as a result of the EL intervention strategies and the change in leadership. Teachers' views about the positive impact of the EL interventions were captured when teachers were asked about the EL school strengths:

The work in academic care, the kindness board, and suggestion box and these types of questionnaires and all the recent PD helped change our perceptions and

understandings of what is happening in our school. My level of awareness for emotional literacy has increased and I can see some changes in the school. Teachers are responding to the emotional literacy strategies such as the Kindness Board and Men and Women of Spirit. We need to sustain this type of activity for teachers to feel valued.

These comments indicate the positive sentiment generated through the intervention strategies, indicating hope for the future. Teachers seemed to shift to a more positive outlook. The initiatives were enabling teachers to support, recognise, and affirm each other as they were presented with a new way of looking at things. Another teacher commented: *“I am hopeful that we are in a period of growth and rejuvenation in this area. There are many staff who are willing and eager to help this process”*. Such sentiment impacted on how the PAR team functioned and how their relationships developed.

Emotional Literacy as True Learning

Comments in the first teacher questionnaire showed insight and development of thought about learning and EL: *“True learning means students connect personally to intellectual and conceptual learning, i.e. there is an ‘emotional literacy’ linked to all topics”*. Another teacher wrote in the first teacher questionnaire: *“Emotional literacy can be seen in classrooms when students work effectively in groups. They take responsibility and understand others to get the group functioning effectively”*. These comments show that when teachers were given opportunities to consider EL, they were very aware of how it impacted on learning and their classrooms. Opportunities to reflect through sustained professional learning were also valuable in building collegial support.

When asked about EL strengths, teachers in the first teacher questionnaire noted: *“Enhanced learning through access to professional development opportunities”* and *“There are relational gains in our professional learning teams and projects”*. These views signal that professional development holds EL potential (Reeves, 2010).

Leading and Leadership

Leading and leadership were important to Study 2 as an influence and an intervention affecting relationships. Teachers when asked about EL strengths in the first questionnaire commented on student leadership and pastoral aspects: *“Peer Support – Tutor arrangements for students”*. Teachers commented on their positive student relationships through comments

such as: “*Students and teachers can work closely together and students can express their whole selves*”. Another teacher stated strengths as: “*Staff to students within the classroom. Peer Support group*”. In noting social-emotional strengths teachers noted the: “*A rapport between staff and students that encourages open communication*”. They also noted there was “*a caring, nurturing staff and a sense of community that has been built*”. Teachers’ views about emotionally literate relationships were seen in comments such as “... *a strong supportive teaching staff and administration staff and good staff and student relationships*”.

Three items on the questionnaire stand out for a positive shift in the responses compared to Study 1. These items involved management’s approachability, student participation in decision-making in lessons, and teacher knowledge about reducing confrontational situations. In Study 1 about one fifth of teachers thought that management were approachable, whereas in Study 2 Questionnaire 1, more than one third thought management were approachable (see Table 7.3). This may have been due to a change in school leadership or the two members of management participating in the PAR strategy and teachers viewing them differently.

Item	Study 1 Questionnaire – Teachers % agreed	Study 2 Questionnaire Wave 1- Teachers % agreed
Senior management are approachable	21	35
Students are offered a means of participation in decision making in class	25	50
Staff know how to reduce confrontation	39	85

Table 7.3 Comparison of Item Results Teachers’ Questionnaires Study 1 and Study 2 Wave 1

The second item involved students making decisions in class. In Study 1 only one-quarter of teachers agreed that this occurred, whereas in Study 2 half agreed that students did have opportunity to be involved in decision-making in class (see Table 7.3). This change represents a large shift, which could be explained by the emphasis on pedagogy and whole-

staff onsite professional learning. It may also have been that different teachers responded to the questionnaire and viewed the issue differently.

The third area in the teacher questionnaire showed a marked shift in applying personal skills to reduce confrontation. In Study 1 just over a third of teachers said they had the skills to reduce confrontation, whereas in Study 2 a resounding majority of teachers indicated they had these skills (see Table 7.3). The three areas of change show shifts in some factors for enhanced EL in relationships.

These positive signs about the response to the EL intervention strategies were undermined by teacher comments showing negative views were retained about the way teachers felt devalued as represented in their relationships with the school leadership team: *“Staff need to be valued and listened to and develop a climate where staff as well as students feel valued”*. It seems that despite the gains made in EL, the unmet teacher self-efficacy needs remained (Bandura, 1997).

Wave 2

At the time of the Wave 2 teacher questionnaire, there was another new Principal. The questionnaire results suggest that gains indicated in the data from Wave 1 were lost, with the results closely patterned on the Study 1 results (see Table 7.4). This shift in teacher responses can be seen in the two waves of data in Study 2, representing different styles of leadership in their response to questionnaire item: a high value is placed on developing positive relationships. The wave 2 patterns were repeated over other items involving emotionally literate relationships (see Table 7.4). Fewer teachers provided detailed comments possibly in Wave 2 Questionnaire indicating the number of new teachers in the school or teachers who may not have wanted to comment again

Item	Study 2 Questionnaire – Wave 1 Teachers % agreed	Study 2 Questionnaire –Wave 2 Teachers % agreed
The overall atmosphere is warm, friendly and responsive	95	50
a high value is placed on developing positive relationships	40	18
Staff who are struggling are offered non-judgmental support	55	25

Table 7.4 Comparison of Item Results Teachers' Questionnaires Study 2 Wave 1 and Wave 2

The new principal achieved major gains for EL initiatives in terms of structures and approaches to learning and student leadership, yet it appeared the implementation approach was flawed. It seemed that teachers felt less valued, competent, and acknowledged than they had previously, creating a negative ripple effect. It appeared the teachers were looking for moral authenticity and a relational leadership style marked by communication and decision-making processes to further strengthen the school as a learning community. However, this did not occur.

A negative ripple effect

Leadership was the major theme within the second data wave for teachers, but not for positive reasons. The Executive Team interviews, teacher focus group, and teacher questionnaire responses were consistent on this point. The impact appeared to be a yearning for positive emotions and emotionally literate leadership. The trust that had started to build with the previous Principal seemed to have been lost, as indicated in the teacher questionnaire comments: *“This school has a ways to go in learning to trust staff. Question to administrators: Is it permissible, conducive to an emotionally literate school environment if staff are manipulated and lied to?”* Another teacher commented that, *“The school needs a Principal who treats staff with respect, consults, collaborates, and listens to other ideas”*.

It appeared there was dissonance between views about staff voice and the sense of belonging expressed in interviews, perceptions, and the reality commented on by a teacher in the second teacher questionnaire about the social-emotional strengths of the school. EL strengths were cited as *“Staff and student well-being committees. Strong sense of belonging.*

Smallness leads to communication between members through increased care and empathy". Contrasting these views were many comments about lack of teacher voice. EL in relationships was continuing to develop through the interventions yet seemed thwarted and undermined by the leadership.

In commenting on the EL strengths, a teacher says: *'Some of the initiatives that began through the work of the PAR team. The approach to teachers has dwindled due to the new leadership, but student leadership has greater chance of success in the longer term'*". Another teacher noted the emotionally literate student-teacher relationships in the classroom: *"The way that some teachers involve their students in the decisions about learning in their classroom. They listen to students and give them a voice"*. Teachers commented on the way a high value was placed on students rather than teachers' care through comments such as: *"X provides an excellent framework for providing emotional literacy to students but not to staff"*. And:

Students are treated as individuals and have the benefit of very experienced, competent, and caring teachers. Students are nurtured and mentored and their achievements are valued and celebrated.

Teachers were concerned about aspects of the students' experience involving a sense of agency. These concerns focused on opportunities to be involved with students in key areas and student learning. It seems that teachers wanted to be more involved in discussions with students and pursue their own learning further as the following comment shows. *"[We need] more discussion with students about issues that impact upon them and matter. More involvement of tutors and staff training."* Another teacher commented that what was needed was: *"More student centred learning and student control over learning. Students could make decisions about the work to do."* Enabling students to make decisions about their learning can provide them with greater autonomy, a sense of purpose, and motivation. It seems that when students feel more confident and in control of their learning this can change their relationship with other students. Martin and Dowson's (2009) research supports this view. Drawing on relational, motivational, engagement, and achievement facets of schooling in their meta-analysis, they propose that teacher level classroom action appears to influence student achievement.

Beyond these teacher comments, concern was expressed about teachers' own social-emotional needs and the need for strong leadership. For example, when asked about priorities

for change and development, a teacher commented “*value the staff*” and another commented “*leadership strength and articulation of vision*”. Another teacher noted what was needed was a school environment: “*where courteous, measured, and professional behaviour is modelled at all times*”. It seems that teachers did not feel the way they were being treated matched their expectations, detracting from EL. The way teachers perceived their needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy were not being met, creating a contradictory situation for building relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Teachers felt they could not adequately attend to their relationships in the classroom. As one teacher commented, we need “... *a less stressful environment where better classroom learning and therefore relationships can be fostered*”. These results indicate the environment created by the tone of school leadership undermined the EL intervention strategies and relationships. It seems that once teachers had experienced emotionally literate leadership they were attuned to a lack of EL in leadership.

Findings Staff Interviews

Executive Team. Executive Team Teacher 1 indicated that she had a vision for EL, articulating a four level approach to EL with student relationships as the core. The four levels were ‘*structures and events*’, ‘*proactive and reactive processes*’, ‘*interventions*’, and ‘*experiential learning provided*’. This was a strong student-based approach, with relationship building opportunities at each level. Through international service learning, the Executive Team member felt students could build lasting relationships. There was also an opportunity for students to exercise a sense of agency through principal challenges in which “*students are provided with opportunities to design and implement projects*”. When asked about how the proactive and reactive processes enhanced relationships, Executive Team Teacher 1 commented on a number of ‘*critical incidents*’ and stated “*these types of experiences and the modeling of appropriate responses are part of emotional maturity. It is developmental.*”

Interventions introduced included Year 7 Friendship forums to enable all students to build their EL skills and develop friendship and relationship skills. The friendship forum was to be followed by meeting the need for additional initiatives.

There will be a psychology elective introduced. Then the next progression will be an academic care program for Tutors. Staff would react to this based on their own approach e.g., story-telling or role play or other. Staff PD would weave through

levels 2, 3, and 4. Staff needs to value it to do it well. There is a continuum of staff readiness.

While impressive, the proposal was student-focused, unlike the approach taken in the PAR EL intervention strategies. Given the previous school culture of fear, it seemed the teachers needed more opportunities to take ownership of EL initiatives and to build trust. Executive Team Teacher 1 spoke about the role of ‘*controlled risk taking*’ which she believed enabled students to know themselves and develop EL through short and longer journeys. The focus on students enabled the provision of additional counselling services and outreach to expert health professionals and psychologists.

A second member of the Executive Team explained how the EL interventions impacted relationships and how elements continued to evolve. She explained that a teacher well-being committee was established to identify initiatives for teacher well-being. The following answer was provided as a response to the question about EL interventions continuing:

A teacher well-being committee is considering the viability of a number of the interventions including the kindness board, suggestion box, and Men and Women of Spirit to give staff a voice.

When prompted about how other EL interventions had become embedded she stated:

The academic care approach is continuing. Tutors now actively interact with girls as they do a weekly forty-minute academic care session. It has given staff more quality time with girls. The quotes in the bulletin have stopped, although they were retained for some months into the new year. The student voice is stronger due to a range of support structures including the SRC, year group student leaders, and a Middle School committee. This has had an impact. The new model for student leadership has been very effective.

The formation of an SRC had been requested over an extended period. The expanded approach to student leadership met the needs of some students for a greater voice. When asked about EL policy, practice, or approaches to communication and decision-making influencing teachers, the second member of the Executive Team answered:

While based on worthy intentions, an unworkable decision-making model hampered the work of committees, including the teacher well-being committee. Across the school quite a number of committees were established with all meeting minutes going to the principal management meeting for all decisions to be made. This was impossible due to the number of agenda items at that meeting. Several committees did not have their minutes read or considered. Decisions were not made and thereby action stalled. This led to teacher frustration and stalled follow through or ongoing meetings, resulting in a lack of confidence and seemingly teachers lost heart. New middle school structures included separate Middle School assemblies, which appeared to give students a stronger voice.

The teacher well-being committee was vital, but seemed to be undermined from the beginning, as they did not have any autonomy with the Principal making the decisions. This meant that while the relational capacity of the teacher professional learning was exercised, it produced a degree of frustration due to the processes involved. The result was ambiguity and contradiction within the leadership. On the one hand teachers were encouraged to become involved, but on the other their involvement was limited. It seemed there were lost opportunities to build democratisation.

Efforts were made to enhance the student voice through assemblies that aimed to be more inclusive and developmentally appropriate. When asked about further EL developments that stemmed from the PAR team EL intervention strategy, executive team teacher 2 answered:

As part of a new approach to student leadership we introduced a leadership camp for Year 10. We investigated emotional literacy. The girls found the camp very empowering. The parents said that the girls haven't stopped talking about it. They are feeling very connected to their year group. It was a 'light-bulb' experience. All of a sudden, they seemed to understand others' emotional needs. They did a mask activity that enabled them to take on the role of others, for example, teachers, parents, and other girls. For some there was an emotional outpouring because they realised what life is like for some other people. They became very emotional about things. The mask held a lot of symbolism and enabled them to actually see beyond themselves.

The EL intervention strategy indicated that creative and innovative solutions where students are in a different context can reap rewards. The mask activity experience demonstrates the

key role of empathy as an EL skill for building relationships. The camp aimed to provide each student with an opportunity to grow as a person.

Another of the EL intervention strategies involved the Women of Spirit strategy which drew on values steeped in school history. In response to a question about how Women of Spirit has been embedded, Executive Team Teacher 2 responded:

Women of Spirit has worked very well. Students and teachers know it. More than that - they know what it stands for and how relational values matter to other people. It is about courage, but it's also about integrity, respect, and empathy. Recognising women in the community who embody the Women of Spirit philosophy is a powerful strategy. It brought people together.

The Women of Spirit strategy enhanced the school EL quotient, as it is timeless and profound.

Executive Team Teacher 3 was in a different section of the school. He felt that:

Recent changes involving new school directions have unsettled teachers. The girls notice this. People seem emotional and on edge. We are fine over here though. Everyone is happy. We are able to keep our teachers and staff.

It seemed Executive Team Teacher 3 established a stable, positive, and productive microcosm within the school. In my notes about the meeting I noted [ET3] “*seems resilient. His grit and ability to exude positive emotions is clearly infectious. His sense of humour and personable approach make a difference*”.

Overall, members of the executive team lacked cohesion in their views about EL and had had different experiences of EL in the school. Executive Team Teacher 1 was new to the school and was envisioning her own EL approach, whereas the other two Executive Team members had been in the school from the start of Study 1.

School Counsellors

Two Counsellors were interviewed. One had retrained to become a Counsellor and was a member of the PAR team. They were asked about how their view of EL had developed and what this meant for relationships. One stated: “*It has raised my awareness about the school environment and how one facet affects another. The same can be said of groups and*

individuals who are influential or disaffected.” I made a note in my journal about the counsellor interviews: “The counsellors seemed reserved during the interview. This could be due to an array of factors such as fatigue, maintaining loyalties to the new Principal, or their focus on case-work.”

The other Counsellor commented:

The surveys and emotional literacy approaches have highlighted the essential elements of the quality of relationships within our school. We have looked at how resilient and connected our staff and students are. The recent survey helped us reflect on our own interactions and raised our awareness about areas that we still need to work on. We thought there was some student bullying happening but we couldn't confirm it. Since the last survey we have not been able to zone in on it. What we have done is to implement some friendship forums. Girls worked with each other. There were 8 – 10 girls in each forum and there were two academic care sessions used. This was a good start but we need more. The girls looked at bullying, the effects, and consequences.

I made a further note in my journal: *“Student questionnaires and focus groups have indicated that bullying is rampant yet the counsellors have not seemed to be able to act on it. The dynamics are obviously complex and unwieldy.”*

When asked about the PAR team and the approaches used, one of the Counsellors answered:

The PAR team worked well together and we did some interesting work across a range of areas that were important to staff. [The Counsellor] took the issue of staff wellbeing to [the Principal] to see if we could tap into the EAP – Employer Assistance program. This operates so that staff can access so-many free counselling sessions. This would be a confidential service for staff.

The Counsellors were advocates for teachers and the EL interventions, making an effort to gain professional teacher support. When asked about specific EL interventions such as Women of Spirit and how these affected people, the other Counsellor responded: *“I think it was because we looked at it in multiple ways across different dimensions of the school. It just*

became part of our vocabulary – a way to talk about values and what was a lost part of our school philosophy.”

It seems other EL interventions were delayed or on hold: *We still have our Men and Women staff awards but nothing more has happened with those this year.* The Counsellors spoke about new teachers in the school:

The new ones are very disaffected. They were interviewed by certain people and based on those interviews formed a particular picture of the people and the school. Both are now different because we have a different Principal and people have left.

It appears that the combination of new, disillusioned teachers, slowed EL intervention progress, and changes in school direction impacted teachers and students through a lack of teacher motivation and satisfaction (Huysman, 2008; Kersaint, Lewis, Potter, & Meisels, 2007).

Despite the setbacks there were signs of progress in building a sense of agency: *“Another change is that the girls have a stronger voice in the Middle years. There is a student committee that is part of the SRC. The girls get to talk about important issues, and our Head of Middle School meets with them.”* The Counsellors regarded the signs of progress in a positive way yet seemed overwhelmed by the degree of ongoing school change. As key support staff who impact on others, they needed to model resilience (meeting notes). The role of resilience for staff such as the Counsellors did not seem to be part of what was considered, yet from an ecological perspective, it is a key factor (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Teacher Group Interview

Three teachers participated in the teacher group interview. Teachers were asked how they viewed the impact of the EL intervention strategy. The teachers described a range of initiatives some of which enabled students to express their opinions and make choices. These advances indicated that students were moving from an experience of subordination to one where they could be more independent (Deci & Ryan, 2002), although there seemed to be a long way to go before students would become true co-leaders of change (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012). One teacher responded: *“The girls are better supported now. The location of the boarding houses has changed and the number of Counsellors has increased, meaning there is a dedicated Counsellor for the Middle School students.”* The physical positioning of the Counsellors seemed to be a key way to promote access and confidentiality.

A second teacher answered: *“We have new leadership roles in place to ensure all students have the opportunity to build relationships to support them academic and socially. The introduction of a Head of Middle School is recognised as another step forward for building emotional literacy”*. Leadership density was becoming a reality whereby a flat leadership structure enabled the students to receive a broader and deeper spectrum of care. The third teacher commented on a service learning initiative:

X initiated a connection with a school on Erakor Island, sending them computers and other materials. The relationship with them developed into a service-learning project. Students and teachers worked together to help build classrooms, teach lessons, and conduct sport events. This created goodwill, gratitude, and mutual respect and understanding. For some students, it was life-changing. They seemed to appreciate far more about their own school, peers, and teachers when they came back. The stories students and teachers told of their experiences spread, creating positive affect.

It appears that the experience of giving to others created positive outcomes for everyone involved (Crocker, 2006). The positive feelings connected to their experience influenced their views of their peers and teachers in a positive way.

The first teacher also mentioned the connected curriculum. The connected curriculum was developed to re-engage students in their learning. The teacher commented:

A cross-faculty team of teachers investigated curriculum possibilities, drawing together opportunities in Human Society and its Environment (HSIE), Information Communication Technology, Science, and English. Students were given choice about where they went on an urban challenge, a series of weekly field trips and excursions. They were exposed to new learning opportunities such as visiting a mosque or an Islamic school. When they returned, they shared what they learnt.

Middle School learning was reconceptualised to provide a more constructivist and authentic learning experience (meeting notes). The approaches appeared to be heading in the right direction indicating teachers were showing more trust towards students (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012), thereby aiming to enhance motivation and engagement. This was achieved through the introduction of connected curriculum as a feature of the Year 8 curriculum. This learning approach met the needs expressed in Study 1 by students for opportunities to have

choice in learning and go on field trips and excursions. Researchers have suggested that by giving students a say and formalising student roles in school improvement, there are more sustainable outcomes (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012; Mitra, 2008; Eccles, Gootman, & Appleton, 2002). The connected curriculum changed the way another group of teachers worked together. The first teacher commented on other Middle School approach designed to engage students:

We now have a signature event for each year group. This provided a sense of anticipation and excitement, but also an opportunity for celebration and positive emotion. We have made an effort to build connections and support. Friendship circles and family nights were offered. This was partly in response to bullying and a culture where alcohol use seemed to warrant attention. It was also to build stronger connections between school and home.

She explained that the friendship circles enabled students to:

... explore their current versus ideal values and practices. The circles provided students with opportunities to reflect on how and why they treated others the way they did. It also gave students a fresh start and an opportunity to change how they treated others, if a change was needed.

The friendship circles appeared to be an emotionally literate and redemptive strategy. The range of middle school developments appeared to offer EL benefits. I noted in my journal: *“To the outsider it appears that the school has all but reinvented itself. While the core is the same, the way it can now be expressed is far more contemporary and innovative. The rate and volume of school change seem to be limitless.”*

Outcomes

A range of positive EL interventions appeared to be occurring in the school. Some of these developed out of the new Principal’s vision and others continued from the earlier part of the EL intervention strategies. The advances made did not address teachers’ concerns about feeling de-valued and alienated by the school management, thereby jeopardising teacher retention.

Student Focus Group

The student focus group's views about relationships were influenced by their need to feel engaged, valued and respected in light of recent school changes. These dominated their comments, overshadowing the impact of the EL intervention strategies. Students wanted an authentic voice and a sense of agency to feel that they could influence and be involved in school-decisions. When asked about the EL interventions, one student commented:

Students would like a say in what happens at school. There are lots of ways this could happen, such as in tutor group, House groups or by talking with different teachers. At the moment it is a bit like we don't count. We are invisible when decisions are made.

Student voice. The students were asked about student voice and how what the school did helped them understand themselves and their feelings to build relationships. To feel that teachers were listening was prized by them as it showed students their teachers cared about them (Bernard & Slade, 2009). One student commented:

There is an SRC, but that is a joke. There is about 10% attendance rate and no follow up of girls who don't attend. It is not taken seriously. The teachers are not listening to the girls. Students are shot down for having an opinion. We have off-limits topics that we are not allowed to talk about in the SRC. We don't think the Middle School is working because there has not been open communication with students. All Year 11 and 12 are forced to do twelve units and we are not allowed to talk about it. We are only allowed to talk about things such as ribbons, which is pathetic. Our ideas get crushed, such as one for a dance party

As a number of the EL interventions targeted staff, the student focus group did not comment on these. They provided a window into their views about student leadership and student voice. While an SRC has been established, the girls are told what they can or cannot talk about. They seemed outraged by this directive and the fact they were excluded from discussions where it could be important to give their opinion. There appeared to be some inconsistency involved in the situation.

In the student questionnaire Wave 1 students continued to express their views on the students' voice. They felt disempowered and alienated through their lack of involvement in important decisions. As in Study 1 there was a domino effect starting with the School Board, the Principal and management team, teachers and students with each feeling disempowered

by the group higher up in the school hierarchy. The issue of power in decision-making and communication undermined EL and emotionally literate relationships. These views were linked to the issue of consistency; students were of the opinion that there was no consistency in policy about student management, tutor activity, academic care. The impact of the perceived inconsistency was noted in my journal:

We seem to have a fractured community. For a variety of reasons there are unmet needs. Some students want more academic challenge, some want more subjects and opportunity to go on excursions, above all they want to be heard and cared for. Teachers want autonomy and support, but don't seem to find enough of either.

Students yearned for authentic participation in school decisions. A student commented on the questionnaire wave 1 that a suggestion box could be placed in the library, so students could have a say in what was happening in the school but had already dismissed the suggestion as 'irrelevant'.

Irrelevant suggestion: I think there should be a 'suggestion box' in the library where students can have their say in improving the school. It's just a box that people put slips of paper in, and maybe Principal/prefects can review them and carry them out if they're agreed on.

In the wave 2 student questionnaire there were some positive comments with reference to student voice but negative comments outweighed positive ones by a ratio of more than four to one. Some students saw the new Student Representative Council as a social-emotional strength, yet many wanted “*more say in changes that occur within the school*”. The focus for students was on the process of change and how they felt excluded from it. This exclusion of student voice in contributing to decision-making processes appeared to overshadow some worthwhile EL foci. The process of involving students and activating the youth voice has been described as “*positioning young people as the experts*” (Spears, Slee, Campbell, & Cross, 2011, p. 12) enabling students to co-construct the future.

In the focus group, students expressed a need to be free to talk about any topics of concern saying that, in an emotionally literate school: “*We wouldn't get told what to talk about at SRC meetings*”. The students seemed outraged that they finally had an SRC but could not determine their own issues (meeting notes). The opportunity to exercise autonomy

serves developmental and self-efficacy needs (Bandura, 1979). When students have autonomy and choice they can select issues which are important to them, thereby impacting on intrinsic motivation and moving towards issues or situations which may result in a state of flow (Shernhoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009).

Leadership, Learning, and Philosophical Changes. Changes that accompanied the introduction of a Middle School approach affected the students' world. An SRC, Middle School committee, and boarders' committee were introduced but were seemingly silos and were perceived as self-serving by students. I made some comments in my journal about the student focus group's comments:

At the start of the student focus group it took more than twenty-five minutes to get the girls on task. They were venting heavily about how bad everything was in the school, despite being asked questions about the positive aspects of the school. I needed to state that if they continued the negative outpouring, our focus group would need to stop. Finally, they calmed down.

I made another entry after the focus group meeting in my journal about the students:

The students were impassioned when they spoke. It was as though this was their time to stand up. They seemed dejected and had apparently been holding a lot in and now was their time to release it. It was not what I had expected. I had to deal with it by acting as objectively as possible.

When asked about EL changes in the school, the student focus group jumped to the changed tutor group structure and one student commented:

The old tutor system was better than the 10-12 model because you got to know girls from Years 7-12. Girls in Year 10 think it's stupid to be in the senior college."

"The new system means that there are more problems with the Year 7 girls. In the past Year 12 girls would adopt a Year 7 but now they don't know them. Year 9 girls are too cool for the Year 7.

I made a note in my journal: *“The girls in the focus group were quite emotional when they spoke about the changes to tutor group. It was as if a personal belonging had been taken from them, when they least expected it.”*

Student views of their relationships with teachers changed, as teachers continued to leave the school. When asked about relationships at school and ‘What happens here to help students understand themselves and their feelings?’ one student said: *“The dynamics of the class are more important to girls than the teacher many times. Teachers keep leaving so the girls can’t trust them. Girls care more about being accepted by girls rather than teachers.”* Girls seemed to feel let down by their teachers, who did not want to remain in the school. Another student went on to comment: *“Just because a teacher is a teacher it doesn’t mean we will respect them. They need to earn our respect by respecting us.”* A changed school environment, new school leadership and approaches to student leadership perceived by students as negative undermined the development of emotionally literate relationships, meaning values needed to be aligned before there could be further progress.

Wave 1: Student Questionnaire

Student questionnaire responses indicate they had a range of concerns influencing their relationships which were connected to the changing school environment rather than the EL intervention strategies. The open response replies to the final student questionnaire indicated their major concerns were across a spectrum of issues. Of most importance to the students were: relationships with their teachers, student voice, friendships, the school environment, learning power, support, and academic care.

Unlike teachers, many students felt that their relationship with teachers needed further development indicating a lack of synergy between student and teacher views. It has been suggested that student perception of the academic climate of the school is an indicator of aspirations and engagement (McCollum & Yoder, 2011). McCollum and Yoder (2011) posit that student-teacher relationships are a key part of school academic culture and student aspiration. Therefore positive relationships between students and their teachers seem worth developing. Students felt that a lack of respect, approachability, and willingness to listen hampered relationships: *“Teachers need to treat students with more respect, and as equals, not as an inconvenience”*. Teachers did not seem to be aware of these issues. Students did not appear to feel valued by their teachers. As another student commented, *“I think that student-teacher relationships should be improved”*. The student comment, *“teachers need to respect the students’ individuality and be easy to talk to”* was expressed by students indicating they wanted to feel confident that they would receive a positive response when they approached

teachers. Students indicated that their teachers needed to be more emotionally literate: *“More conflict resolution from staff is needed and teachers need to understand students more and not assume they know everything about them”*. The relationship building skills that students expected of their teachers did not seem to be evident to them. Not all students shared the negative views about teachers as students also commented, *“teachers are supportive and value input from students”*. Positive comments about teachers, however, made up a small minority of comments about teachers.

Students expressed discontent about their lack of involvement in the decision to change the structure of their tutor groups (23%). They indicated the current model of their tutor group structure was a social-emotional strength. They thought the changed tutor group structure lacked merit: *“I don’t think it is a good idea to change tutor groups as students should be able to interact with older girls from the school to get more of a sense of belonging”*. Students perceived it was better to *“keep tutor groups the same. It is better to interact with the seniors as they are meant to be role models”*. Students made comments such as: *“Do not change Tutor groups because Year 12 and 11 support and help us because they have been through our years and situations”*. One student noted: *“I would not change tutor groups because we should be able to talk to the seniors – we can ask them for help and advice”*. The lack of student engagement and communication with their teachers seemed to undermine the change process. More emotionally literate teacher responses may have produced a different outcome for the students.

Another student commented that she would like *“the communication between students and teachers to develop and also the amount of say that students get when making changes or decisions”*. These comments expressed students’ desires to feel their growing maturity and abilities were being recognised.

Friendship

Findings about friendship were divided between students experiencing positive friendships and those who did not feel connected. The majority of student views such as *“I feel that I have really good friends at this school and we have a really good bond”*, and *“I feel I have strong relationships with fellow class members and peers and that I can talk to them about personal and other issues”* indicate students enjoyed emotionally literate relationships. These views were contrasted by other students’ comments such as *“sometimes I feel left out in social groups”* and *“some peers do not feel they fit in well”*. Teacher comments were devoid of comments about student-student relationships, emphasising the

need for a broader perspective. It seemed that what was not commented on provided insight into what was still needed.

Values of trust and respect came through. Students wanted everyone to experience the same level of respect and for status symbols such as 'how much money you have' to be discarded.

Friendship as a form of support was influential in the findings. It was regarded by students as important to their learning and for enhancing social capital at school.

Comments about friendship were negative and positive. Other students wrote: *"I have many strong friendships so the social strengths are good, but I am not happy coming to school, I don't think it's a very nice environment to be in"*. It seemed the school operated on several levels as the welcoming school environment was seen as one of the school's main EL strengths. Respect for other people remained a concern as students commented: *Students should be taught more respect for others. Students who 'put-down' should not be tolerated"*. It seemed that bullying was seen to be an issue that was further exemplified in the student comment: *".... not many people here include others and it is a fight for survival"*. A vast body of research supports the need for young people to feel a sense of belonging to school to build resilience (Brackenreed, 2010; Greenberg, 2006; Knight, 2007; Rutter, 1985; Stoiber & Good, 1998). This research supports the benefits of an inclusive school environment, where students feel accepted and valued rather than an exclusive one where young people need to conform in appearance or other factors.

The experience of friendship and opinions about it were personalised and divergent. Friends are a large part of the circle of influence for young people. It seemed some students were ostracised, whereas for others: *"people love coming to school to see their friends and teachers"* and *"everyone is a friend"*. This meant relationships and the school environment were inconsistent in EL, with views about it split, based on experience and perception. For students and teachers support was a key issue. The way policies were applied detracted from the quality of relationships between students and teachers and an emotionally literate environment. Unlike teachers, students were concerned about this aspect of schooling. Student management policies such as uniform, detention, and behaviour management did not enable students to feel they were moving from a compliance-based to self-regulated approach (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Students commented they wanted *"a more relaxed and open community with less emphasis on uniform"*. Another student commented, *"the school is too strict on uniform. I understand the need for a uniform but do not approve of the rules and*

punishment for this". Uniform infringement punishments seemed to make the students feel powerless.

Academic Care

Students valued academic care and wanted some improvements: *"teachers should have more tolerance for students even those who are harder to teach"*. There were teachers who commented on the relational quality of the classroom but not in the same way as students. Not only was the relational aspect of the classroom important to students but so too the teachers' approach to learning. Students expected to be challenged at their level, as one student commented, *"The school should try and challenge some of the students a bit more academically and recognise that some students want to extend more than they are in class"*. Students identified enjoyment in learning as important to them as shown in the following student comment: *"teachers should use more engaging teaching techniques so we can effectively learn things, but also pay attention"*. Another student wanted teachers to *"make it fun to learn"*. These findings support research about what matters in teaching (Hattie, 2009).

Support for students with learning and social-emotional needs was emphasised by students. Students leaned on their friends for emotional support and saw them as part of their support network. Students also commented on the Counsellor services at the school. It was a common topic in the open responses (29%). While many of these were positive comments just over one-third of the comments on counselling from students indicated students wanted improved *confidentiality*, more *access*, and *more counselling staff*. Students seemed to think the level of counselling provided was inadequate, whereas teachers believed it met the students' needs. One student commented, *"The Counsellor should be less judgemental and more confidential. I would never go to her for fear of her calling my parents or telling my tutors or other teachers"*. Other students expressed the belief it was a strength to have the counsellor but made comments such as: *"When a student goes to the Counsellor and explains that what they say is confidential staff always find out and try to get involved"*. Many students regarded the Counsellor in a positive way, recognising the important role she played.

A second dedicated Middle-School Counsellor was appointed to support the students. It seemed teachers were oblivious to student relational difficulties. Not one teacher made mention of any student relational issues, as their main pre-occupation remained their own emotional needs. When comment was made, teachers tended to view students based on their social-emotional competencies rather than in terms of in-context relational views, with some exceptions. As noted in the Study 1 teacher questionnaire: *"Students are articulate and able*

to discuss their emotions very well, particularly with their peers”. The school Counsellor was perceived as the one to fix things, rather than there being a stronger focus on teacher staff relationships to promote well-being.

Students also have a good relationship with staff, where emotional literacy is modelled. The school provides a fairly safe environment for the girls, but there is an undercurrent of ‘clinginess’ in which some girls are not included.

This lack of acuity regarding student relational issues has ramifications for learning and the school environment because teachers did not see this as a key aspect of students’ school life. The nature of the school environment and the students’ social skills meant that students were adept at demonstrating pro-social behaviour when expected, therefore making other types of behaviour harder to pick up. It seems that teachers were unaware which students were experiencing social-emotional difficulties or distress. Students were starting to mention new issues in the first questionnaire of Study 2: *“We need more diversity and a cultural focus. We need to celebrate improvements, rather than focus on achievements”*. This finding supports developing a growth mindset, rather than a fixed one (Dweck, 2006). Another student commented: *“Our school is too sheltered. We need to be more open and realise there is a lot we don’t learn at this school”*. This comment seems to be a call for humility.

Acknowledgement of Student Achievement

Students also wanted to be acknowledged for a range of achievements. They believed sport and academic achievements dominated the school culture meaning that if you did not excel in either of those areas school was less enjoyable. *“We need to celebrate a diversity of achievements, not just sport. Everything else follows it.”* Students’ perspectives seemed to match mine as I had noted in my journal:

While there are efforts to contain the emphasis on sport, beyond other areas, it is obvious that sport has more status than drama and music. Such inequity adds to feelings of resentment and creates conflict between teachers and students.

As part of academic care, student effort, improvement, and acknowledgement seemed to mean something to students, as a student noted: *“There is not enough focus on those who*

improve or try extra hard. People who get the best results are rewarded, even if they don't try or earn it over those who put in 110%."

The students' sense of fairness and equity could be seen in these opinions. It seemed there was a tension in lessons as to who gained attention in the students' opinion. One student commented: *"more attention and credit should go to students who need help instead of the brighter students. Often it feels like a competition for attention between students"*. A common concern expressed by students was that teachers had favourites and they thought this was unfair. When individuals do not have their needs met and resources are perceived to be inadequate, behaviours can change as people look for ways to satisfy their needs. Some students may have used attention-seeking or self-serving behaviours to meet their needs (Bourdieu, 1986).

Wave 2 Student Questionnaire

The same issues emerged for students as in the previous questionnaire; student voice, relationships with teachers and peers, values, and the need for support. Leadership emerged as an additional sub-theme for students. Some views remained constant, indicated by the responses to the item, *"The overall atmosphere is warm, friendly and responsive"* (62% Questionnaire 1, 58% Questionnaire 2). For the questionnaire item *"A high value is placed on developing positive friendships and relationships"*, the response remained stable with 55% agreement for both questionnaires.

Almost one third of students wanted their relationship with teachers to improve (31%). They wanted teachers to be approachable, to respect them, and value their opinions. Student responses to the question, *"What would you identify as a priority for change and development?"* showed that students believed they did not receive equal treatment from teachers. They also believed teachers needed to manage their own emotions better. A student wrote: *"Some teachers need to be calmer with their students"*. Such findings reveal the mismatch between what teachers believed the EL strengths were in their relationships with students, compared to what more students believed needed to happen next. Students wanted teachers to use more hands-on teaching approaches. *"We need more hands-on work, e.g., excursions and prac work."* It seemed the students enjoyed both experiential learning and *"teachers listening to the students and what they want."*

Student friendships and peer relationships varied. One student commented, *"everyone gets along. There is never anyone who doesn't feel welcome into a group"* and *"we are very friendly and open towards one another"*. These comments sound positive, yet indicate

students' differing experience and the complexity of adolescent relationships. Some students' comments suggest peer relationships were not pleasant and yet contradictory by saying, "*girls get along well and easily, but it's not a very nice environment and we're all a bit 'bitchy'*". Another student commented, "*girls are bitches*". It seems that the reality of students' relationships continued to present challenges for them.

The key values of respect and trust influenced students' opinions strongly. They think "*students need to be taught respect*", that "*teachers need to be more respectful*" and "*dealing with problems quickly and effectively while respecting others*" was an EL strength of the school. Students seemed attuned to the pivotal role of values in relationships. It seems students and teachers could benefit from explicit values-teaching infused into the curriculum to develop emotionally literate relationships (Lovat, Toomey, Dally, & Clement, 2009).

The issue of support seemed controversial. One student commented that support for students was an area the school needed to improve by saying "*helping people – the school sucks at that*". Another student recommended that "*making it easier for students to have someone to talk to*" would improve relationships. It appears that even in highly resourced schools with a rhetoric of care, the rhetoric does not always translate to the students' lived experience.

Summary of Students' and Teachers' Perspectives

Students and teachers appear to build EL more productively when they feel empowered, valued, and respected through their involvement in a democratised school environment. Emotionally literate relationships can be harnessed when the rhetoric of care and a values-based school environment match the perceived behaviour of teachers and students.

EL intervention strategies can be effective for building emotionally literate relationships despite uncertain, challenging school conditions provided there is a groundswell of support using collegial and ripple effect approaches. EL intervention strategies appear to build capacity, producing longer term benefits when they are housed in the relational capacity of the classroom, and when they relate directly to the content and approaches used in teaching and learning. Prized, values-rich, philosophical planks such as the Women of Spirit Award seem useful EL intervention strategies.

Leadership practices can have a lasting impact on teachers and students. In the case-study school, teacher views suggest leadership impacted their self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and motivation. Discrepancy theory (Busche & Coetzer, 2007), social learning theory (Bandura, 1986), and social capital theory (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995) help explain

teacher behaviour in challenging contexts as seen in teacher morale and the ability to deal with the emotional labour.

Students want to co-construct their future, exercising a sense of agency with teachers through emotionally literate relationships marked by mutual respect and care. Students seek positive relationships and support from their teachers, fellow students, and friends. Students want to be engaged and motivated learners and seek to be known, valued, and acknowledged for their strengths. A warm, relaxed, and inclusive school environment appears to foster emotionally literate relationships.

Conclusions

Teachers are key players for influencing student EL in schooling through building emotionally literate relationships and employing EL in their teaching practice. Analysis of the data suggests that the ecological nature of schooling means that students will gain most benefit from EL intervention strategies when teachers are able to model emotionally literate relationships. Pedagogical, curriculum, and strengths-based approaches steeped in EL values seem to align with positive education offering constructive ways for teachers to develop students' EL. Teacher EL development appears to be a need that students recognise, and a process that develops over time. Teacher EL skills for well-being and achievement seem to require ongoing teacher professional learning and involvement in emotionally literate forms of contextually relevant professional development.

The processes of PAR can make a positive difference for teacher EL and for building positive emotions. As a form of professional learning, PAR appears to harness foundational EL values and empowers teachers to influence the EL of colleagues and students. EL intervention strategies can produce productive outcomes for teachers' and students' emotionally literate relationships, yielding longer term outcomes when Principal practices are congruent with EL.

Results Research Question 2.1.2: Features of the Emotionally Literate School

Overview

Research question 2.1.2 asked what multiple stakeholders, who have participated in school-derived interventions to develop EL, perceive as the key features of an emotionally literate school. In answering research question 2.1.1 a number of features of an emotionally literate school were identified, drawing upon: positive psychology (Seligman, 2011), self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000), expectancy and social learning (Bandura, 1997), social capital (Coleman, 1988, Putnam, 1995), broaden-and-build (Fredrickson, 1998; 2001; 2009) and care (Noddings, 1998) theories. These theories provide the basis for how multiple stakeholders perceive an emotionally literate school. It seems that an emotionally literate school realises the symbiotic relationship between teacher and student well-being, ensuring teachers have the resources, support, and expertise needed to model EL.

Findings Research Question 2.1.2

Staff Interviews

Executive Team

There seemed to be a lack of synergy between the members of the Executive Team. Each made worthwhile contributions in answering questions about what factors constituted an emotionally literate school, yet there seemed to be tensions expressed in some responses. Executive Team Teacher 1 believed an overall framework for EL identified an emotionally literate school. She commented: *“There is a framework for emotional literacy encompassing proactive and reactive strategies. Service and controlled risk taking are central for enabling students to develop their EL.”*

Executive Team Teacher 2 commented that an emotionally literate school is:

...one where there is trust, respect, honesty, and a positive, friendly, and happy spirit. We currently have little of these, as we have a leader who lacks even the most basic social graces. But it makes us more aware of what we need to demonstrate to each other and to students.

When asked about how leadership was influencing EL, the reply was: *“She has her own perspective and sticks to that. She doesn’t know her people. Staff sees that she doesn’t care. We need a leader who understands the school culture”*. It appears that the void in perceived EL enhanced an awareness of what was needed for an emotionally literate school. Teacher interviews indicated there were public displays of disaffection towards leadership teachers by the Principal that sent teachers and students reeling (meeting notes). A positive element expressed by Executive Team Teacher 3 was that: *“The new Principal was equal in her treatment of people and in that way is fair. There are no deals or favours and people know that”*.

Emotionally literate leadership emerged as an essential component of an emotionally literate school, as suggested in other research (Aydin, Sarier, & Uysal, 2013; Roffey, 2007; Abbey & Esposito, 1985). Executive Team Teacher 3 commented: *“An emotionally literate school has visible leadership. She has little visibility and she has not taken the time to get to know people”*. In another interview when asked about EL in relationships the teacher jumped to the issue of leadership stating: *“There is no valuing of the individual capacity to conduct jobs. The valuing, trust, and respect are all missing. There is no listening, or basic courtesy. This has been disempowering for staff”*. It seemed the style of leadership left teachers feeling dispirited and disheartened, which in turn suggests the reverse should be a feature of an emotionally literate school.

Executive Team Teacher 3 commented that: *“... an emotionally literate school fosters creativity and connectivity. We see it here [...] but teachers in other parts of the school seem professionally isolated and not very happy. I think the leadership style has to inspire emotional literacy.”* It seemed, therefore, that there was a lack of consensus between what Executive Team members believe constitutes an emotionally literate school. Greater congruence between the views of the Executive Team might well be an additional feature of an emotionally literate school.

Teacher and Counsellor Views

Teachers believed that an emotionally literate school involves of values, support, and cohesion. One teacher commented: *“In an emotionally literate school there is trust and support between and for teachers”*. Another teacher commented:

There needs to be a focus on teachers’ learning. Professional development helps teachers understand themselves and other teachers, personally and professionally.

Teachers can get feedback about how they are going and are supported if they find things challenging.

It appears that teachers valued collegiality and opportunities to pursue areas of interest to enable them to grow professionally (Reeves, 2010).

A third teacher commented, *“There is cohesion between the management team, teachers, and students. People seem happy and will take risks in the classroom to try new things if they feel supported”*. Willingness to accept a challenge, or create a challenge, if teachers sense it is safe to do so seems to be part of an emotionally literate school.

One School Counsellor added some other perspectives by saying: *“In an emotionally literate school students lead in learning, pastoral, and House initiatives. The concept of student-led design needs to be fully developed”*. The notion of students leading seemed a worthy goal for the school to strive for (Mitra, 2008; Pearce et al., 2011). The other Counsellor commented: *“Teachers need to feel valued and cared for so they can support the students and model EL even when things get tough for them”*. It appears teachers and their modelling of resilience and grit are regarded as part of an emotionally literate school (Tough, 2013; Shechtman, DeBarger, Dornsife, Rosier, & Yarnall, 2013; Tait, 2008; Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011; Brackett et al., 2010). The first Counsellor added that in an emotionally literate school: *“Teachers are aware of students’ needs and have the skills and confidence to be proactive about their learning and relationship issues.”*

Outcomes

Teachers and Counsellors placed an emphasis on the values needed in an emotionally literate school, whereas members of the executive team were more concentrated on an EL framework and the role of leadership. Teachers and Counsellors seemed concerned about a school environment conducive to teacher development for the benefit of students.

Teacher Questionnaire

In addition to indicating a value for the place of EL, teachers identified a sense of agency, values, communication, and removal of fear as features of emotionally literate school. One teacher commented,

I would like to see the work that has been going on in the school in emotional literacy continue over a number of years and gain momentum. High EQ amongst teachers is a

real priority for us. It makes a difference for students and affects the way everyone feels about school.

This comment and another teacher comment, *“True learning means students connect personally to intellectual and conceptual learning i.e. there is an “emotional literacy” linked to all topics”* indicates a constructivist approach to learning. This is a finding in itself as teachers can see how implicit the social-emotional aspect is to learning.

Teachers regarded a sense of agency as key to an emotionally literate school but did not see it in their own school as the following comment indicates: *“The school is almost feudal. There are few ways to impact on what happens outside my own classroom or faculty. We all just give up on things. It is tiring and people are getting worn down. The constant changes in the school are very trying.”* Another teacher remarked: *“There should be a ‘can do’ approach, no ‘fear’ factors and greater student and staff participation in decision making – School/Student Council, Staff Association etc.”*

A values-driven environment was seen to be a feature of emotionally literate schools. A teacher noted: *“We need a stronger shared vision in the whole community and more articulation of values and how that translates into actions”*. The case study school was grappling with what some values meant in their school community and was attuned to the role of values for EL. Another teacher commented: *“Develop a climate where staff as well as students feel valued and supported – let people know this is a priority as well as acknowledging this as a priority and acknowledging that this takes time”*. It seems that communication about values was seen as a priority (Park & Peterson, 2005; Deakin-Crick, 2009; Deenmamode, 2011; Lovat, Toomey, Dally, & Clement, 2009; Roffey, 2008).

Open communication involving students and teachers is another feature of an emotionally literate school. Teachers made many comments about the need to feel respected and valued through the nature of communication and how the type of communication in the school made them feel. A teacher commented: *“Supportive, open lines of communication, opportunity to discuss issues. A caring environment and fair opportunities for all staff and students being genuinely valued”*. Another teacher wrote: *“More open communication and understanding of staff needs. Staff need to be valued and listened to. Decisions need to be made collaboratively between staff and management”*.

The ambience or feeling experienced within the school environment is another feature of an emotionally literate school yet it needed to be reinforced by deeper levels of authenticity. One teacher noted: *“We need a warm, welcoming environment without fear of*

being shut down for being honest". Another teacher who commented said: *"A supportive, caring environment. One where people have a means to air their views without fear or feeling threatened"*. Similar views were captured across the waves of data. The comments provided are from the data Wave 1. Emotionally literate leadership emerged as an additional feature in the data Wave 2.

Outcomes

Teachers wanted to feel that they were at the centre of the school rather than viewing it from the periphery. They wanted to feel valued and that teacher's learning and development mattered. Mutual support, trust, and respect in a genuinely warm environment seem to be vital to EL.

Student Focus Group

The student focus group identified features including: the quality of teacher-student relationships, open communication and autonomy, service, space, and place as features of an emotionally literate school. Students identified as essential that: *"Students and teachers get along and we can have a say in what happens in our lessons and how we learn and we have teachers who understand what stresses us out and they help us then we will be contributing to an emotionally literate school*. Service was a central part of the school philosophy and students regarded its place highly as a feature of an emotionally literate school. One student said: *"It is not all about us. Indochina and opportunities like that let us see what life is like for other people. It opens our eyes"*. The focus on service had been revamped in an effort to make it more sacrificial and other-focused (Crocker, 2006).

One student thought that an emotionally literate school *"has places students can go to feel calm – like our garden. Most classrooms and rooms like this one that help us learn. I like the colours"*. This issue did not come up before or in any other data but it seemed to be important to the students. I made a note after the meeting about how the other students affirmed what the students commented on, showing it was important to them.

Outcomes

Students were seeking positive relationships with their teacher, an active voice in their learning, and meaningful school participation. Opportunities to participate in service learning and experiential learning appear to enable students the opportunity to focus on others,

promoting a sense of purpose and thereby enhancing EL. Students value a learning environment and places at school which help them meet learning and social-emotional needs.

Student Questionnaire

These findings were derived from the data Wave 2 and supported the Wave 1 findings. Students believed an environment that could build their internal assets and strengths was aligned to an emotionally literate school. Like teachers, students wanted to experience positive relationships and a feeling of belonging. Students wanted academic care and to feel supported. Similarly to the students in the student focus group, students identified meaningful participation, and an inclusive environment, as indicators of an emotionally literate school.

A desire for social capital and pro-social values was evident in the student comments: *“Help each other”* and *“Encourage a communal atmosphere”* (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995). To create schools as learning communities is almost counter-culture as society has become increasingly individualistic, yet students value a communal school feeling (Clark, 2012). Another student commented that she regarded *“a system that can offer strong emotional support to all students* as a priority in an emotionally literate school. Accompanying support, students were seeking *“confidential and non-judgmental staff”*. Students’ comments: *“Ensure that every student feels a sense of belonging”* and *“A place where students feel wanted”* indicate the role of positive relationships and a sense of belonging.

Relationships with teachers and the values inherent in them were of concern to students as they wrote: *“Some teachers should concentrate on being more approachable and less biased”* and *“Teachers need to be more understanding of some students and show a higher level of respect in order to be respected”*. As a foundation EL value, respect acts as a beacon for EL and a conduit to the relational benefits associated with positive relationships (Goodman, 2009).

Students regarded meaningful participation, more choices, and more decisions as key elements to emotionally literate schooling. Reeve, (2013) suggests that student agentic engagement is a pathway to greater achievement and motivational support. By asking, and answering questions and making suggestions in lessons, students can demonstrate an ability to construct their own agentic engagement, thereby promoting self-efficacy (Bandura, 1979) and their sense of competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Students recognised the homogenous nature of their school student population and commented that they saw it as important to have *“less discrimination and judgement”* and

more “*diversity in students*”. At the time of the research the school had accepted one indigenous student and that may have influenced the students’ thinking on this topic.

Outcomes

Students indicated that positive relationships, authentic school participation, and an inclusive school, mark an emotionally literate school. They recognised their school still needed to develop in a number of ways and that the stilted school environment did not mirror broader society, nor necessarily meet the current students’ psychological needs.

Summary of Students’ and Teachers’ Perspectives

Based on students’ and teachers’ perspectives a number of themes emerged to make up features that can explain an emotionally literate school. These include positive education, social capital, learning, and leading. The themes are interrelated, recursive, and involve effect on the others, matching an ecological view (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Themes: Features of an Emotionally Literate school

Positive Education

The first theme is positive education (Gilman, Huebner, & Furlong, 2009; Seligman, 2011; see Figure 7.7). Positive education and SEL harness the potential of other dimensions by infusing them with skills, positive values, and positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). The foundational EL values of trust, respect, and integrity underpin positive education practices using EL. Using a strengths-based approach, teachers and students are celebrated for their strengths. Positive emotions and approaches for celebrating success such as appreciative inquiry can guide future change. Positive education is embedded in learning and leading, promoting ways to build positive relationships and achievement. Figure 7.7 displays the sub-themes that emerged from the findings. Positive relationships, a positive school environment and positive emotions appear to be central to students finding their niche of success. Skills to promote a positive mindset (Dweck, 2010) and well-being can enable teachers and students to be more content and fulfilled and to feel valued.

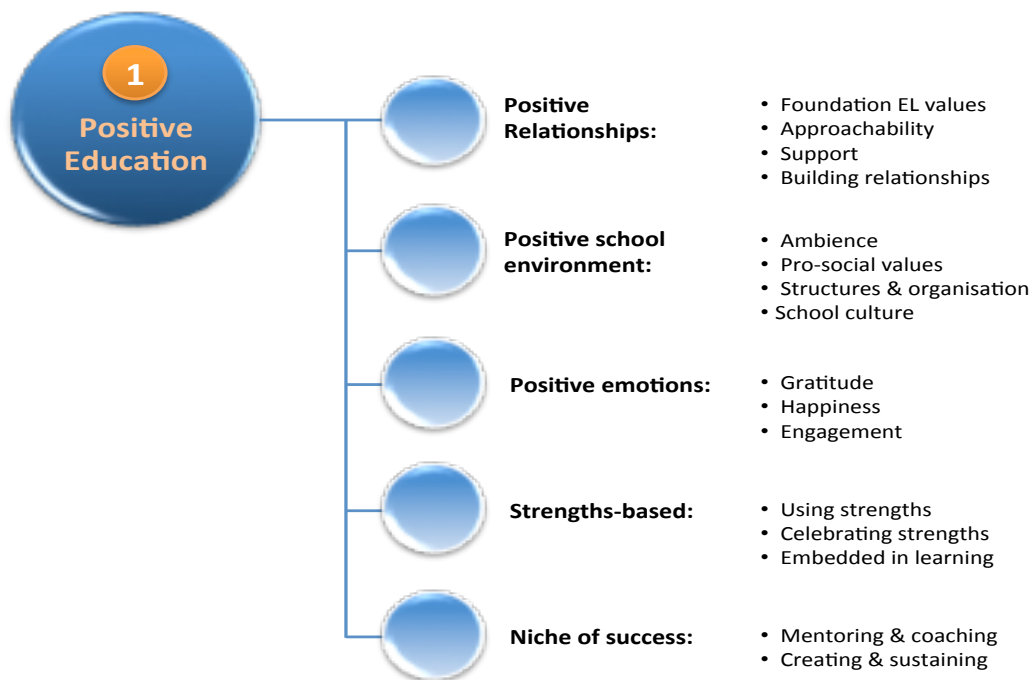


Figure 7.7 Positive Education Theme

Social Capital

The second theme is social capital (see Figure 7.8). Social capital promotes a culture of meaningful participation in school life through the provision of support and challenge. Support may mean incentives for learning and leading. Support seems to be essential for managing challenge and enabling teachers and students to develop. Support may involve time or access to resources with opportunity for teachers' collaboration as in PAR. The opportunity to draw on the expertise of skilled colleagues seems vital. Teachers want support from school management, and effective communication to enable them to flourish.

Support involves the care of all teachers and students. Support takes in formal support such as referral to outside specialist health and learning support. Case work, counselling, mentoring, coaching, friendship, and the impact of influential people such as unofficial leaders seemed useful.

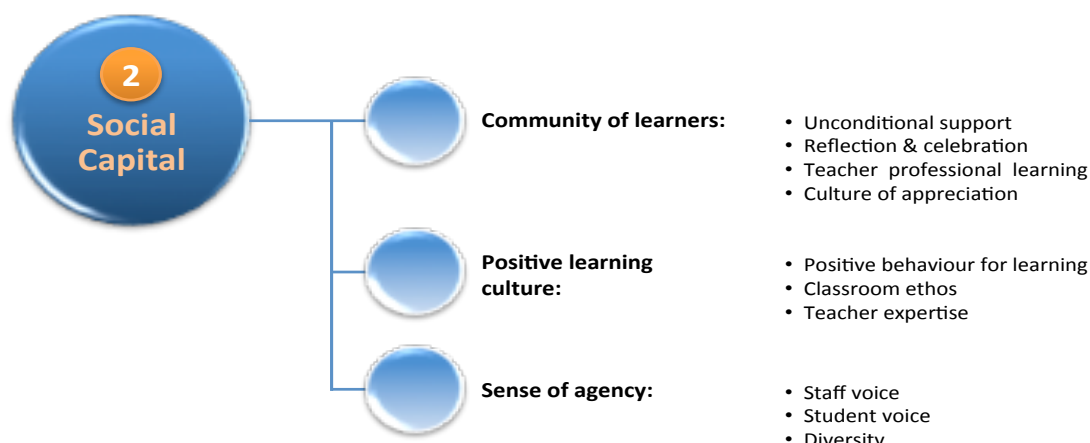


Figure 7.8 Social Capital Theme

Learning

The third theme is learning (See Figure 7.9). Learning involves high expectations for all and caring teacher-student relationships. For teachers, relational practice can be housed in school-based professional learning. Professional development needs to be sustained, targeted, and inclusive of EL and positive psychology skills to enhance teacher performance. Through self-efficacy, awareness, self-regulation, relationship building, and social skills, coupled with positive psychology, teachers can model EL skills. Teachers' EL and skills are central to students' learning. Learning means students are active learning partners and they have a voice (Mitra, Serriere, & Stoicovy, 2012). They set and achieve challenging learning goals and are engaged in pedagogical approaches to develop their EL.

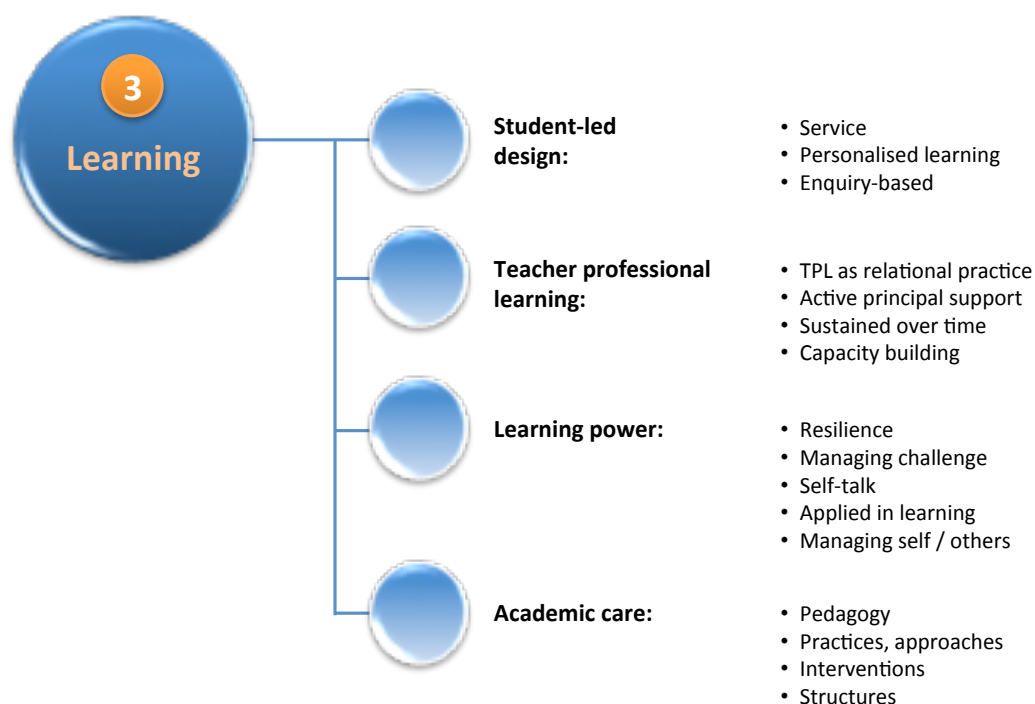


Figure 7.9 Learning Theme

Leading

The fourth theme is leading as in Figure 7.10. The findings suggest that leading founded on trust and respect can build teacher efficacy, enabling teachers to model EL for students. Congruence between school goals and all teachers can be challenging. Living out the values aligned with EL and EL skills to build teacher autonomy, competence, and positive relationships can enable school leaders to develop the EL school quotient. Students and teachers can influence each other in positive ways thereby promoting leadership density. In this sense leading is about taking action: to be an advocate and a Man or Woman of Spirit. Through acknowledging every teacher as a leader of learning and values for life, teachers and students can have enhanced self-efficacy and engagement. This means harnessing arduous skills for leading such as conflict-resolution and coping with ambiguity.

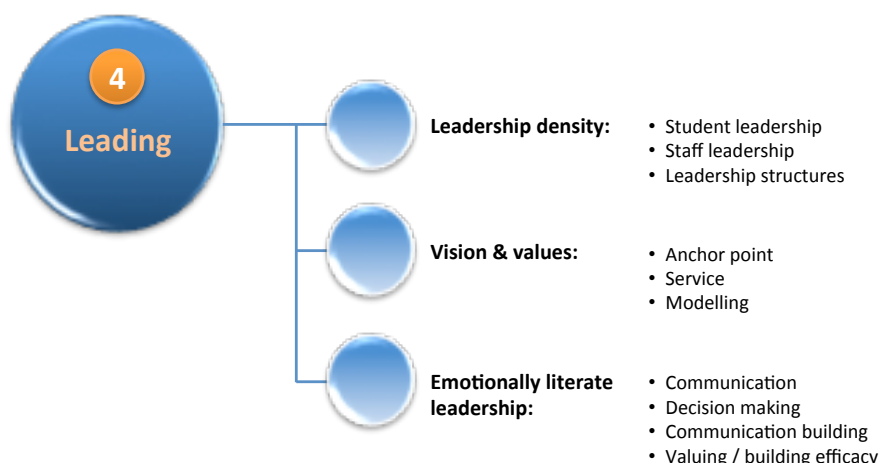


Figure 7.10 Leading Theme

The Place of Policy

Policy weaves through the school dimensions associated with the themes of positive education, social capital, learning, and leading. Embedding emotionally literate practices in school policies promotes a warm and safe school environment. A whole school EL policy encompasses involvement in school decision-making processes and recognition of strengths through adopting positive education approaches. As such it weaves through the other dimensions, and provides protocols, conventions, and limitations. With regard to teachers, policy includes professional learning, technical expertise, and teacher professional growth for EL. Teacher professional development in all its forms is key to enhancing EL in schools. Policy enables teachers and students to develop their skills and abilities in an encouraging environment. Policy involves student management, acknowledging teachers and students, and support for at-risk students, and struggling teachers. When school policy meets these parameters there is a greater sense of cohesion, as shown in the school framework for developing EL (see Figure 7.11).

The school framework for emotional literacy represents a way for schools to begin to assess their EL quotient, to develop a holistic view of the factors involved in EL, and a means to develop EL. The four themes of positive education, social capital, learning, and leading are the centerpiece infused by SEL. There is a bi-directional influence imparted by the four themes involving the eight Cs that can be seen in the outer layer of the circle, representing school ecology. School EL quotient is evident through the four themes and is lived out through the school social environment. The extent to which these themes are positive, thereby enabling positive EL outcomes, are seen on the positive or plus side of Figure 7.11, versus the degree to which the themes impact negatively on EL as on the negative or minus side.

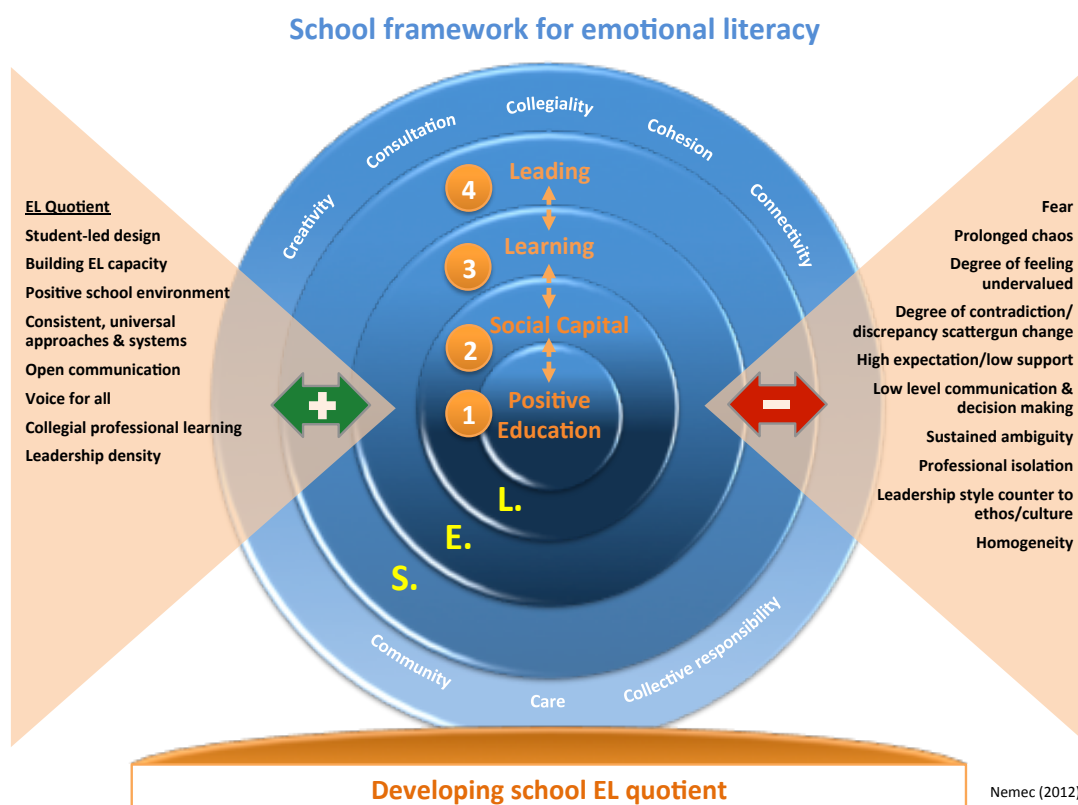


Figure 7.11 School Framework for Developing Emotional Literacy

A Model for Teacher-based Emotional Literacy Development

Based on the research findings a model was created which aims to develop teacher EL (see Figure 7.11). The model draws together teacher technical skills, positive psychology, and EL skills for teachers to apply in and out of the classroom. The development of this model is timely. The *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (Australian Institute for Teaching and Leadership, [AITSL] 2013) and the *Australian Teacher Performance and*

Development Framework (Education Services Australia, 2012) include a mandate for all teachers to develop their teaching skills, including areas involving EL.

The model for teacher EL development recognises three divergent yet interrelated needs. These are the students' need for emotionally literate teachers who can model EL, teachers' needs for growth and development (Roffey, 2012; Rogers, 2006), and schools' needs to retain and develop their teachers. By teachers developing EL they will be able to better attend to the needs of their students. My research, like other research, confirmed that students' relationships with their teachers make a difference to the way they feel about learning and the way they feel about themselves as learners (Murray-Harvey, 2010; McCollum & Yoder; 2011; Martin, 2006).

teachers can forge a new way of looking at what they do. Through teachers' awareness of their own strengths in action (McGovern, & Miller, 2008; Park & Peterson, 2005), social-emotional skills (CASEL, 2012) and positive education approaches including mindfulness and the creation of situations fostering flow (Norrish, Williams, O'Connor, & Robinson, 2013; Waters, 2011) as well as gratitude (Howells, 2013) they can model, teach, and infuse positive education into the curriculum and the overall school approach to develop student-teacher relationships and well-being.

The environmental plank represents the interaction between key people, structures, and the school ethos, suggesting these can have a positive or negative impact depending on factors such as the way in which values are lived out. The synergy and cohesion between teachers, students, groups, and teams will have a bi-directional influence and impact on the way school features are seen, programs operate and school structures are utilised to sustain ongoing EL growth and development for teachers and students.

The remaining plank is the inputs and outputs that mediate between teachers' EL and their interaction and relationships with other teachers, students, teams, and all aspects of the school environment. The mediating plank connects with the way things are done as in the level of democratisation to teachers' needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The way in which teachers' psychological needs associated with competence, autonomy and relatedness are met will impact on the way in which teachers can attend to others' EL needs and will impact on teacher well-being.

Conclusions

Teachers' and students' relationships can be positively influenced by EL intervention strategies, with school leadership and the school context acting as powerful mediating factors. Involving teachers early in school change processes, listening and acting collaboratively, school leaders can activate a trust response for successful change initiatives. EL intervention strategies need to be implemented in ways that are contextually relevant, using collegial influence.

Teachers and students each wanted to fulfil similar psychological needs through their relationships and to feel they have the capacity to co-construct their futures. Teachers are central to an emotionally literate school. Emotionally literate relationships and modeling values-rich behaviours benefit students and their teachers. Teachers' EL, service and pedagogic skills can engage students in schooling. Students need teachers who understand them as young people and learners, advocating for them as supporting them. Similarly,

teachers need school leaders who model emotionally literate practices and provide supportive leadership that they see as giving them a voice.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has addressed two research questions from multiple stakeholders' perspectives for Study 2. The first question examined how EL intervention strategies impact relationships (2.1.1) and the second, how multiple stakeholders' perspectives perceive the features of an emotionally literate school environment (2.1.2). EL can enhance teachers' and students' experience of schooling. Teacher well-being and an ability to weave positive psychology (Seligman, 2011) and EL skills (Goleman, 2013; CASEL, 2012) into teachers' professional practice can pave the way for more emotionally literate approaches to schooling (AITSL, 2013; Lovat, Dally, Clement, & Toomey, 2011; McGovern & Miller, 2008). Resilient, positive teachers, who can demonstrate grit, appear to enhance the school EL quotient (Doney, 2013; Mansfield, Beltman, Price, & McConney, 2012; Cohn et al., 2009). In the next chapter I will provide a summary of the research findings, and the strengths and limitations of the present investigation and the implications of the findings for theory, research, and practice will be discussed.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As parents and teachers, we want young people to be resilient and to have the capacity to use courage and persistence to achieve their goals. We also want young people to be empathic and to develop a repertoire of values, knowledge, and skills so that they can harness meaning and satisfaction in their lives. These qualities and abilities, together encapsulated in the term emotional literacy (EL), impact on student resilience, capacities for persistence, and their sense of what provides meaning, all of which contribute to well-being (Dweck, 2006; Roffey, 2008; Seligman, 2011; Meiklejohn et al., 2012). Therefore it is important to know more about how this well-being can be developed, not only for what happens both academically and relationally in the classroom, but also for later life success.

As positive relationships are central to well-being, the present investigation examined how key stakeholders understood the quality of relationships in schools and the factors that influenced positive development of EL. Findings from the two related studies in this research (see Chapters 6 and 7) indicated that the foundational EL values of trust, respect and integrity form the basis of emotionally literate relationships. These foundational values were associated with four key EL factors: positive education, social capital, learning, and leadership (see Chapter 7). When these factors operate positively, they are indicative of a school with emotionally literate practices. They operate interdependently, across structures, and affect multiple stakeholders. As teachers' experiences of EL and relationships in a school are critical to the implementation of intervention for students, my research found that targeting teachers' well-being was the first priority for enabling positive outcomes for students.

Teachers' opportunities to be involved in participatory processes, as demonstrated by the methodology of this research, addressed their everyday challenges and provided a meaningful way to work together. The action research processes supported the view that collegial peer influence can motivate teachers to adopt change, suggesting that participatory action research is a viable model for a positive change process. The way the research group initially explored their own practices meant they became role models for others and the trust

that developed between team members fostered a set of organisational conditions conducive to taking and owning action (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

The EL interventions showed a positive ripple effect as staff developed their own EL. The resulting positive impact enabled teachers to think about the role of EL in new ways. They had a positive influence on their colleagues, reinforcing the role of EL for teaching faculties and in classrooms. EL also provided teachers with strategies to enhance their own well-being. This was necessary within the research context to improve morale and provide teachers with optimism about the school strategic direction and school leadership. EL-based approaches enabled positive school change through teachers working together, drawing on democratically-driven, action research processes, (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009).

Changes were developed in a symbiotic way across personal perceptions, school practices and organisational processes. Positive education practices improved teacher self-efficacy. Practices such as celebrating strengths, raising awareness about acts of kindness, and drawing on powerful philosophical drivers, focused stakeholders' attention on assets in the school environment, rather than the demands. These practices gained a positive response from teachers and enabled them to feel engaged and to experience positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). Positive education practices where teachers contributed to students' development of a growth mindset based upon effort, rather than a fixed mindset based upon innate ability, (Dweck, 2012) enabled students to be more academically resilient and focused students on achieving their goals over time.

Social capital made a difference to well-being because when key stakeholders felt supported, trusted, and valued they felt they could fully engage in emotionally literate practices. These aspirations were particularly evident in teachers. Teachers' aspirations were for open communication and activating the teacher and student voice with the aim of contributing to everyone's well-being. The findings indicate that social capital facilitates teachers and students to apply EL skills in challenging situations that arise in the classroom and at school. Likewise, social capital was positively influenced by student-driven leadership initiatives based on EL skills and values. This study indicated that when there was a high level of trust between teachers and students they were more prepared to take risks, accept the consequences, and move on from mistakes, understanding mistakes to be a valuable part of their learning. Each of these actions required motivation, and students were more likely to act when they felt supported by their peers, friends, and teachers. Similarly, teachers' motivation

was influenced by the way in which the school management, their colleagues, and the students perceived them.

The findings showed that teaching practices that are consistent with research findings on quality teaching both promote and use EL (Hattie, 2009; Gore, Mockler, Smith, & Bowe, 2012). Teachers need to see learning through their students' eyes and be empathic, passionate, and committed to developing relationships that foster student learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009). Schools that want to develop EL cannot, therefore, merely implement a pastoral care program, or adopt a teacher-based intervention, without processes in place to develop teachers' skills. This study clearly demonstrates that schools that simply react to challenging situations or want to be seen to adopt emotionally literate practices solely to build on school rhetoric - often found in mission statements - need to go further in their efforts to develop EL. They need to develop their teachers and model effective, emotionally literate leadership practices. Enabling teachers to share feelings of empowerment and professional growth, coupled with active, visible principal leadership, engenders EL development. By first working with their teachers to develop their own EL skills, knowledge and understanding, then building these skills as a process while using integrated models of change, schools can become more emotionally literate, build social capital, and foster universal well-being. Teachers are more than a conduit for enabling school change; rather, they can help to drive change for EL through meaningful engagement in relational forms of professional learning, communication, and decision-making (Reeves, 2010).

A unique and unexpected feature of my research was the staffing and school changes in the case study school during Study 2. While challenging, the changes enabled a sharpened perspective about what counts most for EL. Challenges to the school leadership helped to crystallise key stakeholders' understandings of the vital role that emotionally literate leadership plays in setting the tone, character, and aspirations of a school. It became clear in my study that school leadership provides a model of EL for teachers and that teachers expect emotionally literate leadership practices as a key component of leadership. The staff were looking for consultative decision-making, effective communication, and authentic opportunities to exercise staff and student voices.

To develop emotionally literate teachers, and achieve maximum and sustainable gains from EL interventions, emotionally literate leadership is needed. In this study, unfortunately, despite the positive impact of the EL interventions at the teacher level, a negative school leadership ripple was pervasive. Teachers continued to perceive weaknesses in EL at the

leadership level and as new members of the leadership team joined the school, progress in developing EL was enveloped in a culture of tension and power struggles. This included individual teachers lobbying for distributed leadership positions. The power struggles impacted on the school social environment and influenced the way teachers and students perceived each other. These issues demonstrate the importance of emotionally literate practices in leadership.

The research also showed that the school social environment is a barometer for EL as well as for stakeholders' well-being. The school social environment is where and how the reality of EL is lived out. Teachers who were seeking power and influence undermined the positive school social environment due to their lack of respect, empathy, and sensitivity to student needs. The social environment was found to be central to what happens in classrooms to develop a supportive approach to learning and pedagogical practices. Underpinning the social environment were the foundational EL values that stakeholders held in high esteem.

Foundational EL values were also central to developing emotionally literate leadership, learning, positive psychology, and social capital practices and approaches. The role of EL values and skills collectively determined the school EL quotient. This EL quotient is evident in the playground and the classroom environment, in school domains such as learning environments and co-curricular domains as well as structures including school assembly and tutor time. This study showed that the quality of the school social environment and other factors such as the quality of the classroom environment are symbiotic when considering EL. These factors are interdependent and impact on each other.

The findings of this research suggest a new holistic model for teacher EL development in order to promote whole school EL, enhancing both individual and collective well-being. The model aims to make teachers' experiences more satisfying, assisting them to become better at what they do and retaining them in the teaching profession. This will enable students to enjoy school more while developing their EL. The model recognises the need for teacher development as a sustained process over time and for each teacher to feel empowered to impact positively on the school environment. The approach used in the model enables teachers to engage more effectively with their students. Teachers can apply positive education and EL skills as well as practices to model and teach EL. Learner-centred approaches to teaching, where the student voice and student-led design inform what happens in the classroom and the school environment generally engages students and has the capacity to increase EL.

The strengths of this study involve the integrative approach underpinning action research whereby theory and knowledge about EL, school ecology, and positive psychology were applied to create an enhanced understanding of EL. My research was informed by the upsurge in positive psychology research and positive education in schools and an increasing awareness about the role of EL for well-being. My research identified the role of key EL factors to promote teacher well-being and positive student outcomes through schooling. This is timely as it demonstrates the role of EL for teachers and their students as we implement the Australian Curriculum. It is clear that while a culture of teacher professional growth, development, and evaluation takes hold in Australia, the culture cannot afford to neglect the development of teacher understanding about EL if we are to achieve greater educational gains for our students.

Several factors may be considered limitations in the research. First, due to the broad scope of organisational, leadership, and staff changes across multiple educational agendas within the school context, knowledge about best practice for implementing social-emotional programs and interventions was not applied. This is, however, the nature of action research and this grassroots approach created a ripple effect that went through the school, resulting in interesting findings, enabling productive outcomes and suggesting an innovative and valid way to work. In addition, as I was not in the school as a researcher full-time during the final part of Study 2, I may have missed changes in the school that could have informed my understanding or interpretation of the data. Finally, more than forty percent of the teaching staff were new to the school in Study 2, meaning that they had not experienced the early interventions and had limited knowledge of the school context. This is likely to have impacted on the findings for Study 2.

The findings of this research suggest a range of possibilities for further related research. Working with a different school environment, or multiple schools, could further extend the research findings in order to test the framework for developing EL and applying the model for developing teacher EL. Future research may also benefit from investigating a more stable school environment, as well as one in which there is already a desire to develop EL and the Principal actively supports EL development. The findings of this study indicated that by enabling a school's EL, a higher profile could be achieved by decreasing the scope and volume of other school change initiatives, thereby promoting even more benefits for key stakeholders. A school which actively wants to advance in EL and positive education or a school with a more stable body of leadership and teaching staff might give rise to different

results in longitudinal research from those recorded in this study. Examining EL in a range of schools would be useful to further validate these findings and explore how issues such as gender and socioeconomic background impact on the results. School-wide approaches for developing teacher EL are also worthy of investigation, particularly if EL is a stated and prioritised school goal.

Finally, my research has implications for teacher preparation and pre-service courses, as teacher quality is a vital issue in education. Knowledge about EL and positive education needs to be embedded into teacher training courses, so that teachers become more self-aware, able to look after their own mental health, and, in turn, they can help students. In such training courses, positive psychology theory and practice need to be understood and appreciated for the ways in which they can enhance schooling in the context of engaging teachers in democratic and participatory approaches to change.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A TEACHERS' LETTER

SELF Research Centre
University of Western Sydney
Locked Bag 1797: Penrith South NSW 1797

Dear _____

EMOTIONAL LITERACY: SKILLS IN PRACTICE RESEARCH PROJECT – for teachers

Research indicates that processes and practices developed within an emotional literacy framework and taken up by the school in a planned, developmental and coherent way, promote mental health, enhance resilience, reduce bullying, promote connectedness, enhance learning, help everyone feel more valued and are effective in addressing a range of behavioural issues.

In the last decade there has been increased interest in whole school emotional literacy as the relational values, knowledge and skills that underpin healthy relationships, especially in the UK, but little research in Australian schools. Your school has been identified as interested in the benefits of 'emotional literacy'. As a research student at the SELF Research Centre, University of Western Sydney I would like to invite you to take part in this project which explores the processes and practices to further build emotional literacy in your school and the impact these can have for staff and students in the current Years 7 & 8.

This involves completion of a questionnaire and a focus group interview with a small group of volunteers. There is also the possibility of joining the Participatory Action Research team. No individual will be identified and the name of the school will not be published without consent. This research aims to identify good practice in the building of emotional literacy for dissemination across the country.

The focus group interview will be held in Term four 2006 at a mutually convenient time and will run for 45 minutes to an hour. Interviews will be recorded on mini-disk to facilitate recall and collation of data. All information provided by you and others in the school will be kept confidential and anonymous. A copy of the final report will be given to the school and the University of Western Sydney.

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Co-ordinator

(Telephone: 02 4570 1688). Any issue you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome. The research project supervisor is Dr Sue Roffey at the University of Western Sydney.

Email: s.roffey@uws.edu.au

Yours sincerely

Mrs. Michelle Nemec

APPENDIX B SCHOOL CONSELLORS' LETTER

SELF Research Centre

University of Western Sydney

Locked Bag 1797: Penrith South NSW 1797

Dear _____

EMOTIONAL LITERACY: RESEARCH PROJECT – for the School Counsellor

Research indicates that processes and practices developed within an emotional literacy framework and taken up by the whole school, promote mental health, enhance resilience, reduce bullying, help everyone feel more valued and are effective in addressing a range of behavioural issues.

In the last decade there has been increased interest in whole school emotional literacy as the relational values, knowledge and skills that underpin healthy relationships, especially in the UK, but little research in Australian schools. Your school has been identified as interested in the benefits of 'emotional literacy'. As a research student at the University of Western Sydney I would like to invite you to take part in this project which explores the processes and practices to further develop emotional literacy in this school. Along with interviews with school staff and students this involves an individual interview with the school counsellor. You will not be individually identified by name in any report and the name of the school will not be published without the consent of the school principal.

This research aims to identify good practice in further developing emotional literacy for dissemination across Australia and internationally.

The interview will be held in third term in 2006 at a mutually convenient time and will run for 45 minutes to an hour. The interviews will be recorded on mini-disk to facilitate recall and collation of data. All information provided by you and others in the school will be kept confidential and anonymous. A copy of the final report will be given to the school and the University of Western Sydney.

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Coordinator (Telephone: 02 4570 1688). Any issue you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome. The research project supervisor is Dr Sue Roffey at the University of Western Sydney.

Email: s.roffey@uws.edu.au

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Michelle Nemec

APPENDIX C STUDENTS' LETTER

SELF Research Centre

University of Western Sydney

Locked Bag 1797: Penrith South NSW 1797

Dear Student,

Emotional Literacy: Research Project – for students

This research project is interested in what Year 7 & 8 students think about aspects of school life at your school. This includes how people get along with each other, how much feelings matter and how the way you feel can affect your learning. I would like to invite you to participate in a group interview where you can share your thoughts and ideas.

The focus group interview will be held in Term 4 2006 and will run for about 45 minutes. The interviews will be recorded on mini-disk but all information provided by you and others in the school will be kept confidential. Your name will not be recorded. You may leave the interview at any time if you wish to. If you become distressed in any way the school counsellor will be available to talk with you. Your parents will need to consent to your participation and you will be given a letter for them to sign. You will also have the opportunity to participate in a focus group interview in 2008. The research student is Mrs. Michelle Nemec and the Research project supervisor is Dr Sue Roffey at the University of Western Sydney.

Email: s.roffey@uws.edu.au

PLEASE SIGN UP HERE

NAME	Class and contact details

I have been given information about this research project and understand what it is about.

I am participating in this research interview voluntarily

I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time.

I have read and understand the complaints procedure.

I understand that the outcomes of the research will be published with the consent of the school but that individual contributions are confidential and no names will be given.

NAME: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

Dear

EMOTIONAL LITERACY: SKILLS IN PRACTICE RESEARCH PROJECT

Your daughter has expressed interest in participating in a group interview which is exploring the social and emotional aspects of school life at <school>. There are no right or wrong answers. This interview, which will be approximately 45 minutes long will take place in school early next week. Although it will be recorded no individual will be identified and their responses therefore will be anonymous. Students will also be invited to participate again in 2008.

Research indicates that emotional literacy practices in schools promote mental health, enhance resilience, reduce bullying, build connectedness, promote learning, help everyone feel more valued and are effective in addressing a range of behavioural issues. This current study aims to identify good practice in strengthening emotional literacy for dissemination across Australia and internationally.

If you would like more information about this project please contact Mrs Michelle Nemec. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Co-ordinator (Telephone: 02 4570 1688). Any issue you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Yours sincerely,

Michelle Nemec
SELF Research Centre
University of Western Sydney

Locked Bag 1797: Penrith South NSW 1797

PERMISSION SLIP

I.....give permission for to participate in the group interview on emotional literacy in school. I understand that my daughter is able to withdraw her participation should she decide at any time before or during the interview. I also acknowledge that all information gathered by the research will be stored securely and my daughter's identity will remain anonymous.

SIGNED _____ DATE _____

Parent's signature _____

Please print _____

APPENDIX E CONSENT FOR ADULTS PRIOR TO INTERVIEW

EMOTIONAL LITERACY: SKILLS IN PRACTICE RESEARCH PROJECT

I have been given information about this research project and understand what it is about.

I am participating in this research interview voluntarily

I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time.

I have read and understand the complaints procedure.

I understand that the outcomes of the research will be published with the consent of the school but that individual contributions are confidential and no names will be given.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX F CONSENT FOR STUDENTS PRIOR TO INTERVIEW

EMOTIONAL LITERACY: RESEARCH PROJECT

I have been given information about this research project

It is my choice to be part of this group interview

I understand that there are no right or wrong answers

I understand that I can leave at any time and go back to class

I understand that what I say will be recorded

I understand that this research will be written up and published but it will not be possible to identify who said what.

I agree to take part in this interview:

NAME: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX G PROPOSED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPAL / SCHOOL EXECUTIVE Interview 1

(Main questions in bold, followed by possible prompts)

What do you understand by the term ‘emotional literacy’?

How do you see emotional literacy operating in your school?
How does emotional literacy impact on the relationships operating in your school?
How does emotional literacy determine the quality of staff relationships?
How does emotional literacy determine the quality of staff-student relationships?
What degree of emotional literacy do you see operating in regard to Year 7 & 8 students?
How does this impact on the students?
How would describe the tone of the school / character of the school?
What are some key factors which impact on emotional literacy at your school?
What type of barriers impact on emotional literacy?

What changes need to take place in the school to further develop emotional literacy?

What changes need to take place in the school involving staff to further develop emotional literacy?
What changes need to take place in the school involving students to further develop emotional literacy?
What changes need to take place in the school involving policy, procedures and practice to further develop emotional literacy?
What types of skill are most needed to develop emotional literacy?

APPENDIX H PROPOSED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPAL/SCHOOL EXECUTIVE Interview 2

(Main questions in bold, followed by possible prompts)

How has your own view of emotional literacy developed through the research projects?

Have you noticed differences in the school in regard to the level of emotional literacy?

How have these changes been evident in the quality of academic and pastoral care?

How have these changes been evident in the atmosphere generally?

How have these changes been evident in Year 7 & 8 students?

How have these changes been evident in staff?

How have these changes been evident in the way people talk about things?

How have these changes been evident in the communications between people?

How have these changes influenced on-going policy development?

How have these changes been evident individual teachers?

How have these changes affected vulnerable students and at-risk students?

How have these changes affected home-school communication?

Has the focus on emotional literacy made a difference to you professionally and personally? In which ways?

In what ways does emotional literacy affect staff and Year 7 & 8 students from your experience?

How can this be seen to influence learning?

How can this be seen to influence problem-solving?

How has this help to make school a place where they feel valued?

How can this be seen to make school a place where they want to be?

What do you see as needing to happen now?

What needs to happen to manage barriers to emotional literacy?

What needs to happen to sustain change and continue to develop emotional literacy?

What advice would you give others who were considered introducing emotional literacy programs into their schools?

APPENDIX I PROPOSED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL COUNSELLOR INTERVIEW 1

(Main questions in bold, followed by possible prompts)

What do you understand by the term ‘emotional literacy’?

What aspects of this school do you think are ‘emotionally literate’?

At what point do you think the school is at in terms developing an emotionally literate culture amongst staff / amongst Year 7 & 8 students?

What has helped to establish this?

What has inhibited it?

What do you think has made the most difference?

How would you describe the relationships in the school?

How would you describe relationships generally?

How would you describe relationships in the school for students?

How would you describe relationships in the school for learning in Year 7 & 8 classrooms?

How would you describe relationships in the school for staff?

How would you describe relationships in the school for general ethos / discourse?

How would you describe relationships in the school for communications?

How would you describe relationships in the school for policy development?

How would you describe relationships in the school for individuals?

How would you describe relationships in the school for responding to behavioural concerns?

What needs to happen to make the most difference to you in your work?

What needs to happen to make the most difference to you in your work regarding staff ?

What needs to happen to make the most difference to you in your work regarding Year 7 and 8 students?

What barriers exist to enable the school (staff and students) to develop greater levels of emotional literacy?

What barriers exist to enable for the principal?

What barriers exist to enable for the school executive?

What barriers exist to enable for the staff?

What barriers exist to enable for yourself? For Year 7 and 8?

APPENDIX J PROPOSED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL COUNSELLOR INTERVIEW 2

(Main questions in bold, followed by possible prompts) INTERVIEW 2

How has your own view of emotional literacy developed through the research projects?

Have you noticed differences in the school?

- The quality of academic and pastoral care
- The atmosphere generally
- The types of conversations you have had with Year 7 & 8 students
- For Year 7 & 8 students
- For staff
- The way people talk about things
- For communications between people
- For policy development
- For individual teachers
- For vulnerable students
- For disaffected individuals
- For home-school communication

Has the focus on emotional literacy made a difference to you professionally and personally? In which ways?

To what extent does emotional literacy affect staff and Year 7 & 8 students from your experience?

- In solving problems
- In regard to their behaviour
- In making school a place where they feel valued
- In making school a place where they want to be

What do you see as needing to happen now?

- To manage barriers to emotional literacy
- To sustain change and continue to develop emotional literacy
- What advice would you give others who were considered introducing To enable other schools to implement emotional literacy programs into their schools

APPENDIX K FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW FOR TEACHERS INTERVIEW 1

(Main questions in bold, followed by possible prompts)

What do you understand by the term ‘emotional literacy?’

How do you see this played out in classes with Year 7 & 8 students?
How do you see this played out in co-curricular activities?
How do you see this played out in pastoral care?
How do you see this played out in academic care?
How can it be observed in the school ethos?
How can it be observed in staff interactions?
How can it be observed in staff-student interactions?
What impact does it have for Year 7 & 8 students in their friendship groups?

What could help emotional literacy to be further developed in your school?

What could help emotional literacy to be further developed in the values that are held and school ethos?
What could help emotional literacy to be further developed in the policy, procedures and practices in regard to academic care?
What could help emotional literacy to be further developed in the policy, procedures and practices in regard to pastoral care?
What could help emotional literacy to be further developed in staff interactions?
What could help emotional literacy to be further developed in staff-student interactions?
What could help emotional literacy to be further developed in Student-student interactions?
What could help emotional literacy to be further developed in School executive?
What could help emotional literacy to be further developed in the Principal?

APPENDIX L FOCUS GROUP Interview FOR TEACHERS 2

(Main questions in bold, followed by possible prompts)

What has helped to put emotional literacy on the agenda in this school?

Have you seen changes for Year 7 & 8 students? What are these?

Have you seen changes for staff? What are these?

What difficulties do you see with establishing emotional literacy in this school?

How might these be overcome?

For staff?

For Year 7 & 8 students?

How do you see emotional literacy affecting staff and Year 7 & 8 students?

For staff

For Year 7 & 8 students

In regard to policy, procedures and practices for academic and pastoral care

What would you see as the next steps to sustaining and developing emotional literacy in your school?

What practices are most significant for other schools who are interested in further developing emotional literacy in their own school?

APPENDIX M FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH STUDENTS

What do you like about being in this school?

What does this school do to help students feel good about being here?

What happens here to help students understand themselves and their feelings?

Do you think that people's feelings matter in this school?

What difference does it make when people take account of feelings?

How does the way you feel affect your learning in the classroom?

What does the teacher do in classrooms where you feel valued and able to take risks with your learning?

What do the students do in classrooms where they feel valued and safe?

What is needed to make everyone feel that school is a safe place?

What happens here to encourage everyone to get along well with each other?

What ideas do you have to make this school an even happier place to be?

APPENDIX N

FRAMEWORK FOR EMOTIONAL LITERACY IN SCHOOLS **FOR TEACHERS**

Please give a rating from 1 – 5 on the following. 1 is “low”, “never” or “not at all” and 5 is “high”, “always” or “absolutely”. This questionnaire is for understanding where <school> is at, what has been achieved and where we might go next.

See the concluding section to develop Action Plan to for enhancing emotional literacy at <school>.

Values

Students feel respected and valued in all classrooms

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Staff feel respected and valued by management

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

The whole school community can articulate the values of the school

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Each person is valued as a unique individual

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

A high value is put on developing positive relationships

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

An emotionally literate climate

People enjoy working in this school

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Students enjoy learning in this school

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

The school climate is purposeful

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

The overall atmosphere is warm, friendly and responsive

1 2 3 4 5

There is an inclusive ethos (we all belong here)

1 2 3 4 5

Psychological safety and well being is actively pursued

1 2 3 4 5

The whole school is a 'no put down' zone

1 2 3 4 5

There is a positive welcome to new students, new staff, parents and other visitors

1 2 3 4 5

Diversity is explored and celebrated through whole school and class practice

1 2 3 4 5

Collaboration is fostered at every level

1 2 3 4 5

Everyone takes responsibility for maintaining a positive climate

1 2 3 4 5

Staff consider they are making a positive difference for students

1 2 3 4 5

There is a celebration of a range of student achievements

1 2 3 4 5

There is acknowledgement of a range of staff achievements

1 2 3 4 5

Communication

Information channels are open, efficient and constructive

1 2 3 4 5

Confidentiality is respected

1 2 3 4 5

Conversations between adults are predominantly solution focused

1 2 3 4 5

Adults speak calmly and respectfully to students

1 2 3 4 5

Adults speak calmly and respectfully to parents

1 2 3 4 5

Communications home are positive

1 2 3 4 5

Discussions with families take account of their perspectives and needs

1 2 3 4 5

Staff know how to reduce confrontation

1 2 3 4 5

Management

Senior management are committed to the well-being of students and staff

1 2 3 4 5

Senior management is approachable

1 2 3 4 5

Senior management is positive and constructive

1 2 3 4 5

Staff feel that their views matter and are taken into consideration

1 2 3 4 5

Staff who are struggling are offered non-judgemental support

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Students are offered a means of participation in decision making in class

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Students are offered a means of participating in whole school decisions

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

There are active peer support networks for students

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

There are active support networks in the school for staff

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Embedding social and emotional learning in class and school practices

People talk about emotional literacy and what it means

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Social and emotional competencies are modelled by all staff

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Social and emotional learning is integral to the life of the school

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Both difficulties and solutions are seen as the outcome of interactive factors

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Social and emotional skills are actively encouraged in students

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Appropriate assertiveness is taught and encouraged

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Conflict management is taught and encouraged for everyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Behaviour policies and strategies demonstrate emotional literacy

1

2

3

4

5

Summarising

What are the emotionally literate strengths of the school?

What is identified as a priority for change and development?

What type of environment is needed for high levels of emotional literacy?

Other comments:

Action Plan

Please complete the following if you have views about how to strengthen any areas outlined above through the questionnaire or the comments you provided:

What are the first steps that might be taken to address these?

Who will do what?

What is the time-line for implementation?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire: Please place in the envelope provided and return to Michelle Nemec.

If you would like to take part in a focus group for this research project and /or a Participatory Action Research Team please contact Mrs. Michelle Nemec a.s.a.p.

APPENDIX O STUDENT EMOTIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE

FRAMEWORK FOR EMOTIONAL LITERACY IN SCHOOLS

for students

Please give a rating from **1 – 5** on the following. 1 is “**low**”, “**never**” or “**not at all**” and 5 is “**high**”, “**always**” or “**absolutely**”. This information will be kept confidential and will help to develop positive relationships in your school.

Values

I feel respected and valued in all classrooms

1 2 3 4 5

Everyone knows what values are important at our school

1 2 3 4 5

Each person is valued as a unique individual

1 2 3 4 5

A high value is placed on developing positive friendships and relationships with teachers

1 2 3 4 5

An emotionally literate climate

People enjoy coming to this school

1 2 3 4 5

Students enjoy learning in this school

1 2 3 4 5

The school is clear on what I need to achieve

1 2 3 4 5

The overall atmosphere is warm and friendly

1 2 3 4 5

We all belong here

1 2 3 4 5

I feel emotionally safe and I know people want to look after me here

1 2 3 4 5

The whole school is a 'no put down' zone

1 2 3 4 5

There is a positive welcome to new students, new staff, parents and other visitors

1 2 3 4 5

Diversity is explored and celebrated in my class and this school

1 2 3 4 5

Team work is encouraged at all levels of this school

1 2 3 4 5

Everyone takes responsibility for making this school friendly and positive

1 2 3 4 5

The staff makes a positive difference for me

1 2 3 4 5

There is a celebration of a range of student achievements

1 2 3 4 5

Communication

Communication is open, efficient and constructive

1 2 3 4 5

Confidentiality is respected

1 2 3 4 5

Students use constructive ways to solve problems that occur

1 2 3 4 5

Adults speak calmly and respectfully to students

1 2 3 4 5

Communications home are positive

1 2 3 4 5

Staff

Staff are committed to the well-being of students

1 2 3 4 5

Staff are approachable

1 2 3 4 5

Staff are positive and constructive

1 2 3 4 5

Students feel that their views matter and are taken into consideration

1 2 3 4 5

Students who need help are offered non-judgemental support and assistance

1 2 3 4 5

Students are offered a means of participation in decision making in class

1 2 3 4 5

Students are offered a means of participating in whole school decisions

1 2 3 4 5

There are active peer support networks for students

1 2 3 4 5

Social and emotional learning

Social and emotional learning is a key part of school life

1 2 3 4 5

Social and emotional skills such as managing emotions are used by most students

1 2 3 4 5

My social skills help me form positive relationships with staff and students

1 2 3 4 5

Appropriate assertiveness is taught and encouraged

1 2 3 4 5

Conflict management is taught and encouraged for everyone

1 2 3 4 5

Behaviour policies and strategies enable me to develop values such as respect

1 2 3 4 5

Summarising

What are the social and emotional strengths of the school?

What would you identify as a priority for change and development in regard to the above issues for your school?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire: If you would like to take part in a focus group for this research project please see Mrs Nemec.

APPENDIX P ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER
