

**Explore how a learning community might adopt approaches with the intension of impacting positively on their wellbeing. Examining the impact on both Objective and Subjective Wellbeing**

Wellbeing encompasses various aspects of human life and can be seen as multidimensional.

Wellbeing can be defined as: *‘A positive state experienced by individuals and societies.*

*Similar to health, it is a resource for daily life and is determined by social, economic, and environmental conditions. Well-being encompasses quality of life and the ability of people and societies to contribute to the world with a sense of meaning and purpose’* (WHO, 2022).

However, the word Wellbeing can carry a different meaning to each of us. For this paper, I will examine the impacts of adopted approaches in a learning community from both Subjective and Objective wellbeing perspective, whilst Exploring through the history, Theory, and Policy of wellbeing.

Wellbeing can be identified as subjective or objective and can be a combination of both.

Subjective well-being refers to how individuals experience and evaluate their own lives. It includes components such as life satisfaction, positive emotions, and a sense of purpose or meaning in life, often measured through self-reported surveys or questionnaires (Besley et al. 2022). Objective well-being refers to the actual conditions of an individual's life including income, education, health status, and access to resources and opportunities that contribute to their overall well-being (Besley et al. 2022). While subjective and objective well-being can be seen as relatable, they are not always aligned. Looking at an individual's Subjective and objective well-being is imperative as it carries a holistic view of an individual's subjective experiences and external conditions. Understanding both SWB and OWB informs policy

makers on the improvement of well-being from both an individual and national level (Besley et al. 2022).

Greek philosophy has impacted on our understanding of well-being throughout history and provides us with perspectives on how to achieve Eudaimonia. Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus had different views on what constitutes a good and fulfilling life. However, they all agreed on the importance of achieving a state of wellbeing focusing on the importance of living a virtuous life and finding happiness through moderation and self-control (Tesar & Peters, 2019).

Socrates believed virtues all unite as one to achieve Eudaimonia, through the importance of self-reflection in the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom was not just a means to an end, but an end to achieve wellbeing (Kamtekar, 2017). However, According to Plato, individuals will feel unhappiness when they knowingly do something wrong, Plato believed Eudaimonia was the moral thought on a behaviour at its highest and the goal (Ambury and German, 2019).

Aristotle's philosophy on wellbeing is based on the concept of Eudaimonia, Eudaimonia taken to mean Happiness comes from Aristotle's ethic and philosophical work on the '*Science of Happiness*' it can also translate as welfare, flourishing or wellbeing (kraut, 2015)

Aristotle believed that the goal of human life can be achieved through meaningful purpose and finding a balance to achieve wellbeing (Kraut, 2015). Socrates and Plato had similar concepts on the belief that virtues were required in order to meet Eudaimonia such as income, wealth and self-respect, Aristotle believed that how we lived our lives and choices or actions

we take, would result in happiness and wellbeing and not through materialistic gain but by doing good in our lives (Tesar & Peters, 2019).

Epicurus approaches defined wellbeing as absence of pain and worry in addition to non-materialistic pleasures and the engagement with others that shared intellectual interests and views. Epicurus argued that indulgence in pleasure leads to pain and suffering, and that true happiness is achieved through pleasures such as friendships. All Greek philosophers can be seen as subjective wellbeing however it has been seen that Epicurus was that of hedonist approach as to a Eudaimonia, but it is argued that Epicurus approach was that of a Self-tranquillity approach (Austin, 2022).

Within the world of Human ethics, the focus on Greek philosophers developed a contemporary philosophy in the 17th century By Thomas Hobbes desire satisfaction theory (Meyers, 2013). Hobbes hedonist approach to wellbeing suggests that Individuals are motivated by their desires or wants, and act in ways that they believe will satisfy those desires. Hobbes suggested that to achieve the desired outcomes, individuals engage in planned action and make rational choices by weighing up the pros and cons of different options and choosing the best to satisfy their desires (Meyers, 2013). However, it can be argued that the theory is more short-term wellbeing as opposed to long term wellbeing (Chung, 2016). It has been argued that Hobbs was an egoism and through this view he argues that once a desire is achieved it can be short lived, Individuals feelings will return to their original baseline creating more desires to seek the goal of Happiness. The Desire satisfaction theory fails to account for social cultural and emotional factors that may influence human motivation and behaviour and focuses more on self-interests and Gains (Chung, 2016).

Further development by Jeremy Bentham in the 19th century, introduced the theory of utilitarianism. Bentham introduced a hedonist model and calculus where the formula equated to the happiness minus pain equals balance. If the balance is in favour of happiness, then the action is morally right, if the act is in favour of pain, it is morally wrong, known as Act utilitarianism (Schultz, 2017). However, this theory does not come without its disadvantages. Research shows that it is not a practical model to follow in an instant situation of decision making, an individual would not be able to have time to weigh up the pleasure and pains to act accordingly to the calculus and cannot act in the right way or rightfully predict the right outcome from the choice at that time (Robson, 2019). Mill agreed with Bentham's theory of pleasure and pain but strongly disagreed with the calculus and that all pleasures were of equal quality and suggested a higher and lower level of pleasure where rules are needed for society to follow that worked towards the most happiness to the most people, This theory is known as Rule utilitarian and resolved the issues of actions of a negative nature and would allow time to think more morally (Schultz, 2017). Understanding the similarities and differences between the utilitarian theories of Bentham and Mill can provide a useful framework for evaluating ethical and political decisions (Robson, 2019).

Historically, a focus on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measurement is used to access the wellbeing of the nation. However, it is recognised that GDP alone is not a sufficient measure of life quality at a national level, although research suggests that it can have an impact on SWB through various mechanisms (Diener, Tay, & Oishi, 2013). SWB offers a more comprehensive measure of a nation's wellbeing by exploring the concept beyond material concerns and considering an individual perspective (Frijters and Krekel, 2021).

A major improvement on policy whereas the focus was on the standard of living for people was developed by Amartya Sen Capabilities Approach. which focuses on a person's capabilities and freedom to achieve life satisfaction, Functioning and capabilities are factors we care about however, resources are imperative to reach those functioning and capabilities (Yerkes, Javornik and Kurowska, 2019). The capabilities Approach allows people's wellbeing to become central and can be either the achieved quality of life or the freedom to be able to have a good life. In addition to this, social environments can also cause constraints or enable capabilities. Each individual will need different kinds of amounts of resources to achieve good quality of life ensuring human diversity and equality is embedded to ensure a holistic approach (Yerkes, Javornik and Kurowska, 2019)

Nussbaum and Sen developed the approach to incorporate the holistic and functional aspect of the Capabilities approach to achieve one's full potential. Nussbaum approach of affirmation self-respect, practical realigning, concept of good and critically reflect on life, proves imperative for wellbeing within the Capabilities approach in social policy (Yerkes, Javornik and Kurowska, 2019) The essence of the approach is that we all have the capabilities of reaching our full potential however, if we are not informed, have availability to access resources, or able to see that we are capable of, how can we achieve life satisfaction and well-being (Dalziel, Saunders and Saunders, 2018). The contributing factor that determines the outcome of the Capabilities approach is that one person's idea of life satisfaction can be seen as different from another is in the shape of how we live, our upbringing, environment, education, culture, social and personal circumstances. This should not determine the outcome of what we can do to reach our full potential (Dalziel, Saunders, and Saunders, 2018). The use of the approach within modern policy can also contribute to the measurement of wellbeing within a nation and had been used as part of the United Nations

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) The SDG's looks at wellbeing incorporates factors such as Health, Education and income, there is also structural and environmental considerations in relation to the natural world (Yerkes, Javornik and Kurowska, 2019).

The culture in which we are brought up in can influence on how we view and approach wellbeing. Cultural differences from around the world can vary significantly and have unique cultural values, traditions, and social norms (Diener, Kahneman, and Helliwell 2010). In Sweden and Denmark Social Welfare is a priority that contributes to elevated levels of wellbeing with effective policies in place that ensure citizens a sense of security and stability. Japan and China, however, has a strong cultural background of mindfulness and meditation that has been imbedded for centuries and passed on through generations where citizens take ownership of ensuring their own mental health and wellbeing through community and social engagement which can provide a sense of belonging and support. Mediterranean countries such as Spain, Greece, and Italy, are known for strong family orientated cultures which provide social support and belonging and can contribute to overall wellbeing (Cummins, 2018)

The United Kingdom (UK) has many positive cultural attributes to wellbeing, with strong work culture that contribute to a sense of purpose however, work related stress can have a negative impact on an individual's mental Health. The UK can be seen as having areas for improvement to improve and create a culture that supports health and wellbeing of all individuals in all communities. By understanding and learning from other countries and their approaches and cultures, the UK can create a more inclusive and supportive culture of wellbeing for their citizens (Cummins, 2018).

In 2010 developments in approaches to policy making and measurement of wellbeing tools, David Cameron introduced the Wellbeing Framework incorporating a more balanced and holistic view of wellbeing. The Wellbeing Framework consists of components to which personal wellbeing is at the core of the framework with Economy, Education and childhood, Equality, Health, and social relationships forming the surrounding area to which personal wellbeing is achieved and make decisions and interventions (Dalziel, Saunders, and Saunders, 2018)

The organisation of Economic co-operation Development (OECD) states ‘The fundamental purpose of public policy is to protect and promote the wellbeing of citizens, it follows that the notion of poverty and deprivation go well beyond lack of income or consumption to include poor health status, low education and skills, weak social connections, the psychological cost of social exclusion, the exposure to risks and experience of vulnerability, and sense of powerlessness’ (OECD, 2020). The OECD better life initiative recommended that a framework measuring social progress amongst areas, measures values of good life within certain domains with a second view on political concerns of well-being was needed (OECD, 2020).

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) Identified seven connected wellbeing goals to achieve a more equal Wales. Its primary goal to enable our nation to thrive and prosper. The responsibility placed on an approach through multidisciplinary working with the local authorities, businesses, health boards and Welsh government, However, communities and individuals have a responsibility and role to play to take action to achieve this. The law includes positive and long-term impacts for our future by working differently in

approaches from what has previously been done. The principle of the Law identifies working in an integrated way with the involvement of individuals, ensuring diversity and inclusion collaboration is vital to source solutions on a common ground and prevention of issues arising or developing (Gov.Wales, 2021).

The Law can also be seen to be linked to the Bronfenbrenner Ecological system Theory, that a human development is shaped by the interaction of an individual and that of their environment. At the core of the theory is the Individual known as the micro system in addition there are four outer systems each contained within each other the mesosystem, exosystemic, macro system and chrono system each system interacts both directly and indirectly with the individual and each other and has an impact on the Individuals development. The systems are to where each one effects the Individual. This theory can be embedded to all concepts of wellbeing (Eriksson, Ghazinour and Hammarström, 2018).

In 2019 the Scottish Government joined forces with Iceland and New Zealand to form the Wellbeing economy governing group. The purpose of the group was to challenge the current method of measurement tool of GDP. The Scottish government argue that limitations within this measurement do not identify the work done to achieve the data and acts purely on activities that boost the economy even if it has a damaging effect to the sustainability of our planet in the long term. The Scottish Government believes that economic growth is important however, the goal is collective wellbeing inclusive of a happy and healthy population and not just how wealthy they are. It is suggested that the data does not capture factors such as income, children's happiness, access to services, housing poverty and access to green space that are key factors for what is needed on order to achieve a healthy and happy society. *The*

*groups' primary goal is to promote a society that has wellbeing not just wealth at its heart'* (Scottish Government, 2020).

It can be argued that although developments and reforms have occurred, the importance of wellbeing within society today is detrimental in the lives of the individuals that inhabit this world. Never more so with the effects of a pandemic that will have an everlasting effect on individuals Physical, Intellectual, Emotional and Social needs. The support and resources to which policy makers need to address will need to embed a more humanistic approach where diversity and a holistic overview is needed (Frijters and Krekel, 2021).

Maslow (1954) clearly states in his hierarchy of needs theory that human beings need to have a sense of belonging to reach their full physical, emotional psychological and intellectual potential. The theory states that the need for all layers within the Pyramid would need to be met to achieve an individual's full potential and wellbeing (Guillen, 2020). However the Perma model of wellbeing developed by Seligman, challenges the theory and suggests that the Pyramid is strict in structure and states each layer has to be met before progressing onto the next, whilst wellbeing can be met by achieving different parts of the pyramid at any given time without achieving the lower levels (Matthewman et al, 2018). The Perma model advocates building blocks to which individuals wellbeing can be achieved (Matthewman et al, 2018).

With advancements in policies relating to wellbeing of individuals and the aftereffects of covid nineteen having a detrimental effect on mental health and wellbeing throughout the world, adoptions to approaches to wellbeing to support the education sector and the students

has been the subject of ever-changing review and recommendations from Estyn and implemented throughout the education system. However, there are gaps within the approaches that can be addressed that can have a positive effect on students that incorporate theory, policy and meet with both subjective and objective wellbeing to achieve the overall sense of achievement and wellbeing (Estyn, 2023).

Work based learning is an educational approach that provides students with practical skills and knowledge within the workplace where students complete an accredited qualification whilst in full time employment. The qualification is assessed internally and externally by Training providers and the awarding body, by means of assessment consisting of observations, tasks, and assignments (Estyn, 2023).

The introduction of Social Care Wales registration seen all social care workers mandatory completion of relevant qualification to register and work in the Social Care sector. This has seen an increased need for a frontline workforce with employers aged eighteen to sixty-five within this sector to undertake a work-based learning programme. This is in line with the RISCA regulatory Requirements within the sector (Social Care Wales, 2023).

The outbreak of a global pandemic seen the Health and Social Care sector of frontline workers under pressure to undertake their role and complete an Apprenticeship in Health and social care qualification to meet with the regulatory requirement. This presented challenges to both the teaching of work-based learning and the learner's journey. In addition to this, sickness, illness, lockdown of services, furlough, and family commitments of children off

school, additional carer responsibility of families and bereavement of individuals, this sector truly faced exceptionally hard challenges and continues to do so to date (Estyn, 2021).

As a provider within a college setting, we are part for a whole college approach. The current Training provider approaches include training of staff on mental health first Aid and reporting issues of a serious nature to the safeguarding officer (Neath Port Talbot Group of Colleges, 2019). The interventions and adaptations to which I propose will change the way in which wellbeing is approached and positively impact learners within the work-based learner community specifically the health and social care sector ages eighteen to sixty-five.

### **A Student Voice**

A student wellbeing voice for the Learning community would involve students actively participating within the training providers, college, and education system. It will enable students to contribute to the decision-making processes and collectively influence outcomes by putting forward views, concerns and ideas surrounding wellbeing support whilst giving a perspective of the challenges they face within work-based learning identifying the need to address the diversity, Equality, and inclusion of all students within this sector (Hopkins, 2008).

As assessors we can bring forward ideas for change that can be challenged and possibly bias however, there is no voice louder than the student themselves inclusive of all experiences they have on their learner journey and communicating to students the importance of their

voice and how this can effectively bring about changes to the wellbeing support they need and receive (British Council, 2023).

A student council or a similar representative body that can be established to give students a formal voice in matters related to their well-being. The council can work with the provider and college to address issues or discuss and propose solutions related to student well-being and give an opportunity to carry out regular surveys or feedback forms opinions and suggestions from students, on how to improve their well-being that is collated with results and outcomes being presented and used to inform institutional policies or programs relating to well-being of improvements that can be made (University of Plymouth, 2023).

Students can be invited to attend well-being events or workshops where they can learn about various aspects of well-being and share their experiences. These events can also be used as an opportunity to gather feedback from students and be seen as an opportunity for a social interaction of support groups where students can connect with each other and provide emotional support, share experiences, and exchange tips on how to maintain well-being. By providing a platform for student voice, the provider can create a culture of openness and transparency around issues relating to well-being. This can help to promote a sense of belonging and ownership among students, and lead to a more positive and supportive environment for all students (British Council, 2023).

The benefits of the intervention would be changes to the whole school approach the college is currently delivering that could give an insight to a diverse group of learners that are currently under one umbrella of support available. However, the commitment and time linked to the

proposal can be challenging for this sector as they are already facing elevated levels of hours working and additional caring responsibilities with children and extended family commitments which can result in lack of commitment.

### **Assessor Training and Development in Wellbeing**

Research shows that Teachers with the skills and knowledge to support learners through their academic journey have a higher success rate of completion. Completion of a qualification can bring on further opportunities and progression within their chosen career with financial gain with a sense of achievement and fulfilment which can all contribute to a student's wellbeing (Terada, 2019). Staff training for well-being of students can be an effective way to ensure that staff members are equipped with the knowledge and skills to support students (Terada, 2019).

Assessors are key to delivery of effective learning to learners. The student's health and wellbeing are imperative to the successful completion of the chosen qualification. The Welsh government injected funding into the sector in order to ensure all staff received Mental Health Awareness training however, there is currently no training in place for assessors to develop their skills and knowledge in supporting students with their wellbeing specific to the learning community needs and Post Covid effects within the sector need to be addressed (Estyn 2021). Assessors Training in Mental Health Awareness and Mental Health first aid effectively equips the assessor to address and refer the mental health needs of students, which contributes to their wellbeing. However, within the sector of health and social care workforce, additional training needs are imperative to provide a holistic approach to wellbeing (Estyn 2021).

Psychosocial awareness training programmes for post covid support is a training programme that identifies the basic knowledge and skills needed for assessors to support the needs of the students psychological and the social dimensions, as each aspects influences the other the training will enable assessors to identify the internal, emotional and thought process , feelings and reactions whilst the external dimension will identify factors within the environment with regards to family, work, culture and social values (Carreon and Manansala, 2021).

Assessors can be trained to promote the importance of well-being through provision of resources and tools to students that will improve both their subjective and objective wellbeing. Techniques to teach stress management such as mindfulness, meditation, and relaxation exercises will enable students to meet with physical and spiritual dimensions that can minimise stress related issues (Mind, 2023 a)

Guidance for students on managing their time effectively to balance their work, study, and personal commitments and facilitating peer support groups, where students can connect with each other and provide emotional support, share experiences, and exchange tips on how to maintain well-being can all contribute to have a detrimental effect of their studies and completion of qualification, which will meet with subjective wellbeing of a feeling of achievement and self-worth ensuring their emotional, social and intellectual needs are being met (Terada, 2019)

Providing students with information to signpost them for financial advice and support can reassure students that there is support available for them inclusive of individual circumstances. Promotion of diversity is a key factor to take into consideration to ensure all

students are inclusively addressed. Budgeting, saving, and benefit entitlements will have an effective on their financial welfare that can contribute to emotional, financial, and environmental wellbeing. Providing students with career guidance and support, such can also be seen as meeting with the concept of addressing their objective wellbeing by enhancing career prospects (Mind, 2023b).

Identified area of concern is delivery time to the learner limited by the wellbeing role they are undertaking, taking away from delivery of qualification. To resolve this, the scheme of work should reflect this (Carreon and Manansala, 2021).

By providing staff training on well-being, an institution can ensure that staff members are equipped to support students in all aspects of their well-being both subjective and objective and can create a positive and supportive environment for students, and ultimately lead to better outcomes in terms of student success and retention (Carreon and Manansala, 2021).

### **Wellbeing Portal**

A Well-being portal (WBP) for work-based students would be designed to support the holistic well-being and provide students with the resources they need to thrive both in their studies and in their personal lives (Student Minds, 2023).

The portal would include a range of resources and tools to support their physical, mental, and emotional well-being and will compliment assessor training and development. Students will access tools to self-help where issues arise in day-to-day life, and signposted to internal college advisors, as well as external links, with guidance to help the student make real life

changes to manage and improve their health and wellbeing. The portal will be based around the dimensions of wellbeing to ensure an overall holistic approach is achieved.

The portal resources would consist of concepts of wellbeing through workout videos, exercise programs, and healthy recipes to encourage physical activity and healthy eating habits, whilst providing access to mental health resources including stress management techniques, and mindfulness exercises (Student Minds, 2023). The physical aspect will be addressed with Nutritional advice on recipes ideas, online workouts, and local outdoor activities, resulting in physical health which can have a positive effect on an individual both physically and mentally (Australian Government, 2021). Advice on mindset and mindfulness can influence an individual's concentration, and effect sleep patterns that can contribute to a more relaxed state of mind, higher levels of concentration and wellbeing (Mind, 2023 a).

Introducing links for students both online and face to face within the community, encourages engagement through Religious and spiritual groups, coffee mornings and age related discussion groups that embrace inclusion and diversity within the learning community and contributes to students feeling of Spiritual Sense of fulfilment and Meaningful purpose in life, with a sense of belonging whilst addressing physical, emotional and social needs (Buck, Wenzell and Beech, 2021).

Welfare resources to Support students on saving and investing, and information on managing debt, to reflect current cost of living crisis can relive stress and have an impact on individuals' Subjective wellbeing both emotionally and physically and objectively effect the financial and environmental aspects, in which they live in (Mind, 2023 b).

A link to Digital literacy and essential skills will meet with intellectual need and provide resources on job search strategies, resume building, and interview skills that will contribute to the development within their qualification.

The Portal will enable learners to address the Emotional Feeling of belonging and support, engage in mind, connect with others, enhance their occupational learner Journey, which will result in Progression within their role and effective employability through Job satisfaction which will enhance their financial circumstances (Mind, 2023b). Providing opportunities for students to connect with each other through online communities, networking events, and social activities will ensure the social wellbeing of students are addressed, whilst providing resources and tools on personal development, such as goal-setting, self-reflection, and self-improvement that can give a student a sense of achievement and fulfilment (Buck, Wenzell and Beech, 2021).

The portal will be learner led to access and promote Equality, diversity, and inclusion. The college currently has a learner wellbeing portal however, it caters for students of ages Sixteen to twenty-five with topics that would not be relevant for all learners within the learning community. It is vitally important that as a training provider that delivers to a diverse group of individuals that we promote equality and inclusion and build on resilience and self-involvement that meets with the college's wellbeing strategy (Neath Port Talbot Group of Colleges, 2019).

There is a gap in research to show the benefits of wellbeing portals for adult learners however, there is a growth of evidence suggesting that portals throughout the education sector are incorporating these within Student support services with evidence showing a significant improvement into individuals health and wellbeing (Student Space, 2023). However, the issue of funding the portal would be something that would need to be addressed. Assessors would not be able to track access to the portal and so this would not be monitored unless embedded within the teaching and learning plans of each session. Learners that may find it difficult to access the portal due to not being digitally minded would be provided with support to access.

## Conclusion

Life for most of us has returned to a new normal, However, within the work-based learner Health and Social Care sector, Covid is still very present with the sector still facing outbreaks, large turnover of staff, staff shortages, sickness and registration deadlines for completion of qualifications imminent, the wellbeing of this learning community has never been more needed, for regulatory purposes and development in resilience and addressing long term effects of covid but the overall wellbeing of learners.

In conclusion, learning from the history of wellbeing philosophically and politically, enhancing the well-being of a learning community is critical for creating an environment where individuals can thrive and reach their full potential. Promoting Physical and Mental and Social support, and a sense of purpose and belonging, we can create a learning environment that is supportive and conducive to growth. The adaptations identified provide concrete strategies for achieving this goal and implementing these adaptations, we can create

a learning community that is healthier, happier, and more resilient. In turn, this will lead to greater productivity, creativity, and success for individuals. The importance of enhancing well-being within a learning community cannot be overstated, and we must continue to prioritize this goal in all educational and professional settings by developing Policy and Theory for a more holistic approach to Wellbeing.

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