Book Launch:
School Spaces for Student Wellbeing and Learning: Insights from Research and Practice

Student Engagement, Learning & Behaviour (#SELB) Research Group
Welcome

Dr Jill Willis
Event chair
Faculty of Education
Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners
Members of the Student Engagement, Learning and Behaviour Research Group (SELB) are engaged in quality research that aims to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of all children and young people, but particularly those who experience difficulty in schools and with learning.
Context

Dr Janet Buchan
Director – Centre for Innovation, Teaching Excellence & Leadership
Lourdes Hill College, Brisbane

What is the significance of school spaces and why we should pay attention to design?
### Preface
Hilary Hughes, Jill Franz & Jill Willis

### Foreword
Harry Daniels and Hau Ming Tse

### What if ...? Sketch by Derek Bland

#### Part One: Conceptual understandings of school spaces, learning and wellbeing

- **Towards a spatiality of wellbeing**
  - Jill Franz

- **Sociomaterial dimensions of early literacy learning spaces: Moving through classrooms with teacher and children**
  - Lisa Kervin, Barbara Comber & Aspa Baroutsis

- **Promoting children’s wellbeing and values learning in risky learning spaces**
  - Lyndal O’Gorman

- **School design and wellbeing: Spatial and literary meeting points**
  - Kerry Mallan

#### Part Two: Student experience of school spaces for wellbeing and learning

- **Imaginings and representations of high school learning spaces: Year 6 student experiences**
  - Kylie Andrews & Jill Willis

- **High school spaces and student transitioning: Designing for student wellbeing**
  - Hilary Hughes, Jill Franz, Jill Willis, Derek Bland & Annie Rolfe

- **Students reimagining school libraries as spaces of learning and wellbeing**
  - Jill Willis, Hilary Hughes & Derek Bland

- **Creating learning spaces that promote wellbeing, participation and engagement: Implications for students on the autism spectrum**
  - Beth Saggers & Jill Ashburner

- **Enhancing wellbeing through broadening the primary curriculum in the UK with Open Futures**
  - Pam Woolner & Lucy Tiplady

#### Part Three: Participatory designing of school spaces for wellbeing and learning

- **Fostering educator participation in learning space designing: Insights from a Master of Education unit of study**
  - Hilary Hughes & Raylee Elliott Burns

- **Participatory principles in practice: Designing learning spaces that promote wellbeing for young adolescents during the transition to secondary school**
  - Christopher Nastrom-Smith & Hilary Hughes

- **Creating a sensory garden for early years learners: Participatory designing for student wellbeing**
  - Adeline Kucks & Hilary Hughes

- **Creating the third teacher through participatory learning environment design: Reggio Emilia principles support student wellbeing**
  - Vanessa Miller

#### Part Four: Designing ‘space’ for student wellbeing as flourishing

- **Designing ‘space’ for student wellbeing as flourishing**
  - Jill Franz

- **The smells and noises of school spaces**
  - Sketch and impressions by Neve Willis
First presenter – Aspa Baroutsis
Sociomaterial dimensions of early literacy learning spaces:
Moving through classrooms with teacher and children

Lisa Kervin, Barbara Comber and Aspa Baroutsis
Research focus

• ‘Classrooms are learning spaces promote particular roles, activities and tools through which literacy practices are enabled.’

• ‘Situatedness’ of learning (Fenwick, 2014)

• ‘Place-belongingness’ (Antonsich, 2010)
Children’s perspectives of their writing spaces

- How, when, where, with what, with whom they were writing
- ‘Draw and talk’ (Coates & Coates, 2006)

- 89% included tables and chairs
- 59% grouped tables
- Less emphasis on learning ‘paraphernalia’

Social space

59% grouped tables

‘engine table’

89% included tables and chairs

Less emphasis on learning ‘paraphernalia’
Implications for wellbeing

• Teachers ‘design’ learning spaces but not all children’s experiences within the room are the same

• Classroom spaces as negotiated social and pedagogical spaces
Next presenter – Kerry Mallan
Next presenter – Kylie Andrews
Imaginings and Representations of High School Learning Spaces: Year 6 Student Experiences

Kylie Andrews and Jill Willis
Context: Middle years students transitioning to high school, how do they imagine and represent their future learning spaces?

This space relaxes me.  
Hope

You are not crammed inside the classroom, it’s so quiet when you’re outdoors…  
Joe
What do Year 6 students want in their high school learning spaces?

Natural spaces
Active spaces
Open spaces
Sustaining spaces
Autonomous spaces

It’s a tree. A tree makes me feel free.
Lee
Implications for designing spaces for wellbeing

- Design spaces to connect with nature
- Provide open spaces for formal, informal and autonomous learning and relationship building
- Consider environmental factors - air quality, noise and density
- Encourage participatory involvement to discover what spaces encourage a sense of wellbeing for students and provide students with a voice in spatial decisions.
Next presenter – Annie Rolfe
High School Spaces and Student Transitioning: Designing for Student Wellbeing

Hilary Hughes, Jill Franz, Jill Willis, Derek Bland and Annie Rolfe

(Queensland Department of Education and Training (DET) supported this research through funding and allowing access to schools).
purpose/context of research

Flying Start Policy – relocation of year 7 students from primary to secondary school

• **Effective transitioning is important** to ensure the continuation of **student engagement** (MCEETYA, 2008).

• **Lack of research** about how **high school spaces contribute** to—or **limit**—the **wellbeing** of transitioning students.

• **Qualitative case study** explored the **first-hand experience** of **Year 7 students** enrolled at **three schools in Queensland**.

**research question:**
*What is the relationship between student transition to Year 7, high school spaces and student wellbeing?*
Methodological approach of research

Segmented diagram

Drawing Activity

Wellbeing Cards
Year 7 students:

• prefer their home area where they feel supported;
• need fresh air and outdoor spaces to run and play;
• gravitate towards informal spaces such as handball courts and gardens;
• use the library for relaxation and quiet time alone;
• and feel intimidated and unsafe among older students in interstitial spaces such as pathways and stairwells.
practical implications for wellbeing

Spatial features in schools for wellbeing

- **Classrooms that offer a pleasant view & fresh air.** (physical & emotional wellbeing)
- **Private, quiet spaces** where students can be by themselves. (psychological wellbeing)
- **Social spaces** where students can hang out with and feel safe around friends and have fun. (social wellbeing)
- **Large spacious open rooms** that are bright and colourful. (physical & emotional wellbeing)
- **Spaces where students can think and learn.** (cognitive wellbeing)
- **Familiar spaces** where students feel safe. (physical & psychological wellbeing)

Students reimagining school libraries as spaces of learning and wellbeing

Jill Willis, Hilary Hughes and Derek Bland
In Qld schools received $1.78 billion as part of Building the Education Revolution (BER).

Over 600 school libraries were built or refurbished.

We wondered....What is happening inside?

**Research question** - How does the physical environment of school libraries influence pedagogy and learning outcomes?

- **Emerging spaces**
- **Established spaces**
- **Imagined spaces**
Participants:
7 schools: 6 primary, 1 secondary

Students - Teacher librarians - Principals - Teachers

Methodology:
Drawing - Video tours - Interviews

Social (critical) imagination:
“... visions of what should be and what might be in our deficient society, on the streets where we live, in our schools” (Greene, 1995, p. 5).

“a very sefistercated and a roomy area it has a lot of rooms for very different perpses like a reading room teck room, game area and a coppyle of classroom” (Year 7 male)
key findings

Four key themes: spaciousness, connectedness, choice/control, technology.

17 recommendations for future action:
- Creating and designing
- Transitioning and reimagining pedagogy
- Leadership
- Policy

Overall, best results occurred where there was consultation, collaboration & creativity.
practical implications for wellbeing

- **Visually appealing**, comfortable, student-friendly spaces engender a feeling of being welcome and safe, enabling risk-taking in their learning.

- **Flexible spaces** and fittings allow varied pedagogical approaches, including collaborative problem solving and independent inquiry.

- **Flexible and varied spaces** allow for inclusivity and equitable use by diverse learners with myriad learning and social needs (p. 141)

[Link to the report]
Fostering educator participation in learning space designing: Insights from a Master of Education unit of study

Hilary Hughes and Raylee Elliott Burns
Wellbeing through participation...

active engagement in a collaborative, values-based creative process that involves stakeholders with varying professional and lived experience.

Why educator participation?

- Specialist knowledge of pedagogy & learners
- Authentic learning opportunities
- Student voice
- Lived experience of learning spaces
- Continuity, evaluation, reimagining
MEd unit – Designing spaces for Learning
Charrette - Pedagogy for participatory designing

Year 3-4 students design a ‘tech hub’ for their school library

Year 3 students redesign Life Skills and Multi-Purpose rooms

Early years teachers design a sensory learning garden

[Images by MEd students. Copied with permission]
Participatory Principles in Practice: Designing Learning Spaces that Promote Wellbeing for Young Adolescents During the Transition to Secondary School

Christopher Nastrom-Smith and Hilary Hughes
Context of Research

- A desire to align the physical design of a new Junior Secondary Precinct with a future-focused, balanced pedagogy that would promote the active learning and student wellbeing;
- Three key concepts that underpinned the design project: contemporary pedagogy, student wellbeing and participatory designing (paying particular attention to student voice);
- Wellbeing as a psychological construct made up of four components: mental, emotional, social and intellectual.
Key Findings and Project Outcomes

- Indicators of positive wellbeing during adolescence closely reflect characteristics synonymous with 21st century learning and middle years education the development of which will not only support an adolescent’s wellbeing, they will enable young people to fully engage as 21st century citizens;
- The project created a social learning hub with multiple indoor and outdoor spaces, offering a complex of spaces that cater to a diverse range of student needs, enable authentic 21st century learning and is conducive to an evolving pedagogy;
- The flexible layout and reconfigurable furniture will ensure longevity of the space and adaptability in line with future educational trends;
- The inclusion of student voice in the designing process positively contributed to student wellbeing. In particular, the envisioning activity was beneficial in fostering a strong sense of student ownership of, and belong in, the Precinct.
The CHAC experience highlighted the 3 key influences on student wellbeing during the transition to secondary school:

- the provision of a pastoral care and transition program;
- the design of pedagogy and curriculum suited to contemporary learners; and
- the design of student-friendly learning spaces.
Next presenter – Adeline Kucks
Creating a Sensory Garden for Early Years Learners: Participatory Designing for Student Wellbeing

Adeline Kucks & Hilary Hughes
• Masters of Early Years
• A Passion for engaging and rigorous learning spaces
• Inquiry based learning
• Designing learning opportunities
• Being inclusive
• Making reasonable adjustments equitable
• Educating the whole child
• Using nature and our world to anchor students and address wellbeing (teaching social/ emotional learning in a wellbeing framework: nature and our senses for learning)
Key Findings and Points

• Participatory learning and building of a project
• Many stakeholders and Ed Q red tape
• Bring all stakeholders on the journey
• Seeking funding and process orientated solutions
• Children’s voice
• Seeking an inclusive environment for TIP that is grounded in Nature (wellbeing)
• Shift in ‘play’ productive learning opportunities
• Coaching in the use and up-keep (potential) of the space
Practical Implications for Wellbeing

- Exploratory based learning
- Play based learning
- Inquiry based learning
- Student driven// involve learners
- Anchored in ACARA
- Folds into the schools Ped Framework (GVC)
- Increase in student wellbeing and a decrease in ‘blue slips’
- Teachers are empowered to ‘play’ and use ‘inquiry’ this engages Executive function in students (teaching for wellbeing)
Next presenter – Vanessa Miller
Creating the Third Teacher Through Participatory Learning Environment Design: Reggio Emilia Principles Support Student Wellbeing

Vanessa Miller

[Image: Focus group, Surfside School]
Creating the Third Teacher ...

The aim of architectural design is to create amiable spaces ... that guarantee the wellbeing of children and teachers as they construct learning together

(Fraser, 2006)
key findings

**Essential Understanding 1:**
Teachers’ responses to learning environments are complex

**Essential Understanding 2:**
Participatory designing is a dynamic process

**Essential Understanding 3:**
The participatory designing process has transformative potential

**Essential Understanding 4:**
Teachers’ professional learning is vital to the participatory designing process
practical implications for wellbeing

[Image: Mosaic Design process at Surfside School]

[Source: Miller, 2017]
Enhancing wellbeing through broadening the primary curriculum in the UK through Open Futures

Pam Woolner and Lucy Tiplady

University of Newcastle
We evaluated the Open Futures program that focussed on interrelated curriculum in urban primary schools: Growit, Cookit, Filmit and Askit.

There was a clear link to student and staff wellbeing in 4 ways:
1. The benefits of learning outside
2. Life skills
3. Building different relationships not just developing relationships
4. Building confidence through success.

Tip: Balance structure and support for teachers to adapt
Themes and theory: Wellbeing, inter-disciplinary research & future directions

Jill Franz

Towards a spatiality of wellbeing (Introductory chapter)
Designing ‘space’ for student wellbeing as flourishing (Concluding chapter)
themes

- mood
- ambience
- atmosphere

body
- affect
- embodied
- senses
- emotion

learning/wellbeing
- flourishing
- sense of self

active citizenship
- potential
- agency
- participation/inclusion

nature
- adventure
- imagination
- creativity
theory

“Wellbeing is about access to one’s existential possibilities in time and space, with one’s body and others”

(Todres & Galvin, 2010, p. 3).

The physical school environment and its relationship to students and teachers and their multisensory capacity to engage the world emotionally through affect is fundamental to flourishing and the goal of architecture to excite and inspire.

A capability focus demands primary attention to the phenomenological body and embodied engagement through the senses and emotions – engagement that is initially ‘pre-reflective’
Design framework for wellbeing as flourishing

Proactive and aspirational approach to wellbeing as flourishing facilitated through a sense of coherence and being able to see and experience the world as meaningful, comprehensible, and manageable.

The embedded, embodied nature of wellbeing as existential possibility is made apparent through various affective emphases revealing further how we might design environments in more holistic, authentic and atmospheric ways.

Engagement is enriched physically, physiologically and emotionally through multi-sensory experience of nature (biophilic design).

Engagement is fostered and underlying values of social justice, agency and autonomy supported through inclusive and participatory design.

The framework is not prescriptive. For architects and designers, it is a guide that formalises what many teachers and students already know. Of particular note is the need to adopt a holistic approach wherein learning, wellbeing and environment are interconnected philosophically, theoretically, and at a level of everyday lived experience that provides a sense of coherence. In respect of wellbeing as flourishing, this also demands explicit attention to atmosphere and mood, and those aspects of the physical environment that first ‘affect’ us in sensory, perceptual and emotional ways.

The framework is a resource for informing the development of student potential and, as such, can only ever be regarded in terms of its generative capacity.

Ultimately, for meaningful application, the framework relies on a co-creational relationship with students.

References
Official Launch
Refreshments & Networking

Professor Suzanne Carrington