Exploring child well-being: An integration of children's rights and psychological perspectives

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Abstract

Despite the proliferation of references to well-being in educational policy and practice, it is frequently applied within a theoretical vacuum. There is a general consensus that holistic, multidimensional theories are best placed to address the complex concept of well-being, including both positive affect and pleasure elements and meaning-seeking and engagement elements. This chapter examines the synergies and tensions between the human rights perspective and subjective well-being to consider how Human Rights Education (HRE) and well-being in education can be optimised by drawing on both approaches. Through an examination of psychological theories such as Self Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and Broaden-and Build (Fredrickson, 2004) the chapter focuses on autonomy and participation, including teaching and learning approaches, and using emotions in education. It is argued that given that HRE is relatively more established, well-being should build on what has already been done in HRE, particularly in relation to participation and autonomy, while there are areas where HRE that could be informed by the well-being perspective, including the strengthening of the affective and relational dimensions.

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Introduction

Education and well-being have a long history of interconnection (e.g., Patton et al., 2016; Bradshaw, 2019). The desire to be happy is universal, and as such should be included as an aim of education (Noddings, 2003). Well-being is defined as the quality of people's lives, which may be considered from a subjective or objective perspective. This chapter focuses on subjective well-being, which has been defined as people's cognitive and affective evaluations of their lives (Diener, 2000), namely the presence of positive emotions, the absence of negative emotions and a judgement of being satisfied with one's life. Although the explicit naming of well-being as part of education curricula is relatively new, it has been linked with Human Right Education (HRE), which is more established and a statutory requirement for states that have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (Council of Europe, 2010) defines HRE as education which aims to empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. HRE can act as a means to empower schools to promote and protect the rights of children and young people and consequently developing an environment that fosters flourishing.

There are evident synergies between the rights and well-being perspectives. The UNCRC, for example, offers a normative framework for the understanding of children's well-being and as such well-being can be defined as the realisation of children's rights and the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential (Bradshaw, Hoelscher, & Richardson 2007; Camfield, Streuli, & Woodhead, 2010). Furthermore, Camfield et al. (2010) argue that monitoring, protecting, and promoting well-being is central to realisation of children's rights, and understanding well-being assists in interpreting key children's rights' concepts such as 'the best interests of the child'. There are a number of similarities between the human rights and well-being perspectives, however, they also diverge in a number of ways. The rights perspective in general, and the UNCRC more specifically, is not without limitation and contradiction (Quennerstedt et al., 2018). For example, it has been criticised for its Global

North perspective on children as vulnerable, dependent and lacking capacity (Tisdell, 2015; Wells, 2015) and for insufficiently involving children in the development of the UNCRC text itself (Freeman, 2007). A clear and significant advantage of the children's rights perspective, however, is the obligation placed on states to uphold rights and the accountability that follows. A state's ratification of the Convention means that States Parties are obligated to implement it (Article 4, UNCRC), including children's right to HRE as part of their formal education (Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 2006; Irish Human Rights Commission, 2011). Although there has been a recent increased focus on child well-being within education, and frequently as part of a mandated curriculum, it continues to have the potential to be seen as something that is 'gifted' to children, rather than a right and obligation of the state. Nonetheless, while there is no obligation on states regarding children's well-being, the increased use of national levels of measurements of well-being, such as the Innocenti reports (UNICEF, 2013) indicates a move towards states prioritising child well-being. Perhaps the greatest advantage of the well-being perspective is its focus on child flourishing i.e., the positive outcomes and factors that support positive development in childhood. Whereas the UNCRC sets out minimum standards for children's rights, the well-being perspective is aspirational and as such focuses on maximising well-being (Tisdell, 2015). While the UNCRC also has this potential in some respects, particularly in relation to education rights (Tisdall, 2015), there is a clear avenue for strengthening HRE by focusing further on the expansive, maximising potential of children's rights and using such language and focus in HRE.

This chapter aims to draw explicit connections between the child well-being perspective and the children's rights perspective and critically consider the synergies and divergences in these perspectives. The chapter will examine conceptualisations of well-being, with a particular focus on subjective well-being. Specific theories and concepts in subjective well-being will then be examined to consider how HRE and education for well-being can be optimised by drawing on both approaches; specifically it will examine relationships in education, autonomy and participation, including teaching and learning approaches, and, finally, using emotions in education.

Conceptualising Well-being

Although centuries of philosophical thought have reflected on well-being and flourishing, it was only relatively recently that psychology as a discipline has begun to focus on such concepts. Within this context, subjective well-being has been the predominant focus. Conceptualisations of subjective well-being ~~generally include a combination of three separable components - cognitive evaluations of one's being,~~ typically~~ly~~ encompass eudemonic elements (~~ing~~growth, autonomy, purpose)~~ life satisfaction~~ , ~~(the eudemonic element),~~hedonic elements (~~-~~positive/pleasant affect, and negative/unpleasant affect), and satisfaction with life ~~(the hedonic elements)~~ (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Diener 1994, 2009; Diener et al., 2009). The influential Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (2009), commonly known as the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission Report, followed this framework in its conceptualisation of well-being. Recent years have seen further development of new theories or redeveloped older theories, on psychological well-being to include, for example, relational, contextual and agentic elements, such as Adaptational or Set-Point Theories (e.g., Diener, Lucas, & Scollon, 2009).

While subjective theories of well-being are useful in considering cognitive and affective states as impacting on an individual's being, the construct has some limitations. Perhaps most importantly, the perspective has been criticised for disregarding social, cultural, and temporal contexts in which well-being occurs (Becker & Marecek 2008; Taylor, 2011). Objective and environmental resources can significantly affect a child's ability to flourish. Gross inequalities in material resources within a country generate high levels of ill-being (Wilkinson & Pickett 2010; Gross-Manos, 2017). Christopher and Hickinbottom (2008) criticise the approach for its uncritical acceptance of the Western-centric individualised idea of the self that equates the good life to the hedonistic idea of personal fulfilment. However, the individual and collective are not mutually exclusive and traditional psychological approaches could be strengthened by consideration of more collective and interactive modes of being well. For example, the emphasis on individual mastery may disregard the importance of other modes of interaction and self-identity, such as harmony or solidarity (Joshanloo 2014), constructs which have particular relevance to the social justice issues addressed in HRE.

More specifically, within the context of childhood, well-being is a contested topic, with a weak theoretical basis, albeit with a growing empirical base (Tisdell, 2015; Statham and Chase, 2010). Situating child well-being within social contexts is critical, particularly given the dynamic multi-directional interactions between children, and their various social contexts

of family, neighbourhood, school, peers, and wider societal contexts (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007; Lee & Yoo, 2015). Ben-Arieh (2010) and Ben-Arieh, Casas, Frønes, and Korbin (2014) summarised the recent shifts in the field of study of child well-being as including shifts 1. from child welfare/protection to child well-being and participation; 2 from negative aspects to positive aspects of well-being; 3. from well-becoming to well-being; 4. from traditional indicators to new child-centred domains; and 5. from adults to children (Ben-Arieh, 2010; Ben-Arieh et al., 2014). Two approaches have broadly been taken within the field, albeit with significant overlap between the two. One approach is outcome based and addresses the measurement of well-being such as national child well-being indices. The second is more theoretical and examines the factors that predict/underlie child well-being.

The outcomes approach to child well-being has moved away from the predominant focus on economic indicators and takes a more multidimensional approach, considering less tangible but equally important variables, such as the extent to which children feel loved and connected (e.g., UNICEF, 2007). In the writing of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Report over a decade ago on the measurement of economic performance and social progress, the authors argued that the time was ripe for the measurement system to shift emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people's well-being (Stiglitz, Sen, & Fitoussi, 2009). This macro level data, aimed at measuring people's well-being and societies' progress, helps address some of the theoretical tensions between subjective and objective well-being as it allows for the relationship between macro wealth variables and well-being to be examined (Prada & Sanchez-Fernandez, 2021). Drawing on this research Bradshaw et al. (2013) suggests four components to represent subjective child well-being; life satisfaction, relationships, subjective education and subjective health. The highly influential UNICEF Innocenti Report Cards, for the first time in 2013, separated subjective well-being from the more objective domains of material, health, education, behaviours and housing (UNICEF 2013; Klock, Clair, & Bradshaw, 2014). The outcomes approach, given its focus on concrete empirical findings, including objective and subjective indicators, offers opportunities for integrating the well-being and rights perspectives by correlating more concrete rights such as education, health, housing and environmental conditions to less tangible rights of well-being and flourishing.

Where education itself is concerned, although well-being and human flourishing has a long history as an aim of education, the conceptualisations of well-being underlying the recent growth in teaching for and about well-being are frequently varied, unclear, and contested.

Indeed, despite the proliferation of research and policy on well-being in general, the concept lacks a universally accepted theoretical approach likely due to it being theorised and examined using many different conceptual and disciplinary lenses. Child well-being in particular, lacks broad theoretical agreement and risks being so extensive that it pertains to all areas of child development. Nonetheless, there is a consensus that holistic, multidimensional theories best address the complex concept of well-being. The challenges in defining well-being are quite considerable and carry significant weight given the implications such conceptualisations can have for normativity and cultural contingency (e.g., Camfield et al. 2009). The conceptual vagueness and the flexibility with which well-being is integrated into policy and practice may be seen as both a potential strength and weakness (Tisdall, 2015). The flexibility of the approach ensures that one perspective does not have a monopoly on the construct, thereby limiting the constraining effect that a singular perspective frequently brings. It allows for more adaptability of the construct, allowing it to be applied to a wide range of contexts and populations.

However, at the same time when it is applied to a specific context such as education this vagueness may result in it being seen as a woolly concept and hinder concrete implementation and integration. It is frequently applied within a theoretical vacuum. Perhaps consequently there is a great deal of diversity in approaches to well-being education (Langer Primdahl, Reid, & Simovska, 2018) One can differentiate the learning for and the learning about well-being as it applies within the educational context, in a similar vein to the education for, to and through human rights (Howe & Covell, 2005). The learning for well-being encompasses the broader aim of education for the overall flourishing of the student. This context should therefore address all aspects of schooling, across the full curriculum, both formal and informal. Education about well-being includes the more specific curricular areas that address well-being, including emotional and physical well-being. For example, the Irish Primary Curriculum names well-being as one of seven key competencies that support the curriculum's vision for education (NCCA, 2020). Although it notes that the competencies are inextricably linked, its separation into seven individual competencies indicates that what is being addressed is not the broad educational aim of flourishing, but a competency or skill separate but linked to being, for example, a mathematical learner. In this light well-being is a skill or competency that a child gains from engaging with the curriculum. It also names well-being as one of six curriculum areas to be covered specifically in schools. Although not explicitly named as such, both the competency and the curriculum area appear to refer

exclusively to subjective well-being by supporting children's social, emotional, spiritual and physical development (NCCA, 2020).

The relationship between well-being and human rights education: a psychological perspective

From a conceptual perspective, self-determination theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2000) lends itself well to the consideration of child well-being. SDT proposes that humans have three basic psychological needs; competence, relatedness, and autonomy. Each need contributes independently to healthy psychological growth and must be satisfied across the lifespan for an individual to experience an ongoing sense of integrity and well-being. If the social contexts in which an individual is embedded are responsive to these basic psychological needs, they provide the appropriate developmental frame upon which an active, assimilative, and integrated nature can ascend. On the other hand, excessive control, nonoptimal challenges, and lack of connectedness disrupt the inherent actualizing and organizational tendencies resulting in distress and psychopathology (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Empirical evidence supports these claims in children such that the basic psychological needs that are central to SDT contributes uniquely to children's and early adolescents' well-being (Véronneau, Koestner, & Abela, 2005). For the purposes of this chapter, relatedness and autonomy will be examined further as they may also apply to HRE.

Relatedness and Relationships

Relationships and connections play a key role in well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Seligman, 2011; Bradshaw et al., 2013). Arguably, one of the key findings from the psychological study of well-being is that human relationships are perhaps the most important single ingredient in happiness (Diener & Seligman, 2002; Cacioppo et al., 2008; Waldinger, & Schulz, 2016), while the role of relationships in child development is well documented (e.g., Pallini et al., 2014; Parker et al., 2015). On the other hand, the rights perspective has been criticised for its lack of focus on love and affection (Lundy, 2014). Camfield et al. (2009) suggest that the recognition of relationships and groups within conceptualisations of child well-being may be more of a struggle within an individualistic tradition of human rights. Consequently, relationships is a space where HRE could be strengthened by well-being theory and research. For example, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is frequently positioned in the well-being space; nonetheless, despite the transformative potential of RSE for well-being, it

faces a number of challenges. The development, discourse, and implementation of RSE is significantly influenced and informed by the socio-political and historical landscape of the jurisdiction in which it is being provided (Alldred and David, 2007; Sherlock, 2012) and it frequently falls short of the international standards, is not accurate or comprehensive (Campbell, 2016). Recognising children's right to RSE, and the potential of RSE in the realisation of a wide range of children's rights from health and well-being to protection, participation, identity and equality (Bourke, Mallon, & Maunsell, 2022; see also, Maunsell & Machowska-Kosciak, 2023, this volume) can support the positioning of RSE in the HRE. It also sets out the obligation of comprehensive holistic education to be provided universally in schools. Indeed, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern at the severe lack of access to sexual and reproductive health education for adolescents and the discrimination of LGBT+ children and young people in Ireland (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2017); arguably part of the sea-change in relation to RSE in Ireland, and the development of the new curriculum for RSE – an illustration of how the obligatory nature of the rights perspective can shift and prioritise the well-being spaces in the curriculum.

Likewise, bullying poses a significant threat to children's well-being and represents a clear violation of an individual's rights. Despite the protection rights embodied in Article 19 of the UNCRC, protecting children from abuse and harm is often not perceived as being a children's rights issue (Ruck et al., 1998; Mildred & Plummer, 2009). Educational interventions aimed at protecting children from abuse and neglect, such as bullying interventions and the Stay Safe programme in Ireland, are often viewed as separate to HRE. Placing child protection and anti-bullying policies under the banner of HRE, can help identify these as rights issues, and the obligations of schools as duty bearers to have comprehensive and evidenced policies and practices in place.

Autonomy and Participation

Notwithstanding the structural and relational resources required to support well-being, children are active agents in its construction (Fattore, Mason, & Watson, 2007). Participation and autonomy provides an important conceptual and practical nexus between well-being and children's rights, where teaching for well-being can be more effectively supported in the HRE space. Although there may exist some ambiguity regarding what is actually meant by participation in the discourse on children's rights, the UNCRC sets out participation rights as

the right to express views freely and have them taken seriously, the civil right to freedom of expression, religion, conscience, association and information, and the right to privacy (Lansdown, 2010). According to Self-Determination Theory, autonomy, defined as having a sense of choice, initiative, and endorsement of the activities one performs, is a universal human need and its violation can lead to poor psychological well-being regardless of social or cultural setting (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Way, Reddy & Rhodes, 2007). However, large data sets on child well-being suggest that we are poor at supporting children's participation rights. UNICEF's Innocenti Report Card 16 (2020) found that many children feel that they lack opportunities to participate in decisions at home and at school.

Schools have a key role to play in affording children's agency and participation. The importance of using participatory methods as an effective tool for teaching HRE is well established (e.g., Tibbitts, 2017; Bajaj, 2011). Based on findings from the national studies of child well-being (e.g., Children's Worlds Survey), Bradshaw and Rees (2017) and Rees and Dinisman (2015) argue that freedom to choose may be very important to children and schools have a clear role to play in providing this freedom. They argue that differences in national child well-being between the Netherlands and other European countries may be accounted for by the amount of autonomy afforded by the different educational systems, including issues such as uniforms, timetables, curriculum and power statuses afforded teachers (Rees et al., 2015). Micro level studies have supported this idea. For example, not having a say in the decisions made about them was cited as the single most important issue for children in Northern Ireland (Kilkelly et al., 2005). Thus, for optimal education for well-being, participation of children and young people should occur across three levels, at broader educational context, at school level, and in the specific teaching and learning approcahes (addressed below). This could involve youth consultation in terms of curriculum development, school's physical environment, school-wide policies, scheduling, and teaching and learning practices (as described below). This consultation needs go beyond student councils to ensure all voices are heard equally.

Providing agency and autonomy to children and young people also poses a number of challenges. Children's participation is often defined in terms of the roles that adults ascribe to them such that the decision-making and contribution of children is frequently only facilitated through adult-initiated projects (Malone & Hartung, 2010). Taking into account children's views when done in a minimalistic and tokenistic manner can risk being counterproductive (Lundy, 2007). A further challenge in this area is determining what the 'due weight' should

be given and the ‘maturity’ of the child. While there should be no lower age limit on the right to participate (Lansdown, 2010), research suggests that both adults and children support participation rights with increasing age and respondents’ perceptions of the target child’s evolving maturity or competence (e.g., Day et al., 2006; Peterson-Badali et al., 2003; Bourke, Morris, & Maunsell, 2020). This may cause particular challenges for ensuring participative approaches during early childhood or for children with intellectual disabilities (see Kelly, Waldron & Dooley, 2023, this volume).

The specifics of teaching HRE and well-being also have much overlap, including the need for a democratic classroom and a school culture that ensures students have meaningful voice, influence, and agency in school (Arguís-Rey, 2021; Waldron et al., 2011). The stark findings of the UNICEF report card on the lack of opportunities for participation in school provides a clear justification for the need for more participative methods of teaching and learning. HRE should strive to be part of an overall “human rights based approach” to schooling, which calls attention to overall school culture, policies, and practices related to human rights values (Tibbitts, 2017; see also this publication xxx). Similarly, well-being is ideally positioned as integrated across the curriculum and embedded within the wider school culture. While it is arguable whether we can teach children to have well-being, schools can provide educational curricula, structures, culture, and environments that support well-being or facilitate well-being (O’Brien & O’Shea, 2017). Macro data from international studies suggest that the cultural context and school climate have considerable impact on child well-being (Bradshaw, 2019; Klock, Claire, & Bradshaw, 2014). Green (2014) differentiates between the explicit curriculum and the implicit curriculum in schools; a combination of both is suggested to best address such education (Arguís-Rey, 2021). The more established methodologies of HRE should be considered when exploring the optimal way to implement these conditions.

Emotions and education

The school environment is an obvious place where children experience both positive and negative emotions and HRE may be strengthened by giving greater attention to such affective dimensions. Emotions can act as a powerful motivator for human behaviour (Kahneman, Kahneman, & Tversky 2003, LeDoux, 2012) and no less so in the education context where they can have a significant impact on teaching, motivation, and self-regulated learning (Schutz & DeCuir, 2002). Early years education addresses these issues comprehensively,

particularly supporting the child's developing emotional regulation skills. However, as the child and young person progresses through the educational system, less attention is given to these affective issues that nonetheless continue to be of significant consequence to children and young people's well-being. HRE, in its focus on ensuring children's right to flourish could be a place where affective dimensions are revisited in education. Ojala (2013) argues that education for "emotional awareness" should be seen as one important part of education for sustainable development.

The experience of positive emotions are fundamental building blocks for cultivating resilience, happiness, and well-being (Diener et al., 2009; Seligman, 2011; Silton et al., 2020). As such, education should provide opportunities to experience such emotions, through the culture, curriculum and methodologies employed. Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory, for example, argues that experiences of positive emotions broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires, which in turn serves to build their enduring psychological, social and intellectual resources. These resources function as reserves that can be drawn on later to improve the odds of successful coping and survival (Fredrickson, 2004). Noddings (2003) suggests that the happy classroom is one in which there is a continually negotiated balance between expressed and inferred needs and the meeting of these needs occurs through the care displayed by the teachers. She argues that one expressed need is that of pleasure. Providing enjoyable classroom activities provides opportunities for such pleasure. Play is an ideal activity to foster pleasure, again addressed very well in early-years education (see this publication, xxx). The thought-action repertoires outlined in the broaden-and-build theory suggest that joy sparks the urge to play, interest sparks the urge to explore, and contentment sparks the urge to savour and integrate (Fredrickson, 2004). Indeed, a recent review of neuroscientific research on the characteristics of play suggests that play is invariably accompanied by signs of positive affect (Liu et al., 2017). It has also been suggested that play has a number of similarities to Csikszentmihalyi's notion of 'flow' (Whitebread, 2018). Flow, defined as the "optimal experience" of being, wrapping us entirely in the present, and helping us be more creative, productive, and happy, is identified as an important component of well-being (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). At the neurological level, flow is associated with the release of the neurotransmitter dopamine, which enhances regulating attention, working memory, mental flexibility, and curiosity (Gruber, Gelman, & Ranganath, 2014). However, there are many different teaching and learning activities that can elicit

‘flow’ rather than just play, and consideration of this construct can help develop methodologies to use in HRE to optimise well-being.

HRE and difficult knowledge

Through engagement with pleasurable activities and pedagogies, HRE can promote opportunities for positive emotions, thereby optimising well-being. It is pertinent to ask, however, if this approach diminishes the capacity of HRE to deal with difficult and complex areas such as climate change, climate justice and human rights abuses, both historical and contemporary. Drawing on the broaden-and-build theory, Salama and Aboukoura (2018) argue that positive emotions play an important role in climate change communication and that cultivating positive emotions can expand individual awareness of their connections to Earth’s living systems, increasing their capacity to creatively and effectively address environmental problems. Indeed, as Fredrickson (2004) argues, it also helps them recognize that well-being and environmental health go hand in hand. At the same time, many of the issues addressed in HRE have the potential to cause negative emotions. Here lies a potential for conflict between the HRE and well-being space. Well-being theory argues for the reduction of negative emotions to enhance well-being. However, HRE frequently encounters the construct of ‘difficult knowledge’ (Britzman, 1998). This results from the affective and epistemological challenges in teaching and learning about social and historical traumas, including content that is difficult to engage with and learning that is cognitively and emotionally unsettling (Zembylas, 2014). Salama and Aboukoura (2018) also highlights the role negative emotions can play in climate change education through enhancing risk perception, motivating ‘high-alert’ and information-seeking responses, and potentially transforming apathy or indifference into perceived importance and behavioural action. Salama and Aboukoura (2018) also cites the counterproductive effect intense negative emotions, such as fear and anxiety can have on avoidant and denial behaviours and defensive denial. Furthermore, Mochizuki and Bryan (2015) and Bryan (2020) argue that socio-affective learning as a critical component of effective climate change education, includes engaging productively with feelings of despair, powerlessness, guilt and denial. Bryan (2020) argues that emotions should be foregrounded in any pedagogical response to the climate crisis and this psychosocial approach can help address some of the challenges in climate change education (see also this publication, Bryan 2023).

Perhaps Sanson, Van Hoorn, and Burke (2019) and Ojala (2015) views on *hope* offers a potential resolution to the tension between difficult knowledge and affective responses.

Similar to the role reliance plays in supporting well-being for children experiencing adversities, realistic hope can serve as a mediating role between the negative affect that results from the reality of the crisis and the well-being of the child or young person at the centre of the learning. Sanson et al. (2019) argue that as many children feel powerless and hopeless about preventing catastrophic climate change, it is important to build their sense of self-efficacy and collective efficacy to effect change. Building hope can support this by drawing attention to major global problems that have been solved in the past, and drawing attention to the actions that are being engaged in to address the problem. (Sanson et al., 2019). Ojala (2015) differentiates between constructive hope which is associated with engagement versus hope based on denial which is associated with less inclination to behave pro-environmentally. Ojala argues that it is vital to discuss our common future and pathways to sustainable development in schools in order to promote constructive hope concerning global problems. From a HRE perspective, this idea of constructive hope clearly resonates with the centrality of children's agency and their rights of participation to the project of children's rights education.

Conclusion

As outlined, there is much conceptual overlap between our understandings of child well-being and the children's rights perspective. In the many synergies between both perspectives, we can see a number of avenues for development and strengthening of both. Given that HRE has a long history, it seems sensible that well-being builds on what has already been done in HRE, including the focus on participation and protection rights. There are also areas of HRE that could be further emphasised, including the strengthening of the affective and relational dimensions. The teaching and embedding of both HRE and well-being should be done in an integrative and synergetic manner, maximising the potential of both. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights includes 'the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity' as a key component of HRE. The UNCRC provides that education should be directed towards developing the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. Such declarations clearly highlight the role of rights as a means towards well-being and the HRE is an ideal place for this to occur. HRE is often perceived as low-status and taught without adequate consideration of everyday rights denials (Osler & Yahya, 2013). Well-being also risks the same plight unless more specific attention is given to adequately addressing the vagueness of the concept and being

more concrete in its application. In addition, it is important for both to move beyond the individual human rights/well-being to consider population and environmental well-being, taking into account the structural and relational barriers, discriminations and rights denial unequally experienced by some groups and the context of the ecological crisis.

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