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Editorial: How Can Education Better Support the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Young People? Contributions From Developmental Psychopathology and Educational Effectiveness Research

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Editorial on the Research Topic

How Can Education Better Support the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Young People? Contributions from Developmental Psychopathology and Educational Effectiveness Research

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Research in the 1970s that addressed this question (e.g., Rutter et al., 1970, 1976, 1979) has since proven seminal to the development of two distinct fields of research that continue to offer mutually informative insights: Developmental Psychopathology (DP) and Educational Effectiveness Research (EER).

Influenced by a modern medical biopsychosocial model (Engel, 1977), Developmental Psychopathology is concerned with the study of developmental processes in biological and psychological systems to inform understanding of adaptation and maladaptation - knowledge used to develop better prevention and treatment of psychopathologies (Rutter and Sroufe, 2000; Toth and Cicchetti, 2010). This focus on the drivers of development is shared by EER as it investigates, "*all the factors within schools in particular, and the educational system in general, that might affect the learning outcomes of students in both their academic and social development*" (p. 197; Reynolds et al., 2014). DP and EER share the common agenda of understanding factors that relate to individuals' learning and development: DP focuses on the individual learning and developing in context, EER investigates the educational systems, structures, and processes that shape how individuals learn and develop.

Given the complementarity of DP and EER, it is therefore somewhat surprising that they have rarely joined forces and synthesized knowledge to develop a fuller understanding of the roles educational contexts play in the mental health and well-being of students. This Research Topic aims to stimulate such collaboration.

Together, the 11 contributions in this Research Topic demonstrate the complementarity of DP and EER via their focus on how individuals learn and develop in context (educational and otherwise). Most contributions focus on individual learners and consider differences over time, and concentrate more upon the immediate environments around the learner than those more distant (e.g., broader society and culture). **Table 1** maps the 11 studies onto the ecologies and systems that surround the learner. Two theoretical frameworks are used for this mapping to further illustrate the complementarity of the fields—one prominent in DP (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) and one in EER (Creemers and Kyriakides, 2006).

TABLE 1 | The focus of the eleven studies in this Research Topic mapped on to the ecologies and systems understood to surround the learner.

The 11 papers featured within this Research Topic	The various ecologies and systems understood to surround the learner					
	<-Closer to the learner			Further from the learner->		
	The ecological levels of Bronfenbrenner (1986):					
	1. The learner	2. Microsystem (immediate environments; e.g., classrooms and teachers)	3. Mesosystem (connections between immediate environments)	4. Exosystem (indirect environments; e.g., the school; neighborhood)	5. Macrosystem (social and cultural values)	6. Chronosystem (changes over time)
	The multiple levels within the dynamic model of educational effectiveness (Creemers and Kyriakides, 2006):					
	A. Student level	B. Teacher/classroom level (e.g., quality of teaching)		C. School level (e.g., school policies)	D. System level (e.g., national policies; societal values)	E. Dynamic change overtime (in/from interplay between levels)
1. Kreider et al.	x	x	x	x	x	x
2. Melhuish and Gardiner		x		x		x
3. Palardy	x	x	x	x		
4. Evans et al.	x	x	x			x
5. Demir and Leyendecker	x	x	x			x
6. Malboeuf-Hurtubise et al.	x	x				x
7. Unwin et al.	x	x				x
8. Allen et al.	x	x				
9. Chen et al.	x	x				
10. Xu et al.	x					x
11. Orylska et al.	x					x

We organize the contributions in this Research Topic by adopting a prospective developmental perspective and according to age-related levels of education. We begin with a contribution by Melhuish and Gardiner who analyse longitudinal data from 600 contemporary Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings, and draw on results spanning 20 years, to argue that educational policy change may improve child development via changes to the quality of ECEC settings.

Three papers are concerned with primary school-age children. Orylska et al. investigate the learning trajectories during an 8-week working memory training intervention of 126 children (aged between 5.9 and 6.5 years) of which 65 met diagnostic criteria for ADHD. Findings demonstrated that learning curves for most children (both ADHD and non-ADHD) followed an inverted U shape suggesting that young children showed initial learning but did not benefit from extended training. Malboeuf-Hurtubise et al. present results from a series of 8-week Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) carried out with 13 primary school students taught in special education classrooms due to learning needs arising from clinically diagnosed psychiatric disorders. No firm conclusions regarding benefits from the MBIs could be drawn. By consequence, this study reflects the need for caution regarding the use of MBIs in such settings until further data is available. In the third paper, Evans et al. review literature on the impact of transitioning from primary to secondary education on student attainment and well-being. They identify a number of putative risk and protective factors to help inform further research on how education can contribute to mental health and well-being during primary-to-secondary transitions.

Two papers consider both primary and secondary school students. Demir and Leyendecker analyse data from 161 primary and secondary school-aged Turkish immigrants in Germany. Results highlight that across primary and secondary school years, children are differentially responsive to the potential supportive roles of immediate educational environments, peers, and teachers. Unwin et al. evaluate the effectiveness, acceptability, and feasibility of a school-based mental health programme delivered in 8 special schools to 53 students aged 5–15 years using a within-group repeated measures design. While teacher—but not parent—ratings supported the feasibility of the programme, further evidence is required from studies that include control groups. Still, the study provides important pointers for future research into how schools can support students' mental health and well-being.

Three papers focus on secondary school students. In a study of 2,541 high school students, Palardy demonstrates that the non-academic attributes of participants' peers, including behavioral

engagement, cognitive engagement, conscientiousness, self-efficacy, and hope, were important for academic achievement beyond participants' own non-academic attributes. Importantly, this paper shifts attention to the influences of peers on young people's educational experiences. Allen et al. recruited 437 secondary school students and 12 teachers for a mixed-method cross-sectional study investigating difficulties faced by students high in Callous-Unemotional (CU) traits. Their findings highlight the need for adaptation of school-based interventions to lessen the risk of disruptive behavior and poor motivation in this high-risk subgroup of antisocial children. In a cross-sectional study of 677 senior high school students, Chen et al. demonstrate that the association between student shyness and reduced learning adjustment may be mediated via students' goal orientation and academic help seeking. Findings indicate possible targets for interventions designed to benefit the well-being and achievement of shy students.

Finally, two contributions concern students in higher education. Using a mixed-method within-group evaluation design, Kreider et al. report results from a multilevel intervention to support educational opportunities for 173 undergraduate Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) students with learning disabilities. Their findings demonstrate possible benefits from such multilevel interventions for students' educational progress and well-being. Xu et al. report results from 55 undergraduate medical students who participated in a randomized controlled trial investigating the impact of positive psychological interventions (PPIs) on subjective well-being, depression, anxiety, and neural correlates assessed via electroencephalography (EEG). Results suggest PPIs may improve subjective well-being and reduce emotional distress by promoting adaptive emotional regulation that was associated with change in frontal alpha EEG asymmetry. This paper demonstrates one potential neurological mechanism underpinning the effects of PPIs—a form of intervention common in educational settings (see, Shankland and Rosset, 2017)—on mental health.

With this collection of papers in this Research Topic we hope to stimulate further research collaborations across DP and EER that will improve understanding of the roles educational contexts play in the mental health and well-being of students.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

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