On happiness

"For most people, only doing things for fun isn't enough for long-term happiness.(...)
But what will actually make you happy is balancing them out with activities that give your life purpose.(...)
There are different ways we can find purpose in things. Some activities might be motivating because they work towards the 'greater good' of society or the world around us. Or you might feel that what you do contributes to a team you're working in. Or you might be motivated by a sense of making measurable progress.(...)
For those still in education, you can think of your 'job' as studying and passing exams.(...)
(...) with subjects you don't like, grades can start to fall and it's much harder to stay motivated.(...)
Maybe you could find others who struggle with that subject and you all take responsibility for working extra hard on one aspect of it until you're good at that one part. Then you can teach it to the others in the group, so your purpose becomes about helping the team. This also increases happiness, because spending time with people you like increases pleasure. Or you can find purpose in progress, for example dividing a task into smaller tasks and taking a reward or a break as you complete each one.
(...) decide what things in life bring you pleasure and/or purpose.(...)
Then, don't just think about doing these activities, design your life so you do as many of them as possible.(...)
Some aspects of our lives are the result of good or bad luck, but we can still design the parts that are under our control to maximise happiness."

Theories of Happiness: from the UNESCO Happy Schools! program

- Philosophies of Happiness:

In both Western and Eastern thought, ancient philosophers contemplated happiness in their works. Each of them identified themes that relate to today's world and our daily lives, and to the concept of Happy Schools.
According to the Buddha, one can achieve happiness through the power of the mind, by overcoming needs and wants, equanimity or peace of mind and positive thinking (Fronsdal, 2005). Buddhism identifies happiness as something that is not only central to the individual being, but as something collective that is shared with others. This draws from our need for positive friendships and relationships in order to be happy. As noted in The Dhammapada, or teachings of the Buddha, 'happiness is having friends when the need arises' (Fronsdal, 2005, p. 80). It may thus come to no surprise that positive friendships and relationships consist of one of the key criteria for happy schools.

According to Socrates, happiness is not only the purpose of life, but also something that is 'obtainable and teachable' through human effort; in particular through being 'virtuous' (Beebe, 2003). This effort to be virtuous is linked to learning, not only in terms of character development of skills, values and attitudes, but also in terms of how we relate to others within schools, which for learners is essentially a microcosm of society.

On the other side of the globe, Confucius had identified social relationships as a source of happiness, and that learning can lead to happiness (Yao, 2003). This is expressed in The Analects as follows: 'To learn... [and] in time to practice, is that not joy? To have friends come visit from afar, is that not also happiness?' (Dietz, 2010, p. 222). Not only does this reflect relationships with others, but it also emphasizes the importance of love of learning and just how important it is for learning to be applied in daily life.

Aristotle later identified happiness not only as the purpose of human existence, but as something dependent on exercising moral character through virtues among which were friendship, justice and citizenship (Crisp, 2000).

Among the many great thinkers produced by the Age of Enlightenment, in the seventeenth century, was British philosopher John Locke, who coined the phrase 'the pursuit of happiness' in the literary masterpiece An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. Locke examined education from

various angles: psychology, philosophy and religion, with a 'concern for the physical, as well as the mental and spiritual well-being of children' (Aldrich, 1994, p. 68).

- Science of Happiness

Philosophies of happiness were influential in the development of what is often referred to as the 'science of happiness', which stemmed from the founding of Positive Psychology by Martin Seligman in the late 1990s. Positive Psychology can be defined as follows:

Positive Psychology is the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play.– Center for Positive Psychology, University of Pennsylvania

Seligman also identified six core virtues that are recognized across all cultures consisting of:
wisdom and knowledge; courage; humanity; justice; temperance; spirituality and transcendence (Seligman, 2002).
Many of these are reflected in the Happy Schools Framework in one way of another, namely creativity, love of learning, kindness, and teamwork (Values in Action, 2015).

In his later work Flourish, Seligman (2012) offers a theory of well-being consisting of five measurable elements known as PERMA:
1) Positive Emotion, 2) Engagement, 3) Relationships, 4) Meaning, and 5) Accomplishment (Seligman, 2012).