

Global Perspectives:

Pupil Attitudes to Self and School Report 2018





Photograph courtesy of Jumeira Bacalaureate School, Dubai

INTRODUCTION

Greg Watson, Chief Executive, GL Education

It is surely cause for celebration that more governments, such as the Emirate of Dubai's, are recognising the importance of wellbeing in education. Parents and policy makers the world over have been quick to expect ever greater academic success from our children but slow to appreciate the toll that those expectations have taken. As a result, as David Gleason writes opposite, too many students are feeling stressed and pressurised, overwhelmed and defeated by the feeling that 'only the best will do'.

Young people have been habitually told that if they study hard and focus on getting the right qualifications, they will end up with the life they want, with health and happiness to follow. We have to accept, as Nicola Lambros points out (page 10), that this is completely the wrong way round. If we want our children to achieve their full potential in life, if we want to reduce the prevalence of poor mental health that afflicts so many young lives, we have to start making sure they are healthy, happy and confident in school first.

Wellbeing, it turns out, is not an optional accessory to a successful academic life but an essential component of it.

Our psychometric measure, *Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS)*, plays a unique role in helping schools support student wellbeing. We are extremely proud of the contribution it makes. It gives professionals an insight into what students feel about themselves, their learning and their teachers and how they compare to others. It can be particularly useful in international schools where children move countries frequently or learn in a second language, which can make getting to know a child that little bit more difficult.

As Matthew Savage argues (page 8), teachers cannot be expected to just 'know' their students, they have to 'peer under the mask' to truly understand them. We believe that *PASS* helps them to do exactly that.

FOREWORD

David L. Gleason, Psy.D., International Speaker, Author of ‘At What Cost? Defending Adolescent Development in Fiercely Competitive Schools’.



Anxiety, disillusionment and depression emerge, sometimes with devastating outcomes, as conflicts between ever-increasing school expectations and students’ developmental capacities persist. Tellingly, many high achieving schools have been termed “epicenters of overachievement”¹ where students “hear the overriding message that only the best will do in grades, test scores, sports, art, college...in everything.”² Consequently, too many students feel stressed and pressured, conditions that lead not only to their anxiety and depression, but also, to a host of dangerous manifestations of those conditions, such as substance abuse, eating disorders, sleep deprivation, cutting and other forms of self-injury, and too often, suicide.

I applaud GL Education’s efforts to understand and address these challenges to students’ wellbeing. In particular, with the use of their *Pupil Attitudes to Self and School*[®] survey (PASS) in schools all around the world, GL Education has identified a significant minority of students who have low levels of self-belief, a poor perception of their own capabilities and little confidence in their own learning. These attitudinal patterns can present significant barriers to developing the well-rounded, confident and engaged learners we want to nurture in our schools.

Why is this happening? With the use of a highly structured interview over the past four years, I have investigated these students’ challenges in many secondary schools throughout the United States and in hundreds of international schools around the world. From this extensive research, I have found almost complete unanimity in how educators and parents associated with these schools have responded to my inquiries. To an alarming degree, that unanimity is this: these caring and dedicated adults admit – albeit unintentionally – to overscheduling, overworking and, at times, to overwhelming their students and teenage children. In my opinion, this is why GL Education has been able to identify unmistakable and universal attitudinal concerns. Essentially, students’ “attitudes” are direct reflections of their own moods and overall mental health status. It makes perfect sense that students’ “attitudes” would decline as they try to meet the expectations “that only the best will do in grades, test scores, sports, art, college...in everything.”

Over the past decade, unprecedented insights from human brain research have revealed that environment not only affects adolescent identity, but it shapes the brain itself. In light of the intensifying pressures on adolescents that hijack their “attitudes” toward both school and themselves, what must schools do now? For all our students, finding the right balance between appropriate levels of academic rigor and educating them in healthy, safe and balanced ways is a basic necessity – if not a moral obligation – that has both immediate and lifelong implications.



¹ Bruni, F. “Best, Brightest – and Saddest,” New York Times, April 11, 2015

² Richtel, M. “Push, Don’t Crush, the Students,” www.nytimes.com. April 24, 2015

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES: PUPIL ATTITUDES TO SELF AND SCHOOL

Self-belief and academic success

As the pressures on students to succeed increase, it is inevitable that schools should be concerned about the effect of different pressures on their students' wellbeing. This is as true internationally as it is in the UK. It is equally true, as international studies have confirmed, that there is a strong correlation between student success and belief that they are in control of that success¹.

To understand how 'in control' students believe they are, schools can use GL Education's *Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS)*. This psychometric measure helps teachers unpack students' internal perceptions of themselves as learners as well as their attitudes to external factors, such as their attitudes to the curriculum provided by the school and to what extent they feel part of the school community. It provides professionals not only with an indication of student wellbeing but also with a clear indication of attitudinal barriers to learning that might be getting in the way of the student reaching their full academic potential.

Is it a lack of their belief in their ability to succeed – their self-efficacy – that is undermining their academic success or is it that the student doesn't feel as if they have the toolkit to learn? Have either changed over time? What is their attitude towards the school community, and could it be affecting their learning? If attitudinal issues are addressed, will students be capable of greater academic success?

The international school challenge

These questions are particularly pertinent in international schools where many students speak English as a second or even a third language, and can move between different countries frequently. Students struggling with English, for instance, may begin to perceive themselves as less able than they truly are, even if they are academically able, because they associate the difficulties they have with the English language with learning generally.

In some international schools, the transitory lives of expatriates can also cause problems. As Erika Elkady rightly highlights on page 7, international schools, and especially those in transient cities like Dubai and Singapore, face a relatively high annual staff and student turn-over. To take an example, one study found an average staff turnover of 17%, which rises to 60% in some schools².

“ If students have moved often, schools need to get a sense quickly of the child behind the grades. Understanding student attitudes to themselves as learners and their school can be hugely beneficial. ”

The factors behind the attitudes

PASS breaks down student attitudes into nine main factors:

- 1 Feelings about School:** Explores whether a student feels they belong to or are alienated from their learning community. A low score in this measure can indicate feelings of social exclusion and potential bullying
- 2 Perceived Learning Capability:** Offers a snapshot of a student's unfolding impressions of self-efficacy and can reveal early warning signs of demoralisation and disaffection
- 3 Self-regard:** Equivalent to self-worth, this measure is focused quite specifically on learning and shows a strong correlation with achievement
- 4 Preparedness for Learning:** Highly correlated with pupils at risk of behavioural difficulties, this measure explores whether a student feels they have the tools in place to learn. It covers areas such as study skills, attentiveness and concentration
- 5 Attitudes to Teachers:** Provides an invaluable insight into a student's perception of the relationship they have with school staff
- 6 General Work Ethic:** Highlighting students' aspirations and motivation to succeed in life, this is the first of two motivational measures. It focuses on purpose and direction, not just at school but beyond
- 7 Confidence in Learning:** Identifies a student's ability to persevere when faced with a challenge
- 8 Attitudes to Attendance:** Correlating very highly with actual attendance 12 months later, this measure enables teachers to intercede much earlier with strategies to reduce the likelihood of truancy in the future
- 9 Response to Curriculum Demands:** This second motivational measure focuses more narrowly on school-based motivation to undertake and complete curriculum based tasks

Both student and teacher can therefore have less time to get to know each other and develop rewarding relationships. If students have moved often, schools need to get a sense quickly of the child behind the grades. Consequently, understanding student attitudes to themselves as learners and their school can be hugely beneficial.

This report, based on one of the largest ever datasets of international student attitudes³, aims to discover what students in the Middle East and South East Asia think about themselves and their schools. It seeks to indicate which attitudinal factors are most revealing, to provide a benchmark for individual schools to compare themselves against, to highlight hard-to-spot problems, and to suggest what teachers can do to address them.

“**Students in schools in the Middle East and South East Asia appear to have fewer concerns when it comes to Confidence in Learning – 86% are in the top satisfaction category with only 2% in the bottom category. Perceived Learning Capability and Attitudes to Attendance also had high satisfaction, with 83% and 84% respectively.**”

Main findings

The study, which was based on data from **over 95,000 children aged 7-16 years**, found that although students were generally very positive about their schools and their own learning capabilities, significant minorities of students were struggling.

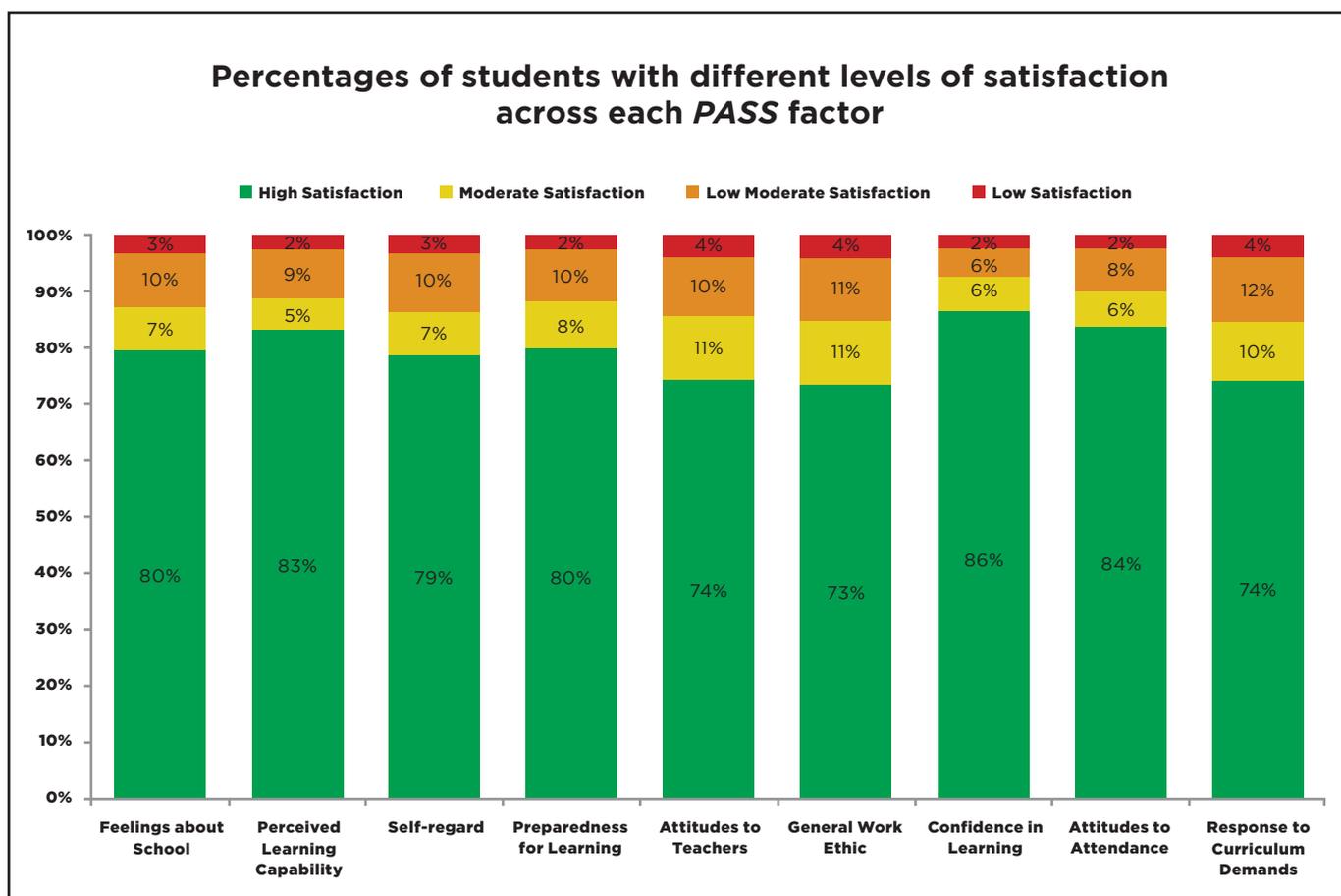
The analysis focused on two sets of results:

- Mean raw scores, expressed as percentages, show the average scores for the schools across the 9 different *PASS* factors; and
- For a more granular level of detail, scores were also divided up into four categories of satisfaction (high, moderate, moderate low and low) to show the distribution of high to low scoring students on each factor.

Categories of satisfaction

Almost one in six children (15%) registered low or low moderate satisfaction in their General Work Ethic compared to seven in ten (73%) who were in the highest satisfaction category. 14% indicated a low or low moderate satisfaction in the Attitudes to Teachers factor and 16% had a relatively negative Response to Curriculum Demands.

It is true that both of those groups were heavily outnumbered by students who indicated a high satisfaction with their teachers and their Response to Curriculum Demands (both at 74%). But the figures do illustrate that a minority of children at international schools in the Middle East and South East Asia have attitudinal issues to learning.



Moreover, the total percentages conceal some widely divergent individual findings. Take the scores of 8-year-olds in two schools in the Middle East that on the surface perform equally highly overall, which we will label School 1 and School 2. Almost two-fifths of School 1 students (39%) are in the bottom two categories for Response to Curriculum Demands, a significant proportion compared to only 16% in School 2. Just over half (51%) of pupils in School 1 are in the high satisfaction category compared to four-fifths of children (82%) in School 2.

It is a similar story with Self-Regard as a Learner. A third of students at School 1 (34%) are in the bottom two categories, double that of School 2, which has 17%. Only 58% of students in School 1 are in the top category compared with 82% in School 2.

All of this illustrates the point made by Nicola Lambros in her article on pages 10–11; while there may be overarching trends in a region, each school and even each class or year in a school can yield very different results which require different kinds of support.

Generally, students in schools in the Middle East and South East Asia appear to have fewer concerns when it comes to Confidence in Learning – 86% are in the top category with only 2% in the bottom category. Perceived Learning Capability and Attitudes to Attendance also had high satisfaction, with 83% and 84% respectively, and with each factor registering in the top category, indicating that levels of resilience are broadly high across the student population internationally.

“ While there may be overarching trends in a region, each school and even each class or year in a school can yield very different results which require different kinds of support. ”

Mean raw scores

Taking mean raw scores into account, the most problematic factors for students in the Middle East and South East Asia are Self-regard as a Learner, Response to Curriculum Demands, and General Work Ethic (67%, 69% and 76% respectively). Students tend to be more positive about Preparedness for Learning and their Feelings about School, which registered 86% and 85% overall.

There were few regional differences, though there were differences in Perceived Learning Capability (84% in the Middle East versus 78% in South East Asia) and Preparedness for Learning (87% in the Middle East compared to 83% in South East Asia), calculated as having moderate effect sizes. The discrepancies, though small, could be attributed to the fact that more students in the Middle East cohort are likely to be children of expatriates and could therefore be showing a slightly different attitude towards their learning capability and preparedness compared to their peers in South East Asia.

“ The most problematic factors for students in the Middle East and South East Asia are Self-regard as a Learner, Response to Curriculum Demands, and General Work Ethic. ”

Interestingly, students internationally tend to have slightly more negative attitudes than students in the UK across most factors. For instance, the average raw score of UK students in Years 3 to 9 for Preparedness for Learning was 90%⁴ and in the Middle East and South East Asia it is 86%. Similarly, the scores for General Work Ethic and Response to Curriculum Demands were 85% and 80% in the UK compared to 76% and 69% in Middle East and South East Asia schools.

The differences could indicate that EAL students, who are more prevalent in international schools abroad, have a less positive attitude towards learning, especially if assessments like the *Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4)* indicate that there is no cause for concern regarding general academic ability.

Finally, the data suggest that there is no discernible gender variation in attitudes to learning. Given the markedly different cultural environments in which many international schools operate, some may find that surprising. However, it does indicate that there are no inherent attitudinal reasons why both genders shouldn't perform equally well academically.

Further research

Although this study into student attitudes is one of the largest – if not the largest of its kind – it inevitably raises further questions. What would a more detailed study based on nationality rather than geography look like? If we had more detailed information about the transient nature of students or the types of schools they attended and the curricula they followed, what would it reveal?

Answers to those questions will have to wait on further research. But armed with *PASS* data schools can begin to address attitudinal issues that may affect student wellbeing and performance. How they can do so is explored elsewhere in this report.

¹ OECD (2013), *PISA 2012 Results: Ready to Learn: Students' Engagement, Drive and Self-Beliefs (Volume III)*, PISA, OECD Publishing. [<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264201170-en>]

² Mancuso, S.V., Roberts, L., White, G.P. (2010) Teacher retention in international schools: the key role of school leadership, *Journal of Research in International Education*, 9, 3, 306–323, [<https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240910388928>]

³ The study by GL Education was based on *PASS* data from 95,031 students from Years 3 to 11 in schools in the Middle East and South East Asia between [September 2015 and July 2017].

⁴ Pupil Attitudes to Self and School: 2016, GL Education [https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/media/169690/pass_report_2016.pdf]

WELLBEING IN DUBAI:

USING PASS WITH THE DUBAI STUDENT WELLBEING CENSUS

By **Erika Elkady**, Head of Secondary at Jumeira Baccalaureate School, Dubai



Governments around the world are increasingly recognizing the importance of attitudes in learning – and in many ways, Dubai is leading the way. The importance it places on wellbeing is underscored by a partnership between the Knowledge Human Development Authority (KHDA) and the Government of South Australia to conduct an annual student wellbeing census that will demonstrate changes in student wellbeing over time.

Private schools in Dubai are now asked to conduct the Dubai Student Wellbeing Census (DSWC) with all students in Grades 6–9 (Years 7–10), and Jumeira Baccalaureate School was invited to take part in the trial of the DSWC before it was officially introduced in November 2017. At the same time, we also decided to use GL Education's *Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS)* to compare the *PASS* data to that of the DSWC.

Attitudinal factors relating to attainment

To conduct the analysis, definitions of the DSWC sub-domains and *PASS* attitudinal factors were compared. Although not a precise match, the following table illustrates how the two datasets complement each other:

	DSWC sub-domains	PASS factors
Attainment	Academic self-concept	Perceived Learning Capability
	Cognitive engagement	Preparedness for Learning
	School work	General work ethic
	Engagement flow	Self-regard as a Learner
Engagement	Emotional engagement with teacher	Response to Curriculum Demands
	School climate/belonging	Attitudes towards Teachers
		Feeling about School

Our DSWC data showed that the students' academic self-concept and their cognitive engagement seemed to be heightened compared to their attitudes towards school work and engagement flow, which is when engagement is achieved through the right balance of challenge and skill.

The same trend is noticeable with the *PASS* results. The students' Perceived Learning Capability and their Preparedness for Learning are heightened while their scores for Self-regard as a Learner and Response to Curriculum Demands show lower mean percentages.

One significant difference with the DSWC data, though, is that *PASS* can be analyzed on an individual student basis, as well as by cohort, year group and school, while DSWC provides an overview of grade levels within and across schools and schools are unable to view individual responses.

The phase 3 students' (those in Grades 6–10 or Years 7–11) General Work Ethic percentile score of 36% is the lowest percentile score of the nine *PASS* factors, showing that this is an area for improvement. However, we also noticed that in the same age group, General Work Ethic steadily

improves over time.

We like to think that our promotion policy into the IB Diploma and IB Career-related Program, which takes into consideration students' attitudes and achievement results as well as helping them search for their potential career paths, has helped to motivate students to work harder and to stick with a challenging task longer.

Nevertheless, the message from the data is that our students are saying: "I know I am capable, and I know how to be a good learner, but learning is hard, and I am not motivated to do or complete the work".

Attitudinal factors relating to engagement

Undoubtedly, students' feelings about school and their attitudes to teachers are factors that will engage students. Comparing *PASS* data to the DSWC trial data of school climate/belonging and emotional engagement with the teacher, we realized that the role of the teacher to coach students and differentiate learning may be at the core of improving student engagement.

Some international schools, and especially those in transient cities like Dubai and Singapore, face a relatively high staff and student turn-over. This may explain why fewer students in international schools have a highly positive attitude to teachers compared to other *PASS* factors as both student and teacher have less time to get to know each other and develop meaningful rewarding relationships.

How can we engage capable learners?

The data analysis, literature research and interviews with students have resulted in a school-wide decision to focus on improving student wellbeing with an emphasis on student engagement:

- The first step is to make sure that the balance between challenge and skills is such that each student is able to reach a state of flow. In other words, teachers need support to allow for more effective differentiation;
- The second step is to allow for immediate feedback. This means that a clearly stated goal including a rationale for why the learning is meaningful will allow the student to provide self-feedback, concentrate, feel in control, and be motivated to complete the task; and
- The third step is to teach students affective skills to help them manage their state of mind by practising skills such as 'bouncing back' after adversity, mistakes and failures; demonstrating persistence and perseverance; and practicing strategies to reduce stress and anxiety.

Jumeira Baccalaureate School is a premium pre-KG to Grade 12 IB World School offering the four IB programs to approximately 800 students from 65 different nationalities.

BENEATH THE MASK

By **Matthew Savage**, Principal, International Community School, Amman



“If makeup is so truthful, why do they call it concealer?”

Sheldon Cooper, *The Big Bang Theory*

This article is based on three contentions. Firstly, I believe that we all wear masks. I certainly do – I depend on them, to be honest, and, I suspect, if you’re honest, you do too. Indeed, as the proud father of a child on the autistic spectrum, I have seen him struggle to understand a world where most people are not what they seem. I do not mean to imply that we are all, somehow, disingenuous and trying to deceive; purely that playing by the myriad rules that govern today’s increasingly complicated society is not easy, and requires a toolbox of multiple masks.

This is certainly the case for the typical, international school child. Imagine you are learning in a language other than your own, with the curriculum rendering you relatively powerless until you acquire a new tongue; perhaps you are a Third Culture Kid, joining your third school in six years, and playing ‘find a friend’ yet again; not to mention the countless pressures on, and contradictory expectations of, children and young people in general today. To misquote *Toy Story*, “It’s a dangerous world out there for a child”. Sometimes, the only way to survive is to inhabit a mask (or several), so that you are not going unarmed into the fray.

This brings me to my second contention: as teachers, we cannot expect just to ‘know’ our children; indeed, I fear it may be the height of arrogance or the depth of naïveté to think we do. This is the cornerstone of **#themonalisaeffect**, the road towards truly personalised learning down which we are fiercely treading at the International Community School (ICS), Amman.

We believe that, just as Lisa Gherardini will look specifically at you should you visit her home in the Louvre, we owe to each individual child a learning and wellbeing experience which is looking directly at them, beneath their masks. Read more about how we are trying to ‘Mona Lisa’ pretty much everything at ICS, and you’ll see that student-level data lights our way; visit us, and you’ll see that the brightest point on our ‘data triangle’ is the attitudinal mindset unveiled by a student’s *PASS* score; and constantly shaping, and being shaped by, those attitudes is their wellbeing. As should every school in the world, we aim to be a **#wellbeingfirst** school.

I have had the privilege to work with schools across the world on their own data triangles, from Asia to the Middle East, and from Europe to Africa. Some sociocultural contexts seem to engender their own masks, as illustrated by the *PASS* factors. For example, in the Nigerian private school system, it is not uncommon for a child to have an inflated Perceived Learning Capability, countered by either a low Learner Self-Regard and/or low Feelings about School; meanwhile, across South East Asia, for positive Attitudes to Teachers and Feelings about School scores to cohabit with a very low Perceived Learning Capability score is very common indeed. However, many masks are worn across the world, subtly but crucially melded to one of thousands of individual children.



Jane was one of only a handful of female students in a male-dominated cohort, and her 'happy mask' was well-developed and convincing. However, her *PASS* score for Self-regard as a Learner was woefully low, and the digging this prompted revealed the systematic and relentless bullying she had endured of late from her tiny peer group. James arrived at his new school as one of the few fluent, native English speakers in his year, and, despite his poorly developed quantitative and spatial *Cognitive Abilities Test*® (*CAT4*) scores, his peers and teachers inferred from his advanced verbal skills that he was without impairment or deficit. However, his *PASS* score for Preparedness for Learning showed just to what extent his meta-cognition was stunted, and the emerging effect on his Self Regard as a Learner score was worrying.

Mode's attainment had improved dramatically since *CAT4* data flagged the significant learning needs which needed the support of a dedicated LSA. However, the subsequent and dramatic dip in his Attitudes to Teachers score showed the flip side of his achievement and progress, as he grew to resent the constant intervention of adults. Meanwhile, Max was not only consistently exceeding the potential indicated by his *CAT4* profile, but his glittering *PASS* scores spoke of a student who loved everything about school, and exemplified a 'growth mindset'.

With each child here, some of whom you will, doubtless, recognise in your own schools too, the data triangle provided a key which unlocked an authentic understanding of their wellbeing, and, crucially, enabled the school to investigate, intervene and have a positive impact.

In Tim Minchin's musical adaptation of Roald Dahl's *Matilda*, the eponymous young girl sings, "I wonder why they didn't just change their story", and, as teachers, if we embrace the challenge, we have the opportunity to help each student do just that. However, invariably, the masks are so hard-worn and hard-won that we will have to dig, which brings me to my third contention: we are treasure-hunters; metaphorical shovel in hand, we are duty bound to mine a deeper understanding of what lies beneath the masks each child has chosen to wear. This is how, at the International Community School, Amman, and in an increasing number of schools across the world, we are now able to keep **#wellbeing** first.

“ Jane was one of only a handful of female students in a male-dominated cohort, and her 'happy mask' was well-developed and convincing. However, her *PASS* score for Learner Self-Regard was woefully low, and the digging this prompted revealed the systematic and relentless bullying she had endured of late from her tiny peer group. ”



At the International Community School, **#themonalisaeffect** aims to keep **#wellbeingfirst**



PUPIL ATTITUDES – Where should we begin?

By **Nicola Lambros**, Deputy Head Whole School,
King's College, Soto, Madrid

Over the last few years the need to place mental health high on the education agenda has at long last materialised. Educators are waking up to the fact that students cannot become the best version of themselves if they do not have a positive mental health. However, the sharp focus on grades in western education remains a threat to our work in schools on promoting positive mental health.

The message we hear all too often in schools at the macro level is; study hard and get your qualifications, your lifestyle will follow, and you will end up being healthy (and happy) in time. We must recognise that this is completely the wrong way round. If we are to reduce the prevalence of poor mental health and wellbeing in our young people and enable them to achieve their true full potential in life, it is crucial we change our focus so that our primary aim in schools is to help our students be healthy (and happy), from where they will derive a good lifestyle, and then they will be on the right road to achieve excellent qualifications through a positive mindset and love of learning.

Schools are keen to support the mental health and wellbeing of their students. This has led to strategies such as mindfulness becoming very popular in schools and in the UK the government is investing in training teachers to become 'mental health first aiders' to enable them to recognise and effectively support students who may be suffering from poor mental health. However, these strategies only serve to support the symptoms of poor wellbeing and mental health problems, they do not prevent them from occurring.

For me this is rather like taking a paracetamol every day for a constant headache rather than finding out the cause of the headache to prevent it from happening again. The good news is that many schools are now exploring how they can create an ethos and culture that supports positive wellbeing in their students to support the prevention of mental health issues developing. This is where *PASS* becomes invaluable.

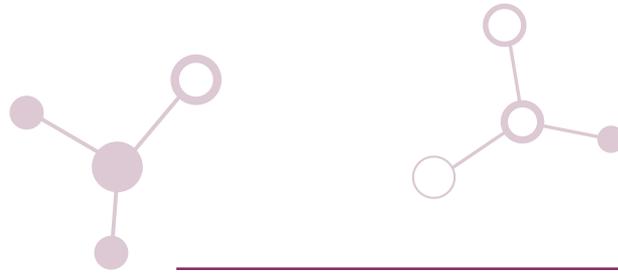
In most of our work in schools we gather data about our students, what is their cognitive ability, how much have they understood, how well can they perform in assessments. *PASS* is different; it provides data from the students' perspective - it allows students to give us information about how well we are doing in our work to create a culture and ethos in our schools which promotes positive wellbeing and a love of learning. This data is indispensable as it provides the information schools need to determine how successful they are in developing positive mindsets in their students, from the whole school level right down to each individual.



My experience of working in international schools across the globe has shown that there are general patterns within the *PASS* data according to the region of the world the school is located. For example, students in South East Asia tend to have lower scores for Learner Self-Regard, whereas those from the Emirates have relatively high percentile scores for Learner Self-Regard but lower scores for Preparedness for Learning.

Furthermore, when drilling down to year group data very often those year groups that have moved Key Stages, particularly those entering examination years such as GCSE or Sixth Form, have relatively low percentile scores for Preparedness for Learning. And just as the research tells us students with EAL have a lower self-efficacy we see that these students show relatively lower percentile scores for Learner Self-Regard and Perceived Learning Capability than their peers. However, just as every student is an individual so is every school and therefore *PASS* data varies from one school to the next, dependent on the school ethos and culture.

This presents schools with a problem; as every school is different there is no one programme, intervention or approach that should be adopted to tackle the areas of development identified through data analysis.



“ Just as every student is an individual so is every school and therefore *PASS* data varies from one school to the next, dependent on the school ethos and culture. ”

Luckily the theory and research underpinning the *PASS* tells us that the three factors that determine self-efficacy for academic success - Learner Self Regard, Perceived Learning Capability and Confidence in Learning, in combination with the factor that determines self-efficacy for self-regulation, Preparedness for Learning - are key to driving improvements in other areas.

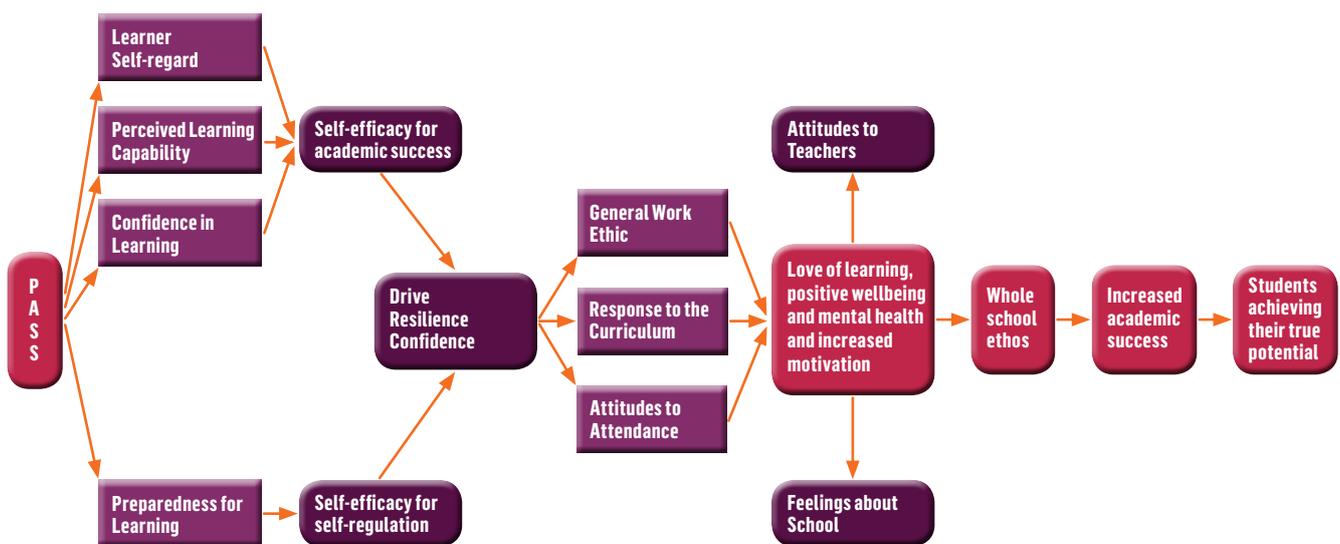
To illustrate this I have put together the diagram shown. My extensive research and work in schools has given me an in depth understanding of the research and theory behind the *PASS* and self-efficacy and this diagram summarises the information below to help schools in their endeavours to improve student wellbeing and ultimately academic achievement.

A student's self-efficacy will impact their academic achievement, goals, aspirations and confidence and drive

resilience and therefore, their motivation. Ensuring the four factors that influence self-efficacy show a high percentile for cohorts and individuals means they have a robust self-efficacy and this in turn positively influences a student's drive, resilience and confidence leading to a strong General Work Ethic, Response to the Curriculum and Attitudes to Attendance.

All this in combination creates students who have a love of learning, positive wellbeing and mental health and increased motivation which if true for all cohorts and individuals will result in a positive school ethos, increased academic success and students who achieve their full potential in all aspects of their life not just the academics. Furthermore, when students are feeling this good about themselves and their achievements they want to be in school and a part of the school community, therefore the percentile scores for Attitudes to Teachers and Feelings about School will look superb!

The *PASS* factors that determine self-efficacy for academic success and self-regulation



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Arrow denotes direction of positive influence

HOW IB TEACHERS CAN USE PASS TO IMPLEMENT ATL SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS



By **Gillian Ashworth**, Head of school, educational consultant and workshop leader



Approaches to learning (ATL) is an important area in IB programmes – it essentially helps students develop skills that help them ‘learn how to learn’. While collecting evidence of students’ knowledge and skill levels may form part of day-to-day classroom practice, pinpointing attitudes can be a greater challenge.

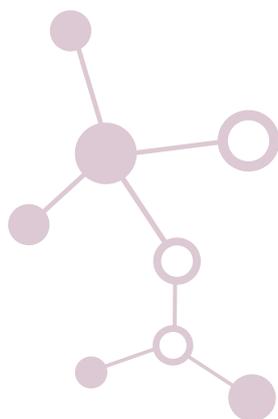
ATL self-management skill clusters – organization, evaluation, reflection – can be used very effectively to address underlying attitudinal factors that are known to affect student performance but those skills can be planned and deployed more purposefully when it is known precisely what those attitudinal factors are. Without such data, implementation can be vague, misdirected or simply never properly used.

The *Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS)* is a tool that can provide meaningful data on attitudes, and help inform focused and meaningful ATL implementation. Take the following scenario:

In School X, all Middle Years Programme (MYP) students took *PASS*, which provided data in nine different areas (see page 4, ‘The factors behind the attitudes’). The school quickly saw a trend across all MYP grades of low scores in Self-regard as a Learner, which gives an indication of a student’s self-awareness as a learner, determination, and openness to learning.

Further analysis revealed more precise concerns. Student responses at all grade levels to the statements “I worry about getting my work right”, “I make mistakes with my work” and “I get anxious when I have to do new work” were especially illuminating.

Armed with this data, and aware of the risk such concerns posed to student esteem, performance and progress, the school looked at how its ATL programme could be used to take action.





Whole school level

At whole school level the school:

- Reviewed the ATL self-management skills to see which could address the issues raised. Of particular interest: self-motivation - practising analysing and attributing causes for failure; managing self-talk; and positive thinking. Resilience - practising “bouncing back” after adversity, mistakes and failures; “failing well”, and dealing with disappointment and unmet expectations;
- Reviewed its ATL planning chart to see if, where and how these skills were being taught;
- Used vertical planning meetings to consider and plan increased emphasis on particular skills, within the existing curriculum, through homeroom periods, in dedicated ATL lessons;
- Asked subject heads for explicit analysis of how these skills were being planned and delivered within their own subject areas;
- Observed how teachers were delivering the skills in the classroom;
- Surveyed teachers on possible professional development needs for improving their delivery of these skills;
- Audited existing resources and explored others which might be obtained; and
- Set up sharing of classroom practice where these skills were being addressed in class, increasing knowledge-sharing among teachers on delivery of the skills and increasing accountability for this.

Cohort level

The *PASS* data enabled individual classes to be identified where scores were lowest, and specific issues raised. “I get anxious when I have to do new work” had been especially highlighted by grade 6 and 7 students (Years 7 – 8).

Horizontal planning meetings were thus arranged in which teachers and homeroom tutors could further plan how to address and reinforce skills relating to ‘emotional management’ and in particular strategies to help students reduce stress and anxiety. Professional development and resource needs could again be discussed.

Individual level

At the individual level, student *PASS* scores provided invaluable data for teachers, language and learning support personnel and counsellors. Individual support could be planned as needed, student support meetings were better informed and goals could be set for individual students. Specific suggestions and strategies could be added to student IEPs or success plans targeting development in the attitudes uncovered.

The process of using *PASS* led overall to a much more purposeful use of the ATL programme, and meaningful implementation of the necessary self-management skills within the student body.

Teachers were more motivated to address their student needs, now they were armed with increased knowledge rather than having to rely on speculation. Limited funds and resources were targeted with greater precision at the individuals, cohorts and professional development areas that needed most attention. And most importantly, collaborative planning time was now based on real data and helped to inform practices that really could lead to better student satisfaction, esteem and learning.

WELLBEING: THE COBIS VIEW

Colin Bell, CEO, Council of British
International Schools

School is where students spend most of their time between the ages of 4 and 18 and it's up to us as international educators and leaders to ensure that school is a supportive place where children and young people can thrive. We work hard to put mechanisms in place to support and care for students that are physically hurt or ill and the same mechanisms must be strong in promoting positive mental health and wellbeing – for both students and staff.

Like all students, regardless of age, location or curriculum studied, children and young people in British international schools can be at risk of mental health issues for many reasons. COBIS schools have high standards and great expectations from parents can have a negative effect on the wellbeing of children. International students may also be members of a globally mobile family, without the stability of an extended stay in one school. This, coupled with the need to establish new support networks every few years, can be challenging for some young people.

Teachers are therefore trained and encouraged to be vigilant for wellbeing issues in the classroom and proactive activities like mindfulness and happiness habits, as practised at the 2017 COBIS Wellbeing Conference in Dubai, can have positive benefits for students. Given the importance of wellbeing to international schools, we often have dedicated strands at COBIS conferences on themes such as mentally healthy schools and building a culture to support positive mental health and wellbeing in young people, with experts such as Natasha Devon MBE and Dick Moore giving their insight.



“ Education around mental health in schools is key and we will do our utmost to continue to spread the word that, ‘it’s okay not to feel okay’.”

The primary route to membership of COBIS is The Patron's Accreditation and Compliance, a collection of high standards that schools must meet to join our association. In formulating these standards, we took inspiration from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular Article 24, which refers to the safety and wellbeing of children. Our compulsory regulations around safeguarding and safer recruitment practices in schools ensure that school is a setting where students can feel comfortable, at ease and free from danger. The safety and wellbeing of students in our member schools is something we don't compromise on.

We recognise that, of course, there is still more to be done. Schools in some countries may not have the same safeguarding infrastructure and support systems as in the UK so leaders must be certain that their own systems and culture support children. Education around mental health in schools is key and we will do our utmost to continue to spread the word that, ‘it's okay not to feel okay’.



USING DATA TO HELP GAIN A CLEARER VIEW OF EVERY STUDENT

James Neill, GL Education's International Director, explains how the company's approach chimes with a growing global interest in the value and importance of formative assessment, providing teachers and senior leaders with the data and insights to gain a holistic view of each of their students.



GL Education has worked in partnership with schools for over 35 years to develop a suite of assessments that support better outcomes for students.

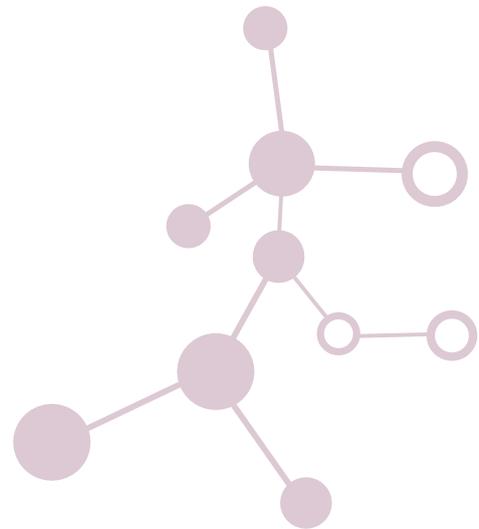
Our tests provide teachers with a comprehensive understanding of a student's ability, attainment and attitudes, as well as any barriers to learning they may have. They are built on the best academic research and have been extensively trialled to help teachers make quick and effective interventions. Narrative reports help teachers spot trends (at individual, group or school level), identify students who could be achieving more, and drill down into anomalies. They alert schools and teachers to a child who may need additional support and allow early intervention strategies to be put in place.

Our attitudes are formed by and affect how we feel, what we do and how we think. In school, a student's attitudes to learning can influence their whole experience of education and have significant effects on their overall levels of attainment, engagement and wellbeing. Our *Pupil Attitudes to Self and School*[®] (*PASS*) survey is therefore a particularly valuable tool for students aged 4 to 18. *PASS* often provides that 'missing link' when a student's attainment scores do not match up with their ability data. It allows students to express their feelings and can help identify issues even before they manifest themselves, giving teachers the opportunity for early intervention.

Available in over 30 languages, *PASS* does not involve curriculum-based material and does not need to take into account previous achievements or first language, making it ideal for use with children with EAL.

As this paper has demonstrated, a significant minority of students in schools around the world have low levels of self-belief, a poor perception of their own capabilities and little confidence in their own learning. These attitudinal patterns can present significant barriers to learning. However, the correct use of assessment data can inform teaching and learning strategies, help improve overall achievement, and provide important information for pastoral support. By supporting student wellbeing, *PASS* can dramatically improve learning outcomes for individual students, groups of students and the whole school.

For further information please visit [gl-education.com](https://www.gl-education.com). To find out more, contact us on **+44 (0)20 8996 3369** or email us at international@gl-education.com.





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