

Should Pastoral Care and PSE be Mainly Concerned with the Support of Achievement?

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ABSTRACT

Pastoral care is being given more attention than in the past from schools and education authorities. Pastoral care can be seen as an aspect of affective education that aims to promote the personal and social development of students. This article will explore the relationship between pastoral care, PSE and students' achievement, and how achievement is promoted by pastoral care and PSE. In order to achieve the best, possible suggestions will be given in this article.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the number of articles about pastoral care and Personal and Social Education (PSE) has increased significantly, suggesting that pastoral care is being given more attention than in the past from schools and education authorities. Pastoral care can be seen as an aspect of affective education that aims to promote the personal and social development of pupils^[1]. Although much has been written about the definition and the importance of pastoral care and PSE, less about achievement and its relationship with pastoral care and PSE. This article will explore the relationship between pastoral care, PSE and students' achievement, and how achievement is promoted by pastoral care and PSE.

This article will be divided into the following parts. Firstly, a definition of pastoral care, PSE and achievement will be introduced. Secondly, the factors affecting

achievement and the role of pastoral care and PSE will be discussed. Thirdly, the relationship between achievement and pastoral care and PSE and how achievement is supported will be provided. Fourthly, some limitations and suggestion will be discussed. Finally, it will deal with the conclusion and implications for future development.

2. Definition

In order to know the relationship between achievement and pastoral care and PSE and how achievement may be supported, the clear definitions of these concepts need to be offered.

2.1 Achievement

The Longman Dictionary (2015)^[2] defines achievement as 'something important that you succeed in doing by your own efforts'. In the context of education, this

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might relate to a student's performance. In this case the term 'achievement' might be defined as follows:

A measurement of the improvement in performance of the individual pupils or groups of pupils, e.g. increase in reading age, extension of vocabulary, movement to a higher national curriculum level as measured by Standardised Attainment Tests (SATs), or progress to a higher grade in the music tests of the Associated Boards [3].

To this extent, the term 'achievement' can be understood as the synonym with 'progress'. OFSTED (2017) [4] also describes 'achievement' as a criterion which 'reflects the accomplishments of pupils in relation to what you would expect of those particular pupils'.

On the basis of the definition mentioned above, it can be seen that achievement may take many forms. As OFSTED suggests, 'achievements include pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding gained through the subjects of the curriculum, and the attitudes, values, and other aspects of personal development fostered by the school'. That is to say, on the one hand, the achievements of pupils cannot be only confined to their academic subjects, such as 'the educational attainment of pupils in relation to some clear benchmark, such as National Curriculum levels, or descriptions, at the end of a Key Stage' (ibid). On the other hand, characteristics which are less measurable but broadly understood, such as attitudes and behaviour, should be considered as an integral part of the achievement.

There were four aspects of achievement: extra-curriculum and out-of-school interests and activities, subject-specific achievement, cross-curricular achievement and personal achievement [5]. The first aspect, not only shows much about the pupils' potential and interests but also appears to have value as a way of strengthening pupil-tutor relationships by providing an opportunity for tutors to discover a different side of their pupils and by giving in-school achievement a new perspective. In relation to the second aspect, it included personal skills for development in subject areas. Cognitive skills of investigation, social, personal and psycho-motor skills and attitudes to learning have all been referred to as cross-curricular achievement. The fourth aspect is about individual characteristic and development influenced by educational experience. From the model above, it can be seen that these four aspects are all key dimensions of achievement.

2.2 Pastoral Care and PSE

Over time the concept of pastoral care has become more clearly defined. Pastoral care is defined as 'the commitment of schools (and teachers) to the all-round well

being and development of the child as a person (and not just as a pupil)' [6]. PSE refers to 'time-tabled subjects like personal, social, moral, health or careers education' (ibid).

From this definition, it can be seen that pastoral care is concerned with both pupils' academic skills and character improvement, both individual pupils and whole school development. It is about support for all aspects of the individual. Pastoral care is about all pupils and concerned with their achievement and concerns entire schools.

The goal of the education is to cultivate children recognising their individuals instead of molding them in the same way. Education ought not only to help children to increase their knowledge but also to teach them how to step into adult society and handle different kinds of problems. Pastoral care plays an important role here. It 'adds a distinctive ethical dimension' to the goal of education through its concern for promoting and facilitating development through learning. Meanwhile, pastoral care focuses on ability of students to be responsible for their future life and shape their characteristic through social action which balances self-interest with altruistic, co-operative and collaborative endeavor.

3. The Factors Affecting Achievement and the Role of Pastoral Care and PSE

Having shown the nature of and relationship between achievement and pastoral care/PSE, the factors affecting achievement will now be reviewed.

3.1 The Factors Affecting Achievement

According to OFSTED, the success of school is most strongly reflected in achievements of pupils—the progress they make, the standards they reach, and the personal qualities they develop. Whether students can achieve highly or not is determined by several factors. Among these are:

- The quality and effectiveness of teaching – the stimulus, challenge and pace of learning created by teachers; the opportunities for learning provided through the curriculum; and the care, support and guidance of pupils;
- The effectiveness of leadership and management – the vision, direction and motivation provided by leaders in the school; the management of people and resources at all levels; the level of commitment to continuing professional development for staff; how effectively performance and provision are analysed and evaluated; and the action taken to bring about improvement; and
- The school's commitment to inclusion and the steps

it takes to ensure that every pupil does as well as possible.

All these three factors are interdependent and exert influences on achievements of students. How well achievements are supported relies on what kind of effects these factors have on it.

3.2 The Role of the Pastoral Care and PSE

The pastoral work plays a vital role in school. As the vehicle for passing on social culture, school must help pupils to find himself, and find meaning for his studies and his life in order to realize this purpose. Therefore, the main task of school is to provide pupils disciplinary, educational, vocational and personal guidance. This is why there is a need for pastoral care.

Pastoral care can make significant contributions to important features of the whole school ^[7]:

- (i) the ethos; the sense of community and mutual respect;
- (ii) pupils' engagement in the school;
- (iii) pupils' contributions to each other and to the school;
- (iv) the recognition of a wide range of achievements;
- (v) the extent to which pupils feel effective and empowered as learners;
- (vi) the quality of teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil communication;
- (vii) the extent of collegiality and coordination amongst staff;
- (viii) the attention to morale of all staff;
- (ix) the extent to which the pupil voice is heard and responded;

From the items mentioned above, we see that on the one hand, the pastoral care system provides support and guidance for students' achievement; on the other hand, it is concerned with the overall improvement of whole school. According to this, the current contribution of pastoral care in schools involves: support for learning and the academic curriculum of the school, assisting pupils to develop their own life style and enrich their personal life, preparing young people for future education and adult life and society, offer appropriate guidance and counseling to help young people make their own decision and so forth.

4. How Achievement is Supported by Pastoral Care

4.1 The Relationship between Pastoral Care and PSE and Achievement

VIS primary school commented on PSE in this way: PSE enables children to develop an awareness of, and

to take increased responsibility for, their own learning and to ultimately maximize their learning and social potential.

From this we can see that pastoral care and PSE promote and facilitate students' personal development as well as learning.

The diagram on next page indicates the relationship between pastoral care and curriculum. The left circle represents the school's curriculum and the right circle school's pastoral care activities. The intersection refers to the coverage of the pastoral curriculum, some given in the subject courses and some through tutorial.

It is also suggested the 'pastoral curriculum' should be carried out in various ways including through the subject course. He advocates a school which places emphasis on caring for its pupils and offering them access to all forms of educational development cannot leave personal, educational, and vocational guidance to each of the tutors individually, however, keen they are. A pastoral curriculum is necessary to enable the tutors to help their pupils ^[8].

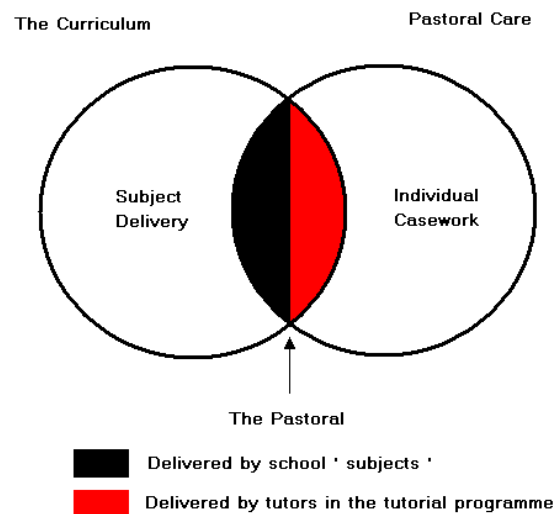


Figure 1. The interrelationship between pastoral care and the curriculum

It is fair to say that as a support system pastoral care can help students by examining the processes which either facilitate or inhibit learning.

4.2 How Achievement is Supported by Pastoral Care and PSE

Pastoral care contributes significantly in helping students' learning tasks and fostering their personal maturity. OFSTED (2017) states pastoral care 'provides effective support and advice for all its pupils, informed by monitoring of their academic progress, personal development, behaviour and attendance' (Section 5.4 p20). With regard to this point, here are the details about how the achievements of pupils are supported by pastoral care ^[9]:

a) To monitor each individual student's progress and achievement across the whole curriculum and to create an overview of his/her approach to different learning tasks'; In other words, due to the different situation of each pupil, a unique profile over the learning period about each pupil is set up to give pupils themselves and their teachers an overview of their learning process and their performance. By doing this, both pupils and teachers will have a clear picture about what they have learned. Tutors can help students more about learning: help them setting learning targets, explore their motivation and approaches, monitor progress, recognize strengths and weaknesses.

b) To provide support and guidance for pupil achievement; the goals of school are not achieved by tutors or students on their own but the cooperation and coordination between them. Pastoral care contributes to this through a variety of forms: subject teaching, tutorial, and other specialist guidance provision (e.g. PSE). For instance, the pastoral staff or form tutor might provide some appropriate advice and help to those who might suffer from some personal problems, which distract them and influence their study. In this way, pastoral care becomes an efficient channel of communication which can assist tutors in giving pupils real support for their work.

Here is a persuasive example: when a child is unhappy, due to a certain reason causing lack of motivation and interest towards learning, they cannot benefit from what is being taught in school. It might be an efficient solution to help him set up the confidence and foster his curiosity. Once the barriers to learning are removed, the child will feel comfortable and confident to resume learning.

c) To encourage a caring and orderly environment within which all pupils can exercise initiative and develop; bearing this point in mind, schools and teachers recognize the need to build up a warm and harmonious atmosphere with which students feel secure and from which they can draw help and support in solving kinds of problems, such as academic, interpersonal, emotional and so forth.

d) In order to activate and link with the wider educational welfare, community and world of work networks to support and extend the experiences of all pupils; Tutors commit to provide a wider educational experience that permit students to not only achieve their academic goals but to be able to grow, to manage their selves, their work and their lives. In addition, schools have ability to build up efficient links and search for richer educational resources for the students in order to widen their horizon and provide more opportunity for their potential.

These are the four main points that how the achievement of students are supported by pastoral care: giving students whole view of what they have learned, providing

guidance, building up caring atmosphere and establishing a wider relationship with outside. Apart from these, pastoral care contributes to student's achievements in a range of ways: such as provide a point of personal contact with parents to hear their view of their child's progress, to provide colleagues with relevant knowledge of pupils so that their teaching efforts can be adapted for greater success, to promote the development of teaching and learning and a school organisation which respond to the experiences of pupils' and so forth. All these aspects will provide opportunity for teachers to communicate well about student's progress and their overall achievements.

All in all, the pastoral care system created to help students balance personal development has had a positive impact. It is clear that the pastoral care does support and facilitate the achievement.

5. Limitations and Suggestions

5.1 Limitations

Although we have taken crucial steps towards the personal growth and social development objectives, there are still limitations and problems.

Firstly, although pastoral care system has been implemented effectively in some schools, the skills needed are often not fully recognised: they are seen as supplementing or complementing the academic work of the school rather than as an essential part of it. For instance, in China, secondary schools in developing cities in particular, were influenced by the traditional concept that the main task of students is to master the skills of literacy and numeracy. Other aspects of education were neglected. This caused a pastoral-academic split in some ways similar to that identity in English schools. What needs to be pointed out is pastoral care system cannot be institutionalized as a separate structure. Its effectiveness can only be shown relative to other courses and activities.

There is a problem about the balance between academic achievement and pastoral demands. On the one hand, the goal of school is to motivate children's learning; on the other hand, subjects concerned with personal and social development which is offered in schools are thought to be unnecessary. There seemed to be a tension between the demands of teaching such topics like mental education and the time currently devoted to the teaching of literacy and numeracy in order to meet government targets. He also mentioned that schools which might previously have abandoned the timetable to devote a week to global or community issues are often wary of losing such time from the core subjects.

Secondly, when the educational achievement was

recorded, the factor of pastoral care was not taken into consideration. Some records of achievement attempt to assess and evaluate personal qualities in the form of grids, levels or grades. Such methods neglect the diverse nature of human personality, the variety of interpretations which may be made of human behavior and often reveal more about the assessors than the assessed. If the criterion of assessment is oversimplified, the goals of school will be confined to a small area and as a result the experience of students will be restricted as well. It is also suggested when the achievement was recorded, not only should the results of the examinations be emphasized, but also there is some place on the page for students' personal development, their character, mental, value and so forth.

Moreover, due to a variety of problems pupils cannot always benefit from the work of tutors to some extent, e.g. teachers do not have enough time to get close pupils, or teachers do not possess enough skills in this field. Such constraints maintained: insufficient preparation for tutoring of teacher's responsibility, lack of continuing professional development for tutoring, disconceptualized purpose of tutoring in the school, little published guidance for schools and individual teachers, little government recognition (the officially invisible pastoral systems) and so forth. All these factors prevent a tutor carrying out efficient support or guidance for a pupil^[10].

5.2 Suggestions

Although pastoral care in education has progressed significantly, there still is a long way to go. In order to help to achieve the best, possible suggestions can be taken account of:

For one thing, tutors should set good examples to students. Tutors play a fundamental role in pastoral care system. The importance of tutors and the impact of tutoring system on enhancing learning and student personal development should be highlighted. By realizing this point, tutors should endeavor to prepare themselves for the good traits before they teach students. If the teachers possess the qualities of maturity and permit students to get close enough to them 'to really know them as people, to feel the force of concern and interest of well-balanced personalities, attitudes and values, then a lot of personal development and growth would occur'.

Secondly, the relationship between parents and pupils should be paid much attention to. Apart from schools, family is a second important environment in which children spend much time. Therefore, parents play a vital role as the participator in their children's education. Children tended to grow more perfect characteristic if they were treated and respected as persons in the loving and close

relationship with parents.

Thirdly, cooperation between tutors, efficient school organization and management and support from educational authority will be helpful to achieve the goals of pastoral care and PSE in school. In order to make the pastoral system work efficiently, it is necessary to associate all levels in the society and coordinate in a whole-school framework. The pastoral system should be connected with academic system (Heads of Department and subject teachers), the executive (Headmaster and deputies), and out-of-school services where necessary. Besides the educational agencies, schools also need the support from parents and all those who are concerned with education. Only when all these factors work together can pastoral care be made the best it can be for all the pupils.

6. Conclusions and Implications

In this article, we introduced the definition about pastoral care, PSE and achievement and their relationship. And then the details about how achievement is supported by pastoral care were examined. Limitations that existing in current pastoral care system and recommendation about further work was given at the end.

We should focus more attention on how to educate the students better. The aim of the school should be the total integration of learning support and pastoral support. The bright future is that there are a growing number of schools where the curriculum tends to be integrated with pastoral system and traditional academic-pastoral divide is disappearing.

In China more and more schools tend to highlight the importance of areas similar to pastoral care and PSE. A number of schools pay much attention to development of pupils through a variety of forms. The reform of some teaching materials is one of the major developments, such as **Moral Character and Society** and **Moral Character and Life** issued by People Education Publishing House. This series of books began to be used in primary school since 2002. Its content regards the life of pupils in both family and society as main thread, combines education in love, people's interrelationship and society together. Based on this understanding and knowledge, the self-concept of good habit and virtuous circle are gradually built up in the development of pupils. Pupils learn and benefit from the books and related activities, in which some chapters involve practical problems happened in real life, such as living in the sun of love, sharing love, say 'thank you', care for eggs.

Since the purpose of education is to cultivate the whole person, the focus should be on humanity as well as knowledge. Moreover, it will be interesting and worth exploring

the strategies of implementing pastoral care system well and helping pupils acquire the values and develop their qualities.

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