

Language of Flourishing: Wellbeing Literacy for motivation and emotion in higher education

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Why this Scoping Review?



HIGHER EDUCATION
STUDENT WELLBEING
AND MENTAL HEALTH
IS A GLOBAL PRIORITY




FOCUS ON MENTAL
AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
HEALTH PROMOTION
AND INTERVENTION,
PREDOMINANTLY
ADOPTING A
DEFICIT-ORIENTED
APPROACH



WELLBEING
LITERACY
IS AN EMERGING
FRAMEWORK



EVIDENCE REMAINS
FRAGMENTED
ACROSS
DISCIPLINES



**“HOW WE
COMMUNICATE
ABOUT
AND
FOR
WELLBEING”**

(Oades et al. 2026)

Objective

This scoping review maps how **wellbeing literacy**, (including emergent forms such as digital wellbeing literacy and meliotropic mindsets) relates to motivation, emotion regulation, and flourishing among university students in diverse cultural and institutional settings



Review Questions

How has **wellbeing literacy** been conceptualized, operationalized, and researched among university?

1. What theoretical frameworks underpin wellbeing literacy research in higher education?
2. How is wellbeing literacy measured and assessed among university students?
3. What relationships have been reported between wellbeing literacy and: flourishing, subjective wellbeing, motivation, emotion regulation, resilience, self-esteem, academic engagement, academic outcomes?
4. What interventions, educational practices, or institutional approaches have been used to foster wellbeing literacy?
5. How do emerging constructs such as digital wellbeing literacy and meliotropic wellbeing mindsets extend current wellbeing literacy models?
6. What research gaps remain in the field?

Method - Search Strategy

Databases: ERIC, PsycINFO, PubMed/MEDLINE, SciELO, Scopus, Web of Science

Timeframe: January 2016 – December 2025

Justification: Wellbeing literacy emerged as a distinct theoretical construct during the last decade, with foundational conceptual and measurement studies published after 2016

Language: Studies published in English, Portuguese, or Spanish are included

Types of Sources/studies: RCT, quasi-experimental, cohort, cross-sectional, mixed-methods, qualitative, psychometric validation, conceptual and theoretical

Method – Eligibility criteria

PCC (Population, Concept, Context) Framework
Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI, 2020)

Participants

Inclusion: Higher Education students, University students, Undergraduate students, Graduate students, College students, Postsecondary education students, First-year students in higher education

Exclusion: Primary school students, Secondary school students, Vocational school students, School staff / Professional only, Student-targeted diseases, Clinical populations

Concept

Inclusion: wellbeing literacy, defined according to Oades *et al.* (2021) as a capability involving intentional language use for wellbeing.

Related constructs will be considered when explicitly linked to wellbeing literacy

Exclusion: Studies focusing solely on health literacy, mental health literacy, digital literacy, or emotional literacy without explicit connection to wellbeing literacy

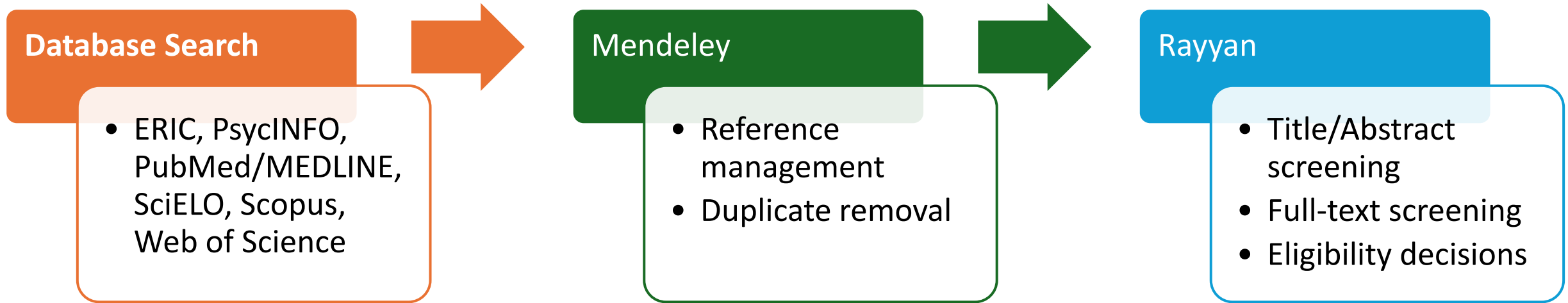
Context

Inclusion: All higher education settings worldwide, including Universities, Colleges, Institutes of higher education

No geographical restrictions will apply

Method

Database Search and Screening Process

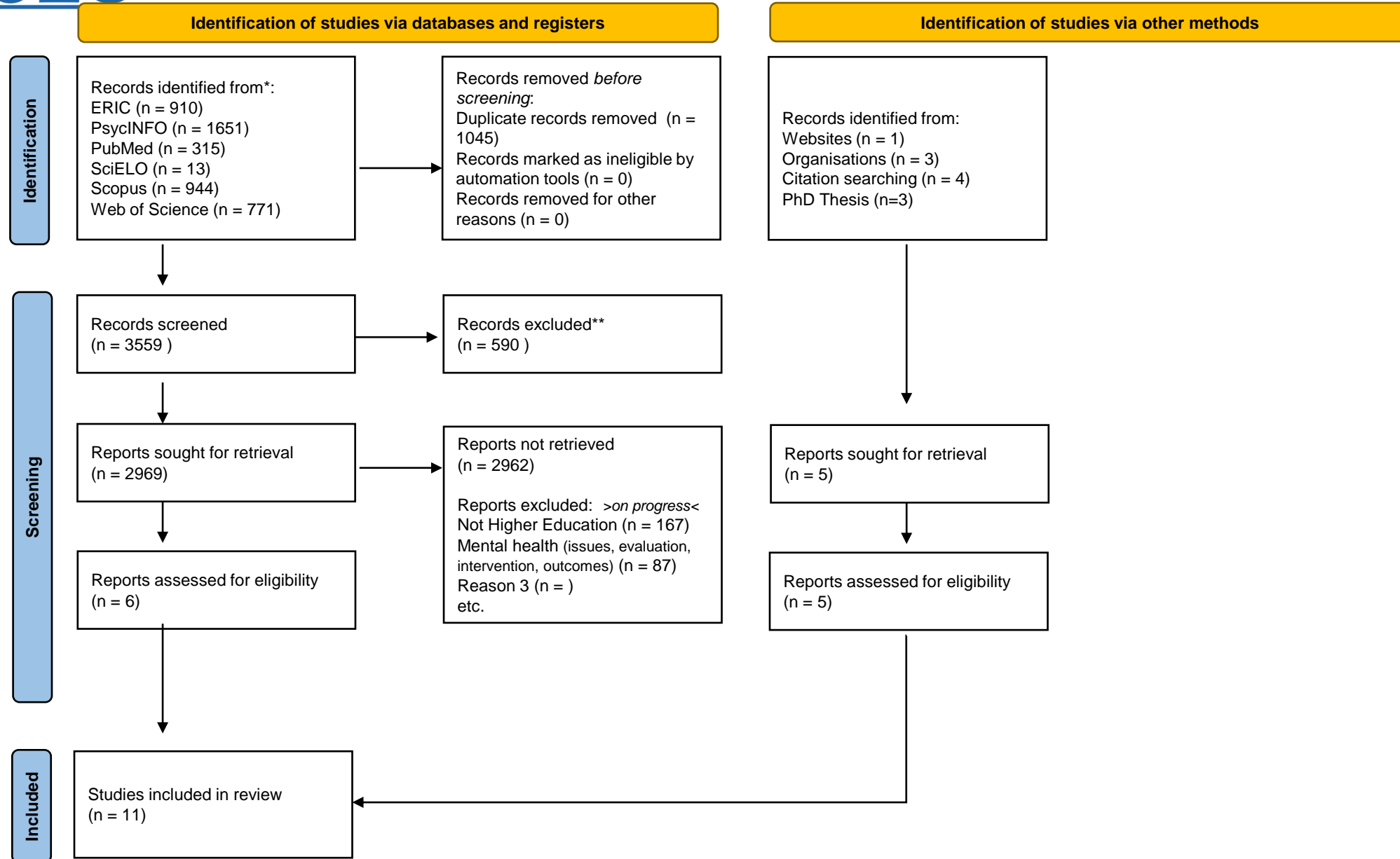


Data Extraction and Evidence Synthesis

Author(s)	Year	Country	University / Research Centre or Lab	Study design	Population/ sample	Educational setting	Theoretical framework	Definition of wellbeing literacy	Measurement instrument	Outcomes assessed	Key findings	Mediators/ moderators	Implication for practice	Research gaps

Data extraction was conducted using a tool developed by the researchers and applied to all papers included in the scoping review.

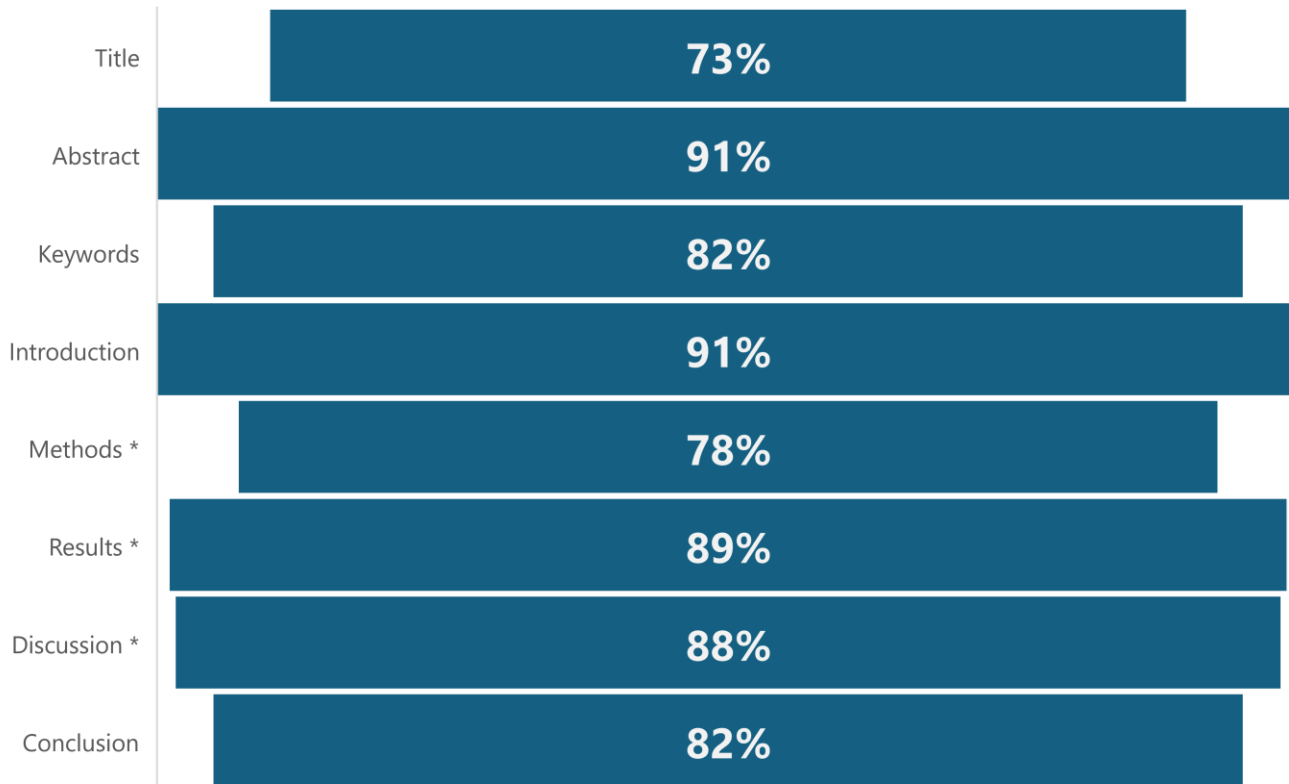
PRISMA 2020 flow diagram



Results – Explicit use of Wellbeing Literacy

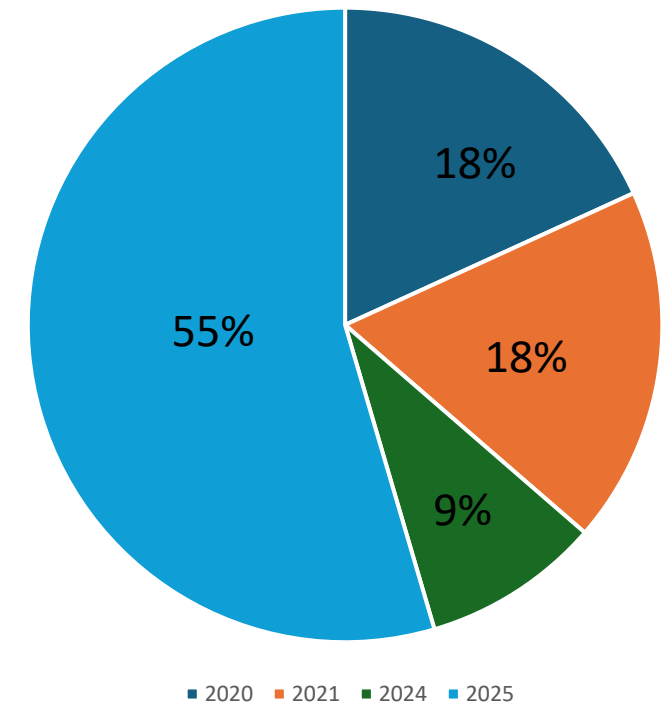
Scoping review studies after eligibility process (n=11)

"Wellbeing Literacy" explicit use



*The proportion was adjusted for studies that, due to their typology, did not have a Method, Results, and Discussion section.

"Wellbeing Literacy" – Publication Year

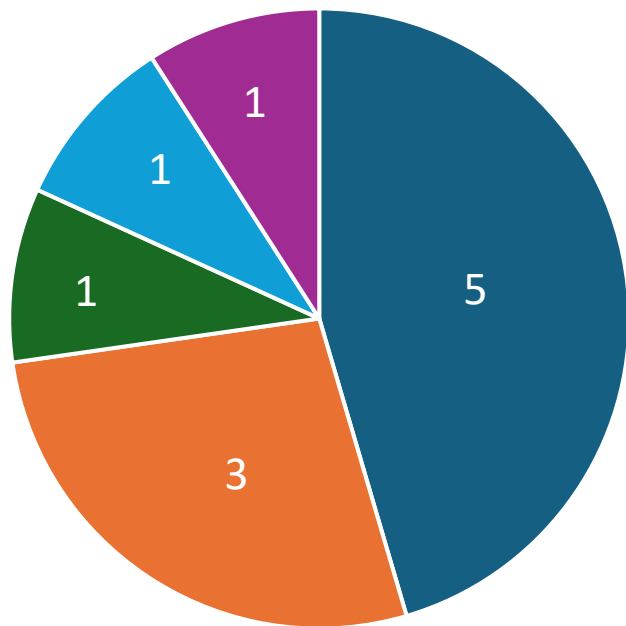


Growing international interest

Results

Scoping review studies after eligibility process (n=11)

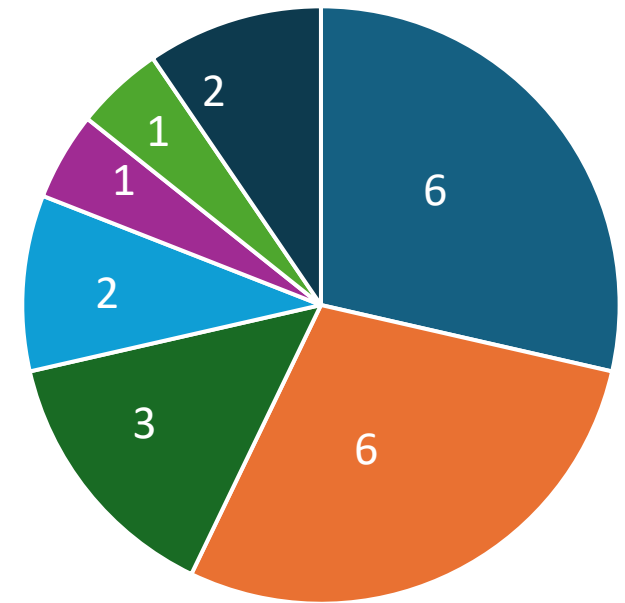
"Wellbeing Literacy" - Countries



■ Australia ■ China ■ Hong Kong / Macau ■ Turkey ■ Brazil /Canada

The leading author who has contributed most to the development of wellbeing literacy is Lindsay G. Oades with 5 publications, as first author (2) and co-author (3).

"Wellbeing Literacy" – Scientific Areas



■ Psychology (included Positive Psy, Developmental Psy, Educational Psy)
 ■ Education (included Vocacional education)
 ■ Medicine (included Medical Psy, Medical Army)
 ■ Languages & Literature
 ■ Engineering (Physics & Electronic)
 ■ Business
 ■ Student Services (included Vocacional education/services)

Interdisciplinary Field

Results

Scoping review studies after eligibility process (n=11)

Type of Studies	n
Psychometric (cross-sectional, invariance, mediation)	5
Qualitative (mixed, phenomenological)	2
Conceptual	2
Quantitative (latent Profile Analysis, multinomial logistic regression)	1
Randomized controlled trial	1

Measured Areas	n
Wellbeing Literacy using Well-Lit 6 scale	7
Subjective Well-Being	4
Psychological Adjustment Problems Psy Distress	2
Mental Health / Psychopathology	2
Life Satisfaction	2
Resilience	2
Self-Esteem	1
Optimism	1
Emotion Regulation	1
Emotional Disturbance	1
Depression	1
Anxiety	1
Psychological Resilience	1
Psychological Well-being	1

One study used solely Well-Lit 6.

The studies used 20 different instruments to measure wellbeing/well being and mental health.

Results

Outcome	Relationship	Main Studies
Flourishing	Wellbeing literacy is conceptualized as a capability that supports flourishing at individual, collective and systemic levels.	Oades et al. (2020, 2021); Lemon et al. (2025)
Subjective Wellbeing	Positive direct association; students with higher wellbeing literacy report higher subjective wellbeing.	Xie et al. (2025); Guo et al. (2025)
Psychological Wellbeing	Positive association with psychological wellbeing and life satisfaction.	Yıldırım et al. (2025); Hou et al. (2021); Guo et al. (2025)
Emotion Regulation	Related but distinct construct; wellbeing literacy predicts wellbeing beyond emotion regulation.	Hou et al. (2021)
Self-Esteem	Significant mediator between wellbeing literacy and subjective wellbeing.	Xie et al. (2025)
Resilience	Positive association; chain mediator after self-esteem; enhanced through mindfulness intervention.	Xie et al. (2025); Xu et al. (2025)
Motivation	Mainly conceptual evidence; wellbeing literacy supports proactive engagement and wellbeing-oriented functioning.	Lemon et al. (2025); Oades et al. (2021)
Academic Engagement	Linked to belonging, participation, communication, and engagement in higher education contexts.	Lemon et al. (2025); Huang et al. (2020)
Academic Outcomes	Limited direct evidence; potential indirect effects through wellbeing, resilience, coping, and mental health.	Guo et al. (2025); Xu et al. (2025)

Reflexions (i) Wellbeing Literacy in Higher Education

Robust Empirical Evidence

- Subjective Wellbeing
- Self-Esteem
- Resilience
- Psychological Wellbeing & Life Satisfaction

Emerging/Conceptual Evidence

- Flourishing
- Motivation
- Academic Engagement
- Academic Outcomes

- ❑ Wellbeing literacy shifts the focus from wellbeing as an outcome to wellbeing as a capability.
- ❑ Universities have an opportunity to move beyond deficit-based approaches and intentionally cultivate wellbeing literacy through teaching, communication, and institutional culture.

Reflexions (ii) Wellbeing Literacy in Higher Education

From language to flourishing...

If **wellbeing** is partly shaped by the **language we use**,
then fostering **wellbeing literacy**
may be one of the most powerful ways
higher education can help students
not only succeed academically but truly flourish

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