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List of Abstracts

1) The structure and use of the teacher and parent Maltese Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

Carmel Cefai , Liberato Camilleri, Paul Cooper and Lara Said

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997) is one of the most commonly used measures of mental health in children and young people and has been translated into more than forty languages. This paper discusses the translation of the SDQ in Maltese and explores the structure and use of the teacher and parent Maltese translations. 4797 school teachers and 2865 parents completed the Maltese teacher and parent SDQ respectively. The results indicate that the Maltese SDQ, particularly the teacher version, meets the basic psychometric properties which make it a useful index of social, emotional and behaviour difficulties and prosocial behaviour amongst Maltese children and young people. Exploratory factor analysis suggests that the Maltese version clearly discriminates between difficulty and prosocial behaviour, and that it may be closer in fit to a three factor model, namely internalized difficulties, externalized difficulties and prosocial behaviour. While there are a number of variations, which may be explained by the local educational and socio-cultural context, Maltese mean scores are quite comparable with international SDQ norms. In view of a number of limitations, however, the use of the Maltese SDQ needs to be used with caution and further research into its psychometric properties is suggested

2) A Study of the Concurrent Validity between the Boxall Profile and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

Caroline Couture, Paul Cooper and Egide Royer

The aim of the study is to establish the level of concurrent validity between the Boxall Profile, a diagnostic instrument used by teachers and teaching assistants in nurture groups, and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, a widely used screening instrument in the fields of education, mental health and social work. 202 children and adolescents attending nurture groups in England, aged 3-14 years, participated in the study. . These consisted of 142 boys and 60 girls and came from 25 schools in 8 LEAs. School staff completed the Boxall Profile and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire for all pupils. . The results show a high degree of concordance between the two instruments, with both measures appearing to identify similar behavioural characteristics in the same children. Scores in specific domains of the Boxall Profile are shown to predict performance on particular sub-scales of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. These preliminary findings support the validity claims of the Boxall Profile, indicating that it is a reliable tool for both diagnostic and research purposes.

3) Promoting social-emotional learning in Chinese schools: A feasibility study of PATHS implementation in Hong Kong

Chi-Ming Kam, Lance Wai-lap Wong, Kennis Mei-sze Fung

This paper describes a pilot study of a reduced version of the PATHS Curriculum, a US-developed evidence-based SEL program, among schools in Hong Kong SAR (China). Three hundred and sixteen 12th grade students in three elementary schools participated in the study. A limited number of first grade PATHS lessons were adapted and translated into Chinese. Twelve teachers learned and adopted these lessons in their teaching. Students in these classrooms learned about different emotions and practiced self-control. The intervention lasted four months. After the intervention, students showed improvement in emotion understanding, emotion regulation and prosocial behavior. No change was observed in the level of children's problem behaviors. Over 65% of the teachers reported a high degree of satisfaction and willingness to adopt the intervention. The effects of the intervention varied among schools, with variations in the level of intervention and principal support, but not in the quality of implementation. Discussion is focused on the factors that could shape the adoption and implementation of SEL programs, especially the role of the difference in school systems between Hong Kong and the United States.

4) Miss, I got mad today! The Anger Diary, a tool to promote emotion regulation

Roberta Renati, Valeria Cavioni, Maria Assunta Zanetti

Effective management of emotions has strong implications in the development of adaptive behaviours during childhood and adolescence. The purpose of this study was to examine the use of a new method of emotion regulation named the 'aRRabbiadiaro' (Anger Diary), with primary school children. The participants included 119 children attending 7 classes from three primary schools located in middle-class urban communities in the province of Pavia, Italy. In the first phase, the participants were asked to complete a narrative tool which investigated how they coped with anger in their everyday life and whether the use of narrative applied to episodes of anger and facilitated adaptive ways of coping with negative feelings. Subsequently the study assessed the relationship between effective anger management and social functioning in the peer group. Our findings suggest that the use of diary writing seems to represent a promising instrument to promote the development of emotional and socio-cognitive skills in school children.

5) The life-course transitions of young women in a Maltese context.

Damian Spiteri and Katya DeGiovanni

This study analyzed how a cohort of eight young women who underwent certain difficulties whilst at secondary school experienced their transition from secondary school to either work or further education. It explores changes in their perception of events and happenings that they classified as significant to them, and the influence that these changes of perception had on their evolving life-course. While not formally classified as emotionally or behaviorally challenged, all the participants in this study claimed to have had varying depths of difficulty when at secondary school, some alleging that they had been classified as troublesome by their teachers and others claiming to have seen themselves as disruptive in classroom settings. The study was informed by the participants' voices about how they saw their transitions being forged and has a phenomenological focus.