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Can We Modify Teacher Mindsets: Towards Well-being in Education

Abstract

Following the impact of positive psychology on education, the term well-being has recently received more attention. However, there is not much research devoted to practical aspects of developing well-being. The studies that exist focus on mindset of novice (Dweck, 2014b) or pre-service teachers (Irie, Ryan, & Mercer, 2018; Haukås & Mercer, 2021). Therefore, there is still much to be done as far as teacher training and well-being development (TT&WD) is concerned. Inspired by Maslow's study (1943) on self-actualised people, the main aim was to present characteristic features of growth mindset teachers. A mixed method study (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018, p. 304) was applied to analyse statements about pre-service teacher well-being. By focusing on teachers' beliefs, the distinction was made between fixed and growth mindsets. In the first phase of the study, using Likert-scale, a set of 50 questions was created to capture nuances of positive and negative stance of pre-service teachers. The aim was not to verify the teachers' "subjective well-being" (SWB) (Mazzucchelli & Purcell, 2015), but to focus on the "psychological well-being" (PWB) based on their beliefs and attitudes (Werbińska, 2011). In the second phase, a qualitative analysis of 15 narrative statements served as an indication of the pre-service teacher well-being. The narratives turned out to be the projections of either success or failure of the participants. Finally, a well-being intervention was used which aimed at influencing teachers' mindsets by involving them in three tasks. The data also show subtle differences in respondents' answers concerning the way certain students recognise and show their attitudes to life or the teaching profession, which correspond to fixed and growth mindset (Dweck, 2006). These findings highlight the importance of training pre-service teachers in well-being and offer some implications connected with developing a paradigm framework of teacher well-being.

Keywords: fixed and growth mindset, teacher well-being, narratives, teacher training and development

The Rationale Behind Researching Mindsets

Mindsets remain an under-researched construct in teacher education. Such studies are important and necessary, as they may improve not only teacher well-being but simultaneously be beneficial for other stakeholders, such as learners, their parents, and the whole school milieu. By studying mindsets, we can make informed decisions about certain aptitudes or dispositions teachers may or may not possess in their profession. Most of the studies on mindsets concerned students and their personality features; however, there have been few research projects investigating mindsets of teachers. Among them there is a case study on a novice teacher after the first year of teaching (Dweck, 2014b), a study of pre-service Austrian teachers exploring their beliefs about teaching competences (Irie, Ryan, & Mercer, 2018), and a study on pre-service Norwegian teachers researching their mindsets about teaching competences (Haukås & Mercer, 2021). The research examples point to the merit of growth mindset in teachers who can cope with challenges brought about by their everyday teaching practice and are likely to grow resilience assisting them in fighting burnout. Eventually, they do not drop out from the profession. Unfortunately, not many studies offer solutions to the problem of how to develop growth mindset in teachers to improve their well-being. Little is also known about the specific well-being training teachers can be provided with. Similarly, not much can be found about ways of modifying teacher training and well-being development (TT&WD) for the benefits of teachers and learners. Therefore, the purpose of this investigation is to explore pre-service teacher mindsets that will be related to their state of well-being. Based on an intervention conducted among pre-service teachers in Poland, the study provides new insights into TT&WD and offers some indications on how to enhance growth mindset.

Literature Review

Definitions of Well-being

Well-being is a multifaceted construct which, in very general terms, aspires to make people experience a better life and more effective functioning. Oxford online dictionary describes well-being as “the state of being comfortable, healthy and happy.” Well-being is defined in many ways as, for instance, life satisfaction (Diener & Suh, 1998; Seligman, 2002), happiness (Pollard & Lee, 2003), the state of being comfortable, healthy, and happy (Shah & Marks,

2004), or the ability to fulfil goals (Foresight Mental Capital and Well-being Project, 2008). Well-being is conceptualised by the Canadian Index of Well-being (CIW) as “(t)he presence of the highest possible quality of life in its full breadth of expression focused on but not necessarily exclusive to; good living standards, robust health, a sustainable environment, vital communities, an educated populace, balanced time use, high levels of democratic participation, and access to and participation in leisure and culture” (CIW, 2016).¹ It is the foundation not only for a good life, but also effective learning (Mercer et al., 2018, p. 11). It is also claimed that well-being “encompasses a multidimensional matrix of our self and our world: the physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, philosophical, social, cultural and relational” (Hughes et al., 2019, p. ix). According to Seligman (2012), well-being is a combination of feeling good and having meaningful relationships and a sense of accomplishment in life. To have good life, a person should like themselves and what they are doing (Diener et al., 2009). Well-being was considered by Mercer, Hockly, Stobart, and Gales (2020) as one of the global life skills for the 21st century.

Research on well-being has been conducted in two directions: the hedonic approach and the eudemonic approach. The hedonic approach, preoccupied with happiness and well-being, is synonymous with achieving pleasure and avoiding pain. The eudemonic approach, which is geared at searching for meaning as well as self-realisation, is operationalised by the way a person functions in life (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The dichotomy of hedonic and eudemonic approaches is reflected in another distinction: the subjective and the psychological well-being. *Subjective well-being* is equivalent to the hedonic approach, and it implies emotions and affect as well as cognitive elements enhancing life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1999 Linely et al., 2009). *Psychological well-being*, on the other hand, is represented by the eudemonic approach and it encompasses six dimensions: self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, autonomy, and environmental mastery.

Subjective well-being (SWB) was defined by Diener, Oishi, and Lucas (2009) as “a person’s cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life as a whole” (p. 187). The ability to experience subjective well-being contributes to achieving mental health (Diener, 1984). Subjective well-being may be interpreted in three different categories. It may be understood as the influence of external factors such as virtue and holiness (Diener, 1984, p. 543). Another factor of subjective well-being refers to life satisfaction, as it enables the person to assess their own life as good. The final factor implies a pleasant emotional experience which may result from the dominant positive affect over the negative one. Therefore, subjective well-being is understood as life satisfaction and positive feelings

¹ Retrieved from: <https://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing/reports/2016-canadian-index-wellbeing-national-report/what-wellbeing>

without negative ones. It is interpreted as happiness aiming at experiencing pleasure and avoiding pain (Linley & Joseph, 2004, p. 720). Well-being may not only be the result of pleasing life experiences, such as academic success and positive relationships, but it stimulates these experiences to occur (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

Psychological well-being may be understood as “engagement with the existential challenges of life” (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002, p. 1007) or personal growth and fulfilment (Linley & Joseph, 2004, p. 721). It affects life in which a person feels well and functions effectively (Huppert, 2009, p. 137). Psychological well-being is composed of six elements: self-acceptance (positive evaluation of oneself and one’s life), personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, environmental mastery (the capacity effectively manage one’s life and environment), and autonomy (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 2006). The state results in physical health. It may also lead to flexible and creative thinking as well as facilitate social behaviour (Huppert, 2009, p. 149). Psychological well-being of an individual is dependent on early childhood environment, especially maternal care (Huppert, 2009, p. 154). External conditions may also affect well-being; however, actions and attitudes of a person may exert more significant impact on this category of well-being. Interventions which promote positive actions and favourable attitudes may cater for achieving well-being.

Components of Well-being

Well-being has been perceived and operationalized differently depending on various conditions. Holmes (2005) proposed a model of well-being which is composed of four types of well-being: physical, emotional, mental, or intellectual, and spiritual well-being. Well-being is not the state opposite to stress (Holmes, 2005, p. 6) and managing stress will not necessarily facilitate the state of well-being. In order to aim at well-being, a person will need to focus on the positive aspects of everyday life, learn how to appreciate little things, and build on them their experiences. Seligman (2012) claims that well-being is composed of five aspects: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and purpose as well as accomplishment/competence (the acronym PERMA). The PERMA model emphasizes the social nature of well-being when an individual functions in the context of a community and maintains their relationships with other people. Positive relations are crucial for reaching the state of well-being. Peterson (2006) claims that “(o)ther people matter” (p. 249), whereas Seligman (2011) indicates that “very little that is positive is solitary” (p. 20). According to Rath and Harter (2010), there are five essential elements contributing to well-being. Firstly, career well-being refers to a place where a person works and

spends most of their time. Secondly, social well-being involves relationships and experience of love. Thirdly, financial well-being incorporates how well an individual manages the economic side of life. Fourthly, physical well-being implies the ability to maintain good health and energy. Finally, community well-being signifies the role and participation in the group of people a person lives in. The presented models display a view that the construct of well-being is subjective and difficult to assess due to its diversity. The common elements involve self-acceptance, meaning, engagement, positive emotions, life satisfaction, and relationships.

Factors Influencing Well-being

Well-being seems to be a complex phenomenon. It may be correlated with physical health, income, or social functioning, among other things. World Health Organisation defined health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 1948, p. 2). In a later publication (WHO, 2001), WHO specified that positive mental health is “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (p. 1). There is also evidence that a person’s genes may have an impact on the development of positive well-being and resilience to stress (Huppert, 2009, p. 144). It is claimed that stress has a powerful effect on well-being, whether defined in terms of adverse life events, chronic stressors, or daily pressures (Huppert, 2004, p. 704). Personality is another significant predictor of an individual’s emotional reactions, in particular extraversion (positive emotions) and neuroticism (negative emotions) (Huppert, 2009, p. 145). Socioeconomic factors tend to affect mental well-being, in the sense that higher income and socioeconomic status are related to higher levels of well-being (Dolan et al., 2008; Ryff & Singer 1998b). There is a relationship between income and well-being; however, there is some research evidence that although the income has increased, the level of happiness remained at the same level (Helliwell, 2003). There is also a link between education and well-being. Diener et al. (1999) explain that education may justify subjective well-being because educated people have higher income, know how to take care of their health, and enjoy more social contacts. As far as the age is concerned, research findings reveal that the correlation is not straightforward as it depends on which aspect of well-being is taken into account. Although women tend to suffer more frequently from anxiety and depression, in terms of mental well-being, gender has proved not to exert a major difference in the perception of well-being (Donovan & Halpern, 2002; Helliwell, 2003).

Teacher Beliefs and How They Refer to Fixed and Growth Mindsets

A popular definition of a belief states that “it represents an acceptance or conviction that something is true” (Williams et al., 2015, p. 63). Teacher beliefs about teaching derive from their life experiences in the society, prior schooling, professional education, and teaching experience (Gabillon, 2012, p. 3). Beliefs can be divided into three groups: *epistemological beliefs*, *mindsets*, and *attributions* (Williams et al., 2015, p. 68). Epistemological beliefs concern understanding the nature of knowledge and what is meant by the process of learning. Beliefs may be conscious and unconscious. Those conscious ones are also called explicit, and they may be verbalised by an individual. Unconscious beliefs, the ones a person may not be aware of, are also called implicit beliefs or mindsets. However, those hidden beliefs may change, and this is what teachers and teacher trainers can base their instruction on. Mindsets may be fixed and not likely to change, or they may be subjected to modifications, and this is when they are labelled as growth mindsets. These mindsets are more prone to enhance the learning process as they encourage people to make an attempt at discovering new knowledge or skills (Dweck, 2006).

People reveal certain beliefs about teaching and learning which may have an impact on achievement in these processes. As regards beliefs about the teacher and teaching, Williams and Burden (1997, pp. 62–63) stress the importance of developing self-esteem by the teachers in themselves, because only in this way can they enhance self-confidence in their learners. Other qualities, which should also be cherished in the relations between the teacher and the pupils, are dignity and respect. Yet another feature which teachers should stimulate is permissiveness which is understood as acceptance of people in search for their own individuality, expression of opinions and values in life, and, consequently, approval of the learners in their pursuit for identity. Teaching in this approach is interpreted as conveying values and attitudes rather than only transmitting knowledge. Epistemological beliefs concern convictions about what knowledge of language is and how a language is learnt. An individual may be conscious of their beliefs (i.e., explicit beliefs) or a person may be unaware of them (i.e., implicit beliefs). Carol Dweck (1999, 2006) identified two groups of beliefs in learning: entity theory and incremental theory. People who represent entity theory of beliefs are convinced that certain human qualities, such as intelligence, personality, or aptitude, are not changeable. In contrast, the incremental theory entails that these individual features are malleable, and they may be subjected to modification. In more practical terms, the entity theory may also be referred to as a fixed mindset, while the incremental theory is also known as a growth mindset. Mindset is the “extent to which we believe that our competences and their development are within our control and can be improved upon” (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020, p. 40). Growth mindset can enhance

well-being in teachers which, in turn, may also contribute to the well-being of learners. Even though it is partly related to certain personal dispositions, it may also be affected by the teachers who attempt to promote growth mindsets in the learners (Williams, Mercer, & Ryan, 2015). Mindsets may influence learning by facilitating or hindering the development of language.

Mindsets do not fall into two separate categories but they may be revealed on a continuum (Mercer & Ryan, 2009), which indicates that humans may get closer to a fixed mindset or may aspire to growth mindset in different activities. An individual identifying fixed mindset in themselves in a given context, may undertake effort to progress towards the growth mindset in this aspect. To modify mindset, the person must recognize its type and then the reasons for it to be fixed. Dweck (2014a) advocates the value of reflection on one's capabilities and suggests adding the word "yet" to any statements indicating a fixed mindset, such as, *I can't speak English well / yet*. However, the modification of mindset alone may not be sufficient to stimulate improvement, it also requires time, motivation, opportunities, and strategies necessary to enhance change. Gershon (2016) suggests a list of strategies which may stimulate growth mindsets: conveying to the learners the ideas about what language abilities are, accepting mistakes, appreciating effort, providing constructive feedback, introducing language learning strategies, promoting challenge as an opportunity for growth, concentrating on the process of learning, not only on the product.

The research on mindset of learners has been more elaborate than on mindset of teachers. Irie, Ryan, and Mercer (2018) in a study on pre-service teachers' mindsets related to teaching competences, found out the subjects to hold a belief that technical aspects of teaching may be malleable, while interpersonal skills and personality characteristics are rather unchangeable within an individual. Dweck (2014b) claims that if pre-service teachers represent a fixed mindset, they may experience problems in training and in their teaching practice, which may lead towards their lack of confidence in themselves as professionals eventually resulting in quitting the job. Among the pre-service teachers, enhancing growth mindsets seems to be especially significant, as they are still in the process of development as professionals, and they may benefit from the malleability of certain individual characteristics and abilities adequate for teaching. In this way, they may become more resilient to challenges they may encounter in teaching, and they may remain resistant to the risk of burnout on the job (Haukas & Mercer, 2021).

Growth mindset teachers approach learners in a different way than fixed mindset teachers. According to Dweck (2017), growth mindset teachers appraise students who have achieved success through persistence, practice, and learning strategies. Educators revealing growth mindsets convince learners to love learning and to think independently, as well as to work on the basic aspects of this process. They also identify with the view that intellect and talent may

be developed, and they value the process of learning highly. Such teachers establish high standards for all students, not only for the gifted ones and they assist students in achieving them. Growth-minded teachers do not restrain themselves from telling students the truth, but also offer them instruments how to bridge the gap between the ones who do not know how to do things yet and the ones who already can perform the activities. Dweck (2017) summarizes her idea about growth mindset by stating that it is a belief that people can develop their abilities.

Methodology

We made the decision to implement *explanatory sequential mixed method* research design “because of its strength of drawing on both qualitative and quantitative research and minimising the limitations of both approaches” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 297). In order to explore the construct of well-being of Polish pre-service teachers, we designed a study in order to answer the following quantitative (RQ1), qualitative (RQ2), and hybrid/integrated research questions (RQ3) (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 304).

- RQ1: What are the pre-service teachers’ beliefs in relation to well-being?
- RQ2: How do the narratives based on awareness-raising questions help to explain fixed and growth mindset of pre-service teachers?
- RQ3: How may well-being intervention influence mindset?

In the quantitative analysis, the responses to the questionnaire were to provide an insight into the participants’ beliefs about well-being. In the context of the study, a *belief* will be understood as “any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does” (Rokeach, 1971, p. 61). In the qualitative data collected from written narratives, *fixed and growth mindset* was observed, which will be understood as a prevailing or predominant tendency to act in a certain way under specific circumstances. The tendency may refer to an individual’s state of mind and might be expressed as the most characteristic inclination of a person to be either happy, sad, or anxious. It can also be traced back to its usual way of feeling and behaving, for example, complaining. Finally, a *well-being programme* was established as a result of a *pre-intervention* (based on some awareness raising questions which aimed to encourage pre-service teachers to become aware of change in the quality of their life), *intervention* (based on three tasks in practising acts of kindness, expressing gratitude, or taking up a new sport) and *post-intervention* (based on reflections after performing the three tasks).

Procedure

The design was mixed-method research (Efron & Ravid, 2013, p. 45). The study had two stages. In the first stage, we devised a set of questions in a form of a questionnaire using Google forms (URL: <https://forms.gle/movv2ebasa-86bvpqa>). The questionnaire consisted of 50 statements, which usually took the pre-service teachers five to ten minutes to complete. Our true inspiration for the research came from Abraham Maslow's studies on self-actualisation; however, we also used the Teacher Aptitude Test² to create the instrument. To understand personal experiences, we also focused on some dominant and recurring themes that we found in the literature on well-being. As it was our decision to observe clear expressions of teachers' beliefs, we used Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) without the middle neutral value. The rationale behind asking pre-service teachers to make stronger dichotomous choices (1–4) prevented us from collecting less interpretable data. However, we decided not to change the response scales (into, for example, very often, often, seldom, never) for the sake of ease of administrating. We assumed that statements placed to the left of the poll will represent fixed mindset, while those on the right growth mindset. In some questions we changed the meaning of a sentence. For example, we used the negative form *I don't complain*, as we wanted the participants to think carefully before responding to the statement. The aim was to reveal certain dispositions of the teachers, both positive and negative. It is possible; however, that some of the teachers may have misunderstood the meaning intended in some statements if they answered the questions too quickly or without comprehension.

The next step of the first stage of the research involved dividing the questionnaire statements into triads within two fields of study corresponding to spheres and conditions (Table 1). By collectively agreeing on the meaning of the nature of the dispositions, we distinguished the following fields of study. The "spheres" field of study stood for professional, social, and environmental, as well as emotional triad. Whereas the "conditions" one consisted of performance, competency, and stance. The framework was not supposed to sort people into types (as in the case of the Myers-Briggs theory of psychological type), but to measure teachers' general beliefs using the Likert-scale statements. Since the respondents dealt with self-reportable indicators of habits, perceptions, attitudes, reactions, and preferences, we assumed that the raw scores were sufficient to bring valuable information on individual well-being. It was also possible to address the statements related to the indicators which would be for the sake of identifying teacher well-being.

²The Teacher Aptitude Test (TAT) consists of 213 questions and usually takes 75 minutes to be filled in. (URL: https://www.queendom.com/tests/access_page/index.htm?idRegTest=4175).

Table 1

A Division of Questions into Spheres and Conditions Triads (Link to the questionnaire: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdezndvMiBg-L2yrYxvwQuqxCX6w-wQQPO4ojahLEJKXkWSGEA/viewform?usp=sf_link)

WELL-BEING						
Field of study	SPHERES			CONDITIONS that are necessary to be met		
Triads	Professional sphere (Job satisfaction/ teaching practice)	Social & environmental sphere	Emotional sphere	Performance	Competency + commitment)	Stance (attitudes, points of view)
Question number	1, 2, 3, 6, 11, 12, 13, 15, 21, 29	14, 16, 20, 25, 36, 37, 39, 45	22, 24, 28, 30, 40, 41, 48	4, 7, 8, 9, 18, 23, 34, 38, 42, 43, 47	5, 17, 33, 35, 46, 49, 50	10, 19, 26, 27, 31, 32, 44

In stage two of the study, we established a well-being intervention. Psychological interventions designed for enhancing well-being are described by Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009, p. 467) as techniques “aimed at cultivating positive feelings, positive behaviours or positive cognitions.” Duckworth et al. (2005) point to around 100 activities which may enhance well-being. Some of them involve noting down small things every day for which a person is grateful, having a regular physical exercise and reflecting on feelings about it or avoiding complaining because it provokes negative thinking. However, there are other ways of achieving well-being.

Our well-being programme was divided into three parts. The aim of the *pre-intervention* was to point to the potential of the treatment actions undertaken by the participants. Therefore, after the quantitative data were collected, we devised a set of 12 awareness-raising narrative questions (see Appendix 1). The questions arose from focusing on the spheres and conditions, which may have an influence on teacher trainees’ mindset. In each of the sections, we added one task, asking the participants to perform an activity over a period of one month. We addressed the *well-being intervention* by asking the respondents to choose one of the three tasks from one of the three sections of the narrative questions (performance, competency, affect). The tasks involved listing ten items every day, such as practising gratitude, taking up a new sport, or doing random acts of kindness. The participants of the study were to continue performing the selected task for the period of one month, so that a good habit is formed and internalised. The *post-intervention* aimed at asking the pre-service teachers to record reflections on the well-being training/intervention.

Research Instruments

We began the study with the *quantitative phase*, in which we used a questionnaire which consisted of 50 Likert scale statements. The questionnaire aimed to display distinct set of factors having an influence on and affecting well-being. Then, we addressed the *qualitative phase* to explore teacher well-being. In the qualitative phase, we used narrative inquiry which aimed to show growth or fixed mindset dispositions of the teachers. Instead of *stimulated recall*, in which a researcher invites “teachers to think aloud about relevant classroom processes” (Fives & Gill, 2015, p. 21), we used **written narratives** to gather the data in this phase. We do believe that writing ideas down may slow down thinking and make the process more conscious. We are aware of the fact that writing is less spontaneous than speech, but we believe that by writing the pre-service teachers could look retrospectively at what they and their peers believe in. The written narratives focused on one central phenomenon—the growth mindset specifically. The narratives were also used to help teachers analyse their own constructs, known as schemas, which are understood as a way of perceiving the world. In other words, teachers may experience their reality better by creating constructs about the profession. The constructs can be modified or changed any time, depending on the dynamics of the context, willingness, or motivational factors. Finally, we introduced the **well-being intervention**. The biggest challenge that we faced while working on the development of the intervention, was to come with a reliable and valid tool which would measure any change of fixed mindsets. As we were uncertain how to make the changes happen; therefore, we asked the participants to do three tasks (see Appendix A) over a period of one month. The tasks, based on the PERMA model (Seligman, 2012), are presented below:

Task 1. What are you grateful for? Task: List 10 items every day for a period of one month. Write down your observations.

Task 2. How often do you do physical exercises? Task: Take up a new sport and practice it for a period of one month. Write down your workout results and observations.

Task 3. What are the “small things” that matter? Task: List the “small things” (or “random acts of kindness”) you do every day for someone (your parents, siblings, friends, unknown people) over a period of one month.

In our research, we wanted to check if there is any positive influence of practising gratitude, performing acts of kindness, and exercising sport on teacher well-being. We allowed pre-service teachers to choose from the set of the tasks in order to observe the nature of the dispositions exhibited in their narratives. In the study, we did not aim at changing the participants’ dispositions in any

way, but rather making the participants aware and conscious of certain fallacies they may have possessed. Our main field of study was to gauge which conditions are necessary for the growth mindset to flourish or to enhance a change of the fixed mindset. Ultimately, in order to improve their well-being, our idea was to come up with a paradigm framework of main characteristic dispositions that could be changed, or at least modified to a certain degree, by the teacher trainees themselves.

Participants

The data analysed come from the research conducted in the academic year 2019/2020 on pre-service Polish teachers. The project was carried out among pre-service teachers at the Witelon State University of Applied Sciences (WSUAS) in Legnica (B.A. students $N = 34$) and at the University of the National Education Commission (UKEN) in Krakow (B.A. students $N = 24$, M.A. students $N = 10$). Initially only B.A. students were to be included in the research; however, the decision was made to observe the responses given by M.A. students as well. The students had different degree of teaching experience. Some reported only 45 hours of observing the classes and 15 hours of teaching done as their obligatory apprenticeship at the universities. Some students gathered the teaching experience at one-to-one tutorials or working in private language schools.

We took into account some ethical considerations (Plummer, 2001, p. 228), which were made clear to participants in the instructions (see Appendix 1). The participants were presented with a consent form to complete before any data were collected. They were allowed to withdraw from the study at any phase of the research.

Results

This section reports on the outcomes of the data collection stages and the findings are presented in relation to the research questions.

RQ 1: The Pre-Service Teachers' Beliefs Concerning Well-being

In response to the first research question, our results clearly revealed pre-service teachers' beliefs, and served us to notice various aspects of their lives.

The questionnaire, which was based on Likert scale, measured such beliefs as motivation, preferences, effort, resilience, perseverance, conflict resolutions, and many more. However, due to some space limitations, we restricted the presentation of the data to one sphere only, namely *performance*. The other two spheres of *competency* and *stance*, which apply to the conditions that are necessary to be met by teachers, will be discussed in a separate article. As declared by the pre-service teachers, their beliefs related to well-being vary. Some exemplary statements are provided in Table 2.

Table 2
Exemplary Pre-service Teacher Beliefs in the Field of Performance (in Percentage)

Number of an item	Strongly disagree / Never %	Disagree / Occasionally %	Agree / Often %	Strongly agree / Always %
4. <i>I have time for relaxation</i>	22.7	36.4	29.1	11.8
7. <i>I do yoga</i>	79.1	10	7.3	3.6
8. <i>I meditate</i>	76.4	10	10	3.6
9. <i>I listen to relaxing music</i>	30	13.6	17.3	39.1
18. <i>I am very sensitive to fake and dishonest behaviour</i>	3.6	16.4	29.1	50.9
23. <i>I do not regret things</i>	32.7	39.1	18.2	10
34. <i>I appreciate „trivial things” like sunset or a flower</i>	6.4	8.2	24.5	60.9
38. <i>I have very few but close and intimate friends</i>	10.9	16.4	23.6	49.1
42. <i>I can forgive others and myself</i>	10	24.5	40.9	24.5
43. <i>I practice gratitude</i>	7.3	4.5	31.8	56.4
47. <i>I do not complain</i>	33.6	42.7	16.4	7.3

The raw data collected in the questionnaire were problematic to unravel. In their responses, pre-service teachers claim not to have too much time for relaxation. However, those respondents who admit they have leisure time, were not able to specify if they spend it in front of a TV-set or by being physically active in the nature. This limitation was due to the questionnaire format. Most of the participants have never taken up yoga (79.1%) or meditation (76.4%), which might have been a gauge of their well-being. It was unclear to us whether the teachers truly “practise gratitude” or simply say “Thank you” as an indi-

cation of good manners (Statement no. 43). Similarly, we are not certain how well and to what extent, they appreciate small things that matter in their lives (Statement no. 34). We also needed to know what the pre-service teachers usually complain about (Statement no. 47) and how they go about it in everyday life. It was interesting to observe their past experiences, as we believe they may have formed their mindset (Statement no. 18). The questionnaire, which provided us with extensive data, lacked precise information. We needed to collect information that could generate vast amount of rich data on the nature of students' beliefs and dispositions in relation to well-being. We were more interested in knowing "how" the teachers actually perform, rather than the "what" standards they identify with. We realised that it is unclear what the pre-service teachers meant by choosing some of the statements. We needed to collect more observable and interpretable types of information. For that reason, apart from collecting data from the questionnaire, we asked the teacher-to-be students to write narratives, in which they presented their responses to the clues in the options provided.

RQ2: Fixed and Growth Mindsets of Pre-Service Teachers Found in the Narratives

Regarding the second research question, a set of narrative questions, which were based on awareness raising questions (Appendix 1), provided us with noteworthy findings. The purpose of implementing this instrument was to repeat the process of inquiry introduced in the questionnaire in order to verify the hypothesis of fixed and growth mindset. The aim was not to contrast the data coming from the two databases but to look for some tendencies in the answers provided by the participants. However, we found it difficult to demonstrate meaning conveyed by the pre-service teachers and interpret the data accurately, as narrative data are often abundant in quantity, repetitive, or confusing. Dörnyei and Csizér (2012) claim that a "rule of thumb is that we should present as much of the information as possible in *tables* rather than in the running text" (p. 86). The way of demonstrating the results helped us to explain the qualitative data, but above all, they expanded the understanding of the reasons behind the fixed and growth mindset of the students. The narratives, classified as statements of either success or failure, illustrated how growth or fixed mindset influence dispositions of the respondents. We also observed a continuum of mindsets in which traces of both fixed and growth orientations were found.

Table 3

The Dimensions of Growth and Fixed Mindset as Indicators of Success and Failure with Corresponding Sample Items Reported (in Italics, Spelling original). Based on Dörnyei (2005, p. 180)

Growth mindset teacher's dispositions (Statements of success)	Fixed mindset teacher's dispositions (Statements of failure)
TIME MANAGEMENT i.e., how well one manages one's time	
<i>In my opinion, I am pretty good at managing my time. Whenever I have many things to do, I try to put them down in the form of a list and see which are the most important. Then, I plan my day by assigning a certain amount of time to each thing on my 'to-do list,' starting with the most important ones.</i>	<i>I can't organise my time well enough to do everything I'm supposed to do a particular day. It may have something to do with my fondness to napping especially during winter.</i>
Continuum of mindset: Time management	
<i>I'm not very good at time management, although I've gotten better over the years. Both procrastination and forgetfulness have often caused me quite a lot of trouble.</i>	
COMPLAINING i.e., how well one restrains himself/herself from expressing feelings of dissatisfaction, grief, or resentment	
No example found	<i>To be honest, I complain about pretty much everything :) It may be as trivial as bad weather or as serious as political issues. Someone that I complain with is my sister because she is basically the same person as me and things that irritate me also irritate her and I know she won't judge me. In other cases she is the one that pulls me together and tells me to stop complaining and it makes me realise that I am being petty. I always complain about trivial things, but mostly about the condition of my health. I often say that something hurts me for example back or throat. I say these things to my friends. I know that they are done with my complaining but I just can't change it. I'm aware about the fact that it is highly annoying, yet I still do it. It is said that Polish people are likely to complain and I have to agree with that statement :) I am guilty of complaining quite frequently when it comes to the topic of my university and studies, or hardships that result from some incompetence stemming either from me or others.</i>
Continuum of mindset: Complaining	
<i>I'm really learning to complain less, because it's very unprofitable.</i>	

Growth mindset teacher's dispositions
(Statements of success)

Fixed mindset teacher's dispositions
(Statements of failure)

HELP-SEEKING

i.e., how well one uses the resources of other people to make important decisions

I would like to say I make decisions considering what my family expects of me, or what my friends would like me to do, but that is not the truth. I do respect everyone's opinion and love to ask my loved ones for advice, but when it comes to lifechanging events, I believe I am the only one who has the right to decide. Things that concern my future or my relationships, I believe should only be determined by me, and staying true to myself without corruption of what others expect of me, is essential. When my mind is fixed on something, there is nothing that could prevent me from pursuing, whatever path I decide to take. Sometimes it results in irreversible mistakes and I am aware of the fact, I was wrong, but making mistakes is a part of the process that is life.

I always get inspired by other people's opinion. I want to know what somebody thinks about a particular idea/decision. I believe that I can learn from everybody and that everyone I meet in my life can enrich me in some way. I think it is important to ask other people for their opinion as sometimes it is necessary to look at something from a slightly different point of view. Only in this way can we spot things that we haven't paid any attention to before. However, at the same time we should remain assertive and we cannot let others decide about our own life. The way we live should make us happy and not necessarily other people.

Continuum of mindset: Help seeking

At this moment, I feel that I am truly responsible for my life in all of its domains. Beginning from the choice of my daily tasks, continuing with university and ending with work, I am liable to the consequences of most of my decisions. However, I like to have a second opinion on my choices; therefore I often consult them with somebody close to me, as my mother or boyfriend. In most cases, advice just helps me to approve my initial decision; but sometimes opinion of my beloved ones changes my perception, allowing me to make a right choice.

PRACTICING GRATITUDE

i.e., feeling thankful and being willing to show appreciation to other people; being consciously grateful for trivial things like food, shelter, not as a habit of saying "Thank you" but rather as a recognition of the positive aspects of one's life

*I practiced every day. I decided to continue doing such gratitude task, perhaps only with less sentences. I'm not only glad I could be a part of this self-based research, but I'm **GRATEFUL!***

First of all, I chose this particular task because this is something I've been wanting to do for quite some time. To begin with, I must confess that I did not manage to make a list of 10 items for every single day. I am simply not a person who is keen on noting down personal thoughts, dreams and feelings.

Continuum of mindset: Practicing gratitude

*I chose this task (*practicing gratitude) because I am liable to complaining a lot and I thought that this task would help me to appreciate my life more and be thankful for even the smallest, insignificant things. Sometimes, it's easier to focus on what we don't have, rather than what we do have. It's important to take time out and remember all of the things to be thankful for that many of us take for granted.*

Growth mindset teacher's dispositions
(Statements of success)

Fixed mindset teacher's dispositions
(Statements of failure)

TOLERANCE

i.e., the ability to accept something that annoys us, is unpleasant or willingness to accept a behaviour different from our own, being tolerant towards oneself and others

Mistakes are a natural component of our lives. Experiencing a failure or even a small lapse is usually associated with shame and embarrassment; such approach is not correct. Due to committing mistakes we have an opportunity to learn plenty things about ourselves and the outer world; by repetition that is needed in order to improve or fix a mistake, we gain a chance to better resolve problems; thanks to them, we acquire modesty and understanding. These points should remind us that mistakes are supposed to teach us, not embarrass or humiliate us. I perceive them as a sight of impending improvement as well as prompts to becoming better and better. When a teacher or my peers make mistakes, I regard it as something necessary for their individual development. Laugh or rudeness are not welcome. I rather tend to help them correct lapses or assure that such occurrences are not shameful but serve another purpose

There are many kinds of mistakes. I'm not at all troubled or annoyed when my peers make tiny mistakes, and hopefully they don't mind me doing some either. We are still developing our skills. However, I absolutely hate it when teachers that teach English make grammatical mistakes or pronounce words in an abhorrent way, especially at the University. If you don't speak better than me or use vocabulary more advanced than my own, and are supposed to teach me practical skills, what can I learn from you? And that extends also to accent, preparation, exercises, etc., i.e. everything that makes a lesson a lesson.

Continuum of mindset: Tolerance

When I notice my peers' or teachers' mistake it makes them more "human like." When it comes to peers' errors I usually try to politely ask if they mean "this" or maybe something else. Obviously, I feel less hesitant when correcting my friends than correcting my teachers. I often make mistakes for this reason, when someone says something incorrectly or do any type of error it ensures me that I am not the only one struggling with certain matters. However, I try not to justify my mistakes by assuming that I am allowed to make mistakes since other people make them too. Rather, I try not to commit the same error

DEALING WITH UNPLEASANT SITUATIONS

i.e., the ability to forgive, let go, accept things as they are, confront the challenges

The only unpleasant situations I can think that I've witnessed are fights. I've seen a fair share of them throughout the years. The one I remember the most happened during my PE lesson back in primary school. Two of my classmates got into it during a football match and we had to separate them rather quickly, but it took us over 20 minutes to get them calm. I, along with my other classmates, immediately rushed towards them when we saw what was about to go down and thankfully, we managed to separate them before any real damage was done. We talked to both of them a lot over the next hour and eventually they shook hands and they never fought themselves again.

The last unpleasant thing that happened to me is when I heard that my friend cried over what a teacher told them. At first, I was completely shocked that a fully grown woman can be brought to tears and I wanted to know as soon as possible what happened. I met with that friend as soon as possible and my first reaction was funny. I was furious at the unprofessional behaviour of that teacher towards their student. I was more angry than my friend. I soon calmed down but didn't ignore the issue. I advised my friend to tell someone or at least keep a record of the situation to have something to refer to if such a situation repeats itself. It hasn't been solved yet but I resolved myself to aid my friend in any way as I would hate to have her break down mentally.

Growth mindset teacher's dispositions (Statements of success)	Fixed mindset teacher's dispositions (Statements of failure)
<p style="text-align: center;">Continuum of mindset: Dealing with unpleasant situations</p> <p><i>One unpleasant situation that I remember was during the class when due to some weather conditions the group seemed not to be focused and the teacher got really upset. He was very angry and started to scream at us and threaten with extremely difficult exam. Even though there was not a single person pointed out for this behaviour but a whole group, I felt really uncomfortable, especially because I was sitting in the first row when the rage outburst took place. Obviously, I just looked at my notes to not provoke the teacher and waited for him to finish. I believe that it was the only action I could take in such student—teacher situation. To solve the problem I moved to a different sit for the next class.</i></p>	

Table 3 shows exemplary fixed or growth mindsets of pre-service teachers, which are illustrated by means of verbally stated dispositions. The participants interpreted the same narrative question in different ways, which testified of their beliefs related to the suggested prompts. Students could have written about anything; however, their choice of the topic was in fact a reflection of their continuum of mindset. Some participants were hesitant or unaware of what makes the potential of well-being so effective to be discovered. The findings also demonstrate that the responses may indicate some inconsistencies within individuals and their dispositions oscillating on a continuum between a fixed and growth mindset. The qualitative data provided us with a more in-depth insight into the state of students' mindsets. Above all, the narratives expanded our understanding of the reasons behind the fixed and growth mindset of the students and helped us explain the areas of concern for learners' well-being.

RQ3: The Influence of Well-being Intervention on Students

In response to the third research question, our results showed various dispositions exhibited by the pre-service teachers. They are presented in Table 4. As part of the well-being intervention, we measured the influence of practising gratitude (Task 1.1), exercising a new sport (Task 1.2), or performing acts of kindness (Task 1.3) on teacher well-being. In each of the tasks, understood as “the one-month challenge” conducted over a period of thirty days, the pre-service teachers were to keep a daily record of their progress. In the post-intervention we conducted a qualitative analysis of students' observations on the experience.

Table 4*The Number of Respondents Optionally Choosing Particular Narrative Questions*

Question number	Witelon State University of Applied Sciences (WSUAS)		University of the National Education Commission (UKEN)	
	BA		BA	MA
Triad	PERFORMANCE			
1	Gratitude	2	13	—
2		6	8	4
3		5	3	1
4		4	9	3
5		6	10	4
Triad	COMPETENCY			
1	Sport	3	7	—
2		6	11	9
3		6	12	7
4		1	8	3
5		2	6	1
Triad	STANCE			
1	Kindness	2	2	—
2		—	4	—
3		2	10	4
4		—	4	1
5		2	10	4

Most of the choices of the UKEN students ($N = 13$) fell for task no. 1.1 which entailed practicing gratitude. Task no. 1.2 (doing a sport activity) was chosen mainly by the male participants (WSUAS, $N = 2$; UKEN $N = 7$). However, a few students admitted that they “reactivated” gym training, instead of trying a new sport. Only $N = 2$ students from WSUAS and $N = 2$ from UKEN decided to record the random acts of kindness or notice the small things that matter (task 1.3). It was interesting to observe which of the items the respondents considered important to be mentioned in their narratives. The choice for the tasks the teacher-to-be-students made, as simple as they may

seem, served us as the source of evidence for their change of mindsets that might be related to their overall state of well-being.

As stated before, the idea of the intervention was not to introduce the pre-service teachers into a system of norms and beliefs connected with well-being but help them find the opportunities to create their own positive dispositions by undertaking one of the tasks. As a result, in the post-intervention, some of the participants, even though not requested, wanted to share their lists of things they are grateful for (some examples are presented below).

Breathing and waking up every day
Being healthy
Having money for buying food
I am grateful that I am in good health
I am grateful that I am not very poor
Having a wonderful sister
Having new and wonderful friends
I am grateful to every person that is out there for me, my friends and relatives
I am grateful to my girlfriend who I love and who loves me despite any problems
I am grateful to my family who helps each other
The things that I have lived in the past
Being able to live new things
Living too many things with my granddad before he died

The pre-service teachers reported the gradual process of developing new and surprising items they wanted to express their gratitude for. They listed single words or whole phrases, which usually started with basic needs realised (like physiological needs of food and shelter), then gradually developed into safety and belonging needs (friends, family, love). They rarely listed the elements from self-actualisation level of Maslow hierarchy of needs (1954).

In the post-intervention phase, the successful students mentioned some of their observations that happened on the way of practicing gratitude. The students explicitly declared that they noticed a gradual change in their perception of reality, from negative to a more positive one. They stated that they gained a lot of new experiences from this task, namely feeling happier and appreciating trivial things in their lives. It helped us, the researchers, recognise the difference between fixed and growth mindset. Growth mindset pre-service teachers made more effort and persisted in keeping the records of their gratitude practice.

At first the task seemed difficult. It was really hard to name those 10 things a day, but after a few days it actually became easier and I kind of started

seeing and witnessing gratefulness for various different, smaller things than usually. This whole exercise opened my mind for literally everything that is going around me, and I started enjoying simple things more than ever.

Contrary, those students who failed to undertake the task, regretted not having done so in light of feedback from the colleagues who reported on the beneficial impact of the intervention on their lives. Their responses indicated that the basic competences, such as persistence, time management, and effort failed. The fixed mindset students usually found excuses for not undertaking the task. They admitted that they had not seen the value in doing such tasks, or that they gave up the task when they realised that they kept noticing the same small things every day, or they felt intimidated by performing acts of kindness. However, they later expressed the willingness to practise gratitude in the future as they noticed positive changes in their peers. Perhaps because by writing ideas down, they may have noticed the inconsistencies of their thoughts in retrospection.

I believe honesty in such tasks is crucial, therefore, I have to admit my failure completing the assigned chart. Being a strong believer in the power of motivational speeches, and little changes in life that hold great significance, I am surprised how difficult it was for me to write down things that made me happy. Maybe because November turned out to be one of the most stressful and depressing months I can remember. [...] I might try such a task again in the future, when the time is right.

Discussion

We agree with the previous researchers that the complexity of mindsets makes it difficult to operationalize the concept of well-being. Thus, the study provided us with an illustration of different thought patterns among the group of pre-service teachers. Based on the findings, we were not only able to distinguish growth from fixed mindset occurrences, but above all, to observe a process of transformation which happened because of the well-being training. In the first stage of the research study, in order to investigate beliefs in relation to well-being, we used the questionnaire. In the second stage, to explore mindsets, we utilised a set of narrative questions. To induce change and modify teacher training and well-being development (TT&WD), we applied the intervention that focused on three growth mindset-oriented tasks. We then

interpreted the succeeding results. They displayed distinct set of viewpoints and beliefs that teachers identify with.

The results of the questionnaire helped us notice that there were certain factors that could have affected mindset and well-being of the teachers, which we perceive as culture-based default assumptions. Some of the pre-service teachers exhibited negative beliefs (fixed mindset), concerning various issues. They were complaining, making excuses, not taking responsibility for their actions, acting as a victim, or even blaming others. We perceived them as negative dispositions. Psychologists (Wojciszke & Baryła, 2002; Szymków, Wojciszke, & Baryła, 2003) point to the Polish culture of complaining which may result from the negative norm of the social world. According to this view, the Poles create a specific culture of complaining, in which it is allowed, or what is more, it is even appropriate to speak, think, and feel in negative terms. The researchers agree that complaining in certain situations may result in deteriorating the mood, as well as it leads to the access to negative categories, but it may also help to build and maintain close interpersonal relations. This interpretation may explain why, in the present study, if respondents chose to reflect on the point concerning complaining, they confirmed that they often experience it and that there are many aspects of life they grumble about.

One unique feature of our findings is that the lack of willingness to perform a task and not perceiving this activity as useful or beneficial, may testify about another culturally distinctive characteristics of some of the Polish pre-service teachers. It remains unclear why M.A. students were unwilling to undertake the task (Table 3) neither in performance, competency, nor stance. It may well be that they have never encountered this type of training in their teacher education programmes and they do not believe that it can alter anything in their lives. Or perhaps, the research they have to conduct while writing their M.A. theses makes it difficult for them to find time for any extra activities. Their anxiety about entering the teaching profession on completing the M.A. programme may also affect their apprehension about starting any new training. We, therefore, agree with Dweck (2006) that as educators, we should focus on and praise *persistence, effort, time spent* in order to create a culture of self-motivated teachers. It may help them pursue various aims and achieve their goals. We shall also encourage teachers to strive to develop their well-being by undertaking the activities that are generally perceived as positive for human body, emotional balance, and mental development. It is because we noticed a change among the participants in their approach to practicing gratitude or noticing small things that matter. By being open to change, the participants were more likely to pursue the way to achieving the state of well-being.

This study shows that some participants were more determined to change their mindset. It is, therefore, likely that connections exist between their responses, which indicate that they understood the value of change, and their

inclination to struggle to implement it in their lives. There were also some common affective behaviours displayed by the individuals which included interests, appreciations, attitudes, values, and adjustments. They were visible in such dispositions as tolerance, help-seeking, lack of complaining, good time management, practicing gratitude, dealing with unpleasant situations. It turned out that the pre-service teachers felt more assured of their well-being. They usually represented the growth mindset. What is more, the responses to the first tasks in each of the three sets of the narratives suggest that fixed mindsets are modifiable to a certain degree and that malleability of the fixed mindset cannot but foster the growth towards well-being.

Previous studies have confirmed the positive influence of well-being development on individuals; however, well-being is rarely included in teacher training programmes. Practicing gratitude may affect psychological well-being in a favourable way (Carver et al., 2003; Seligman et al., 2005). Some people reveal a trait of gratitude, which can be considered a predisposition to experience the feeling of thankful appreciation for favours received in everyday life (Gularnik, 1971, p. 327; Watkins 2003, p. 432). Not only gratitude but also kindness has a positive influence on psychological well-being (Parks & Schueller, 2014). People who are capable of being grateful and kind, turn out to be more optimistic and happier (Watkins et al., 2003), can manage effectively adverse events (Emmons & McCullough, 2003) and are able to establish as well as maintain positive relations with other people (Algoe, 2012). Gratitude may also foster physical health, as it strengthens cardiovascular and immune systems, secures relaxing of the body during sleep, and promotes physical activity (Post, 2005).

The results of the study should be interpreted with caution as Irie, Ryan, and Mercer (2018) found out that pre-service teachers believed in some technical aspects of teaching being learnable, while interpersonal or personality features were not considered malleable. This conviction may have resulted from the fact of what is included in a teacher training curriculum, the supposition being that if some aspects are not included in the programme, they cannot be taught. Another research (Haukås & Mercer, 2021) confirmed the finding that pedagogical and linguistic competences were perceived by pre-service teachers as more prone to be subjected to change while personality and social skills were interpreted as more permanent. However, it was also suggested that teacher trainees encouraged to promote a growth mindset in social skills and personality, were more resilient and enhanced their professional well-being. Being proactive in developing social and emotional mindsets cannot but assist empowering of professional well-being.

New Paradigm Framework for Teacher Well-being

Abraham H. Maslow once said that “we spend a great amount of time studying criminality. Why not also study law-abidingness, identification with society, philanthropy, social conscience. *Gemeinschaftsgefühl?*” (Maslow, 1954, p. 287). Maslow kept a *Good Human Being* journal in which he noted down his observations of good human beings. The information he gathered, was used for developing the highest level of hierarchy of needs, namely self-actualisation (Szymańska, 1997). Even though Maslow was criticised for lack of empirical data, his contribution in the form of the pyramid of needs in the field of psychology is known to all. Just as we study teacher burnout, we may as well look at the core features of well-being, which according to Mercer et al. (2020) is one of the global or 21st century skills nowadays. For those reasons, the study aimed at specifying the overall sense of well-being and formulating factors which may contribute or have an impact on the well-being of teachers. These data indicate that similarly to the studies of the good language learner, which involved identification of the main characteristics associated with gaining success in language learning, we may indicate the dispositions of growth mindset language teachers. Just like the Teacher Aptitude Test can measure teachers’ predispositions for teaching, similarly fixed mindset teachers’ dispositions can be noticed in the language they speak and hopefully modified, or at least verified, by what they report back.

Prior studies noted that teachers are under the influence of their own beliefs, which are also related to their values, the views about the world, and the perception of the context in which they live and work (Williams & Burden, 1997). It is true to say that we perceive our reality by creating various constructs, but human beliefs very often lack consistency, as an individual may believe in contrasting convictions. Being unaware of the beliefs or fallacies of mind is one thing, becoming mindful and conscious of one’s performance is another. Robins and Pals (2002) claim that mindset is a combination of beliefs and self-regulatory processes. In the study, we have noticed that mindsets can be enhanced by means of asking awareness-raising questions, which indicates that despite being constant, beliefs of individuals can be instructed and modified not only by experimental treatment (Dweck & Molden, 2015). Secondly, just like some previous studies have already observed that mindset can be changed (Irie, Ryan, & Mercer, 2018; Haukås & Mercer, 2021), our research confirms the positive influence of practising gratitude, performing acts of kindness, and exercising sport on teacher well-being. Consequently, based on the findings from the study, we devised a new *paradigm framework* with some features that represent a growth mindset teacher. The outstanding features are based on the written utterances provided by the participants. We juxtaposed the answers given to the narrative questions and pried out the growth-oriented responses

provided by the participants. As a result, we came with the following framework which may serve as a paradigm shift of a growth mindset teacher.

Table 5

A Paradigm Framework of a Growth Mindset Teacher

Growth mindset teacher
practises gratitude
can self-regulate
doesn't regret things
doesn't hold grudge
doesn't complain
does a physical activity regularly
can manage time well
sets goal
resolves disputes successfully
is interested in other people and their interests
does random act of kindness
tolerates mistakes of other people
has one's own values
is self-assured
can make one's own decisions

Table 5 presents a paradigm framework of a growth mindset teacher, which consists of a set of beliefs. The paradigm does not impose getting rid of cognitive approaches to teacher development but urges teacher trainers and trainees to study the affective and psychomotor domains more closely. It also does not cover all teachers' dispositions, nor it is to be understood as the legitimate set of teachers' standards. Though, it may act as a set of dispositions which are required, or at least shall be taken into consideration, in teacher enrolment, training, and development. The framework may be claimed to consist of the main characteristic features of self-realizing teachers, as they present growth mindset dispositions. What is more, we designed the theoretical framework mainly to illustrate the main attributes of growth-mindset teachers.

All in all, we are inclined to believe that well-being training shall be preceded by training in mindsets. Firstly, the participants need to learn about the difference between fixed and growth mindset. It can be achieved by read-

ing more specialised literature. By asking awareness-raising questions (ARQ), they can gauge for themselves which of the fixed mindsets they would like to change. The most important part of the well-being training requires teachers to develop new habit formation (Lally et al., 2009). For instance, teachers may improve their physical condition, enhance social relationships, or work on the area that will make them happy. They may also note down their blessings, write thankfulness letters (Lyubomirsky et al., 2011), or keep sports or meditation logbooks/journals (Moon, 2006). Feelings and emotions can be treated in compiling gratitude journals (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). It is also reasonable to ask the participants to mentor younger students, or other teachers, using the growth mindset messages (Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002). By doing that, they will internalise the concept (the construct) of growth-oriented behaviour better. All that shall also be supplemented by teacher trainers acting as a role model for teacher trainees.

Implications

The findings lead to the following implications. The first pedagogical implication refers to the need to re-evaluate the main competencies of language teachers. During teacher training and development, apart from technical and functional knowledge, as well as communication and interpersonal skills, educators shall look at such commitments as perseverance, determination, positive attitude, and self-motivation. It is incremental not only to teach about well-being but also induce a growth mindset by letting teacher trainees notice acquirable dispositions. It will lead to strengthening resilience of the teachers, which refers to the power or ability to recover quickly from a misfortune, to be happy or successful again after some adverse situations.

The second implication stems from the research by Dweck (2006) who encourages educators to praise persistence, effort, time spent, instead of focusing on abilities or talent. In order to develop growth mindset teachers, certain degree of proactive behaviour and performance is needed on the part of the teachers. By focusing on developing positive habits (such as practicing gratitude, managing time, doing random acts of kindness), teachers will experience well-being not only in professional, but private lives as well. It will also help them prevent burnout. The study revealed that a change in the dispositions may lead to transformation within the individual, being a form of accomplishment of happiness.

The third implication concerns the promotion of well-being in educational settings. Organising workshops and lectures, giving the access to various publications on well-being (Szulc-Kurpaska, 2021) as well as encouraging pre-service teachers to conduct their own action-research, may induce positive

changes. Well-being training should be incorporated into the teacher education programmes on a regular basis as part of teacher training and development. It shall bring benefits to professional as well as personal conduct of teachers.

Finally, the most striking implication seems to refer to a need for re-evaluation of the given “school climate” (Lester & Cross, 2015) of pre-service teachers. Educators should model and nurture positive attitudes of growth mindset themselves so as to set a good example. Apart from that, it is crucial to specify various aspects that contribute to well-being and identity formation. Through training and individual practice, teacher trainees and trainers should notice the positive outcomes of the changes in behaviour, habits, attitudes, and stance in themselves and others. The use of reflective practice, as an awareness raising tool, will allow teachers to develop continuously and adapt to changes. All in all, we agree with Fredrikson (2011) that well-being may assist the teacher in managing challenges of everyday life and broaden their minds. As a result, they will be more creative and will communicate more effectively with others.

Limitations to the Study

There are certain limitations to the study that need to be acknowledged. Firstly, as far as reliability of the data analysis is concerned, the study findings are clearly subject to other interpretations. It is because teachers were researchers in the project which might have had an influence on the participants. Secondly, there is lack of verified data collected from M.A. students (intervention to perform Tasks no. 1.1), which might have shed light on the study. It is unknown whether they would have undergone any change from fixed to growth mindset. Even though the study took into consideration both the growth and fixed mindset dichotomy, as well as reported on the *continuum mindset (mindset orientation)* (Haukås & Mercer, 2021), it failed to find illustrative examples in some other parts of the triads of the study. What is more, the study did not reveal any major differences in other spheres and conditions, perhaps because the performance sphere has been the most conducive to change.

The main criticism of the current design to the study refers to the actual form of data collection and analysis. It mainly refers to the long-term effects of the intervention that are understudied. Considerably more work will need to be done to determine the effects of well-being on teachers after a few years. The items mentioned in the questionnaire cannot be verified as effective unless implemented and tested out by the in-service teachers themselves. Conducting similar research on a wider scale, may solve the problem and offer more insight into the nature of teacher mindsets and their well-being. In order to do that, some pre-testing and post-testing will be required to make pre-service and in-service teachers become more aware of the complexity of the training. One

treatment group and one control group could also be assigned to verify whether the instructions were effective. It would be advisable to continue working on the well-being of teachers and conduct an experimental study aiming at encouraging participants to perform other tasks, like practicing yoga, meditating, and writing a gratitude diary (Mercer, 2019). Additionally, another instrument for collecting more insightful data should be designed and implemented. Conducting interviews with the subjects, instead of the questionnaire, would grant the researchers, or those who would like to replicate the study, with an in-depth access to more insightful data.

Conclusions

The purpose of the current study was to determine pre-service teachers' mindsets, understood as a set of beliefs that cause a unique combination of various dispositions. The key findings are summarised below which may contribute to self-actualisation of the students-to-be-teachers and may be a gauge of their well-being in the future (Huppert, 2009). The main contributions of the mix-method research to the field of TT&WD are presented below, however the study provided tentative evidence of the participants' well-being and the findings need to be treated with considerable caution. The analysis of *competency* and *stance*, the other two dispositions, which will be analysed in the next article, may shed some light on the final conclusions of the research.

Firstly, the study provided the researchers with an illustration of either growth or fixed oriented mindsets. The construct applied in the study was valuable to be used with pre-service teachers, due to the fact that well-being of teachers is a universal idea that can be tested and applied at the initial stage of professional development. The results of the study indicate that the narrative questions, which were believed to act as a simple indication of real dispositions, concerned the well-being of novice teachers that needs further development. Greater efforts are needed to ensure that well-being is achieved by changing teachers' dispositions towards a growth mindset thinking. The first rationalisation might be that fixed mindsets can be modified by incorporating certain awareness-raising questions (ARQ) in teacher training, which enhance reflection and stimulate self-regulating processes. As we observed, well-being can be attributed to certain stance such as positive language use, behaviours, and attitudes, which growth mindset teachers apply in the school environment. The stance might be facilitated by developing successful mindset teachers. The findings suggest that it is possible to modify teachers' mindsets to help them achieve the state of well-being.

Secondly, the findings demonstrate the importance of developing well-being. As revealed in the intervention phase, it can be achieved by deliberate training of growth mindset dispositions. In order to create good habits, teachers need to conduct the activities over a period of one month or at least 21 days of repetition (Lally et al., 2009). And the fact that well-being might be altered by such interventions opens a window into developing key teacher competencies. However, a further study could assess the long-term effects of other such interventions as well. A general conclusion can be drawn from this study that these participants who were able to change their dispositions, they represented a growth mindset. Therefore, we may claim that such personalities may be inclined to decide on pursuing a teaching career and the teacher training course, which by its very nature, stimulates growth and development of a prospective teacher.

Thirdly, the study contributes to our understanding of well-being training. The results lead to the conclusion that teacher training and development in Poland needs to and can be modified. The term “modify,” as defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary,³ shall be understood in terms of making “basic or fundamental changes in order to give a new orientation to or to serve a new end.” It also refers to a situation in which a person can “undergo change.” Fletcher (2001, p. 1) claims that learning (thus training) embraces “body, mind, emotions and spirit.” In this view, Teacher Professional Development (TPD) shall not only entail knowledge accumulation or skills practicing, but it is to be understood as a wider concept that includes personal development, including moral and value dimensions. The idea is to focus not only on standards to be achieved by pre-service teachers (the “What”) but to implement a *softer approach* to education (the “How”).

One may conclude that happy and healthy teachers succeed in all aspects of life, both at work and in their family life. Therefore, greater efforts are needed to ensure such conditions in teachers’ life. Research showed that stimulating well-being may reduce the burnout syndrome or even drop out from the profession (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020, p. 2). When teachers get a lot of positivity from their jobs, particularly from their interactions with students, there is a much stronger chance that the learners will flourish as well (Morris & Mercer, 2019). It is also believed that growth mindset teachers are more likely to develop growth-oriented learners. Teachers’ attitudes, emotions, and motivation affect the learners positively (Becker 2014; Frenzel 2009; Roffey, 2012). Learners very often adopt the teachers’ state, so if teachers are happy, this will also be contagious for the learners. It works both ways because positive attitude of the learners influences the teachers and stimulates them for work (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020, p. 2). When teachers flourish, also their learners

³ Retrieved from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/modify>.

benefit in academic achievement and may reach the psychological well-being (Briner & Dewberry, 2007).

Following the results, it is argued that even though the study shows a degree of progress in relation to fixed and growth mindsets, some questions remain about the nature of their influence on teacher well-being. The authors of the study point to the complexity of the construct, as it is difficult to formulate mindsets on a set of implicit theories and because they may also interact with the explicit ones. Even though the recent research focused on pre-service teachers, the authors aim to continue the project “Promoting Well-being among Pre-service and In-service Teachers” in the following years, taking into consideration in-service teachers. The main focus will be placed on helping teachers understand the complexity of their profession; reflecting on knowledge, skills, and competences; challenging their beliefs, attitudes, and worldview; helping them become more aware of their individual mindset; as well as observing and modifying teachers’ dispositions for teaching. We deeply believe that the humanistic approach connected with the Positive Psychology movement may bring many benefits not only for teachers themselves, but also for learners, parents, and the school milieu.

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Question-based Narrative Study

This research focuses on studying teacher well-being. The decision to participate in this study is **voluntary**, which means you can take part or withdraw your answers anytime you wish. The data (name) is **confidential** which means that we will not share the information you give us that could identify you. This study does no harm to the participants, which means that your responses will have no effect on your English class/lecture; however, by answering the questions and doing the tasks (no. 1) you may improve some of the life habits. The information you provide us with may help other pre- and in-service teachers in the future.

Choose 5 out of 15 (you need to do one no. 1, one no. 2, one no. 3, one no. 4, and one no. 5 from whichever category). Write your answers in ca. 100 words.

NOTE! Copy and paste the question first and below write down your answer. We need to know which question you refer to.

Category 1: Performance

- 1) *What are you grateful for? **TASK:** List 10 items **every day** for a period of **one month**. Write down your observations.*
- 2) *Can you restrain yourself from eating sweets, checking Facebook before exam session, or other things? How do you do it? Describe the way you succeed or fail.*
- 3) *What was the last thing you regretted?*
- 4) *Imagine a situation in which someone did something bad to you. How did you react? How do you perceive the person now?*
- 5) *What do you usually complain about? Who do you usually complain with?*

Category 2: Competency

- 1) *How often do you do physical exercises? **TASK:** Take up a new sport and practice it for a period of **one month**. Write down your workout results and observations.*
- 2) *How do you manage your time? Are you good or bad at TM? Give us a few examples.*
- 3) *What goals will you set for your nearby future?*

- 4) Think of an unpleasant situation you found yourself in. Describe it. Say: who was involved? What was your reaction? How did you solve it?
- 5) What are your students' interests?

Category 3: Affect

- 1) *What are the "small things" that matter? **TASK:** List the "small things" (or "random acts of kindness") you do **every day** for someone (your parents, siblings, friends, unknown people) over a period of one month. Write down your observations.*
- 2) What is your reaction to your peers' or teachers' mistakes? How do they make you feel?
- 3) What are the main values in your life? Prepare a list of 3 most important ones. Justify what they mean to you.
- 4) Describe a difficult situation in which you remained "true to yourself."
- 5) What role other people play in your life as far as making important decisions?