

'TEACHING WELLBEING' IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE 2020S: A QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP PROJECT WITH SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ENGLAND

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
October 2024

Rosanna Wilson

Abstract

The state of mental health and wellbeing for young people and their teachers has been a rising concern in recent decades. Across OECD countries, there has been an increased focus on wellbeing in schools within policy and practice. Teachers are at the frontline of these issues. In 2020, the covid-19 pandemic arose, adding further complexity. In England, the teaching profession was required to absorb new policy requirements and “teach” wellbeing. Scant research existed to explore the practice implications for teachers as increased emphasis on wellbeing expectations emerged.

This interpretive qualitative project conducted with teachers (n=25) from regional state-maintained secondary schools (n=15) investigated: a) teachers’ concept of wellbeing, b) their experience of wellbeing in teaching practice and c) tensions and barriers. Informed by Etienne Wenger’s communities of practice approach, fieldwork took place in three rounds of data collection from Autumn-Winter 2020-21 to Summer-Winter 2021-2022, and is published in three individual articles.

Findings demonstrated dual conceptions of wellbeing as ‘doing well’ and ‘being well’, where ‘being well’ was conceived as relational rather than individual, and foundational to ‘doing well’. Measures to promote wellbeing during return from school pandemic closures were seen as thwarted by the drive for attainment outcomes. As behavioural challenges arose, related to the disaster recovery and trauma resultant from the pandemic, teachers talked of ‘survival’. Multiple wellbeing initiatives based on philosophies of embodiment, person-centred traditions and inter-disciplinarity were emergent in teachers’ practice and school settings, yet teachers saw initiatives for wellbeing as resting ‘out of the realm of the classroom’ whilst schooling remains so strongly tethered to neoliberal governance. Teachers’ imaginaries for a ‘turning’ towards relational pedagogy, engaging with students’ living and complex communities/world were considered little practicable within neoliberal ‘education as usual’ despite hopes for an ‘education reset’. Yet this

project also points to openings whereby policy and practice shifts offer levers for integrative rather than additive approaches to wellbeing through schooling.

Acknowledgements

I dedicate this thesis to all the wonderful teachers and colleagues who, at the 'chalk face' weave the web of care, negotiate the give-and-take, and continue to question what a good education means. I am so grateful to the participants of this project for opening their hearts and minds to these questions.

A huge thank you goes to my supervisors, Edward and Stephen, who have supported, questioned, challenged me, and helped me to grow. Thank you for paying attention to what I had to say, and helping me to hone my voice, the craft of research and academic writing.

I must also thank a wonderful ecology of other special people: brilliant PhD colleagues, in solidarity, camaraderie, and intellectual exploration, in particular Dr Rodrigo Brito and Elizabeth Brown. Also my great gratitude to the academic community members, peer reviewers and journal teams who have welcomed and encouraged me through conferences and the development of papers. This project is better because of all of you.

To the wonderful Nottingham Climate Assembly and Youth Panel network, and partners in writing, practice and experimentation: Katie Keddie, Dr Dena Arya and Prof Matt Henn for all I have learnt from and with you.

To the young leaders, students and my school teaching colleagues in their inspiration, interest and support, who have put up with me 'just finishing the PhD' for literally years. To dear friends who have held my hand, believed in me and encouraged me through this curious aspiration to do research.

Finally, to my family, who have been there for me in their hilarious tangle of care, chaos and wisdom. A special mention to my wonderful greyhound familiar, who came into our lives at the start of the PhD like its guardian, and who has waited patiently for me to get off the laptop and get on a walk many an evening. And to Jason, for enabling me, accepting me, caring for me and being my rock. To all these people and more, thank you more than I can say for helping me do this work.

Contents

Abstract

Acknowledgements

.....

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures	9
1. Introduction to the research	10
1.1 Rationale and contribution to knowledge	10
1.2 Summary of the project and research questions	12
1.3 Research Context.....	14
1.4 Thesis approach.....	16
1.5 Personal journey and positionality	17
2.0 Literature Review	31
2.1 Brief Literature Review Methodology	31
2.2 Defining wellbeing and flourishing for education.....	36
2.3 Relational wellbeing: key distinctions	45
2.4 Why wellbeing now? Neoliberalism, recovery from the pandemic and trauma-informed approaches to resilience.....	49
2.5 Wellbeing in secondary teaching practice	52
Table 1. Approaches to 'teaching wellbeing' relevant to English secondary schools.....	53
2.6 Practice, practitioners and agency	66
2.7 Care and relationships	70
2.8 The body and ecological psychology perspectives	74
2.9 The case for research with teachers	75

2.10 Summary	77
3 Research Design Methodology.....	79
3.1 Introduction - Research Design Summary	79
3.2 Methodological paradigm (epistemology and ontology)	80
3.3 Research context	84
Table 2. Table of interview principles (Opening statement, drawing on Rogers, 1945)	87
3.4 Transformative research design and communities of practice	88
3.5 Data collection and analysis (interviews and focus groups). 94	
3.6 Recruitment and sampling.....	103
3.7 Ethics process	105
SECTION II	112
4.0 Study 1: 'Doing Well' and 'Being Well' – Secondary School Teachers' Perspectives	113
4.1 Reflection: Interviewing English Secondary Teachers about Wellbeing Education	113
4.2 Abstract.....	120
4.3 Introduction	122
4.4 Methodology	127
Table 3. Teacher Participant Sampling.....	131
Table 4. Table of themes	132
4.5 Findings.....	133
4.6 Discussion.....	145
4.7 Conclusion	152

5.0 Study 2: Still surviving, rather than thriving - the need to reimagine post-pandemic wellbeing according to secondary school teachers	155
5.1 Reflection: On the relationship between negative emotional experience and wellbeing in schools	155
5.2 Abstract.....	160
5.3 Introduction	160
5.4 Methodology	166
Table 5. Table of Discussion Themes (developed from Winter 2020-21 Teacher Interviews).....	168
Table 6. Themes from Easter 2021 Teacher Focus Groups and Interviews.....	172
5.5 Findings.....	172
5.6 Discussion.....	182
5.7 Conclusion	185
6.0 Study 3: Wellbeing and the importance of going 'out of the realm of the classroom': Secondary School Teachers' Perspectives	188
6.1 Reflection: Workload, wellbeing and 'add on' culture	188
6.2 Abstract.....	192
6.3 Introduction	193
6.4 Methodology	197
Table 7. A summary of key implications from teachers views on 'doing well' and 'being well' (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a; 2023b)	198
Table 8. Teacher participant sample showing roles and years of experience	200

Table 9. Themes from initial analysis of Spring 2021 focus groups/interviews discussed with participants.....	204
Table 10. Study 3 themes	205
6.5 Analysis.....	206
6.6 Discussion.....	219
6.7 Concluding Remarks.....	225
6.8 Reflection: On wellbeing 'outside the realm of the classroom' and placebo policies for wellbeing and sustainability	226
SECTION III	230
7.0 Discussion: What do we learn about the state of education from secondary teachers' perspectives on wellbeing in schools in England?.....	230
7.1 Introduction to the Discussion	230
7.2 The dominance of educational 'Business as Usual'	240
7.3 Breakdown and The Great Unravelling in Education	254
7.4 School's out? The place of the Great Turning in Education and Schooling	269
<i>Figure 1: Thinking through features of pedagogy and curriculum in relational pedagogy and 'education as usual' via two triads: Triad One (left)– the 'matter' of education; Triad Two (right) – the 'relations' of education.....</i>	<i>282</i>
8.0 Conclusion.....	291
8.1 Implications	301
i. Relationships are curriculum.....	301
ii. The cognitive curriculum falls short.....	303
iii. Place as teacher	306
iv. Teachers are on the front line of the shift.....	309

Table 11. Table of policy and practice affordances for wellbeing promotion in schools based on this research, for use by practitioners.....	312
References	325
Appendices	370
Appendix 1a – Interview and Focus Group Schedules (Studies 1,2 + 3)	370
Appendix 1b - Participant Information and Consent Forms	384
Appendix 2 – Ethics Approval	394
Appendix 3 – Exemplar analysis: coding	395
Appendix 4 - Analysis Materials – Domain studies and final themes	421

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1a. Table of literature search terms – p.34

Table 1b. Approaches to 'teaching wellbeing' relevant to English secondary schools – pp.54-65

Table 2. Table of interview principles (Opening statement, drawing on Rogers, 1945) – p.86

Table 3. Teacher Participant Sampling, Study 1 – p130

Table 4. Table of themes, Study 1 – p131

Table 5. Table of Discussion Themes (developed from Winter 2020-21 Teacher Interviews), Study 2 – pp. 167

Table 6. Themes from Easter 2021 Teacher Focus Groups and Interviews, Study 2 – p171

Table 7. A summary of key implications from teachers views on 'doing well' and 'being well' (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a; 2023b), Study 3 – p197

Table 8. Teacher participant sample showing roles and years of experience, Study 3 – pp199

Table 9. Themes from initial analysis of Spring 2021 focus groups/interviews discussed with participants, Study 3 – p203

Table 10. Study 3 themes – pp. 204

Figure 1: Thinking through features of pedagogy and curriculum in relational pedagogy and 'education as usual' via two triads – p280

Table 11. Table of policy and practice affordances for wellbeing promotion in schools based on this research, for use by practitioners – pp. 311-315

SECTION I

1. Introduction to the research

1.1 Rationale and contribution to knowledge

This thesis explores the practice of teachers in secondary schools in England regarding the fast-changing landscape for wellbeing knowledge, policy and practice in schools. Despite a proliferation of intervention/implementation research, and a series of new policies affecting English schools and teaching practice, particularly from 2017 to 2021, there exists remarkably limited research into the lived impact of such school wellbeing work on teachers' professional practice. This is particularly in the English context where this study is based, and which represents something of an extreme case (Daley, 2023a; 2023b; Anderson, Ozseser Kurnuc & Jain, 2023) for control of the teacher's professional subjectivity by comparison with the other devolved education systems of Great Britain. This gap is stark considering that it is with their teachers that students spend most of their school time, and who will lead their educational experience.

Health and wellbeing outcomes worsen when inequality increases, which describes the case in England both pre and post covid-19 pandemic (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010; Watt, Raymond & Rachet-Jacquet, 2022), and which has dramatically affected children and schools. Wellbeing and mental health measures for adults, children and young people were of increasing concern prior to the pandemic (population rates of mental illness steadily rose from 1993 to 2014, with most up to date statistics due out later this year (2024) – British Medical Association, 2023). For young people, rates of

probable mental disorder rose between eight and 13 per cent between 2017 and 2023 (Baker & Kirk-Wade, 2024). These circumstances are making it extremely difficult for mental health needs to be served by the inadequately resourced English Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services. Teachers face the lived outcomes of these numbers, when increasingly the children they teach go with their wellbeing needs unmet.

Teachers enter the profession wanting to help their students grow to their full potential, or flourish, but suffer when they cannot be the sort of teacher they hope to be, faced with these circumstances (Perryman & Calvert, 2019). They also wish to prepare their students for a world of interconnected global problems, the most large scale and multifaceted of which: the global climate and ecological crisis intimately connected with threat of global conflict. Yet schooling continues to focus on replicating historic norms focusing on exam attainment and neoliberal progress measures as educational purpose, leaving matters affecting human and planetary wellbeing (climate and social injustice, as well as education for youth leadership/democratic engagement) largely occluded.

Teacher wellbeing and retention are also of concern, mirroring wider workplace wellbeing patterns (Jerrim, et al. 2021) , with measures put in place to support teacher wellbeing often viewed as ineffective (Brady & Wilson, 2021), whilst students and colleagues feel the effects of poor teacher wellbeing in their experience of school and work (Glazzard & Rose, 2019; Culshaw & Kurian, 2021). These dynamics point to the need to look at wellbeing as a collective or relational concept within schools, rather than as individualised.

From the 2000s onwards, government and public interest in the need to address wellbeing and mental health via schools in England

grew significantly (Department of Health and Department for Education, 2017; Department of Health & NHS England, 2015; The Children's Society, 2012; Challen et al., 2011, Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2005; DfES, 2003). The topic of wellbeing and mental health was thus the subject of a raft of policy changes under the UK government from 2010 onwards.

Nonetheless, this work had limited impact on the performativity orientation of school purpose, as measured by accountability measures such as Ofsted's inspection framework, and for students and teacher, as exam results. As in many international contexts then, the school is generally a 'convenient site' (O'Toole & Simovska, 2022, p28) for wellbeing provision, rather than wellbeing being understood as a fundamental purpose of the school and of the teacher's work.

This research sought to examine the impact of this tension upon teachers' practice in relation to wellbeing, and to examine their hopes and concerns for the future of wellbeing in schools with a view to illuminating and unpicking some of the ineffective and indeed harmful impacts of 'education as usual' where teacher and student wellbeing are concerned.

1.2 Summary of the project and research questions

This project follows mounting research in positive, character and contemplative education, all of which have human flourishing and wellbeing as a key element. Secondary teachers are on the frontline of a tension in educational aims, between, on the one hand, teaching for wellbeing and character strengths (Arthur et al. 2016; Department for Education [DfE], 2019b; Schutte & Malouff, 2019), and on the other, delivering standardised forms of

knowledge, to meet models of efficiency and exam requirements (Biesta, 2009; McNeill, 2002). The impact of this tension on teacher wellbeing, workload and retention; student wellbeing; and on progress towards inclusive and sustainable education, is widely documented, as pressures towards compliance to exam requirements lead to an underprivileging of education for wellbeing and sustainability by both 'commission' and 'omission' (Lautensach, 2019, p7557). COVID-19 measures and a new statutory wellbeing education policy brought wellbeing education to the fore for teachers in 2020, simultaneously adding further layers of complexity.

Although there is no doubt that knowledge and expertise are critical, the pressure to obtain prescribed quantitative outcomes, in terms of exam results, has dominated the life and work of teachers in English secondary schools. This PhD project aimed to understand teachers' changing views and practice in relation to wellbeing in schools. To do this, this thesis draws on teachers' experiences, perspectives and practice on the following research questions:

- what are secondary mainstream teachers' attitudes and knowledge in relation to flourishing and wellbeing at school?;
- how do teachers engage with flourishing and wellbeing in their own practice?;
- what tensions do they experience in promoting flourishing and wellbeing at school?

Qualitative data is presented gathering teacher accounts in relation to the research questions over three time points (T1 – Winter 2020-21, T2 – Spring 2021, T3 – Summer-Winter 2021-22) as follows:

T1. individual interviews (via Microsoft Teams, phone or in-person);

T2. first follow up focus groups and interviews;

T3. second follow up focus groups and interviews.

The study brought together secondary subject teachers to share their views and practice in relation to what wellbeing means in education. The project aimed to allow teachers to share resources and insights as well as to consider the impact of recent events on how teachers address wellbeing with their students. We looked at the issue of purpose in education and brought a critical lens to discourses around wellbeing and flourishing.

The findings from this project are an important contribution to knowledge given the gap in data on lived experience of England's secondary school teachers through several critical influences to the landscape of wellbeing in schools over the last decade (statutory teaching of wellbeing topics from 2020; the covid-19 pandemic; the subsequent cost of living crisis; a far-reaching reform of the curriculum from 2014). The findings contribute to existing knowledge on how to implement and learn from secondary teaching for wellbeing – and crucially why many well-intended approaches may fail to improve teacher and student experiences of wellbeing in schools. This project also aimed to look at room for manoeuvre in practice at the individual practitioner level as well as at the collective or leadership level, considering teachers as leaders and transformers of education in their own right.

1.3 Research Context

Secondary teachers from regional English secondary schools reflect on their perspectives and practice in relation to teaching wellbeing in the wake of the introduction of statutory Health Education for mental wellbeing (for mandatory teaching from September 2020),

new Character Education Guidance (Department for Education, 2019a; 2019b) and a new Ofsted Inspection Framework (Ofsted, 2019). This was swiftly followed by the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, which led to the closure of schools in the UK in March 2020, and again in January 2021. These impacts were heralded as the onset of a “new normal” in education; yet evidence in this thesis illustrates the hasty return to the old normal (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph 2023b, 2024), or education ‘as usual’ (Macy & Johnstone, 2012/2020; Lautensach, 2018, p7557).

Teachers from the English Midlands, the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber contributed to this study from their various school contexts. Participants included trainee teachers, Newly Qualified Teachers (now Early Career Teachers – DfE, 2019/2024), middle leaders, senior leaders, Special Educational Needs and outdoors education specialists from ten state-funded, English secondary schools.

I also note that whilst this work was ongoing, there was a notable drop off in wider youth provision, as services closed down during the pandemic, leaving teachers and parents largely alone in their efforts to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on young people’s development. Youth services such as youth voice networks within local government and Youth Parliament networks were piecemeal in their operations, at a time when children and young people were reportedly extremely worried about the future, particularly in the wake of the Youth Strikes for Climate movement (e.g. Hickman et al., 2021).

This led to my own involvement in the Nottingham Youth Climate Assembly programme. The importance of local opportunities to learn and take action ‘out of the realm of the classroom’ becomes evident in the later sections of this research (see Study 3 – Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p11) yet there are systemic barriers to

enabling young people from all backgrounds and socio-economic contexts to access such opportunities, whilst schools are seen as the main site for 'catch up and catch all' (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b, p13). I explored these questions with colleagues in a separate viewpoint article in which we again question educational purpose in light of the climate crisis, inter and intra-generational justice, and the constraints on resourcing of young people's opportunities beyond the traditional classroom dynamic (Wilson, Keddie, Arya & Henn, 2024).

1.4 Thesis approach

The thesis is divided into three sections following a conventional thesis structure. Section I covers chapters one to three: introduction, rationale and positionality statement covering my own background as a teacher and researcher, before outlining the literature search methodology and literature review. A detailed overview of the methodology of the full research project is then offered considering the argument for the qualitative approach taken and the rationale for drawing on transformative research design approaches.

Section II reports the fieldwork and data analysis of each of the three studies (from Times one to three), with a full research paper from published journal articles for each discrete study:

- Study One: Teacher interview study from Winter 2020-21 (published in the British Educational Research Journal, 2023 - see Wilson, Sellman & Joseph 2023a)
- Study Two: Teacher follow up focus group and interview study from Spring 2021 (published in the Journal of Pastoral

Care in Education, 2023 – see Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b)

- Study Three: Teacher follow up and practice sharing focus group and interview study from Summer 2021 to Winter 2022 (published in Educational Review, 2024 – see Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024)

Within Section II, I include examples of the data analysis approach and reflexive positionality notes to contextualise the findings as well as to improve the rigour and transparency of the reflexive thematic analysis approach as set out by Braun & Clarke (2019; 2020).

Finally in Section III can be found a discussion of the complete findings of the research project, bringing together apparently competing narratives fundamental to discussions of care and wellbeing in neoliberal schooling as in terms of Joanna Macey's three narratives: 'business as usual'; 'the great unravelling' and 'the great turning' (Macey and Johnstone, 2012/2020; Macey & Brown, 2014, pp 5-6). Within the conclusion, implications for school policy and practice are presented, and a table of policy affordances is offered to aid teachers and leaders in enacting recommended actions from the findings.

1.5 Personal journey and positionality

Throughout this thesis, I offer elements of my personal and professional journey through education. This is as a means of:

- a) offering transparency and building trust in the findings and my role within their interpretation as a researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2019) and insider-outsider (Mercer, 2007)

b) illuminating the personal impacts of patterns discussed in the data and theory shared in this research.

Here I reflect on my educational journey, from student, to teacher, to education researcher, and the influence of a strongly neoliberal education upon my own positionality. It will also be seen how some of the 'counter-current', later explored in Wilson, Sellman & Joseph (2024, p10), as well as through Chapter 9's discussion, is evident in my own subjectivity. I hold the tensions explored in the conversations with teachers in this study, also in my self, and my life experiences through my own educational journey thus far. Throughout the PhD process, my own journaling, reflective/embodiment practices and encounters and learning with others, have been central in my own journey to make visible to my awareness tensions, which lie hidden in my own beliefs, values and behaviours.

In an effort to share these, and draw parallels with the messages within these research findings, I attach to each of the three studies a reflection from my research or professional practice. These relate to: the process of preparing for research with teachers; ongoing conversations and the importance of reflecting on what it means to create "safe space" to speak openly about the difficult emotional side of school experience; how this interacts so closely with one's identity and decision-making as a teacher, and then how my developing professional teaching practice has been shaped by, and has shaped the process of this research. With a focus on transparency for myself and readers, this part of the work contributes to mitigating bias. The sub-sections are offered to accompany and contextualise the studies and their findings, and can be viewed either as part of the study or as standalone sections. Here I begin with an opening piece on my positionality at the start of this research.

Who am I and how does this relate to this research project?

In thinking about how to approach positioning myself in the research project, I needed to ask certain basic questions: what does it mean to reflect on who I am in this research? How do I do this? What does this mean for the project? Why am I doing this research at all and how is it valid? In my literature review chapters, I set out notions of growth and person-centredness within humanistic traditions of education (Joseph, 2015). I am clearly also at the centre of my own inquiry and my own education, but I see this as part of *our* education, because I conduct this research with a perspective of shared planet, shared humanity and with an expanded conception of Self (Sellman, 2020).

I have looked for guidance from a number of theoretical perspectives to understand reflexivity in this piece of writing, some rooted in the research project, such as Ergas' (2017) work on self-inquiry with teachers, and Biesta's (2009) model of the functions of education as qualification, socialisation and subjectification. Some influences come from methods literature or simply resonate with my reflections and experience (Anderson and Braud, 2011; Davies, 2006). It is a distinct moment to be doing research, in the midst of a global pandemic unfolding and interacting with multiple other crises of global social and ecological justice. Decolonising the history of knowledge has taken a newly heightened importance in the context of the Black Lives Matter protests responding to the death of George Floyd on top of many other black, indigenous and people of colour, in Summer 2020.

In the context of this reflection, I came across the following quotation from indigenous knowledge:

'For many Indigenous people, [the act of self-location] is intuitive, launched immediately through the protocol of introductions. It shows respect to the ancestors and allows community to locate us. Situating self implies clarifying one's perspective on the world. This is about being congruent with a knowledge system that tells us that we can only interpret the world from the place of our experience.'

(Willett in Eidinger, 2017, 'A History of Positionality', paragraphs 4-5)

Representing knowledge and where it comes from remains a challenge: putting into words some of the ideas in this piece has felt a little corrupting for me, simply due to the process of trying to translate feelings, senses and emotions into words. This insight can illuminate how I go on to interpret the words of other teachers and show sensitivity to how they express their ideas during fieldwork and data analysis. It further illustrates the need to take iterative, reflexive steps to check and review interpretations throughout the study.

My identity as a researcher

Since I hold myself in a tradition of critical research, it follows that I need to think about power and intersectionality in my position, both as a researcher and professional teacher. Issues of identity, class, ethnicity, education and family background all need to be interrogated (Derry, 2017); they also illuminate the interlocking stories of myself and this research in its wider context. I am a white, middle-class, British and privately-educated, millennial woman; and as I write this I admit to cringing a little. I feel uncomfortable with these labels at the same time as I acknowledge the powerful effect these influences have had on shaping my own

privilege and experience; they are probably largely responsible for my ability to be conducting this research at all. They also mean I am very much the product of a neoliberal education. That is to say, that our education system is a market place for developing human capital, and that this implies an economic good in itself (Savage, 2017). I mention this because the neoliberal story heavily influenced the subjectification and socialisation functions of my education, and those of my peers. It is also ever present as a powerful background structure shaping the lived experience of teachers in this research.

Neoliberal education is heavily premised on the notion that, as an individual, how hard you work will determine your success. This idea of meritocracy works on a logic of just desserts, and therefore implies that structural barriers and personal difficulties should not matter. If we work hard enough, we all have an equal chance at success. Yet we know that, as persuasive as the simplicity of this argument may sound, in Britain, as well as globally, this simply is not true (eg. Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010). Stories about meritocracy and perpetual striving for performance and achievement are also key factors within our contemporary climate of mental ill health (de Botton, 2023).

Notions of inclusion and injustice in education have always been very close to home for me. I saw plainly that my severely autistic sister did not have an even chance at success, whatever this meant, and that the same was true for others. So during my own schooling, the things school was telling me about achievement, work, merit and identity seemed to conflict with home life. In my early teens I developed a deep interest in religion and the environment, experimented with meditation and developed a growing awareness of the ecological crisis, but struggled as I got older to find a place for it amidst the pressure of performance,

exams and work, even whilst it never went away. I hoped and believed that those in power had the knowledge, skills and will to address the ecological crisis, and that I should concentrate on my education and career.

Later, opportunities to live in France and North Africa, teach languages in underprivileged communities, and to work and volunteer with children with additional needs shaped a counter-logic to neoliberal education in me, that ran in contradiction to the dominant logic of alleged meritocracy as I was growing up in middle class Britain and attending a Russell Group university. Training as a teacher, and researching for a Masters whilst at a school in special measures in one of the UK's most disadvantaged areas in North Lincolnshire further highlighted these issues for me.

I have come to my way of seeing the world now, inevitably as a product of all these experiences.

Who am I now in this research?

I can see myself in this present in the context of multiple unfolding narratives. The term narrative is useful because it conveys the notion of rootedness in time, linking to memories and meanings from the past, experience and action in the present, and knowledge, beliefs and stories about the future. There is:

- an individual identity 'self-narrative',
- a social-historical narrative (moving beyond current social context, increasingly, I like to think of this as 'ancestral')
- an ecological/world narrative (related to a notion of embodiment – (Humberstone, 2015; Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1991/2016))

The ecological narrative

I wrote earlier about my interest and concern for the climate crisis in my teenage years, and a belief that solutions were under way, that those in power would avert the worst of the crisis. But living on the Mediterranean during the opening waves of the migrant crisis in 2014, then seeing the damage caused by bad policy in relation to my first school and its community, followed by 2016, a year in which the Brexit vote, and Trump's election in the US were a double blow to international social justice and responses to the climate emergency, my concern over the parallel global issues of social justice and the ecological crisis started to grow.

I spent a while in the classroom just trying to do my best for my students, and all the while thinking about how on earth to respond to these enormous global problems. It was my resilience and wellbeing research and practice work which seemed to offer the road map. Having just started the PhD, in December 2019, I wrote a positionality piece reflecting on the historical, ecological moment; how the multiple crises taking place at world level, particularly climate change, and the urgency of the need for action and transformation (IPCC, 2018) in a culture of political and educational inertia have culminated, by and large, in the repeated habits of 'business as usual' (Macy & Brown, 2014, p5). This is partly bound up in uncertainties about what wellbeing means in a post-consumerist, carbon neutral economy. Yet the rise of social movements for climate justice, such as Greta Thunberg's Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion are evidence of an awakening collective agency (Klein, 2019).

Now, the ecological narrative moment also holds COVID-19, followed by war in Europe and the Middle East, deep economic instability and political unrest, which has forced accelerated social shift upon this time, from local to global, schools to stock markets. I think any kind of honest consciousness of this moment we are in

can result in only one of two things: paralysed denial or transformation, and this informs my views of education at this time.

Having spoken earlier about how my educational 'subjectification' (Biesta, 2009, p40) came to shape this perspective, I want to talk about the 'individual narrative', which places my research more concretely in the context of my own agency and identity.

The individual narrative

I point out that it really is only through Biesta's (2009) educational functions of socialisation and qualification that we can have access to agency as an individual, since it is these things that allow us to gain permission and the power to move and take action in different social contexts. I talked about this earlier in the context of my demographic identity; neoliberal education is the context in which I have been able to become a teacher and researcher. I like to think that this is in part due to the process that James Reveley (2013) describes: that in spite of the additive and paradoxical nature of wellbeing measures in the damaging neoliberal system (e.g. Becker et al., 2021), the movement towards positive psychology, resilience and mindfulness within neoliberal structures may in fact result in an awakening which 'turns a blow torch on capitalism' as we know it (Reveley, 2013, p545). Agency only becomes transformative through subjectification, as in Bhaskar and Archer's model of social transformation (Bhaskar, Danermark & Price, 2017) in which social circumstances at time 1 lead to an agent's action at time 2 and either social reproduction or transformation at time 3.

Over more than ten years of mainstream secondary school teaching, I have learnt that the role of a teacher is a complex one. At secondary school, teachers nurture, support, parent, police, guide, encourage, organise, and entertain through the undeniably

difficult task of growing up and surviving the teenage years in the 21st century. Then, a good measure of teachers go home to parent their own children too. This is an amazing, gruelling, tiring, heart-wrenching but nonetheless rewarding job. Yet we also know so many young people lose themselves rather than find themselves in school. Permanent exclusions and 'managed moves' are not rare and their results are rarely positive for the child, nor well-documented.

Secondary education is heavily shaped by the political, economic and techno-managerial power structures of neoliberalism, which comes to mean that in working towards a vision of education which is about celebrating and nurturing multiple intelligences, cultivating agency, inclusion and care, and generally developing the whole person in the ways I explore in this research project, there is a real battle. In a school system where success is ultimately measured by exam results and progress metrics from standardised tests, the message to school communities, teachers, children, parents is that one's value, and opportunity for agency in life, is determined by the score one gets on tests set by someone 'out there' with the power to set the score and rank the cohort. It is also a competition, so there is no such thing as win-win. Life is shaped by tests and metrics we have little power to influence, so we had better focus on preparing for them, rather than shaping them in a way that works for us.

When I began teaching in secondary school in 2014, it was to move from the more person-centred, small group approach of teaching English language to paying customers, to teaching French at a school in special measures in a school in one of the most deprived regional areas of the country, according to multiple indexes of deprivation. I had a steep learning curve. In the two years I was there, that school underwent such turbulence and

changes; many students were permanently excluded in an attempt to turn the school's Ofsted rating around. My time there was marked by staff absences, school restructure, high staff turnover, low morale, and dedicated but relentless work from the mainstay of school staff, little of which actually helped the students achieve higher grades.

I am not sure where to begin or end in articulating all the highs and lows of full-time teaching. It is an honour and a job I treasure the chance to do, but the real 'success' stories of children by the exam system (especially in languages) are, in my experience, far exceeded by those who do not get to explore and express their talents and potential. Perhaps, I am simply not a good enough teacher. Programmes and teacher initiatives to address this imbalance are so often scrapped when funds are stretched or sidelined by policies which insist the focus be on exam preparation and progress measures which do not capture creativity, personal development and wellbeing. It seems we are educating in spite of the exam system, not because of it.

In light of this system of ranking which reproduces inequalities, and has been used to justify relentless test training and draconian behaviour systems which quickly subject children to isolation and exclusion, there is a narrow space in schooling and teacher development to focus on wellbeing education. Current wellbeing education policy changes, and COVID-19 precipitated a shift. Yet entrenched issues suggest to me that to be truly supported in wellbeing education, teachers and policy makers need space to think differently about schooling.

Social-historical narrative

For those who do not live in what Kate Raworth (2017, p89) calls 'weird societies' (ie. the Western 'developed' world), it has been

traditional to think of actions in terms of a seven generation principle, that is how does our life and its actions reflect seven generations back and seven generations forward (Mori et al. 2009)? The fact that in recent history, our societies seem trapped in a contracted future in terms of five-year political cycles has led to the norm of a decontextualized present which seems to exist outside of the parameters of the events going on in our planetary home, conceiving the future in terms of a perpetual neoliberal market status quo (Amsler and Facer, 2017), at least where education and the economy is concerned. The upshot of this is a highly separated sense of self, divorced from the context of place and community (eg. Henderson and Hursh, 2014).

My reaction to this realisation over the course of my early career as a teacher has been to gradually seek to reclaim the hold of my attention on my time and place. It began by moving back to the area where I grew up, and continued in seeking to build a more detailed knowledge and relationship with the natural and social world on my doorstep, as Jenny O'Dell (2019) advocates in her support of the movement of bioregionalism, and as Timothy Morton attempts to articulate in 'Being Ecological' (2018). This process of building awareness and relationships led me, before the pandemic, to begin exploring my connections with community groups through a local choir, community gardening projects and over time to environmental activism. I dedicated time to being outside, learning about the people, flora and fauna of home and observing them in the context of the changing seasons.

It seems to me that cultivating a way of being that is highly connected to when, where, how and whom we live with, within the natural world also heightens an awareness of the "deepness" of time, and our relationships as separate but connected beings. For me, cultivating this way of thinking and experiencing the world has

helped me to see myself as descendant, kin and ancestor. In turn this helps to counter and bring into balance the stresses and separationism which dominates neoliberal culture and education, and the globalised, digitised 'attention economy' (O'Dell, 2017) with its attendant mental health, inclusion and ecological impacts. So I see my positionality as a researcher as enabling me to claim and articulate this inquiry in a way which connects to my goals and values as an educator, and to my self-understanding as a global citizen with present agency in a complex and changing world.

Deliberative democracy and intergenerational justice work

During my time working on this thesis, having reduced my teaching hours to part time, I became involved in a local group working to promote citizens assemblies and deliberative democracy on climate action solutions in Nottingham. The purpose of such methods is to support fairer and more inclusive community decision-making in tackling the climate emergency, and similar models have been used in local and national contexts in recent years as climate justice movements seek ways of re-invigorating fragile democracies and strengthening climate action (Willis, Curato & Smith, 2022). Stronger community relationships and agency in decision-making on local and global issues are key both to sustainability and wellbeing.

One major concern within the context of tackling wellbeing, sustainability and social justice within both local and global contexts is the need to enable young people to access accurate information, and a seat at the table when it comes to planning for a just transition to carbon neutrality and beyond. Equally, Nottinghamshire is both highly diverse and segregated by ethnic background and income. Young people struggle to access information, or to meet each other in dialogue so that they can learn and have a voice on planning for their shared future.

Young people's voices are not at the centre of my PhD research but it became clear that there was an important opportunity to work with young people as a starting point to elevate their voices in Nottingham's decision making around the climate crisis through Nottingham Climate Assembly. I was therefore a bid-writer, lead coordinator and facilitator for Nottingham's first Youth Climate Assembly in 2022, a residential weekend of deliberation with experts and practical action to tackle the climate crisis, and produce a youth climate manifesto for Nottingham. I continue to support the young people involved to meet and promote their work via access to community platforms and decisionmakers in the local councils. I see the learning from the Youth Climate Assembly, and that of this PhD research as interlinked, in illuminating the importance of dialogue, deliberation, shared planning and meaning-making in moving towards a more sustainable and wellbeing-oriented society. Yet both projects also highlight the power imbalances, embedded by the value structures of neoliberalism, which mean scant time and resources for education staff, young people or community educators to resource and sustain such dialogue and work.

Why am I doing this research and how is it valid or purposeful?

My colleagues, friends and peers (myself included) in teaching are the products of the neoliberal education I have critiqued here, which currently perpetuates an 'education as usual' (Lautensach, 2019, p7556) that trains certain ways of being that continue to reproduce neoliberal values ('if you want a nice house and a nice car then you'd better work hard in your exams and get a well paid

job'¹). 'Education as usual' privileges materialistic and competitive values through its standardisation structures, and undermines messaging about valuing inclusion, first-person experience, diversity and deep connection to community and the natural world, that is, the potential foundations of what has been called 'prosperity without growth' (Jackson, 2016 – from book title) or an enriched human nature of fulfillment (Raworth, 2017). It prevents us from moving towards an education which enables us to address the ecocidal society in which we are living (Finn & Phillips, 2023) and from allowing teachers and students to learn to reinvent education, for sustainability (e.g. Dunlop & Rushton, 2022). As a teacher, I hold the tensions of working to "achieve" through the care, craft and relationships of pedagogical practice, valuing knowledge and skill as emancipatory yet recognising the need to integrate what we know about individual personal development, *and* the need to embrace relational and ecological understandings of wellbeing through education. Exploring these issues with colleagues holds potential answers to methods of transformation that could enable a shift in values for a sustainable future. For me, this research project presents a piece of the puzzle in providing space for teachers to develop and share their understandings of wellbeing in education, and barriers to its promotion.

¹ In conversation with a friend and teacher, 21st June 2020.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Literature Review Methodology

Due to a need to draw together multiple types of research literature around a broad set of questions, a narrative review process was selected for the purpose of this thesis. Although it is not required in a narrative review to detail methods such as key words and inclusion/exclusion criteria, as is the case for a systematic review (Paré et al., 2015; Paré & Kitsiou, 2017), it is nonetheless useful to support the quality and evaluation of the approach (Ferrari, 2015). Within this thesis, these steps are useful to illustrate how the research question, context and scope were arrived at. Here I provide a literature review framework as follows: methodological introduction and literature search; in the main text, introduction to literature scoped; review of key concepts aiming to 'survey the state of knowledge', provide some aspects of 'historical account' and 'problem identification' (Baumeister & Leary, 1997, p312) for the context of "teaching wellbeing" in secondary schools. I follow with conclusions setting up the 'problem' or gap in knowledge, which provides the basis of this research project.

Having identified the broad research focus to understand how the changing landscape around wellbeing in English secondary schools was influencing teachers' educational practice (see Introduction, section 1.1), the literature search began with a key word search of important literature databases (e.g. Scopus, EBSCO, Science Direct, Google Scholar, JSTOR) in order to establish:

- a. what methods and findings already existed in the research literature around teachers' practice for wellbeing

- b. what concepts and theoretical frames might be used to inform this exploratory and qualitative study

On the basis of initial reading of key theory (see the review which follows – a summary of categories of material can be found in 2.1.2) it became clear that there was very limited literature looking specifically at practising teachers' perspectives on wellbeing in the English context. It was unclear how far theoretical research and empirical psychological research, such as that conducted as part of the positive education movement (Seligman, 2011; Joseph (Eds), 2015) were adopted amongst teachers' practice in England. Having identified initial key literature, terms and gaps, three questions were developed to inform the literature search:

- How are the concepts of wellbeing and flourishing addressed in relevant literature regarding education/educational practice?
- What knowledge exists about approaches to practice for wellbeing/flourishing as relevant to English secondary school teachers (e.g. pedagogy, interventions, curriculum design)?
- What theory exists in the literature which could support a research design exploring wellbeing and flourishing in secondary school teachers' practice?

Using an interpretative approach, the aim of this review is to critically assess the literature scoped, and to build an argument for the core theoretical lens of this thesis. Since wellbeing and schooling as twinned domains have seen an explosion of interest in the last twenty years (e.g. Maiese, 2022; McLellan, Faucher & Simovska, 2022; Joseph, 2015), with much simultaneous exploration of the area at government, individual school level and in academic research, it is useful to work in a way which can navigate across these contexts. Simultaneously, the word

'wellbeing' is a contested term (Gallie, 1955; O'Brien & Guiney, 2021; McLellan, 2017; McLellan, Faucher & Simovska, 2022), and approaches aiming to understand and promote wellbeing require careful unpicking around their underpinning logics/philosophies since there is frequent divergence in philosophy between different disciplines and research approaches. It is therefore not appropriate to develop a tightly framed research question to generate quantitative data on a narrow hypothesis as in a systematic review.

Since wellbeing is encountered at the level of human experience, almost all of the data generated on wellbeing is ultimately qualitative in nature; though various instruments and measures which employ mixed-methods or some level of quantitative approach are used (e.g. Jerrim, 2022; Tennant et al, 2007).

Nonetheless, these factors mean it is ultimately sensible to bring an interpretivist approach to literature review and to the research design.

2.1.1 The literature search with inclusion/exclusion criteria

Literature searches were conducted using academic databases: Scopus, ERIC, Science Direct, Web of Science and Google Scholar. Further literature searching involved monitoring updates via Research Gate, Browzine alerts and scanning recent years of flagship journals in educational research (examples: British Educational Research Journal; British Journal of Educational Studies; Educational Review; Journal of Pastoral Care in Education).

It was clear on developing the initial literature database that multiple terms would be needed. The relationship between the terms wellbeing, flourishing and mental health were salient in that they appeared inter-related but shaped research, policy and practice around different philosophies and assumptions (e.g.

Norwich et al., 2022; McLellan & Steward, 2015). The relationship between these concepts and the perceived purpose of education and schooling were also identified. The list below illustrates the range of terms identified to develop an integrative understanding of this picture. Two key papers published during the course of this research project provide helpful summaries and insights into the conceptual landscape around school wellbeing in educational research Norwich et al. (2022) and policy (Brown & Donnelly, 2022). These papers became influential later in this project (see Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a).

Table 1a. Table of literature search terms

What?	How?	Why?	Where?	Who?
Flourishing; Wellbeing; Mental health; Mental wellbeing; Sustainability	Character education; Positive education; Contemplative pedagogy; Care; Relationships; School practice	Educational purpose; 21 st century challenges	Secondary schools; England	Teachers

Due to the particularly interesting contextual situation with regards to recent updates to school wellbeing policy in England in 2019 (starting year of the project), as well as my own geographical context and research position as a practising teacher, the decision was made to focus on the English educational context.

Literature pertaining to early years, primary or higher education specifically was excluded from the review. The situated context of this research project is in English secondary schools so where international literature was used, this was included where there is clear comparability between the educational contexts, for example, research in Australian schools. All literature used was published in English.

2.1.2 The literature

There is an array of literature about wellbeing in schools, from both a theoretical and a practitioner lens. This material can be divided up into:

- Reviews of evidence and arguments for **why** schools should focus on wellbeing, often relating wellbeing to other outcomes, eg academic attainment, character etc. (Willis, Hyde & Black, 2019 ; Arthur et al., 2016)
- Reviews of evidence for **how** to achieve effective schooling for wellbeing, often relating to whole school approaches which look at ethos, culture, and organisational structures, generally linking wellbeing to mental health and avoidance of health risk (see Shute and Slee, 2016 for a review)
- More practitioner focused work looking at **what** to teach to cultivate wellbeing in schools, from positive psychology and neuroscience lessons, to spiritual and moral teaching, to specific content on health education (eg. Department for Education, 2019a)
- The above relates to a (less well covered) debate (Spratt, 2017) in the literature around **how** to teach for wellbeing (at the level of the individual teacher and classroom as much as the whole school) (Kibe and Boniwell, 2015, Boniwell et al., 2016, Guilherme and de Freitas, 2017, Morris, 2015)

- A set of interdisciplinary research critically analysing what is meant by wellbeing in schools and how discourse in policy, schools and related settings influence the way teachers and pupils experience wellbeing in schools and linked issues (Spratt, 2017; Braun, Maguire and Ball, 2012; Simovska and Mannix-McNamara, 2015; Willis, Black & Hyde, 2019; Krístjansson, 2017; 2020a; Brown & Donnelley, 2022)

2.2 Defining wellbeing and flourishing for education

Two underpinning views shape the understanding of wellbeing in the literature: a risk-oriented view of preserving safety/mental health, or a strengths oriented view of enhancing resilience/flourishing. Additionally, whether wellbeing is conceptualised in terms of experience (or affect) in subjective terms or whether it has objective indicators which go beyond relative experience; this will be unpacked in light of the differences between wellbeing as pleasure (*hedonia*) or as fulfilment (*eudaimonia*). When referring to wellbeing as experience or emotional affect, I refer to temporary experience of emotions (generally positive emotions).

Subsequently relational understandings of wellbeing are explored, and contrasted with universal/individualising perspectives in the policy discourse (Brown & Donnelly, 2022; White, 2017). Following this, key unifying elements of the concepts and the theory are used to inform the framework for this research. I also draw in some other concepts from related debates which are often separated in the literature: namely, sustainability and self-regulated learning, which also inform the conceptual framework of flourishing for this PhD project.

2.2.1 Issues in conceptualising wellbeing and flourishing

The literature on flourishing broadly equates optimal wellbeing with the concept of flourishing. Following some key distinctions in defining wellbeing and flourishing in this chapter, I will be referring to the two broadly as one construct for succinctness.

Strengths versus risk-based views of wellbeing in schools

The concept of wellbeing in schools, as in other social domains, is often framed as:

- instrumentalist to academic attainment and engagement
- associated with mental health support viewed in terms of safeguarding and prevention of risks to health

In both an attainment-focused view and a safeguarding and health risk view, wellbeing is framed within a hierarchy of priorities, and conflated with other ends or seen as a means to an end (for example, improving academic results or ensuring young people's mental health supports academic engagement), rather than as a fundamental end in itself (e.g. Weare, 2022; Willis, Black & Hyde, 2019). Contrastingly, in the literature focusing on 'eudaimonic' wellbeing (most closely associated with flourishing), wellbeing and flourishing is logically the ultimate educational purpose (Kristjansson, 2017; 2020a; 2020b).

In a recent paper unpacking conceptions of wellbeing and flourishing in policy and practice, Norwich et al., (2022) also point out the contrasting dimensions of wellbeing in education policy and practice as flourishing (strengths-based/salutogenic lens) and addressing mental health (risk-based/deficit lens). Through a critical review, they argue that the representation of mental health

and wellbeing as school aims are conflated by leaders/policy, when they serve different aims.

A mental health lens is required to take a protective/healing stance where young people or staff members are suffering adverse mental health to the point that they are experiencing a condition, e.g depression, anxiety, or another social emotional mental health need, often associated with some kind of trauma. This aim of healing a condition is responsive; contrastingly, the aim of wellbeing and flourishing is proactive, universal to a whole population.

Many young people/education staff may not meet criteria which means they require a diagnosis for a medicalised mental health condition, but nonetheless can benefit from a strengths-building approach to school culture which is proactively protective, and which aims at promoting the individual's innate skills. This approach is described as 'broadening and building' (Frederickson, 2004, pp. 1367-1369). It promotes potential contributions that individuals can make to community/society. A lack of clarity in the difference between the two approaches to wellbeing may account for the over-medicalising of the notion of wellbeing amongst school communities (Billington et al., 2022) and the prevalence of additive programmes which can be construed as attempting to "fix" the mental health of individuals in a wider system that overlooks wellbeing for academic/economic performance.

When we jump to wellbeing education before exploring educator understanding of the concept, we assume an awareness and coherence of approach to teaching wellbeing which likely is not there (Sixsmith et al. 2007, Graham et al. 2011; Brown & Donnelley, 2022). This research draws on work which places the function and role of wellbeing as the ultimate aim of human and educational functioning. To what extent educators take this view

should not be assumed. These issues of how we prioritise human wellbeing, in terms of educational aims, is therefore one of the first matters to address when aiming to understand educators' perspectives on wellbeing.

Flourishing as subjective and objective wellbeing (hedonia and eudaimonia)

Hedonia and *eudaimonia*, which I explore here, are likely to be outside the day to day conceptual vocabulary of teacher participants. 'Happiness' and the term 'wellbeing' itself are more relatable lay terms, but they are far less specific and lead to a lack of clarity as to what we mean by 'being well' or 'happy'. Indeed, researchers do not agree on this either (Jayawickreme, Forgeard & Seligman, 2012; Cooke, Melchert & Connor, 2016). This section will explore these issues with a view to considering implications for meaning making around wellbeing in this research in its context of UK secondary schooling.

Taking the position that education is experiential, psychosocial, and takes place first person (Dewey, 1938; Rogers, 1961/1995) this study draws largely on psychology and educational literatures on wellbeing. An important distinction to make when addressing the topic of wellbeing is whether we are discussing *subjective* or *objective* views of wellbeing. *Subjective* wellbeing is more frequently associated with *hedonic* wellbeing and involves data collection methods such as reported positive affect and life-satisfaction measures (Jayawickreme, Forgeard & Seligman, 2012; Kristjánsson 2017; Kristjánsson 2020). *Eudaimonic* wellbeing originates as a concept in Aristotle's *Nichomahean Ethics*, in which *eudaimonia* is a term for the process of living a full, balanced life marked by the development of virtue. The two views are sometimes viewed in dichotomy, and other times viewed as two approaches within the spectrum of wellbeing theory.

2.2.2 Approaches to wellbeing as a concept

Hedonia and Positive Affect (Emotion)

Studying wellbeing in terms of subjective experience and measures creates challenges; it involves operating from non-normative and interpretivist positions, equating optimal wellbeing with indicators of happiness in the sense of reported affect/emotional experience , or 'feeling good'(Jayawickreme, Forgeard & Seligman, 2012; Simovska, 2018). There is wide agreement that measuring happy emotions alone is an impoverished conceptualisation of wellbeing, both in terms of the way it emphasises the emotions of the individual above other indicators of wellbeing (McLellan, Simovska & Faucher, 2022) and in the way it promotes, in its worst form, a 'smile or die' culture (Ehrenreich, 2010, from book title) in which feeling happy takes precedence over feeling one's real emotions, encountering self and others with authenticity (e.g. Joseph, 2015). Beyond this, Sellman (2020) and Pauwels (2015) highlight the role of awareness of negative or oppressive structures in their visions of flourishing, as opposed to an optimistic view that enables complicity with injustices.

Concerns have been raised about the usefulness of subjective wellbeing measures given that there is not necessarily an association between positive affect and life conditions (Jayawickreme, Forgeard & Seligman, 2012). Whatever the detail of the measure, relying on individuals' varied understandings of satisfaction, or wellbeing, may fail to capture the nuances and dynamics of the quality of happiness, especially when simplistic quantitative self-report scales are used without triangulation or qualitative approaches to support (Cooke, Melchert & Connor, 2016). Although significant work into instrument validity and reliability has taken place, considerable disagreement remains in this area as well as variation in the quality of instruments used, for

example, where trade-offs in instrument length occur to support the collection of large data sets (Martela and Sheldon, 2019).

Furthermore, psychological study of emotion highlights that positive emotion (for example in the case of reward) is associated with a number of potentially negative attitudes and behaviours, by objective health and wellbeing standards, as in the case of addiction and excessive consumerism (Seligman 2012; Kasser, 2016). Issues of self-deception (Mele & William, 2001; Gladwell, 2019) and stable personality traits which determine pre-dispositions towards dominant affect in the personality research (Seligman, 2012; Nettle, 2009), indicate that there are significant reliability and utility issues with measures of wellbeing which focus on subjective report and affect alone. There is reasonable consensus across those studying wellbeing and flourishing in depth, particularly from an educational standpoint, that hedonia alone is not a sufficiently powerful or useful view of wellbeing.

Eudaimonic Wellbeing

Many scholars of applied wellbeing research are converge around the Aristotelian view of wellbeing as eudaimonia or 'fulfilled' life (e.g. Ryan & Martela, 2016, p4). From the 1980s, Carol Ryff's work looked to conceptualise eudaimonic wellbeing in terms of its components at the level of individuals to further enable understanding, theorising and measurement of psychological wellbeing. Ryff's model of wellbeing draws on a broad heritage of psychological theory as well as Aristotle's philosophy and is composed of the following features:

- '(1) the extent to which respondents felt their lives had meaning, purpose and direction (purpose in life);*
- (2) whether they viewed themselves to be living in accord with their own personal convictions (autonomy);*

(3) *the extent to which they were making use of their personal talents and potential (personal growth);*
(4) *how well they were managing their life situations (environmental mastery);*
(5) *the depth of connection they had in ties with significant others (positive relationships), and...*
(6) *the knowledge and acceptance they had of themselves, including awareness of personal limitations (self-acceptance).'* (Ryff 2014, p11)

In education research and educational philosophy, Kristjánsson (2016; 2017; 2020a; 2020b; 2023) draws together a project across psychology and philosophy to develop theory of flourishing as the aim of education in terms of a Neo-Aristotelian view. This approach directly addresses educators and education stakeholders. Kristjánsson updates some features from Aristotle considering contemporary findings and the observation of the need for 'enchantment' and 'awe' as components of educational flourishing and wellbeing. His definition is as follows:

'the (relatively) unencumbered, freely chosen and developmentally progressive activity of a meaningful (subjectively purposeful and objectively valuable) life that actualises satisfactorily an individual human being's natural capacities'

(Kristjánsson, 2020a, pp. 1; 10)

As I will explore later in the literature review, the emphasis on the individual over the contextual and relational within both of these understandings of wellbeing raise issues for cross-cultural understanding of wellbeing (McLellan, Faucher & Simovska, 2022;

White, 2017) and for addressing it within a collective context (teaching within a school, and within an ecosystem of connected relationships). Nonetheless the idea of flourishing being 'organic', and about healthy development is shared with humanistic psychology as drawn upon by Joseph's work in *Positive Psychology in Practice* (2015). Such a view can be understood as rooted in relationality (Rogers, 1961/1995; Cornelius-White, 2007) even if it has also been criticised for an individualistic stance (Neff, 2003).

Joseph calls for an integrative approach to wellbeing which moves beyond dichotomising between positive and negative wellbeing, and builds on psychology's heritage of humanistic theory in viewing wellbeing and flourishing in terms of 'organismic' growth:

'The dictionary definition of flourishing invokes the metaphor of growth as a way to understand human experience. Not growth in the sense that economics uses the term to mean a never ending increase, but growth in the biological sense in which things are born, develop to their best potential, and eventually die...'

(Joseph, 2015, p825)

Later, it is worth exploring how we understand 'development to best potential', since one individual maximising productivity or potential can risk to unbalance an ecosystem of relationships as a whole (Capri & Luisi, 2014). Thus a relational or systemic lens needs to be brought to individualistic conceptions of wellbeing, since as Education for Sustainability research points out: : 'one person's happiness can be another person's unhappiness' (Lazarus, 2003, p98 in Disterheft, 2023, p11). It requires acknowledging that aspirations towards wellbeing education take place within a

network of relations along uneven distributions of access and power with regards young people, teachers and their school settings.

Although psychological in orientation, both Ryff and Joseph highlight the essential connection between the psychological and physiological in wellbeing and flourishing. Wide consensus highlights the integrated nature of the physical and psychological where wellbeing is concerned (World Health Organisation, 2004; van der Kolk, 2014 ; Department for Education, 2019a) even if the concept of wellbeing across disciplines and contexts remains diverse (Cooke, Melchert & Connor, 2016). Increasingly, research addressing wellbeing and flourishing points out the necessary connections between awareness of the physical body, and the blurred lines between mind, body and environment, providing grounds for the case that the common exclusion of education around nature and sustainability from the discussion of wellbeing and flourishing is a logical oversight which should be integrated into any framework for educational flourishing and wellbeing (e.g Disterheft, 2023; Oswald et al., 2020; Walshe, Moula & Lee, 2022).

A further important concept in the literature on hedonic/eudaimonic wellbeing is worth mentioning: Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2012), influential in educational settings (Deci et al., 1991; Kowal & Fortier, 1999, Willingham, 2009; Seligman 2012). Martela and Sheldon (2019), suggest that rather than rejecting either the subjective or the eudaimonic dimensions of wellbeing, that there is a suitable middle ground between the two, which is the fulfilment of psychological needs. This is best conceptualised, according to the authors, in Ryan and Deci's Self Determination Theory model of autonomy, competence and relatedness. Such a view of wellbeing highlights that the subjective and the objective be underpinned by

the satisfaction of a sense of psychological need, as opposed to 'want'(Jayawickreme, Forgeard & Seligman, 2012).

Capabilities approach

Finally, from human development theory, and showing parallels with a psychological needs approach, the capabilities approach to wellbeing comes from the work of Sen (1993; 1999) and later Nussbaum (2000; 2003; 2011). In the capabilities approach, wellbeing is based on the notion of facilitating potential to experience dignity, and agency over fundamental pillars of dignified life such as: 'bodily health', emotional experience and expression, access to education and experience enabling 'senses, imagination and thought' (Nussbaum, 2003, p41). This list also includes living alongside other species and nature. The approach has a clear social justice lens (Nussbaum drawing on feminist thought), with an explicit connection to human rights. There is an intention to offer a universal set of features which a person has the capability of engaging with to live well, for example political participation being underpinned by bodily integrity, freedom from violence. Where this approach is perhaps more engaged with the physiological and material, it nonetheless looks at wellbeing at an individual level. This approach has been less readily engaged in the education literature reviewed than subjective wellbeing and eudaimonia.

2.3 Relational wellbeing: key distinctions

Having looked at key dominant models of wellbeing, here in section 2.3, I look at some key critiques, the alternative account of relational wellbeing, and summarise the key features of wellbeing to be used conceptually in order to explore the topic with secondary school teachers.

All conceptions of wellbeing explored thus far are open to two key criticisms. Firstly, they overplay personal wellbeing as the domain of a separated individual, where relationships are a means to an end of individual wellbeing, or at best a measure of it (e.g. Seligman, 2012 in White, 2017). Secondly, they draw on cultural data and social norms which are the product of western thought and scientific tradition (psychology, economics) in which conceptions of happiness and wellbeing are contextualised in the global market culture of late capitalism, and generally, neoliberalism as a specific political ideology (Maiese, 2022). This is such that, in research with village communities in India and Zambia, participants struggled to respond or recognize their own experiences in wellbeing indicators used increasingly globally, and which are based on the individual's experience as separate from the relational or collective (White, 2017).

Interestingly, evidence from teachers/school staff (Billington et al., 2022) and school students in the UK (Brown & Shay, 2021) also indicates that there is difficulty in relating the practice and understanding of wellbeing/mental health to individualised conceptions of wellbeing such as skills in resilience (connected with eudaimonic wellbeing). McLellan & Steward (2015) along with Brown & Donnelley (2022a) raise the importance of drawing on more collective understandings of wellbeing since approaches to wellbeing building on psychology have tended to 'under-theorise' this area (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p6). Following White (2017), recent work on wellbeing in schools (Brown & Shay, 2021; Brown & Donnelly, 2022a) has highlighted the need for a more relational conception of wellbeing:

'Relational wellbeing is grounded in a relational ontology that views relationality as logically prior to individuals, rather than vice versa. It celebrates

multiplicity and resists fixity, seeking always to extend possibilities for relationship. ... Rather than dividing 'subjective' from 'objective', subjective, material and relational dimensions of wellbeing are revealed as co-constitutive. Wellbeing is emergent, the outcome of accommodation and interaction that happens in and over time through the dynamic interplay of personal, societal and environmental structures and processes, interacting at a range of scales, in ways that are both reinforcing and in tension.' (White, 2017, p133)

Relational wellbeing relates to an understanding of wellbeing in practice as being upheld by care:

'everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair 'our world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web.'
(Tronto, 1993 in Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p.3)

Specifically in regards to education and teaching, care ethics (Noddings, 2002; 2012; 2013) comes to the fore as a practicable means of understanding wellbeing pedagogy as rooted in relationality. This literature review will return to the topic of care practice in sections 2.5 and 2.6.

Having reviewed relational wellbeing alongside subjective/objective and hedonic/eudaimonic approaches to conceptualising wellbeing, which draw on a range of theoretical work and empirical evidence, these features will inform the discussions conducted with teachers in this research. In summary:

- Wellbeing may be viewed as building human strength or capacity, or it may be viewed as attenuating risks to health and basic safety.
- Human wellbeing may be viewed as a means to an end (academic attainment, or pupil basic health and safety) or it may be viewed as an educational end in itself.
- Human wellbeing is equated with human flourishing.
- Wellbeing has been researched in terms of subjective wellbeing and eudaimonic wellbeing.
- Subjective wellbeing emphasises reported emotion and experience.
- Eudaimonic wellbeing denotes fulfilment and balance and emphasises objective and structural elements of wellbeing as well as subjective experience.
- Eudaimonic wellbeing draws on organismic metaphors of growth, and also encompasses negative experience, and the 'death element' of life.
- A psychological needs-fulfilment view based on satisfaction of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2012; Martela & Sheldon, 2019) can potentially reconcile divisions between subjective and eudaimonic wellbeing.
- 'Relational wellbeing' tackles critiques of wellbeing as it is conceptualised between a late capitalist/neoliberal and individualising culture, to emphasise that wellbeing is emergent from relationships, and that relationships build individuals rather than the other way around.
- Wellbeing is fundamentally linked to the physical body and the somatosensory.
- There is an important place within wellbeing theory for the relationship to the environment. (Hefferon, 2013; Ryff, 2014; Humberstone 2015)

2.4 Why wellbeing now? Neoliberalism, recovery from the pandemic and trauma-informed approaches to resilience

Following more than thirty years of neoliberal political social structures in education (England and globally) (Ball, 2016; 2018; Thompson, Gunter & Blackmore, 2014), increasing scholarship points to the link between neoliberal culture and current mental health, and wider crises (Phillips & Finn, 2023; Maiese, 2022; Becker et al., 2021; Tronto, 2017). In short, neoliberalism aims to 'marketise' public goods and services under the assumption that competition and consumer choice will drive better outcomes, for example, in health and education (Maiese, 2022; Slater & Seawright, 2018).

Working on a logic of a separating individualism, teachers, students and schools find themselves competing against each other for educational outcomes and resources at national, and international level (e.g. Sorenson & Robertson, 2018; Slater & Seawright, 2018). In a time of widening inequalities and instability, the accountability measures and exam systems that govern teaching, education and much of the social and working world have resulted in a performativity agenda amongst education staff and students, and a sense of precarity and heightened anxiety resultant from depleted community resources and social fabric (Phillips & Finn, 2023;). Having 'enough' for 'success' relies on getting far enough ahead in the competition (e.g. Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). Such a social and political structure has eroded the capacity for and emphasis on building strong community relationships.

When we talk about a rise in mental health and wellbeing concerns and diagnoses in young people and adults (Collishaw et al., 2004; Collishaw, 2015; Cybulski et al., 2021; Hudson, 2022), particularly anxiety and depression, it is against this neoliberal backdrop that it

has occurred. Schools have been shaped to pursue the orchestration of this competition. When policymakers, leaders and international organisations have talked about cultivating wellbeing and resilience to support individuals as though there is something deficient in the individual, this has generally been without consideration for the wider picture of depletion of social and community support, and the heightening of competition culture since the technological and cultural shifts that began post-war.

These circumstances preceded the arrival of the covid-19 pandemic which, specifically in the English system, resulted in three national lockdowns, two lengthy periods of school closure, and the total upheaval of a system made to run, like clockwork, around the build-up to GCSE and A Level or equivalent examinations at ages 16 and 18. Young people experienced turbulence, largely unrecognisable and unrelatable to the adults in their lives. This period affected social development, and increased the instability and/or violence of abusive or unstable homes (Bradbury-Jones & Isham, 2020; Noman et al., 2020), caused trauma, and delays to academic learning. When I use the word trauma here, I refer to the definitions of Maté (2022) and van der Kolk (2014): to quote Maté, 'an inner injury, a lasting rupture or split within the self due to difficult or hurtful events... not what happens *to* you but what happens *inside* you' (Maté, 2022, p20). Nonetheless, in spite of talk about a focus on mental health, wellbeing and relationships for school recovery, as well as discussion of education 'reset' (Rolph, 2022; Robinson, 2020), in reality schools were compelled towards restoring normality, meaning neoliberal education norms. Thus, the school aim that took precedent was restoring performance in terms of exams and achievement in the school curriculum.

Trauma-informed practice approaches provide increasing insights into the psychological and relational roots of behavioural and self-

regulation difficulties for individuals in schools (Emerson, 2022; Harper & Neubauer, 2020) – these may be both for students, their families and education staff. These challenges were exacerbated during the school returns from the two school closures and particularly the second school return, which took place in Spring 2021 (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b). Yet schools were pushed by habit and accountability metrics to emphasise the importance of standardised exam learning and pupil progress measures. Trauma-informed approaches recognise the role of what may seem to be disruptive behaviours as resulting from the heightened anxiety, and fight-flight-freeze states of individuals who have experienced some kind of shocking event or disaster, and who find themselves in a state of perpetual alarm/lack of safety. Individuals coping with these emotional and physiological responses will experience fight-flight-freeze responses and will struggle to engage in higher order thinking, or to attend to social rules due to this state of perpetual vigilance, and to difficulty in communicating this verbally. The work of trauma-informed approaches is therefore to restore a sense of emotional regulation and safety through trust, and engagement with the relational and physiological impacts of trauma and stress (van der Kolk, 2014).

The relentless push to sustain the existing system is inherent in schools' and teachers' work in spite of their awareness that these goals are frequently not serving young people or education staff (e.g. Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012). Where the policy environment continues to place performativity as the central culture via accountability systems, adaptation to a new normal which acknowledges the need for young people to learn about the global problems and uncertainty affecting their lives and the world around them becomes an additive or 'placebo' element to their education

at best, rather than a feature at its core (e.g Dunlop & Rushton, 2022, p1085).

2.5 Wellbeing in secondary teaching practice

Approaches to 'teaching wellbeing' in English secondary schools

There are various ways in which flourishing and wellbeing theories have been applied to teaching and learning in secondary schools. In the figure below I show wellbeing education approaches. It is worth noting that there is a large degree of cross-pollination of ideas and approaches.

Within the approaches outlined, there is a basic practical consideration about organisation, which nevertheless ultimately feeds back to the 'big picture thinking' of philosophical perspectives towards wellbeing and education:

- a. integrated throughout the curriculum, both explicit and 'hidden' (the whole school approach);
- b. dedicated lessons and programmes which compliment or run parallel to other lessons

These paradigms are found across different secondary school approaches to teaching wellbeing which can be summarised according to Figure 1. Though I have defined them as practical differences, the implication is that wellbeing may be treated as siloed to a discipline or component of education, or it may be holistic and run through all elements of schooling. In practice a combination of both is often in play.

One additional point to raise in contextualising these approaches, is the way that they interact with central government policy. Two of the approaches outlined (*character education*, and *mental wellbeing education*) inform specific Department for Education policies (2019) and Ofsted inspection framework criteria (2019) by which the performance of schools in England is judged.

Table 1b. Approaches to 'teaching wellbeing' relevant to English secondary schools

Approach	Key features	Considerations and challenges for relational approaches to wellbeing in education
1 'Character' education	<p>Drawing from values education, character education approaches begin from the perspective that: 'good education is good character education' (Thompson. personal communication, Jan 10, 2016). Character education in this incarnation came about in response to concerns over how to support and explicitly address moral development through the creation of 'a common 'post religious' moral language' (Arthur, 2010, p3) in the context of rapidly changing 21st century society, from which some of the socio-political issues arising, have been associated with the rise of consumerist individualism and a breakdown of common moral purpose, once found in religion.</p>	<p>A first critique: a lack of acknowledgement of issues of colonialism and Western Enlightenment hegemony. In context, Aristotle's approach excluded, for example, slaves and women, from the pursuit of virtue, and so when the theory is derived from such origins, a modern approach might explicitly address a need for a more pluralist approach to virtue, especially when considering the fact that in application, character education often draws from, for example, Eastern traditions in promoting such practices as mindfulness, as the basis for personal and collective educational transformation. Kristjansson's updated version of Aristotle's approach also attempts to overcome this.</p>

	<p>It is an approach based on Aristotle's framework of virtue ethics. This lead to the collaborative development of curriculum materials, concerning teaching character both as a pastoral element to the curriculum and within and through secondary subject teaching (Arthur et al., 2016). In the model, teacher's development of their own character is fundamental to the teaching of character to students (Arthur et al., 2015).</p>	<p>The second issue: character education has been viewed as a classed set of values favoured by a conservative political agenda (Body, 2024), which attempts to shunt the responsibility for genuine structural social inequalities, and their impact on educational outcomes, onto the individual (eg. Francis in Ward, 2019).</p>
<p>2 'Positive education' and wellbeing lessons</p>	<p>In the last ten years, Seligman's PERMA model of wellbeing (positive affect; engagement; relationships; meaning; accomplishment) (Seligman, 2004, Seligman, 2012, Jayawickreme, Forgeard & Seligman,. 2012) has been influential in understandings of wellbeing pertaining to education policy.</p>	<p>Positive education research generally side-steps issues of power and representation in the compiling of evidence and theory, favouring a 'what works' in wellbeing education approach which fails to ask 'for whom?' and 'to what end?'</p> <p>Positive education is a powerful paradigm in terms of its reach, impact and evidence-base in</p>

	<p>Although varying significantly in approach, delivery and format, positive education programmes are commonly characterised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit teaching of the science of positive psychology (Seligman, 2012, Boniwell, et al., 2016) • Teaching of techniques and habits which support wellbeing according to the theories of positive psychology; examples include: gratitude exercises; teaching about emotions and emotional responses including techniques for recognising and managing stress, supporting optimism and changing responses to situations through self-regulation (Seligman, 2004; Morris, 2015) • Delivery through timetabled dedicated lessons or workshops, and in some cases integration through other lessons in the curriculum, such as English and sport 	<p>the context of contemporary educational power structures, but as Reveley (2016) and Sellman and Butarazzi (2019) argue, wellbeing education which operates inside neoliberal parameters of truth and inquiry remains the subject of needed criticism in its role of 'adding lemon juice to poison'. This additive approach to 'education as usual' (Lautensach 2018, p7557), as characterised by Cook (2019) seems to remain unrecognised, either in positive psychology research, or in policy informed by it (eg. Department for Education, 2019a).</p>
--	---	--

	<p>(Hoare et al., 2017; Cherkowski & Walker, 2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative approaches to programme evaluation (Challen et al., 2011; Boniwell et al., 2016) • Often, there is reference to an instrumental agenda of improving academic attainment across subjects, work productivity, or reducing risk of adverse mental health symptoms such as depression or anxiety (Reschly, et al., 2008; Geldhof, et al., 2013; Reveley 2013; Ng, Huebner et al. 2015) 	
3 Mental health and wellbeing education (part of RSE and PSHE*)	<p>In September 2019, UK government launched its new policy package for Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE – DfE, 2019a), and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), in readiness for compulsory teaching from September 2020 (also linked</p>	<p>Wellbeing as a term is not explicitly defined , rather it is inferred through stating the responsibility of teachers and schools:</p> <p><i>'...to promote pupils' self-control and ability to self-regulate, and strategies for doing so. This will enable them to become confident in their</i></p>

	<p>to a Character Education Framework guidance policy – DfE, 2019b). As this project was underway, this policy package shaped attitudes, understandings and teaching approaches towards wellbeing in English secondary settings.</p> <p>Along with a range of topics relating to risk to wellbeing and health, for example around drugs, diet and safe use of the internet, the policy frames the teaching of wellbeing as the acquisition of knowledge on defined topics including: emotions, the link between wellbeing and relationships to others, ‘self care’, the importance of being outside and physical exercise, signs of mental health concerns and types of mental ill health, and finally the role of service, volunteering and community activities.</p>	<p><i>ability to achieve well and persevere even when they encounter setbacks or when their goals are distant, and to respond calmly and rationally to setbacks...</i>’ (DfE, 2019a, paragraph 3)</p> <p>The emphasis here on self-regulation, achievement and rationality in response to obstacles selects from the research and debate in order to emphasise the role of wellbeing in ‘achieving well’ and goal completion.</p> <p>The policy suggests presentation of a knowledge list in schools (lending to more didactic pedagogy although this is not inevitable), but does not recommend any particular methods or how teachers might support young people in practising these habits or accessing these experiences.</p>
--	--	---

		Picking up on the expectation that young people learn to be 'a discerning consumer of information' (DfE, 2019a; Internet Safety and Harms section), able to 'self-regulate' and 'persevere' in difficulty (DfE, 2019a, paragraph 3), there is a preference for an individual responsibility position, as pointed out in Brown and Donnelly's (2022) analysis of the policy landscape on wellbeing in education.
4 Contemplative pedagogy	Oren Ergas (2019) has characterised contemplative education as a 'countermovement' (Ergas, 2019, in title) in the context of performative and standardised education culture. He incorporates three main approaches to pedagogy as fitting into this movement: 'mindfulness-based interventions [MBIs], contemplative pedagogies and contemplative enquiry'. Although contemplative practices have at	Contemplative education is inherently practice-oriented and holistic requiring this discipline and insight from teachers and learners in a way that topic-knowledge teaching simply cannot access. It is transformative in outlook, and coherent with epistemologies which privilege experience as knowledge making, above and beyond a positivist approach to knowledge and truth.

	<p>times been co-opted towards an academic attainment or economic productivity agenda (Sellman, 2020), the philosophy informing contemplative practice means that its function is inherently transformative. Opening 'the contemplative mind in the classroom' (Hart, 2004, in title) is about heightening holistic awareness and enhancing the quality of attention for both teachers and learners as is coherent with its antecedent traditions in eastern wisdom and humanist psychology:</p> <p>'The reemphasising of experience and investigation inherent in contemplative pedagogy shifts the purpose of education to greater alignment with the notion of 'eudemonia', or 'human flourishing', which sees education as a vehicle for human potential and enlightenment, something</p>	<p>Contemplative education involves practices and is therefore reliant on personal routines and training of teachers as well, often involving an adjustment of school culture and routine to accommodate such approaches.</p> <p>In keeping with these features, contemplative pedagogy explores embodiment (Hefferon, 2013) and our connection to the living world, which has led to strong influences and interest in the field of sustainability and environmental education (for example Humberstone, 2015; Pulkki, Dahlin & Värri, 2017).</p>
--	---	--

	<p>radically different to the current neoliberal emphasis on employability.’ (Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020, p72)</p> <p>In bringing about heightened awareness, contemplative education positions itself as empowerment in the context of oppressive or dogmatic structures within mind and culture, as in Freire’s critical consciousness (Freire, 1996, Guilherme & de Freitas, 2017).</p>	
5 Person-centred education	<p>Person-centred education originates in the philosophy and theories of humanist psychology and was promoted by key theorist-practitioners such as Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow and Gordon Allport in the 1960s.</p>	<p>Contrary to criticisms, the requirement for deep responsibility and involvement by both teachers and students, and the iterative and personal process of creating learning and evaluation tools, requires person-centred pedagogy to be rigorous by nature in many ways coherent with the principals of qualitative research. Like</p>

	<p>Building on the growth metaphor, Joseph (2015) has emphasised the central assumption to person-centred education: that educators 'create the conditions' for flourishing. Like a gardener, rather than a factory operator or manager, it is not an educator's role to control the course of a learner's development and knowledge acquisition, but rather to monitor the learning situation and the learner in such a way as to remove barriers and guide growth.</p> <p>Rogers and Freiburg (1994) describe pedagogy and practices which emphasise this centrality of personal growth albeit in the context of the USA in the early 1990s. Contrasted with mechanistic exam-learning and didactic pedagogy, features of person-centred pedagogy include: active learning, whereby students make use of new factual</p>	<p>qualitative approaches to research, however, it comes under criticism due to issues of replicability and generalisability.</p> <p>It is contrary to standards culture and makes the insuring of a 'socialisation' function (e.g. Biesta, 2009) of education by means of the learning of a standardised body of knowledge something of a problem. Many tools and ideas from person-centred pedagogy are alive and well in teaching in the UK since their value in building relationships and developing learners' autonomy is recognised for practitioners. Yet they clash with a standards model which insists a homogeneity of academic learning for all students.</p> <p>Settings and approaches in contemporary UK education which hold strong to person-centred pedagogy in its full form include Steiner Waldorf</p>
--	--	--

	<p>knowledge towards purposeful goals including through group work and problem-solving; 'citizen'-oriented school dynamics, in which students are involved and engaged in issues to do with leadership and running of lessons and school organisation; elevation of the arts through concentrated training and the opportunity to complete creative projects within traditional subjects and arts disciplines; valuing of community; one-to-one support; flexibility and encouragement with supportive student feedback involving such approaches as portfolio work.</p>	<p>schools, Montessori schools (although all are primary), forest school approaches, which have seen a significant rise in popularity in recent years, and outdoor learning (Dillon et al., 2006)</p>
6 Integral education	<p>Integral educationalist perspectives (e.g. Esbjorn-Hargens, Reams & Gunnlaugson, 2010; Wilber, 2016; Brito, Joseph & Sellman, 2021) align with Rogers, but build the approach by drawing on eastern philosophy</p>	<p>Integral education is a nascent project to bring together multiple approaches in wellbeing education, and which relates directly to Gert Biesta's process of 'individuation', learning about the self.</p>

	<p>and embodied cognition research (eg. Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 2016) to address this narrow conception of self. Neff (2003) points out this critique in emphasising self-compassion:</p> <p><i>'In recent years, humanistic psychology ...has been faulted for being too individualistic—for over-emphasizing the need for autonomy, self-actualization, and self-fulfillment while not paying enough attention to equally important needs for relationship, community, and responsibility...'</i></p> <p>(Neff, 2003, p91)</p> <p>Relationships mediate between individual and collective wellbeing; indeed they are the underpinning reality that prove the falsehood of dichotomising between individual wellbeing and collective wellbeing.</p>	<p>Integral education has principally been applied in higher education settings. It provides theoretical links between the approaches to wellbeing education included in this table, hence its inclusion here. Nonetheless, age, development and context sensitive approaches to integral education in the secondary setting have not been developed. It offers a potential theoretical foundation for bringing together the different philosophies of education and wellbeing embodied in the five practice approaches.</p>
--	--	--

	<p>In integral education practice, relationships have been enacted and explored through 'deep dialogue' (Bronson and Gangadean, 2010, p149), through processes of inquiry which create space for first-person and second-person experience as well as objective approaches to knowledge, and a process of questioning which goes back to Socrates and Plato. Methods which resist dichotomising through encouraging metacognitive awareness of the processes going on in judging, knowing and learning allow a means of identifying and correcting one's own understanding through a process of hearing and respecting different positions and experience.</p>	
--	--	--

2.6 Practice, practitioners and agency

Agency

How do the theories explored apply specifically to the action and experience of teachers and pupils? This sub-section on agency considers how teachers, and by extension, pupils, enact wellbeing in schools. For this, we need to look at theory of agency.

Let us assume that, as Kristjansson (2020a) argues, all educational purpose comes down to the pursuit of the purpose of human wellbeing (or flourishing), even if for some people that is maintenance of the social order in the 'status quo'. Biesta (2009) and Hostetler (2005) have clarified how this aim is plural and complex. Teachers (and students) as agents, then, have to speak to this complexity, and take motivated action in school, based on their own judgments and awareness. Agency is variously defined as 'the capacity to set a goal, reflect and act responsibly to effect change' (OECD, 2024 – The Future of Learning and Implications for Teaching, paragraph 17), 'an individual capacity of teachers to act agentically' (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015, p2) (from their own reflection and discerned judgments) and 'an 'ecological' phenomenon dependent on the quality of individuals' engagement with their environments' (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015, p2).

Later in the thesis (sections 7.5, 8.4) I explore how ecopsychological theory can make sense of the alienation and lack of agency experienced when knowledge acquisition (understood as didactic knowledge acquisition as is typical in a classroom) is assumed to build to perception, and then action at the individual level. Nonetheless, the dominant model in education and educational policy is that sharing knowledge will lead to perception

amongst teachers, and then this perception will lead to action and agency. Scholars such as Kris de Meyer (2023) have problematized this model from a neuroscience perspective, particularly in the context of action to tackle climate change.

A range of work has been written about teacher agency, but because it is helpful, I want to focus on Imants and Van de Wal (2020) who build on Gert Biesta's work to theorise a model of teacher agency, contrasting two definitions: the first from social cognitive theory, relates to the individual's sense of ownership or direction over their own life and action (Bandura, 2001); the emphasis here is on agency as individual characteristic. The second definition is focused in action itself, 'that is things that individuals or collectives actually do while affecting their work'. I want to draw parallel here with a present orientation to agency found also in the conception of self-awareness and embodiment theorised in care practice (Noddings, 2013), contemplative traditions and mindfulness research (Ergas, 2017; Sellman, 2020) as well as in Carl Rogers' work. In all these contexts, agency as present awareness and action is transformative.

To look at teachers' experiences of wellbeing in schools, we need a theory of teacher agency oriented according to 'socio-ecological' context as well as which speaks to the individual context (Mannix-McNamara and Simovska, 2015; Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2015). The theory needs to take into account the dynamic and complex organisational structures that schools are. After all, teachers as conceived in the context of this research, exist as contingent on the English schools in which they teach. Imants and Van de Wal (2020) develop a model which reflects the complexity and dynamics of professional development (at the level of teacher change), and school reform (at the level of organisational change). They articulate the importance of recognising that these two

contexts both limit and stimulate ways in which teachers enact their agency.

Therefore, how teachers act in the classroom, build relationships with students and each other, and engage in a vision of educational culture for wellbeing, is shaped by their orientation towards these other factors; their awareness and their intentions. The nature of teachers' agency then shapes what happens around wellbeing in schools. As Bhaskar and Archer's model points out, teachers reinforce the status quo, or act to change it (Bhaskar, Price and Danermark, 2017). This subsequently means turning back in and looking at teacher's beliefs (Biesta et al., 2015) and experiences, their awareness of self and the power structures they operate within. To understand how teachers can be agents of wellbeing education, it is useful to look at Carl Rogers' approach to awareness and presence through 'congruence'.

Carl Rogers on Congruence

'Learning will be facilitated, it would seem, if the teacher is congruent. This involves the teacher's being the person that [they are], and being openly aware of the attitudes that [they hold]. It means that [they feel] acceptant towards [their] own real feelings. Thus [they become] a real person in the relationship with [their] students. [They] can be enthusiastic about the subjects [they like] and bored by topics [they do not like]. [They] can be angry, but [they] can also be sensitive or sympathetic. Because [they] accept [their] feelings as [their] feelings, [they] have no need to impose them on [their] students, or to insist that they feel the same way. [They are] a person, not a faceless embodiment of a curricular requirement, or a sterile pipe through*

which knowledge is passed from one generation to the next.' (Rogers, 1959, p237)

**Note: pronouns updated*

Here, Rogers is highlighting the importance of the authentic presence of the teacher in being able to support students, observe the states and moods inherent in the classroom environment, and to make decisions about their own needs and those of the class. It is notable that Carl Rogers and Nel Noddings (2012) agree on the importance of being open, honest, aware of self and others, and responsive in the present to one's own needs and to student needs.

In order to understand how wellbeing, through teacher congruence, may be facilitated and/or impeded by teaching practice, it is valuable to inquire into the conceptual and emotional conflicts that teachers encounter, and which may impair this presence or congruence, stifling their agency. Later in this thesis (Study 1, p 61; Study 2, p 93 ; Discussion, p 179), I explore links with recent work on teacher wellbeing, which describes the 'negating' (Culshaw & Kurian, 2021, p282) action caused when teachers are not given space or permission to acknowledge the whole of their experience, but must suffer negative experience silently (Culshaw & Kurian, 2021). Alternatively, they simply move in 'unreflexive ease' between contradictory pressures and demands in their professional identities (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012, p95).

A focus on the 'hoops' through which to jump narrows the possibilities for what school success or education is for. It tends to squeeze out time for reflection and development of the teacher and teacher community as a reflective profession, and promotes an outputs-oriented focus on efficiency and 'box-ticking' (e.g. Gewirtz et al., 2019; Dunlop & Rushton, 2022; Phillips & Finn, 2021). Even

as policies and rhetoric aimed around restoring the centrality of purpose and contextualised progress within English school evaluation have come in (particularly as of 2019 – Ofsted, 2019), the well-established norms for managing and structuring teacher priorities and workload prevail around the school effectiveness agenda. Thus, policy and school leadership around wellbeing and character in schools can and certainly do engage with the purpose of schooling, and with the agency and values of staff and students, but they are entering a climate and policy landscape which remains dominated by the contrasting culture of ‘deliverology’ (Barber in Gewirtz et al., 2019, pp. 504-507).

These norms reflect the effects of neoliberal education ‘as usual’ (Lautensach, 2018, Plust et al., 2020; Ball, 2016). The need for authenticity, care and agency through which to develop wellbeing via education appears to emerge spontaneously both as a result of, and, in competition with these norms. Such conflicts are often unvoiced and are not reflected upon by teachers and school staff, manifesting in a frantic scramble to try to do all things at once, simply to stay abreast of the game (Gunter & Courtney, 2023).

2.7 Care and relationships

There is a consistent message in the literature reviewed that relationships and wellbeing are important to each other (Ryan & Deci, 2012; Martela & Sheldon, 2019; White, 2017). I have described how definitions of wellbeing in policy relevant to England tend to take an individual stance (Brown & Donnelly, 2022) which marginalises the relational in wellbeing to indicators or a component of wellbeing rather than the underpinning conditions.

Where wellbeing is conceived as an educational aim, it should lead quickly to questions of educational practice and pedagogy, where 'the hidden curriculum' (Morgan, Pennington & Milton, 2023) and teacher roles come to the fore. Here I introduce the work of Nel Noddings.

An introduction to Nel Noddings

Nel Noddings was an important American educational philosopher, scholar and teacher. She is especially known for her contributions to theory on moral education and care ethics in educational practice. In fact, she died during the writing of this PhD, in August 2022, at the age of 93. Having spent much of her career in elementary and secondary schools as a maths educator, her work is heavily rooted in the practitioners' experience – an important context for this research project's approach, which seeks to ground its design in the direct experience of teachers and their practice. Noddings' academic career has influenced generations of teachers and educators.

Noddings' understanding of the purpose of education was growth through relationships and relational pedagogy, particularly moral growth. Amongst many seminal works developing these theories are 'Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education' (Noddings, 1984/2000) and 'Educating Moral People' (Noddings, 2002). Noddings' ideas about the importance of encounters of care and relationality are persistently relevant in this research. She emphasised that care must be experienced and modelled through dialogue in order to be taught, and that it is in this way that education can serve peaceful relations. Although the teacher is a subject specialist (especially in the secondary context), Noddings' emphasised that this is not their primary function, but to nurture the growth of the person, making practice decisions in their best interests. As a result, Noddings placed high importance on the

intelligence, skill and discernment of the teacher, on their agency and professionalism.

Nel Noddings' theory conceives teaching as care practice (Noddings, 2012; 2013). Her theory describes the relational dynamics of pedagogy for care, and how these practices underpin moral education, through modelling, dialogue and confirmation:

'To confirm another, we need to know him quite well. Then we can attribute a better motive to an act of which we disapprove. For example, in the bullying case, we might say to the bully: I know you wanted to show that you are strong, but that is not the way to do it. You are a better person than that. Confirmation is among the loveliest of moral gestures. Instead of condemning the other, it points him upward toward his better self.'

(Noddings, 2010, p395)

In Noddings' care theory, the teacher's role is responsive to the needs of students and this can be expanded to the 'web of care' (Noddings, 2013, p. xiii) amongst the educational community. A need is expressed, acknowledged, responded to by the caregiver (with a possibility of not being able to respond to the need immediately – if so, a reason is given); finally the cared-for acknowledges the role of the carer. In this dynamic, the teacher's judgment is key. It is also important that the teacher be aware about both the collective needs of students, and their own, in order to navigate the ongoing 'dance' of supporting needs:

'In a caring relation, the carer is first of all attentive to the cared-for, and this attention is receptive; that is, the carer puts aside her own values and projects, and tries to understand the expressed needs of the

cared-for. In describing such non-selective attention, Simone Weil comments that 'the soul empties itself of all its own contents in order to receive into itself the being it is looking at, just as he is, in all his truth' (1977, p. 51). Of course, we cannot really empty ourselves of the norms and values that have become part of us, nor should we do so. But we can put them aside in order to listen. If the cared-for's needs do not clash with our most deeply held moral convictions, we may experience motivational displacement. In motivational displacement, our motive energy flows toward the needs or projects of the cared-for. We put our own projects aside for the moment in order to help.'

(Noddings, 2010, p 391)

Before Noddings, Carl Rogers defined teaching as a 'helping relationship', with interesting parallels to Noddings. In the process of noticing, drawing out the needs of students and a helpful response, both approaches require the teacher to be what Rogers called 'congruent' (Rogers, 1961/1995; 1959, p237). This describes an attitude of responsibility and self-awareness towards one's own feelings and attitudes, and an interest and openness towards the needs of one's students, or the 'cared-for' in a way which enables dialogue, and subtle adjustments to support learners in their growth. Subsequently learners can trust and build stronger relationships with their teacher.

2.8 The body and ecological psychology perspectives

Prior to and over the course of this research project, there has been a discernible increase in the quantity of scholarship connecting experiences of subjective wellbeing to both the body and the natural world, as well as connection to place and community (Phillips & Finn, 2022). In the secondary school classroom, there are two problems with engaging in this dimension of wellbeing. Firstly, the majority of secondary teachers are subject specialists preparing students for exams. The remit of secondary teaching focuses on the head, rather than hand or heart, or the cognitive, as emphasised in recent iterations of policy (Ofsted, 2019). So there is a normalisation of separating the domains of mind and body in the classroom, and specifically the rational, logical mind, often at the expense of the emotional and experiential which relate more strongly to the early brain and physiological phenomena in the body. This conceptual separation follows a long history of Western norms (Billington et al., 2022; van der Kolk, 2014; Varela et al., 2017).

The second problem is that evaluation of classroom teaching focuses on the performance of individuals on standardised tests in subject knowledge. As such, these goals entail training individuals in decontextualised, universal knowledge to serve a globalised economy. In this view of educational purpose, there is no place for *place*. That is to say the specific communities, towns, cities and landscapes that students, their families and education staff, are rooted in. Secondary classrooms reflect this design: with some exceptions such as in Physical Education and Drama. Students are generally seated in rows, facing the front, looking at a projector or the teacher, and shut off from the activities of their wider community during learning. There is extremely limited engagement

with service, or problem-solving at the community level via the curriculum.

Yet we see increasing evidence that wellbeing rests on a sense of belonging, connection and relationality (White, 2017). Connections to people and place afforded by deep knowledge of, and service to the neighbourhoods, nature and landscapes in which one is rooted. This is why, following Nel Noddings' (2013) logic of the web of care, Phillips and Finn (2023) argue for a relational pedagogy which involves making space for a more agentic role for students working in dynamic learning contexts (e.g. community social action and problem solving, and with experts from the beyond the school staff) and a philosophy of learning which builds on eco-behavioural theory: the idea that humans both: 'perceive to learn and learn to perceive' (Gibson in Phillips and Finn, 2023, p120).

The philosophy described makes two key shifts in relation to wellbeing. Firstly, it puts learners in more direct conversation with their environment and those who make up their community, simultaneously both increasing autonomy, relatedness and responsibility. Secondly, it exposes students to lived realities and the agency of other people, material, social and natural structures which offer them the chance to turn and learn from the realities of the world, a key role for education, as argues Gert Biesta (2022) in a time when too often education leaves students with their wants unchallenged, and their selves underexplored, in the 'time of shopping' (Biesta, 2017, 5.13m).

2.9 The case for research with teachers

Although secondary school teachers are frequently conceived as subject specialists in academic learning rather than pastoral

caregivers as is more so the case in primary schools in the English context, secondary teachers are nonetheless key adults in the lives of secondary age students beyond the family. They play an ever more central role as frontline workers in children and young people's mental wellbeing provision (e.g. Lowry et al., 2022a). In spite of peripheral shifts in policy (as in the case of Health Education within statutory PSHE), updates to Ofsted policy (2019) and their core safeguarding responsibilities, teachers' roles in English secondary schools continue to be framed around academic performance within a relatively static curriculum, as a priority (DfE, 2021). Research with teachers points to their conflicting experiences when negotiating their role regarding student wellbeing and student (or teacher) performance (Culshaw & Kurian, 2021; Willis, Hyde & Black, 2019; Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012), according to accountability measures whether in the form of exam results, or Ofsted judgements.

Decisions regarding the policy environment teachers and students inhabit often do not involve their voices. Yet at a time where the purpose or purposes of education are in flux, and in which wellbeing is becoming more central as an educational aim, rather than being siloed to healthcare (Lowry et al., 2022b), teachers are required to engage in their practice as caregivers, and to exercise greater agency in their roles. They must also navigate the varied messages they experience through policy and practice culture having been trained and educated themselves within neoliberal and competitive educational norms. So whilst policy guidance and research syntheses report on new approaches to wellbeing within education and provide directives, it is central to understand the role and perspectives of teachers and their own understandings of wellbeing within their practice. This, in order to make sense of the nuances of lived experience in the secondary school setting for

engaging with wellbeing as a teacher. We can therefore learn from drivers and barriers to student and teacher wellbeing behind the statistics reporting on a decline in adolescent and teacher wellbeing, retention and recruitment.

2.10 Summary

This literature review identified and built on the lack of research with teachers on understandings of wellbeing in education, within a rapidly changing policy and practice environment in schools, particularly in the focal research context of England. Within this narrative review, literatures key to responding to this project's research questions have been scoped. Firstly, this was to understand how teachers' concepts of wellbeing may be shaped, taking in important approaches to defining wellbeing and flourishing within educational literature. These included discussions about the way wellbeing may be evaluated or measured. Strengths-based and risk-based views of wellbeing have been outlined with relation to growing interest in the term 'flourishing' as an aim of education, particularly since the 2010s. Individualised conceptions of wellbeing were reviewed: including hedonia (the experience of positive emotion), eudaimonia (the sense of living a fulfilled life), as well as subjective and objective ways in which wellbeing can be understood and measured. These individualised understandings of wellbeing were then contrasted with relational understandings of wellbeing, with matters relevant to exploring the third research question about the tensions in wellbeing policy and practice also raised.

Secondly, the background of wellbeing in school teachers' practice was reviewed. Here, some background on the relationship of school

wellbeing initiatives to neoliberal educational aims and systems were explored, before examining approaches to wellbeing practice found in the research and policy literature applicable to England's secondary school teachers. Theories appropriate to the application of this practice were outlined.

Thirdly, from these theories, some issues within the interpretation of wellbeing theory, both as concept and practice for schools, were surfaced, particularly as regards the role of the teacher in care, and the increased relevance of understandings about mind-body interactivity (or embodiment) where wellbeing and education are concerned. These led to laying out some challenges to teachers' and schools' understandings of 'teaching wellbeing' where an ecopsychological lens is applied to learning.

Finally, to reiterate, whilst relevant studies and findings including research done with teachers' in English secondary were surfaced and explored throughout the literature review, the case was made for inadequate research and evidence to answer how teachers in England understand and navigate the changing picture on wellbeing within their practice. This was particularly key in the rapidly evolving English education policy environment of the 2010s and early 2020s. This thesis will next turn to the methodological approach developed from the review of background literature and decisions made about the research design given the context of this project.

3 Research Design Methodology

3.1 Introduction - Research Design Summary

A research design with a critical approach aims to surface issues within wellbeing education with teachers in order to clarify their understanding of wellbeing and its relationship to their own professionalism and practice (Biesta et al., 2015; Noddings, 2003). The design draws on transformative traditions of research (Fals Borda, Reason & Bradbury, 2006) though ultimately it cannot be defined as transformative (see section 3.4). As a practising teacher, I worked with a network of colleagues to conduct a year-long, qualitative study, collecting data through interviews and focus groups in three phases through the academic year 2020-21, and into early 2022. The research purpose was to understand how attitudes and practice towards wellbeing, with a sustainability lens (adopting the view that long term wellbeing and sustainability are fundamentally interconnected concepts – see Disterheft, 2023) were constructed by teachers and how they changed over the research period.

Here, I briefly review the theoretical roots of this study, and outline how they inform the methodology, which is composed of the following elements:

- a critical realist ontological position
- a critical and constructionist approach to epistemology
- an integral educationalist perspective to embrace reflexivity as first, second, and third person approaches to multiple forms of knowledge

- an ethical position reflexively updated from virtue ethics to care ethics (see section 3.2 – ethical paradigm) and a commitment to research purpose
- qualitative data collection and analysis methods as best fit to the research questions, and theoretical approach
- a paradigm informed by transformative, qualitative research in regards to field work and data collection, drawing on participatory and critical traditions (though the project itself does not make claims to a transformative outcome)
- a reflexive, thematic approach to analysis which also embraces multiple perspectives and recognises the central position of myself as researcher in the research context

3.2 Methodological paradigm (epistemology and ontology)

This research follows the critical realist position that reality is structured and objectively real in the sense of existing beyond the minds of those experiencing it. Practice for wellbeing education happens as an emergent phenomenon from attitudes and action at the individual level and the collective level, as well as phenomena within and outside of individuals' immediate experience (Bhaskar, Danermark and Price, 2017; Sayer, 1999).

Wellbeing and sustainability are concepts, which relate to inner experience and psychology, relational or interpersonal dynamics between peers, students, teachers and community, and are ecologically embedded within place and time (home, community and environment) (e.g. Bronfennbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Tong & Shidong-An, 2024). Wellbeing and sustainability may appear to be abstract constructs, but they are embodied within the physiological systems of individuals (van der Kolk, 2014; Varela et al., 2016), relational behaviour between

humans and non-humans within a place, and in the material nature of the environment.

Ethical Paradigm

There are ethical implications to this ontological position. At the start of this research project, starting from Neo-Aristotelian theory on eudaimonia, I adopted a virtue ethics approach to research ethics, in line with the notion that through practice and an approach of reflexivity, I would seek to design and conduct research in such a way as to seek balance, or the 'golden mean' for a virtue approach through, for example, compassion (within moral virtue), valuing community (civic virtue) and so on. These virtues can be seen as traits and tend towards viewing one's virtue practice at the individual level, even if these virtues relate to one's interconnection with others. Nel Noddings (1984/2003) drew the parallels between virtue ethics and care ethics as valuable practice oriented ethical paradigms, one enriching the other. The increasing salience of the notion of care and its relevance to wellbeing in my research fieldwork and data analysis led me to reevaluate the theoretical approach I was drawing upon and to delve deeper into care ethics. In care ethics, one guides one's ethical choices in terms of repair, maintenance and sustaining relationships within 'our world' (Tronto, 1993). It allows the researcher or teacher to position themselves within the web of care, and do what one can in any given moment to attend to, respond to, and engage in dialogue with one's research participants' needs in order to cultivate a compassionate and safe space in which individuals can be heard. As a relational and situated theoretical ethical position, care ethics allowed me to recognise my own embeddedness in my research, and thus, my responsibilities to my participants and research audience.

Epistemology

This study seeks to examine wellbeing education as a concept in the attitudes and experience of teachers in English secondary schools, as a snapshot on the discourses, beliefs and activities shaping wellbeing education in English secondary schools in the 2020s. As a construct, wellbeing education is emergent, not fixed but a process in flux and impacted by multiple layers of emergent reality in the school context, as is also the case for the constructed and developing experience and views of teachers. Taking a constructionist approach to epistemology, I share perspectives with participatory methods (Fals Borda, Reason & Bradbury, 2006) which emphasise that the validity of findings rests on getting at the knowledge and observations sought by allowing teachers to initiate and develop their own meaning-making. This is supported through a process of hierarchical focusing (Tomlinson, 1989) in semi-structured interviews and focus groups, which leans towards the non-directive approaches of Carl Rogers (1945). More detail is provided on these approaches within the data collection summary of each of the three studies which compose the overall project.

Role of the researcher

At the outset of this project, it was clear that Carl Rogers' (1961/1995) theory on helping relationships and his ontological position on wellbeing as growth, were going to be valuable in researching teachers' perspectives on cultivating wellbeing in schools, and the barriers therein. As the project went on, Rogers' focus on being authentically present, what he described as 'congruent' (Rogers, 1959, p237), showed a clear parallel with the ethical position I was assuming in relation to care ethics (Noddings, 1984/2003), in which the steps of attention, listening, caregiver response and care-receiver response emphasise the importance of presence, honesty and authentic dialogue. Within the research, this

theory is relevant both to my practice as a qualitative researcher, and to considering the role of teachers around wellbeing.

Carl Rogers' approach aims to create the conditions for maximum authenticity, space for awareness, and hence greater validity in findings. Clearly this also rests on my own transparency and reflection as researcher in order to clarify my own position on how the research is conducted and the analysis is developed. As such I kept regular reflective journal notes on the research process in addition to inner work which could sharpen my awareness of my own emotions, biases and assumptions (Anderson & Braud, 2011).

As a practising teacher both prior to and throughout this project, my role as both insider and outsider is also important to consider in terms of conducting the fieldwork and data analysis. As an insider (practising teacher), I benefited from using my existing professional networks in order to access to participants, who were particularly prepared to talk about matters of wellbeing in schools during the covid-19 pandemic, which had made the topic all the more salient. Since I continued my secondary classroom practice throughout the research project, moving from one school to another part way through the project, I had access to insights into lived classroom experience, both as school policy around wellbeing changed, and as measures throughout the pandemic took effect.

Yet as a trained doctoral researcher, and now a part-time rather than full time teacher, I was stepping outside my teacher subjectivity to look across different contexts to the perspectives of teachers. Becoming trained in research methods and issues for education research at doctoral level and yet retaining my role as a practising classroom teacher meant assuming a privileged position, trusted to be party to intimate personal stories/worries and perspectives due to being seen as both colleague and researcher. I

was deeply conscious of the responsibility to manage this trust appropriately.

In designing the research, I drew on the social constructionist (in Tomlinson, 1989) approach to learning which emphasises the collegiate nature of professional learning, reflection and motivation. In enabling participants to connect with each other at various stages of the project, this process of shared reflection, learning and meaning-clarification was facilitated, an epistemology coherent with Wenger's communities of practice (Wenger, 1999).

Nonetheless, what I had not truly anticipated, was how the quality of these conversations would shape me professionally in my own teaching practice. I have stated in conversation with others on multiple occasions that the interviews and focus groups I conducted during this project have been some of the most profound and eye-opening professional conversations of my career as a teacher, and to some degree, have reinforced my hope that in spite of the barriers to wellbeing *in/as* education (Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2019; Brito, Joseph & Sellman, 2021), there truly is a potential for schooling to adapt its priorities to better serve the wellbeing of children and staff within it, and through this, our changing world.

3.3 Research context

In 2019, new policies implemented by the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted in England led to a new emphasis on school's role in the health, wellbeing and personal development of pupils (DfE, 2019a; DfE, 2019b; Ofsted, 2019). Further funding and policy guidance informing both pupil wellbeing measures (DfE, 2021a) and those for education staff (DfE, 2021b) were

released as the covid 19 pandemic took hold. These policy changes occurred in the wake of twenty years of increasing research and policy work, particularly in the Western developed world, on mental health and wellbeing, paralleling rising concern at rates of mental ill health in the same time window (Collishaw et al., 2010; Slee et al., 2021). Elsewhere, myself and colleagues, as well as other scholars have argued that this focus on wellbeing is a product of neoliberal systems and their undermining of wellbeing at the community level (Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2019; Maiese, 2022; Brito & Wilson, 2023).

In parallel to rising concerns around wellbeing in education and beyond, the build up to this research project also saw an increasing consciousness of inaction on the climate and ecological crises at both international institutional and local citizen levels (IPCC, 2018; Brulle & Norgaard, 2019; Gunningham, 2019). Both issues imply engagement with a need to shift cultural and social norms, institutionalised within education systems through neoliberal structures. Incoherent policy discourses shaping the role of teachers subsequently characterise the policy environment in which teachers define the purpose of their practice and imply a need to get beneath the rhetoric of how good teaching is talked about by teachers in an environment of 'unreflexive ease' (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012, p95) promulgated by a need to switch unproblematically between different and at times deeply contradictory definitions of educational success.

Engaging with the connection between education for wellbeing and sustainability, teacher participants with an interest in one or both of the topics of wellbeing or sustainability were recruited from Autumn Term 2020. Outreach was conducted via personal contacts and online channels and networks, both within my school at the time, the East Midlands based Academy Trust, and professional

teacher networks such as the regional National Education Union and the Teach First network. More detail on recruitment methods and information provided on the project can be found within the recruitment and sampling section (3.6) and the detailed study reports in Section II of this thesis.

Considering the culture of 'unreflexive ease' (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012, p95) suggested by previous work on teacher experience in the UK-based neoliberal education system, significant efforts were made to set up an authentic, open and trusting environment for the interview and focus group discussions. As mentioned previously, referring back to Carl Rogers' approach, the following guiding principals were shared with participants:

Table 2. Table of interview principles (Opening statement, drawing on Rogers, 1945)

Principle	Detail – extracts from statement
Interview ethos of non-direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>As interviewer, I will try to give space to think and reflect on the questions as much as possible.</i> • <i>Silence is okay; it allows reflection.</i> • <i>I have a set of questions but the order is not strict and the intention is that we follow the thread of the conversation so if it makes sense to follow a theme that's come up or explore an example in more detail, we might do this in order to get the most meaning from the conversation.</i>
Interview ethos of non-judgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>You have an invitation to be honest and authentic without judgment. Nothing you say in these interviews will be personalised or identified to you.</i>
Constructionist approach to knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There is no 'right answer'; you cannot be 'wrong' and there is no judgment about anything you do or don't want to explore.</i>
Care and responsibility for personal wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In the context of talking about wellbeing, our own wellbeing as teachers is central, and we are going to look at what it means personally as well as in school. If in the process of</i>

	<p><i>this reflecting you feel that actually, you could do with talking a bit more about something, there is an organisation called Education Support that I want to flag. You can look them up online and they have a 24/7 helpline. Obviously we hope that it isn't needed but I think it's important that we acknowledge that this job has its significant ups and downs and that we are in the middle of an incredibly tough time in education with the pandemic not to mention personal circumstances, so please consider if you might find any of their information helpful.</i></p>
--	--

3.4 Communities of practice and transformative approach

In order to investigate the situated perspectives and experiences of teachers in state-funded, regional English secondary schools on the nature and practice of wellbeing education in the 2020s, this research project employed a transformative qualitative research methodology, drawing on Wenger's (1999) communities of practice model.

The design entailed three 'mini-studies' involving fieldwork from Autumn Term 2020 to February 2022. Twenty-five English secondary school teachers took part.

The research questions for the project were:

- How do English secondary school teachers' view wellbeing?

- What elements of English secondary teachers' practice relate to wellbeing in schools?
- What barriers or tensions are experienced in promoting wellbeing in schools?

This research project set out with an aim of embracing transformative and critical approaches towards research. This is in the sense that it aimed to work with the community which it researches/represents (teachers) to raise critical questions, support shared and community-led learning, and potentially allow further collaboration (e.g. Fals Borda, Reason & Bradbury, 2006; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2017). In this sense, the idea is that the project offered a learning experience, and raised the capacity for change and transformation within the group of teachers it worked with.

In what ways does this project deviate from transformative and participatory traditions?

Firstly, although I myself am a teacher and am a part of the teaching community which I research, this project was not conceived and developed collaboratively with participants, rather its framing grew out of my own experiences in education and the teaching profession, alongside past research experience. Secondly, the project supported collaborative engagement and collective learning in its design, but resulted in only limited connections and subsequent work. In most cases, teachers participated to contribute their perspectives, to share work they were involved in, or their own observations and experiences, and to listen to those of others explored within the research. Teachers did not (to my knowledge) ultimately engage in future collaborations with each other after the fieldwork ended, or become involved in

dissemination or further development of the research, except to read and share the research articles in several cases.

To what extent can this project make claims towards being transformative?

In spite of the fact that the research design stage of this project did not reflect participatory processes, the project was nonetheless informed by many years of conversations and exploration of ideas, including through scoping discussions with teachers who participated in the project (n=5) and who supported me in piloting the interview procedure (n=2). Several participants (n=3) in the project became involved as a result of a separate community led project to run Teachers Eco Network events for Nottinghamshire, and who shared a concern for the interconnectivity of sustainability and wellbeing in education. In this regard, the project was established from the concerns of its participants, albeit a small proportion (32%).

Another way in which we can examine this project's claims to a transformative or participatory design is in whether it resulted in subsequent collaborations/actions between participants. In many cases participants were in the process of engaging with work on wellbeing in their school simultaneously to engagement in the project (examples include: overseeing mental health first aid training at leadership level; overseeing whole staff counselling skills training; establishing whole school embodiment practices; running sustainability projects and initiatives; undertaking Anna Freud centre mental health training; setting up Forest School sessions and facilities). I observe that many of these projects reflected opportunities taken up at the moment of the arrival of the pandemic, a point in time in which the first school closure in Spring 2020 led to increased flexibility in teachers' schedules, an opportunity to undertake new initiatives and to (forgiving the

cliché) think outside the box as regards the confines of 'education as usual'.

As the fieldwork for the project progressed and then came to a close, so too did this flexibility or opening, in teachers' freedom to explore these different priorities. Whilst some teachers shared taking up activities, like running a lunchtime session for students to talk about their experiences for those struggling with anxiety, working on the Nottingham Youth Climate Assembly and ongoing projects, which took place in Summer 2022, taking on new pastoral roles, or year group community activities, and/or in several cases leaving the profession or reducing to part time hours, these decisions and activities were largely individual and/or 'extra-curricular' rather than collective and transformative across the group.

As far as a 'communities of practice' model inspired the formula for the research project, the group did not meet the definition of a self-organising group continuing in their existence over time outside of formally organised meets (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). Still, participants spoke of how valuable they found the experience of having the space to talk about issues of wellbeing in school, and how these related to their lives and decisions. I conclude that in some small and limited ways, this project demonstrates some transformative qualities, but that it fails to meet the scope of a transformative research project (Fals Borda, Reason & Bradbury, 2006; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2017).

What is Wenger's (1999) communities of practice approach and how does it inform this research?

Developing from the research of Lave and Wenger (in Smith 2003/2009), 'communities of practice' describe a theorising of the

way learning happens through collectives of people with a shared disciplinary interest or goal:

'Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour: a tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression, a group of engineers working on similar problems, a clique of pupils defining their identity in the school, a network of surgeons exploring novel techniques, a gathering of first-time managers helping each other cope. In a nutshell: ...communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.'

(Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p1)

The theory has been applied in numerous examples of educational action research (e.g. Ampartzaki et al., 2013), including with and by teachers (e.g. Johannesson, 2020). Drawing from these contexts, for this PhD project 'communities of practice' was selected as a theoretical model for generating a research design structure around the participants and their learning in response to the complex question of practice for wellbeing in secondary schooling. This research design created spaces (online via Microsoft Teams, in person within a host school and other interview locations such as people's homes), during a specific time frame and context (more strongly shaped by the pandemic), where participant teachers could be brought together to reflect on the research questions: the meaning of wellbeing, its relevance to their teaching practice, and the tensions and barriers perceived. Inviting participants with a range of experience, from those with leadership

roles, and heavy involvement with student pastoral needs, to newly qualified teachers, and those in between, meant the community held a range of expertise with different contributions to the repertoire of practice 'experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems' (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p2) to exchange and develop their ideas.

It is worth noting some critical issues around the use of 'communities of practice' to shape the design of this research. Similarly to notions of wellbeing and mental health in a productivity-oriented system, the approach has been widely used within corporate structures to strengthen 'competitive advantage' within the knowledge economy (Coghlan, D & Brydon-Miller, 2014, p136). Furthermore, Hammersley (2005) challenged the way in which theory on 'communities of practice' and situated learning actually call into question the entire endeavour of educational research and practice through institutionalised and formalised structures. These conclusions have relevance to a time in which academic and formalised learning are questioned for their worth in the economy within political discourse (e.g., Craske, 2020) and simultaneously adherence to high stakes, performative approaches to education threaten approaches which offer freer, more self-organised and community-facing modes (e.g. Rogers & Freiburg, 1994; Ball, 2018).

In reading subsequent to this research, I highlight the salience to this research project of Smith's (2003/2009) comments, quoting Murphy (1999) on the implications of communities of practice and social learning to institutional and formal learning contexts such as schools:

'Learning is in the relationships between people...
Learning traditionally gets measured as on the
assumption that it is a possession of individuals that

can be found inside their heads... [Here] learning is in the relationships between people. Learning is in the conditions that bring people together and organize a point of contact that allows for particular pieces of information to take on a relevance; without the points of contact, without the system of relevancies, there is not learning, and there is little memory. Learning does not belong to individual persons, but to the various conversations of which they are a part.'

(Murphy, 1999, p17)

It is interesting that, like the study of wellbeing in schooling, the application of communities of practice within organisations and broader communities reveal a two pronged issue around the need for the recognition of fundamental relationality (both to wellbeing and learning) between people, and of the way in which both are essential to, and coopted by the agenda of productivity or 'doing well' (e.g. Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a). These issues will be returned to later within the thesis (see chapters 7 and 8).

3.5 Data collection and analysis (interviews and focus groups)

Reflections on the interview schedule and interview approach

The methodological decisions made around the interview procedure represent a series of compromises and accommodations between

potentially conflicting features of the ontological and epistemological approach. Here, I wish to briefly lay out what the challenges and compromises are, the decisions that have been made in response to them, and what implications are relevant. In each case, the decision made was designed to support engagement, open-ness and a high quality outcome, both in terms of the interview experience for the participant, and in terms of the quality/integrity of reflections shared by participants. Nonetheless it is important to reflect on the need to navigate personal and professional identities, as well as conditioned versus authentic responses within the data, not to mention my own biases and preconceptions. Whilst the opportunity to influence these was limited, the interview approach was designed to support the capacity to provide a 'non-performative' space in which teachers could share reflections that may be self-censored or unpermitted in their day-to-day professional domain, as well as to raise topics previously unexplored in professional development.

If following Carl Rogers, why have an interview schedule?

It is reasonable to argue that having an interview schedule may be considered at odds with a Rogerian approach to interviews (Rogers, 1945), since for Rogers, allowing the interviewee to lead in their own articulations of meaning and understanding is key. In this regard, the interview design is not Rogerian. To address the research questions, 'what does wellbeing mean to teachers, conceptually and in practice?', I wanted to have regard, on the one hand to the personal experiences and meaning-making of participants, and, on the other, to how the existing landscape of policy and research literature played into these personal

conceptions and experiences (e.g. Imants & Van der Wal. 2020). Making use of the philosophy behind Rogers' non-directive interview technique informed the approach I took as an interviewer with creating an ethos in which participants could speak openly, explore their own ideas and self-direct the order in which ideas were discussed, as well as to select or dismiss topics which felt appropriate (or not) to their experience. Such features of the approach were evident, for example, in the limited discussion of character education in these terms, in spite of its prevalence in the research literature. Questions focused on helping participants to develop their ideas, e.g. reflecting back their wording and asking them to say more about what they meant by a specific term or concept. Working with Rogers' approach (e.g. Rogers, 1961/1995) informed the attitude which I worked to bring to interviews, drawing on Rogers' notion of the 'helping relationship' (Rogers, 1961/1995, pp39-41). This is not to say that I was attempting to 'therapise' or 'teach' those participating in the study, but in the sense that the conversation we were to have was intended to be educative both to the interviewee and to myself (as well as, ultimately, to the research community).

At the same time, it was important to this research project that the existing policy and practice landscape was acknowledged and explored. Rogers, alongside his fellow seminal proponents of humanistic psychology, has been criticised for an overly individualistic presentation of human development and practice (e.g. Neff, 2003). In this research, it was important to explore how teachers' understandings existed in conversation with the ideas, concepts and practice recommendations that were present in the policy and research literature. It was for this reason that Tomlinson's (1989) approach of hierarchical focusing was selected (see Reflection 4.1 and Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p991).

What did the interview schedule contain and why?

The interview schedules were formed on the basis of the research questions. In the first study, the interview schedule contained four 'top line' questions pertaining to understandings of: wellbeing as a concept (personally, and in education), wellbeing in school practice, tensions and barriers around promotion of school wellbeing.

Beneath each 'top line' question were sub-topics to be asked about relating to those areas of the sub-theme. Here I share the schedule questions for study one before continuing with further detail as to how the schedules were developed in each study.

Interview Schedule Questions – Study One

(see Appendix 1a for visual flow chart used as a questioning guide, also for Studies Two and Three)

1. What does wellbeing mean to you as a concept?
 - How do you think of wellbeing in your everyday life?
 - o Before Covid-19?
 - o Now?
 - o How do you see wellbeing in light of other 21st century challenges, eg climate change?
2. What do you think is the relationship between wellbeing and education in your view?
 - Flourishing and education?
 - o **Pedagogy**
 - o -Character education
 - o -Person-centred education

- *-Positive education*
- *-Mental health and wellbeing*
- *-Contemplative education*
- **Theory/concepts**
- *-Eudemonia, fulfilment and balance*
- *-Subjective wellbeing, positive affect and happiness*
- *-‘Growth’ (humanistic psychology)*
- *-Psychological wellbeing*
- *-Health and sustainability*
- *-Self-regulation and meta-cognition*
- **Principles, values and goals**
- *- Risk attenuation vs strengths and capabilities*
- *-Purpose of education/wellbeing*
- *- Interdisciplinarity vs subject knowledge focus*
- *- Body, mind, place (the somatosensory + the environment)*
- *-SMSC – spiritual, moral, social, cultural perspectives*
- Change over time?
- In light of COVID?
- Other events?

3. How do you engage with wellbeing in school?

- Professionally – as a teacher?
 - In terms of culture/school ethos?
 - In the classroom?
 - In specific teaching practice?
- Change over time?
- In light of COVID?
- Other events?

4. What are some of the challenges or tensions in promoting wellbeing in school?

- Professionally – as a teacher?
 - o In terms of culture/school ethos?
 - o In the classroom?
 - o In specific teaching practice?
- Change over time?
- In light of COVID?
- Other events?

In the first round of data collection, these questions and sub-topics were developed from the literature review. In the second and third round of data collection, these were developed from the analysis of data from the previous study (i.e. topics and issues raised within interviews and focus groups). In addition to topics, the interview schedule contains reference to periods in time, in order to support participants to reflect on their experiences prior to the pandemic, during (at the time of data collection), and where relevant, their perspectives on future directions for wellbeing approaches in education.

The interview schedules in Appendix 1a indicate the list of topics to explore as developed through the literature review, however there was no expectation for the interview or interviewee to respond to all topics. The schedule served as a guide to the conversation areas we might explore (via checklist) but the interview process was not 'standardised' to any further degree since this would overly compromise the quality of the conversation and ideas developed. A closer examination of the work done to explore this tension in

methodological approaches can be found in Reflection 4.1 within the first research study.

Study 1 – Interview Study

Study 1 involved semi-structured in-depth interviews with twenty participants to understand the meanings at play in participants' views and practice around wellbeing education. We also explored tensions and barriers towards the idea of teaching wellbeing in secondary school. The interviews use a hierarchical focusing approach (Tomlinson, 1989) which allowed the literature review to inform the topics which were explored within interviews, but which balanced with a constructionist view of epistemology and a non-directive approach (Rogers, 1947) to the conversation in which participants are able to explore their ideas and, to a large extent, lead the course of the conversation. (See Appendix 1a for the Interview Schedules and Opening Statement to interviews; Appendix 1b for information and consent forms and Appendix 2 for ethics forms).

Summary of procedure

Twenty interviews took place either online using Microsoft Teams, or in the case of four participants, in person in the workplace during the school day whilst observing Covid-19 safety measures. Interviews were audio recorded, then transcribed and analysed using NVivo 12 and a process of qualitative reflexive thematic analysis drawing on Clarke and Braun (2006; 2020) was used. This

analysis enabled the conceptualisation of five important themes to be reviewed and developed with participants in study 2:

- 'Doing well' and 'being well' – what's the difference?
- Relationships are the foundation but we need time, space and training to grow them
- Knowing the self – self regulation and emotional awareness
- School culture and community as the 'soil' for flourishing and wellbeing
- Adapting to the body and the environment

See Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, pp993-999 for analysis. See appendices 3 and 4 for table of domain summaries and final reflexive themes.

Study 2 – Spring Focus Groups

Study 2 involved an invitation to 45-60 minute focus groups and follow-up interviews with the same participants as for study 1. Focus groups took place in April-May 2021. Participants were invited to hear a fifteen-minute overview of the findings and initial analysis of study 1, before engaging in a discussion of the five themes conceptualised from the data. As in study 1, a hierarchical focusing schedule (see Appendix 1) was used to structure questions which arose around the themes, but participants were encouraged to direct and prioritise the topics we discussed. There were several purposes to this stage of the research design:

- to validate and triangulate findings from study 1, giving participants a say on how these findings were developed, and the chance to contest or critique how themes were presented

- to enable participants to meet, share practice and consider the perspectives of other teachers interested in the topic
- to collect qualitative data from participants which reflects the changing nature of teaching wellbeing, both in terms of their own understandings, and in terms of their teaching contexts, for example, importantly, in relation to how the management of the pandemic was affecting them as practitioners

These were again transcribed and analysed using thematic data analysis ahead of Study 3. A sample of the coding for data analysis can also be found in Appendix 3, and summary table of codes developed into themes in Appendix 4.

Study 3 – Summer Focus Groups

Between late June 2021 and February 2022, study 3 took place. As for study two, this fieldwork was structured as focus groups with individual interviews taking place where participant availability did not fit the focus group time. There were a number of key differences between studies two and three, including the aims of these focus groups (listed below).

Original participants were invited to these focus groups.

The purpose of these focus groups/interviews was:

- to reflect back and share how the pandemic shaped attitudes and practice to wellbeing education over the course of the academic year 2020-21
- to present examples of specific practice or resources used in relation to the project themes and research questions
- to provide an additional opportunity for teachers involved to meet and network

- to collect a final qualitative data set for triangulation of findings, and to enable a deeper and more robust analysis overall by reflecting the development of perspectives, ideas and events over the project timeline

As in study two, a summary of findings from the project so far was shared with participants. The original twenty participants from studies one and two were invited back. This set of focus groups also offered an opportunity for some participants in the study to present on an element of their practice in relation to wellbeing education, which could relate to changes in practice provoked by the pandemic. This part of the study was also open to new participants, to bring in new perspectives on the study and to ensure a better sample size and range (for example, a greater ratio of men, where women dominated the sample) when a small number of participants (two at study two; three at study three) withdrew before the final stage of the project. New participants were engaged in the same way as for the original twenty participants, with 'word of mouth' providing the main rationale for the involvement of new participants. This presented an opportunity to widen the impact of the research and to gain further insights from additional teacher perspectives.

3.6 Recruitment and sampling

Across the three studies of the project, a total of twenty-five teachers from the English Midlands, the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber contributed as participants from their fifteen various school contexts. Participants included trainee teachers, Newly Qualified Teachers, middle leaders, senior leaders, Special Educational Needs and outdoors education specialists from fifteen

state-funded, English secondary schools. Sample make-up in each stage of the project can be found in the findings section in which an overview of each individual study is offered in more detail.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited via teacher networks and local schools and Trusts with which the lead author had links as a practising teacher. Networks included regional National Education Union groups and Teach First. Participant teachers self-identified as having an interest in wellbeing and/or sustainability in schools as per links to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals three and four (United Nations, 2015).

The sample size was informed by Fugard and Potts' (2015) sampling recommendations; however, Braun and Clarke's considerations in regard to qualitative research samples are also taken on board (2016). I aimed for approximately 20 participants as the best compromise between sampling recommendations, feasibility and analytical rigour.

Validity and Research Position

Thanks to existing connections and networks, the snowball participant sample represents a skew towards the region local to the University of Nottingham. Whilst this was not an intent of the study, the geography of the sample does have potential to frame the experiences outlined in the findings. Nonetheless all teachers were working within the English policy framework of wellbeing in secondary schools and hence likely to be representative of many other regions.

This study does not claim to present the views of a representative sample of the teaching profession in England, but offers exemplar positions and experiences, which can inform a richer understanding of the contexts in which English secondary teachers are being asked to respond to and 'teach' wellbeing. I hold to an ethic of professional engagement, consultation and collegiality around the implementation of approaches to, and research in, wellbeing in schools. Taking a critical look at 'How Schools Do Policy' (Ball et al., 2012), the position of this research is a commitment to 'policy with' and 'education with', not 'policy to' teachers and school communities, since the former places distance between teachers and their sense of ownership over their roles.

3.7 Ethics process

This research project was approved by the University of Nottingham and School of Education Ethics Review Committee. All considerations for informed participant consent, rights to confidentiality and withdrawal were observed, and participant data anonymised in the write up process. University of Nottingham GDPR processes were also observed.

I have approached ethics and integrity in this project along three lines:

- research purpose
- theoretical position on ethical decision making and reflexivity (see Ethical paradigm, section 3.2)
- professional practice and responsibility for research conduct in terms of ethical guidelines

Evaluating the strength of qualitative research often comes back to the integrity of the research to its purpose; is it transparent and ethical? Transparency on ethics requires situating oneself as a researcher culturally and in terms of the politics of the research (Davies, 2008); detail on my research positionality can therefore be found in the Preface, and in the excerpts on positionality preceding each study within Section II, locating reflexivity work within the time frames of the research fieldwork.

As to the research purpose in specifically examining wellbeing in schools with a critical lens as practitioners, teachers expressed that they were motivated to participate because of their desire to speak openly about this topic. The key driver voiced by participants was an interest in the topic and valuing this research purpose, as well as to offer help to me as a researcher, in a collegiate and supportive way. Clearly the tensions in this dynamic needed ongoing interrogation, but given that I share a profession with participants and, seemingly a shared interest or value around education for wellbeing, this created an opportunity for trusting professional relationships in the context of the research. This trust is a privilege I do not take lightly. For this reason, navigating communication via the online platform of Teams as well as email correspondence with a strong commitment to confidentiality and clear communication was central. All recordings were exclusively held on University of Nottingham Microsoft Accounts and One Drive, available only to my supervisors and I.

There is a responsibility to the community of stakeholders enabling access to the participants and spaces to conduct this research (BERA, 2018). In large part, this is in the care given to the design and communication of the study, as well as ensuring dissemination of its findings. In terms of institutional, professional and practical

ethical responsibility, specific important considerations to be made included:

- informed consent in the context of the research design
- data protection, in particular online
- confidentiality and relationships within the context of the study

Information about the study was shared with each participant, and then an ethically approved thorough guide to participant information was shared before they provided informed consent at the onset of the study, via a Microsoft Form. Consent was rolling which meant teachers could continue involvement in the study or else withdraw at any time. Regular repetition of key information about the study and participants' rights were shared at each of the three mini-study data collection points. Wiles (2012) points out that the informed consent process appears a straightforward measure but that in reality, negotiating relationships between researcher and researched is nuanced and requires care. Alongside the need to ensure information about the project is understandable, clear and to the point, so as to engage participants without being offputting, it was necessary to consider the role of gatekeepers and to share information with Head Teachers about the project where teachers were being approached via their school. Once in conversation about participating, it was essential that I explained the nature and purpose of the study to participants clearly, even if the key ideas such as 'wellbeing' itself, and the teaching of wellbeing, are ambiguous, indeed their contested nature being part of the point of the project (Gallie, 1957). Offering chances to discuss or answer questions was key, alongside ensuring participants were given space to make a decision for themselves, rather than for example, feeling coerced due to an existing relationship.

As described by Mercer (2007), when researching in the setting/settings in which one also works, one moves along a continuum as positioned outside the institution and within it (between insider and outsider). Thus when navigating solidarities, collegiate relationships and also friendships with participants, it was important to be continually reflexive about the boundaries around the research. There were situations in which participants opened up about personal stories of distress. Ensuring support alongside professional boundaries again required navigation.

The 'opening' and 'closing' of the interview process with signposting on towards further support was an important measure to allow the stepping in and out of this level of potential vulnerability. Scripts and accompanying information for this process can be found in Appendix 1a. On a personal and professional level, I found one outcome of this situation to be that these interviews were some of the most moving and developmental conversations in my career. In the context of the research topic and setting being explored here, I was privileged as a researcher in my ability to be able to relate to and 'speak the language' of the experiences of my participants in the intermediary interactions between formalised data collection. I reflect that this reality provided both benefits and challenges, enabling an ease in establishing a level of both professional and informal trust with participants at the same time as sustaining both myself and the research participants within the context of an 'in group' of teaching professionals. As Mercer (2007, p8) notes:

'... it could be argued that the potential for distortion is usually greater within the context of insider research, for two reasons. First, as Preedy and Riches (1988, p. 221) note, respondents may face 'problems of tempering the truth in the knowledge

that fruitful professional relationships ... [have] ... to continue after the research had been completed'. In other words, pragmatism may outweigh candour.'

As previously described, the measures taken, and the specific purpose of the research seems to have helped with the issue of candour, not to mention that there were no interviews or focus groups in which I had a directly senior role over the interviewee. It was nonetheless important to take measures to establish trust to speak openly about matters in which teachers may usually self-censor.

Thinking through participant interactions with each other, e.g. within focus groups, it was important to emphasise the responsibility of participants to maintain confidentiality, whether they were meeting on or offline. Due to the collegiate, professional nature of the project, it was possible to engage with teachers' professional guidelines and conduct expectations around confidentiality when setting up the ground rules of the research. Nonetheless, this is a risk within focus group research, both on and offline. Sim & Waterfield (2019) highlight the need to manage interactions whereby conversation which may be distressing or highly personal can be aired where this is potentially beneficial, but with strategies adopted to prevent one person taking over the conversation, as well as to enable a supportive environment amongst participants in which those sharing can trust in the confidentiality of fellow participants. Moderation of the conversation therefore requires careful attention. Sim & Waterfield (2019) highlight the role of emphasising this expectation within the consent process, the preliminary briefing and the debriefing. This was found to be an effective technique for maintaining an open ethos within the group conversations. These expectations were emphasised again at both the point of adding participants to the

Team for the project, in the first focus groups, and repeated in Study 3, for the second set of focus groups.

Opportunities to interact and discuss the topics of the research were overseen, again via the Microsoft Teams platform. This enabled the opportunity for professional sharing and networking online without concerns about the safety or confidentiality of more publicly visible sharing platforms such as social media platforms, although of course in some research contexts, they do and might have their place. Scholars have reflected on the impacts of moving to online interview and focus group formats in qualitative research, particularly during the pandemic (Khan & McEachen, 2022; Carter et al., 2021; Maldonado-Castellanos, I., & Barrios, 2023; Keen et al., 2022). Naturally there are benefits and drawbacks, regarding rapport (Khan & McEachen, 2022) and also regarding the smoothness of the discussion, which can be hampered by all kinds of technical delays (online disruption) and household impacts at the intersection of personal and professional life when working from home (such as children and pets – see Carter et al., 2021). To still enable access to high quality conversations and insights for qualitative data collection, the ground work, structure and personal rapport building process all played their role.

'Rapport during an interview involves a feeling of comfort and confidence in the interviewer. How the interviewer ethically approaches and convinces a participant to solicit their internal views on a subject is an art.' (Khan & McEachen, 2022, Rapport and Data Collection section)

Within this project, through drawing on the Rogerian interview approach described in sections 3.2 and 4.3, alongside the identity capital afforded through my position as a fellow teacher, researcher status and the reputational status of the university, it was possible

to engage participants well with a one to one relationship as researcher. It was, however, more difficult to establish ongoing relationships and rapport between participants so that they might further share ideas and insights between studies. Carter et al. (2021) emphasise the capacity for online focus groups and interviews to 'foreground inclusion' (p1), and I would also observe that they offer an intimacy, which is harder to achieve in a common/professional space such as in a school setting as was the case in the in-person focus group. Nonetheless, ultimately it was in consistency of email contact and in focus group discussions where teachers in the project were able to most 'bounce off' each other's insights. Finding ways to spark further connections and interactions between participants would have required a more structured group meeting, perhaps in person, and this would have undermined inclusion aspects of the project, and a commitment not to overburden participants with important regard for their own wellbeing needs.

SECTION II

Chapters four to six of this thesis include the published article scripts for the three interconnected studies conducted for fieldwork. In addition to this material, within each chapter, I offer reflections relevant to the methods of data collection (interview/focus group) and analysis of the findings, which expose my own learning and observations of effects of wider events on the teachers and school communities implicated in this research, and on me, personally. These can be taken as embedded within the study, or read as standalone pieces. Many of the observations and learning I draw on have relevance to the findings of the projects, and the themes I identified in my positionality statement within chapter one. In the chapters that follow, I present the three research pieces conducted during the events of the covid-19 pandemic: 1) a teacher interview study conducted between Autumn Half Term 2020 and Spring Half Term 2021; 2) a teacher focus group and follow up interview study conducted between Easter and Summer Half Term 2021, and 3) a final focus group and interview study from Summer 2021 to Winter 2021/22. Separate analyses and conclusions for each study are offered here, before the themes are examined as one 'big picture' in chapters seven and eight.

4.0 Study 1: 'Doing Well' and 'Being Well' – Secondary School Teachers' Perspectives

Published with Edward Sellman & Stephen Joseph in British Educational Research Journal, 2023

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3878>

4.1 Reflection: Interviewing English Secondary Teachers about Wellbeing Education

Prior to sharing the first interview study here, I include a reflection piece in which I examine my own interview practice and the use of a hierarchical focusing approach to interview (Tomlinson, 1989). This piece contextualises my efforts to tether the approach in Rogers' non-directive interview practice, and the benefits and challenges of this for my practice and for the research. Further reflections are made in each chapter of Section II (5.1, 6.1, 6.8, 8.2).

On non-directive interviews

How have I approached the first interviews?

Study one involves interviewing twenty secondary teachers on their perspectives and practice relating to wellbeing education. To achieve as constructive and authentic a conversation as possible, it is important that I develop and reflect on my practice as an interviewer as I go along. I want to continually open up opportunities for insights, and hope to elicit a response as close to

the truth for the participating teacher in that moment. The converse would be a hollow response, in which the participant anticipates that they have to perform a response in a certain way. I assume that teachers will not have dedicated a lot of time to reflection on wellbeing education in the past since the policy this research builds on is relatively new in secondary schools. As such, teachers will be unaware of some of their deeper views, and perspectives will be shaped and constructed through raising the questions in the interview. In line with the critical transformative stance of this research, and with the influence of humanistic psychology, the interviews take a 'person-centred' approach. I am seeking to avoid heavily influencing the responses or thought processes of the teachers I interview, at the same time as to direct enough to allow us to talk about the broad territory involved in the concept and practice of wellbeing education. To do this, I have drawn on Tomlinson's (1989) hierarchical focusing approach and drawn up an interview schedule with a 'branched' hierarchy of stages (see **Appendix 1a**), allowing themes to be 'crossed off' as they are elicited, and picked up by me as the interviewer, only where needed. In this way I aim for a balance between directive and non-directive interviewing.

What are my reflections on the initial interviews?

The initial interviews revealed the challenge of balancing the directive with the non-directive. In these two initial interviews with teachers who are also personal friends, I was able to explore the process of following the hierarchical focusing method. One interview took place in-person outside, on a visit to the friend (Interview 1). One interview took place online using MS Teams

(Interview 2). The interview setting had implications for the time needed to come into 'alignment' in conversation with the other person, and in establishing an open ethos in which the participants knew they could respond in line with their own instincts and definitions. One example of this difference, that I noticed when listening back to the interviews was the fact that in Interview 1, the participant was comfortable with taking silences and moved naturally into elaborating her views. Pauses were taken for reflection, followed by provision of additional information and examples. In Interview 2, the participant is quick and succinct with her response. As the interview goes on, it becomes clear that she is unsure whether there is a 'right answer' to the questions asked.

Interview 1 opening extract

RW: So I'm going to get started with...'what does wellbeing mean to you as a concept'?

01: PAUSE. *Yeah I just want to make sure I get my thoughts down...*PAUSE

So I think wellbeing as a concept would cover the...the happiness somebody has with their self in terms of their physical health, mental health, social health...uhm...

PAUSE.

Yeah I think physical, mental and social happiness... I'm trying to think if there is anything else I would... physical, social, mental happiness... yeah no that would be it...

I mean at work we also have a strand that's like a charity strand or a voluntary strand, but for me I

*think physical, mental, social are the key ones.
Yeah, and the happiness they have within
themselves about those three things.*

Interview 2 opening extract

RW: My first question is what does wellbeing mean as a concept to you personally?

02: Uhm... feeling happy and healthy and doing something worthwhile with your time.

//RW: OK

//02: *Oh and being connected to people.*

RW: ...Okay, and in your everyday life, what does it mean?

02: Same thing really: feeling happy and healthy so like having access to healthy food and exercise, being connected to people that you love and same, that in your free time like doing something that you're interested in that gives you a bit of purpose.

RW: Yeah, yeah definitely makes sense. The next question is around... how... so obviously this year's been a bit of a funny year (COVID) uhm so do you think your ideas about wellbeing were different before COVID compared to now?

02: Uhm no.

I also noticed that in my desire to put the participant at ease, I was inserting feedback comments for reassurance: 'definitely makes sense', which come from a desire to help the participant to

continue exploring, but could certainly be seen as reflecting a judgment back, and thus steering the responses of the participants. My initial comments on first analysis reflect this:

Interview 2 Interviewer Notes on Transcription

Note 1 (Start of Interview): *Recording this interview at distance via Teams gives a different feel to things. Despite knowing P personally, there is a little more stiffness and effort required to align with each other in the rhythm of the conversation.*

Note 2 (at Interviewer Question 2):

- A. My body language is a bit forced rather than natural in order to assert presence/confidence in the interview.*
- B. I am reassuring, diving in when P gives short responses. It would be good to give space; state 'silence is okay'. Good to give time to think but also okay if you haven't got a lot to say.*

To manage this dynamic, and maintain an approach coherent with the non-directive and non-judgmental, I have thought about establishing some principles with participants at the beginning of interviews which will allow space for reflection and self-direction within the conversations. I go into this in the last section of this analysis.

The second key reflection relates to defining concepts within the questions in order for participants to construct their answers. At a number of points in both interviews, participants indicated that they were concerned about giving 'the right answer' or that they wanted to be supplied with a definition of 'flourishing', for instance. Given the critical and person-centred orientation of the research, it was important to know what participants understood and believed about the concepts of wellbeing and flourishing *a priori* to any definition I might supply. Allowing participants to outline their own definitions of the concepts discussed gave a helpful framework, both for scaffolding the conversation to move from definitions of wellbeing to applied practice and for allowing participants to direct the conversations as authentically for themselves as possible. Of course, it is important to note that I can never be sure that participants are not to some degree performing a response that they think is most appropriate to the presentation of themselves in that moment. This is the problem of Charles Cooley's 'looking glass self' as explored in Downey (2015) in relation to qualitative interviews. Cooley is widely quoted as framing this looking glass self as:

'I am not what I think I am; I am not what you think I am. I am what I think you think I am.'

(Cooley in Karmakar, 2023, Introduction section)

I can aspire to overcome this obstacle of interview validity using features of the non-directive approach, but there will always remain an uncertainty. This is why reflexivity in approaches to authenticity at interview is so important.

How has theory informed my reflections and interview practice?

In response to these concerns, I explored these issues with my supervisors. Having established the importance of the humanistic psychologists to this research approach, Stephen Joseph (2020) suggested revisiting Carl Rogers' classic paper on the non-directive interview (1947) as a support for developing authenticity in interview methods. Rogers' emphasis on the non-judgmental, allowing an interviewee to determine their own definitions and conclusions provides a method, not only to support the authenticity of contributions and ideas from the speaker, but also supports the interviewee in their own learning and reflection. As a trainee teacher and Masters student, I used Silcock's (1994) work on the transformative process of reflection in teaching practice. This transformative reflection is underpinned by self-directed construction of learning and knowledge. To take an integral approach to education and inquiry, an interior view of coherence of ideas here, corresponds to an exterior aspiration to validity in the research through seeking a practice which enhances authenticity at interview.

How can I develop the approach moving forward?

In response to these considerations, highlighting the double benefit of non-directive methods to the validity of the research design, I intend to add a statement at the start of the interview that can clarify some principals of the non-directive approach for teachers used to 'performing' to pre-set criteria in an educational setting. The statement will establish the following points, which I have formulated below in response to the interview reflections I have talked about here:

- *Silence is okay; it allows reflection.*
- *As interviewer, I will try to give space to think and reflect on the questions as much as possible.*
- *The questions are intended for you to take in your own way and define as you see makes sense to you.*
- *This is an invitation to be honest and authentic without judgment. Nothing you say in these interviews will be personalised or identified to you. I am not making judgements on anything you say here.*
- *I'm going to do my best to go with you. I have a set of questions but the order isn't strict and the intention is that we follow the thread of the conversation so if it makes sense to follow a theme that's come up or explore an example in more detail, we might do this in order to get the most meaning from the conversation. In this way the intention is to be somewhat non-directive. In the focus group I will present you with a bit more information at the start to guide us, but in the interview it's about really going into these issues from your perspective.*
- *There is no 'right answer'; you cannot be 'wrong' and there is no judgment about anything you do or don't want to explore.*

4.2 Abstract

The mental health and wellbeing of young people is increasingly a concern in schools. This study explores how English secondary school teachers perceive and engage with the concept of wellbeing. By asking teachers to reflect on their practice we can draw out their relational experience and knowledge about wellbeing in the classroom. Twenty teachers were interviewed about their practice in the context of the covid 19 pandemic and during the academic

year 2020-21. Reflexive thematic analysis reveals the challenges experienced by teachers. Specifically, we find a perceived role conflict for teachers between care-giving and purveying knowledge. We draw on recent policy research and the work of Nel Noddings to account for this conflict in terms of conceptualisations of teaching practice and purpose. We illustrate how an emphasis within schools on 'doing well' academically undermines and marginalises a more holistic sense of 'being well', which contributes to a set of strains on teachers personally, professionally and relationally in terms of their interactions with students and colleagues. We propose that 'doing well' arises out of 'being well', rather than the converse, and should hence be an educational policy priority, finally we then offer implications for how wellbeing may be woven into school culture.

Key words: wellbeing, secondary schools, teachers (mental health)

Key Insights

What is the main issue that the paper addresses?

This study explores how demands on secondary teachers in England to address mental health/ wellbeing in their school practice are being experienced by teachers, in the context of the academic year 2020-21, mid-pandemic. We explored how teachers understood wellbeing and how this relates to the role of a teacher.

What are the main insights that the paper provides?

Teachers understood wellbeing as the web of relationships between teachers and students, and also between teachers. Teachers experienced role conflict between care-giving to promote 'being well' and purveying knowledge to promote 'doing well'. The pressure to perform 'doing well' in schools was contradictory to teachers' ideas of promotion of wellbeing/flourishing.

4.3 Introduction

Evidence in this journal (Jerrim, 2022), and elsewhere (Solmi et al., 2022), indicates that adolescence is a critical time for the onset of adverse mental health experience and schools now occupy the position of a frontline service. Current increased attention to issues of wellbeing at ground and policy level follow twenty years of growing concerns around youth and adult mental wellbeing in the United Kingdom and other Western countries (e.g. Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Health (DoH), 2017).

However, within the educational research literature there is uncertainty regarding the degree to which wellbeing should inform teachers' day-to-day practice (Willis, Black & Hyde, 2019; Brown & Dixon, 2020; Norwich et al., 2022). Furthermore, wellbeing in teaching practice may refer to medicalised/deficit concerns around mental health (Billington et al., 2022), or towards a strengths-based educational goal of 'flourishing' whereby students/teachers target learning for growth to one's full potential (Norwich et al., 2022). The latter is associated in policy with both character/virtues education guidance (DfE, 2019a) and 'personal development' (Ofsted, 2019) as approaches to curriculum content.

Through their praxis, teachers have a rich set of contextual understandings about how to meet students' needs and how these needs are changing; indeed they have recently been described as 'the forgotten health workforce' (Lowry et al., 2022). Jani and Lowry (2022) found students' relationships with teachers are the most impactful aspect of their school connectedness; the quality of such relationships is found to predict long term physical health, and to impact mental health as much as academic outcomes. In order to understand how wellbeing may be facilitated and/or impeded by teaching practice, it is valuable to inquire into the

conceptual and emotional conflicts that teachers encounter. Culshaw and Kurian (2021) examine the context of teachers' struggle with role conflict whilst Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012) look at this issue through the lens of policy implementation in secondary schools. Both highlight the tendency for teachers to feel isolated and how they must conceal any difficulties or internal-conflict relating to classroom management, in order to perform an image of success and strength. The performance pressures on teachers are shown to favour a culture of 'unreflexive ease' (Ball, Maguire and Braun, 2012) where teachers adhere to expectations of switching unproblematically between contradictory roles (e.g. Kelly *et al.*, 2013), thus creating a difficult context for the cultivation of compassionate awareness towards themselves and others. Whilst school policy levers may have moved on since Ball and colleagues' (2012) research, the 'performance techne' of Ofsted inspections, and competitive accountability mechanisms described in this research remain embedded in teachers' work, in spite of questions about their appropriateness in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic (Rolph, 2022).

Locating wellbeing in teaching practice

Brown and Donnelly (2022a) describe three framings of wellbeing in the policy context of schooling and teaching. These are:

1. a competency/skills-based approach focusing on objectifiable qualities such as courage/confidence or self-regulation, focused on the individual;
2. a morals/ethics-based approach, focused on identifying and providing the tools to address inequalities in society; morals

- here imply universal morality and ethics emphasise a relative, situated, whole-person perspective; and
3. a capital-based approach, which sees wellbeing features as reflecting larger social structures.

The first emphasises an individualising approach whereas the latter two are conceived as collectivising perspectives. Nonetheless a distinction is made between morals and character education as dealing with individualising skills and competencies, and an ethics-based approach addressing the relational and situated nature of wellbeing. When the focus is on a competency/skills-based approach, students are expected to acquire a set of a-priori knowledge and skills, leaving limited scope for exploring the situated lives of students or for questioning such knowledge through dialogue rooted in relationship. Instrumental approaches like these are often taught as a discrete course within the curriculum and allocated limited time/resources, ultimately affecting their perceived status. Programmes falling under this bracket (e.g., mindfulness-based interventions) tend to be treated as secondary to academic subjects leading to formal qualifications (Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2019). The current dominant approach to wellbeing in the English school policy context is in the form of Health and Relationships and Sexual Education within statutory PSHE (DfE, 2019b). This approach lists a standardised set of knowledge to be acquired by learners (usually within a lesson lasting one hour per week), which contains limited acknowledgement to varying cultural and social contexts of school communities. Increasingly, however, this 'individualised' approach to the 'teaching' of wellbeing is being challenged, with wellbeing being understood at the relational and cultural level, between community members, as a 'web of care' (Noddings, 2013, p.xiii). Like ours, such research emphasises the relational nature of

teachers' and students' experiences of wellbeing at school (Billington et al., 2022; Culshaw & Kurrian, 2022; Graham et al., 2016).

What is 'teaching' for? – Care and competence

Noddings (2010; 2012; 2013) outlines how pedagogies of care in teaching can cultivate wellbeing, as the healthy growth of whole persons (Hordern, 2021). In addition to Noddings, Culshaw and Kurian (2021) emphasise the present-orientation and critical professional judgement required of teachers in order to cater for the real needs of students as opposed to their 'presumed needs', termed 'virtue caring'. In Noddings' (2012) account of care in teaching practice there are clear stages which can be honed and practised by the teacher: (1) a need is expressed by the cared-for, (2) is observed by the care-giver/teacher, (3) the need is acknowledged, (4) a response is selected by the care-giver/teacher, including, based on professional judgment, the possibility of not being able to fulfil this need immediately, but with an acknowledgement and an explanation to the cared-for, and (5) the cared-for acknowledges the receipt of care or explanation.

Noddings' account of care-giving is not only relevant to an account of practice for cultivating student wellbeing. Teachers' experience of their own wellbeing/care is also integral to Noddings' care model since we know that teachers' professional wellbeing a) is improved by and even comprised of quality relationships, and b) the roles in the care model are not fixed; teachers may be care receivers in addition to being care-givers in the 'web of care' (Noddings, 2003). For example, multiple studies have shown that positive teacher-student relationships buffer teacher wellbeing and mediate

perceptions of classroom misbehaviour as well as teacher stress/exhaustion (Aldrup et al., 2017; 2018; Hascher and Waber, 2021) in addition to informing teachers' understandings of wellbeing in practice (Billington et al., 2022). Further, collegiate relationships in which teachers engage in care between peers are shown to underpin components of school cultures where wellbeing is cultivated (Hascher and Waber, 2021).

A historic emphasis on qualification as the purpose of schooling, and attentional neglect of how school socializes and builds self-understanding (Noddings, 2006; Biesta, 2009; Brito, Sellman and Joseph, 2021), seems to have underpinned the marginalising of wellbeing and care within contemporary approaches to the purpose of teaching and education. For example, pastoral care is separated from teaching and learning as an area of responsibility in schools. Still, research on teachers' perspectives on wellbeing (Graham et al., 2016) highlights how teachers simultaneously value, and struggle to prioritise, the personal and relational in their practice. Such issues inform the normative positioning of a teacher, who deliberates on practice decisions based on the best outcome for their students (Hordern, 2021) according to their vision of educational purpose. A question we must therefore ask is 'how does wellbeing fit into teachers' views of their practice'?

What do teachers report on these issues?

In order to explore these issues and tensions in relation to practice for wellbeing in secondary teaching, we present part one of a three-part study on English secondary teachers' perceptions of wellbeing in education from the academic year 2020-21.

Specifically, we examine wellbeing through the lens of teacher practice, which means looking at perceptions of both student and teacher wellbeing and how the two interact. As noted, the fieldwork coincided with events as they transpired during the Covid-19 pandemic. In these interviews, we explored with teachers in regional, England-based state-funded secondary schools how they understood wellbeing at a personal and professional level, how they viewed wellbeing as part of their practice, and what tensions and barriers they saw as limiting the potential for the promotion of wellbeing in secondary education. Many of the interviews recorded took place during remote learning and lockdowns, thus filtering teachers' perspectives in the interviews with a certain reflexive distance. An analysis of these conversations using reflexive thematic analysis (Clarke and Braun, 2006) is presented, exploring the dynamics of different understandings of educational purpose, policy positions and praxis with regard to how wellbeing in schools is shaped and constrained, through the experiences of teachers. Through this analysis, we gain insights into the frustrations caused by a belief that the educational purpose of 'doing well' in school should be privileged over 'being well'. This, in spite of the conflicting belief that focusing on 'being well' first is more likely to lead to 'doing well' than the other way around. We thus explore the contradictions and uncertainties inherent in teachers' understandings of 'doing well' and 'being well' and suggest what these may mean going forward.

4.4 Methodology

Interview study design

During the terms of Autumn 2020 and early Spring 2021, individual interviews were conducted with a snowball sample of English secondary teachers in order to ascertain conceptualisations of wellbeing education in their theory and practice. We intended to inquire how policy shifts were being met and experienced on the ground from the perspectives of practising secondary teachers. The interview schedule was developed following an extensive review of the literature on wellbeing education in the English secondary school context. Note that the version of the literature review used in this article is abbreviated for the purposes of article length and clarity. The extensive review was used to create an interview schedule informed by Tomlinson's (1989) hierarchical focusing interview method in which participants were encouraged to take the lead using a topic checklist rather than a prescribed set of questions followed in order.

Rogers' (1945) classic paper on non-directive methods in interviews was consulted and an opening statement developed for interviews, which stated key principles for the dialogue. These were: an ethic of non-direction; non-judgment; a constructionist approach to knowledge about wellbeing; and care and responsibility for personal wellbeing. The principals were key to promoting the transparency, authenticity and trust needed in conversation to enable honest dialogue around the challenging and complex topic of wellbeing in school.

Online interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams, and transcribed. Additional data was also collected on teachers' schools, gender, subjects taught, roles and years of teaching experience to inform our sampling strategy and to provide insight into whether differing patterns in the data varied according to the above criteria. We found no evidence of variance in views across these variables in the data presented in this article however.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited via teacher networks and local schools and Trusts with which the lead author had links as a practising teacher. Networks included regional National Education Union groups and Teach First. Participant teachers self-identified as having an interest in wellbeing and/or sustainability in schools as per links to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals three and four (United Nations, 2015).

Purpose of Study as Explained to Teachers

It was communicated to potential participants that the study aimed to bring together secondary subject teachers to share views and practice in relation to what wellbeing means in education. As stated, this paper focuses on a first set of individual interviews with teacher participants. We stated that through the three-stage study, we would explore the subject in the context of curriculum, pedagogy and personal development. After the interview stages, the project aimed to allow teachers to reflect, share resources and insights via focus groups on Microsoft Teams as well as to consider the impact of recent events on how teachers addressed wellbeing with their students. Results from post-interview aspects of the fieldwork are not shared in this paper. Few studies had yet taken place to explore teachers' views on new models of wellbeing in schools in England from 2019 policy changes (DfE, 2019; Ofsted, 2019). This was an opportunity to contribute to new knowledge on this important topic.

Interview schedule – themes underpinning questions

The interview schedule, informed by hierarchical focusing as an approach (Tomlinson 1989) consisted of four core areas:

1. What does wellbeing mean to you as a concept (personally/professionally)?
2. In your view, what do you think is the relationship between education and wellbeing?
3. How do you engage with wellbeing in school? (e.g. As a teacher, around school, in the classroom, in specific teaching practice)
4. What are some of the challenges or tensions in promoting wellbeing in school?

Each question enabled further exploration of pertinent issues; however, it was not an expectation in this methodological approach that all sub-topics were covered, rather that each theme could emerge organically from the natural direction of the interview.

Participant sampling

Twenty teachers from eleven English secondary state-funded schools in the Midlands, North West and Yorkshire took part in the study. Participants ranged in experience and included trainees, newly and recently qualified teachers, middle leaders (subject and pastoral), and assistant heads (see table for complete list). Years of experience ranged from the first year of teaching to 22 years in the classroom; the average was 9 years.

Table 3. Teacher Participant Sampling

Role (Subject specialism)	Number of participants	Range of years of teaching
Assistant Heads (Maths/Science)	2	7-19
Mental Health Lead (Humanities)	1	4
Subject Leads (English; Languages; Science)	3	6-14
Teachers of English / English and Media	5	1-10
Teacher of Geography	1	2
Teacher of Languages	2	1-7
Teacher of Maths	1	8
Teacher of Outdoors Education	1	3
Teacher of PE	1	18
Year Pastoral Lead (all English)	3	7-22

Data analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis (Clarke and Braun, 2006; 2016; 2019) was applied to the data. Initially, all transcribed data was manually coded at phrase and sentence level using NVivo12 to organise the codes compiled. Codes were developed as emerging from the data.

Once a first stage of coding had been conducted on all interview data, codes were iteratively organised into groups by relation to three research questions:

- How do English secondary teachers view wellbeing?
- What aspects of their practice relate to wellbeing?
- What barriers or tensions to wellbeing in school are experienced?

A procedure of building up domain summaries was then conducted. These categories were intentionally explored for overlap across the questions before themes were developed and agreed.

In a second separate, linked study, these findings then informed late Spring focus groups with participants (study two) which allowed respondents to check themes, reported separately to this paper. The five themes from this phase are listed in Figure 2.

Table 4. Table of themes

Theme
1. 'Doing well' and 'being well' – what's the difference?
2. Relationships are the foundation but we need clarity and more training on how to grow them
3. We need ways to recognise the role of the body and adapting to students' contexts as part of wellbeing
4. Knowing 'the self' – being authentic, self-regulating and making decisions
5. The school community and culture as the 'soil' for flourishing and wellbeing

Validity and Research Position

Thanks to existing connections and networks (see Sampling), this sample represents a skew towards the region local to the University of Nottingham. Whilst this was not an intent of the study, the geography of the sample does have potential to frame the experiences outlined in the findings. Nonetheless all teachers were working within the English policy framework of wellbeing in secondary schools and hence likely to be representative of many other regions.

This study does not claim to present the views of a representative sample of the teaching profession in England, but offers exemplar positions and experiences, which can inform a richer understanding of the contexts in which English secondary teachers are being asked to respond to and 'teach' wellbeing. We hold to an ethic of professional engagement, consultation and collegiality around the implementation of approaches to, and research in, wellbeing in schools. Taking a critical look at 'How Schools Do Policy' (Ball *et al.*, 2012), the position of this research is a commitment to 'policy with' and 'education with', not 'policy to' teachers and school communities, since the former places distance between teachers and their sense of ownership over their roles. When it comes to wellbeing, we feel closing this distance is critical to the health of both teachers and their pupils.

4.5 Findings

Research Question: What does wellbeing mean?

Theme 1a. 'Being well' in the classroom is seen as 1) foundational and 2) relational, rather than a process of qualification in knowledge and skills

Multiple participants considered that they lacked knowledge or focused practice time on specific 'strategies' for teaching wellbeing as a subject discipline in PSHE and sometimes drew upon interventions they had learned in other areas of training, e.g. for supporting students with Special Educational Needs (SEND). They also referred to the opportunity to introduce exercises/content found in positive education and wellbeing curricula such as gratitude diaries and forgiveness letters within formal classroom teaching, as recommended by research in this area (see Boniwell *et al.*, 2016). Examples were introduced in one school as an extra curricular opportunity via *The Art of Being Brilliant* programme. Still, teachers interviewed felt that wellbeing was foundational to learning (generally conceived as knowledge acquisition). Wellbeing was about the active process of learning about and celebrating students' individual strengths. It was simultaneously viewed as a) formative to teaching and learning and b) in tension with teaching to dense, rigid curriculum and standardised assessment structures. Teachers in this study also described wellbeing in terms of relational experience, as highlighted by Billington *et al.*, (2022) and Noddings (2012), and they were cautious of assigning wellbeing in teaching to PSHE lessons or extra-curricular areas, indicating that this "boxing off" of wellbeing as an area of study led to treating wellbeing as an 'add on'. Rather than being 'in the everyday curriculum'; it was 'almost on a backburner' (Participant R).

Rather the main practice of wellbeing was about:

'...building relationships without (pupils) even knowing ...I think unless you're feeling good about yourself, you're confident you're interested in things then why are you ever going to do anything?... If something that... happened at school or at home is in your mind, you're not in the right mindset... Or if you've got a bad relationship with a student or a teacher, that's going to be at the forefront of your mind rather than what you're going to learn that day.' (Participant R, Outdoors Education Teacher)

Participants felt that, although structures and requirements existed to support teachers in knowing students and their social worlds well, these elements of a teacher's role that provide time to build relationships: learning via pastoral, tutor or form group activities and PSHE, in reality, were not given time, training or priority in terms of messaging from leadership or policy. Rather, relationship building and working with individuals was a priority in competition with a system based around standardisation and grades:

'I think sometimes because we are so ... focused on...teaching our students that content that they need in order to achieve grades and things ... we forget about.. the personal side of each individual, maybe we don't really know what things they are interested in.' (Participant H, Languages Teacher)

Theme 1b. 'Doing well' as exterior mastery and performance; 'being well' as interior emotional and psychological health, and experience of balance.

A notable element of uncertainty in the positions of teachers in the study was the perceived connection between 'doing well' in terms of academic success, productivity and performance, and 'being well' which related to health in the sense of the whole person: emotions, the body and a sense of alignment with one's inner awareness, values or sense of purpose.

Teacher accounts suggested *measures of 'doing well' in school veiled issues of 'being well'*. They explored the difference between extrinsic markers of 'doing well' and those students who they saw as authentically flourishing. Participants gave examples of students who were top 'performers' but who experienced deep distress, particularly in exam years:

'I used to be the form tutor... to a young girl who is a national (sports) champion. In terms of how she was performing, she was up there.... on paper just the perfect student. And then she knocked on my door after break time and I had a lesson. She said 'Miss, can I speak to you?'... She burst into tears and ... it was as if it just all came out ...: "I have no idea what my purpose is. I have no idea why I'm even alive." So you get so taken aback by something like that and you think she is somebody who to us, seems like a perfect student, a perfect person. She's obviously performing at the top of her game and yet she's feeling such emptiness ...' (Participant D, English Teacher, Sixth Form Pastoral)

This discrepancy between extrinsic indicators to do with performance or 'doing well' and authentic wellbeing was a foundational thread running through the themes and examples explored in the interviews, and they drew from the range of teachers' experiences whether in the context of the pandemic or

beforehand. There is also a question to be raised here about the assumptions made by teachers through embracing policy definitions about achievement/excellence in terms of the 'perfect student', thus illuminating a clash between a lens which embraces the concept of 'performing' and a 'perfect student' whilst simultaneously questioning the value system this represents and an awareness of its inadequacy, suggesting the enduring relevance of Ball, Maguire and Braun's (2012) critique of 'unreflexive ease'. Teachers shared their own experiences of 'doing well' whilst not 'being well' and the split this created in their experience. They described a lack of space to acknowledge negative experience and a pressure to outwardly always be 'doing well':

'You're having to do this set of things ... to call yourself successful. ...The majority of teachers are feeling under pressure, overworked... a lot of people wouldn't consider themselves to be in touch with themselves (or) experience a sense of wellbeing and then you are kind of replicating this spiral of... a stress-inducing environment.' (Participant E, Languages Teacher, Head of Department)

Theme 2. Relational practice and care

'Being well' in teaching and learning was constituted by the quality of relationships amongst staff and between staff and students. Within the twenty interviews, by far the most frequent theme was relationships and care. As identified when exploring the meaning of wellbeing, teachers reported that wellbeing was not reducible to specific activities and content, rather the cultivation of relationships

was central, which allowed space for both attentiveness and spontaneity.

There was a focus on a need for 'interaction', maintaining the practice of a respectful interest in who students are and what their home context was like, with an attitude and practice of care-giving. As such a teacher's job in relation to wellbeing was conceptualised around this attentiveness, this role of care:

'(Education is) all about people looking after people and as we know... as practitioners, it's so much more than just standing in a classroom and imparting knowledge... because we give care all day.'

'(Participant E, English Teacher, Head of Year)

This conception of wellbeing as 'care' speaks to the degree of teachers' work which is around this practice of attentiveness to students' present states and needs. Examples included noting students' demeanour, initiating conversations to one side when upset or when they seemed in need of support, and generally practising an authentic emotional awareness and interest in students' needs and inner experiences.

Teachers identified how their own wellbeing rested on relationships and connection with support networks, especially with colleagues and other teaching staff, as well as from family. A desire to both offer and seek support without being judged was emphasised.

Simultaneously, teachers raised the issue of tension whereby teacher training and professional development provides limited work on the theory and practice of this care:

'I was thinking about my own teacher training and...how it was always said how we need to be aware of students' wellbeing and our own wellbeing,

and the only kind of real strategies we were given was just to maintain effective relationships with students and colleagues. And obviously that is important, but I don't know if that's ... a real strategy.' (Participant N, NQT, Geography)

Relationships were considered foundational for teachers, but teachers stated that as their roles are conceived principally in terms of purveyors of subject knowledge and curriculum content, often their practice in terms of care for wellbeing 'falls through the cracks' (Participant C, Humanities Teacher). Teachers described constantly having to grapple with other priorities, which took away from time, space and support mechanisms to grow those foundational relationships, and as such, to act as agents for wellbeing education. Yet, this relational aspect of a teacher's role was inevitable and this labour of care in a teacher's work was considered to be an essential but under-recognised juggling act in the classroom.

Notably, some participants in the study had considerable responsibility for student pastoral support, whilst others' roles focused on curriculum subject area. An ongoing tension is observed around whether teachers felt they needed more time themselves for the pastoral focus of their role, or whether it was more appropriate the role be looked after by a separate pastoral team. Such questions speak to divergent conceptions of the role of the teacher. Put bluntly, as caregiver/nurturer versus 'purveyor of knowledge' (Participant E). Nonetheless, if matters of student wellbeing are treated outside students' timetabled day, and beyond the reach of their subject teachers, concerns were raised about how teachers can be aware enough of students' contexts to build sufficiently strong relationships, or truly prioritise care. Furthermore, there is an implication that one can teach without

care, which is in direct contradiction to the conclusions of this study.

Theme 3. Engaging with students' context (time, place, body)

Acknowledging the present realities of students' context (home, community, society, world) and of the body was seen as providing opportunities to integrate 'being well' (interior experience) and 'doing well' (exterior behaviour/activity) as dual aspects of educational experience, nested in the real, lived world. Participants emphasised the need to adapt learning to the changing context of the immediate world around them, whether this be home and community, or in response to national and international events, of which the pandemic was one of many mentioned. Others included examples from alcohol and relationships education, poignant for many students' home contexts, to the inauguration of Jo Biden as president of the United States to the Black Lives Matter movement and developments around the climate crisis. Teachers expressed their frustration that they frequently felt prevented from exploring these topics to their full educative potential with students due to the rigid nature of curriculum content and the challenges of workload.

One participant in the study was a trained Teen Yoga Instructor who taught science to special educational needs groups. She talked in detail about the value of movement for emotional awareness and regulation, due to the somatosensory system's impact on the whole body and the way this affects memory, attention and emotion. A successful daily afternoon yoga activity in one school

resonated with discussions with many participants about the challenges of adapting to the students' emotional needs in a cramped classroom, particularly under the restrictions of the pandemic, and the value for relationship building and emotional regulation found in sports and outdoors education teaching.

We note that observations in this section warrant exploration of embodiment science and new materialism in the context of our data; however we are unable to scope out this substantial additional branch of theory within this article. This is thus an area for further theoretical and empirical work.

Research question: What conditions promote or prevent practice for wellbeing in the classroom?

Theme 4. Self-knowledge and space for agency as an important condition for wellbeing.

Where teachers valued achievement or 'doing well' as underpinning 'being well', this was contextualised to specific situations and individuals, for example, a shy, uncertain student became an active and skilled player in her sport. It was seen as important to celebrate and praise all the little successes that students made, for example in relation to accessing and participating in online learning, as a means of consolidating growth and success in other areas. Flourishing was envisaged as an alignment of 'being' and 'doing well', and was therefore about the capacity of students to reflect and develop on their own particular strengths and to grow in independence and agency as a result of this

'I think if you were to ask staff to say OK, can you identify a child who is flourishing? ... I hope that they would pick the kids who have identified something that they're really good at, and that they're really pushing into. So you know, maybe it's an artistic ability a musical ability...or...not necessarily to do with school... Do they have something that helps them feel valued and feel that they're contributing something? That's... what I would say is flourishing. ... I certainly don't see it as the ones who are achieving high academic success necessarily.'
(Participant T, Assistant Head)

Note that discussions of flourishing did not lead to discussions of character and virtues education (see Norwich et al., 2022) in this study though prompts were offered. Rather this theme resonates with Brown & Shay's (2021) student voice research in conceptualising wellbeing as:

'the power of knowing who you are, where you come from, where you belong, and how you are connected.' (p. 263)

As noted particularly in the discussion of 'being well' and the role of relationships, teachers often felt that the capacity to get to know individual students' preferences and interests was strongly limited by the need to cover dense curricula within tight time constraints. Furthermore, teachers felt that they lacked scope within their time with students to really help them to hone in on individual strengths and areas within which they could flourish; rather teachers felt that although they would love to offer this kind of support, that the structure of learning and demands to cater to other needs and standards meant working in an in-depth way with individuals was

often beyond the scope of normal classroom practice, and down to the students as individuals to seek out.

Theme 5. Culture for wellbeing – Purpose and relationships before measures and content

In their interviews, teachers started by exploring what wellbeing meant to them personally or professionally. They talked about how their own wellbeing rested on relationships and connection with support networks, especially with colleagues and other teaching staff, as well as from family. Emphasis was placed on trust, on the feeling of being able to confidently seek and receive support with a sense of mutual respect, so that when challenges arose, whether personal, in the classroom, or professional practice, there was a sense of trust in finding a solution together. A professional support network was a frequent topic, and in one school, counselling skills training was offered to all staff to support this culture: 'that actually there is someone there that I can talk to.' (Participant T)

So the connection between building trust, and being available and genuinely open to listen to others' needs was considered important to creating a culture in which relationships were high quality and supportive of a sense of wellbeing, both for teachers and students. The indicator here in this particular Assistant Head's experience is that teachers are seen to be seeking and offering listening, support and guidance to each other voluntarily and organically, as opposed to via a formal structure in which parameters of who to go to and when are pre-defined. In an honest and generous account of one participant's own struggles with their mental health, they recounted how support from colleagues was complemented by more formal mental health provision in the form of counselling paid

for by the school, but the support and acceptance of colleagues remained key:

'I had a good support network, amazing, especially from (my) Department. And you know, we just have to get on with things. And I think if you've been at work for a long period of time and you've known a lot of people, when something bad like that happens, that you can...you know you're going to come out of it, you know you are.' (Participant J)

A desire to both offer and seek support without being judged was also considered a key part of wellbeing in school. Where this was in place, teachers described being able to overcome personal and professional difficulties and find support in times of mental distress or adversity.

Within teacher-student classroom interaction, strengths-building through celebrating student success was given high importance. Teachers valued creating a safe, respectful environment in which to engage in discussion, for example, on issues of wellbeing and current affairs in English or PSHE. These were considered implicit and integrated ways in which culture for wellbeing occurred, but teachers did not feel enabled to make the most of these opportunities: *'the curriculum is planned to sort of teach those skills but I feel like they need to be ... more explicit.'* (Participant F, English Teacher)

Teachers' accounts suggested a lack of creative scope to envision how these topics were brought out in the curriculum, and severely constrained time to explore such topics in depth due to the pressure of dense schemes of work. Teachers described a need to be prepared adequately to utilise subject teaching as a tool for building meaningful conversations with students and that, as it

stood, such work represented an 'add on' rather than an integrated aspect of classroom teaching.

'(Wellbeing) does seem to fall in between the cracks of PSHE and safeguarding...it doesn't feel that it's clicked that if you do have a whole school approach where everyone's responsible where it's a preventative approach in terms of we encourage people to talk about wellbeing, encourage resilience, try and reduce ...assessment anxiety, trying to encourage people... if we can embed that, that means that actually we'll reduce a lot of those crises from happening.' (Participant C, Geography Teacher + Mental Health Lead)

Although participants expressed that both 'doing well' and 'being well' were important to the work of schools, they stated that wellbeing, and the caring role of teaching was under-recognised in favour of standardised measures of performance: an inauthentic measure of 'doing well'. They considered talk of wellbeing in school to often be an 'add-on', or inconsistent. Examples of good practice conveyed wellbeing as an essential and embedded priority within teaching practice and school culture, but it was reported that this is not the area for which teachers and schools are judged or held accountable.

4.6 Discussion

'Being well' in school as relationships

This study points to relationships as the basis for how teacher participants see wellbeing in school practice, corresponding to other recent research with teachers and practitioners (Billington et al., 2022; Aldrup et al., 2017; 2018; Graham et al., 2016). For these teachers, relationship-building, through practices of care, are central to day-to-day practice for wellbeing; therefore, relationships themselves are a core purpose of education, and specifically of teaching practice. It would seem therefore that it is a striking omission in policy informing school practice that wellbeing is not recognized as relational within teaching practice (Brown & Shay, 2021); rather it is conceptualised as knowledge, skills and competency content alone.

Through Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education in PSHE (DfE, 2019), wellbeing in school practice in England is conceptualised in terms of a skills and competency area of the curriculum as identified by Brown and Donnelly's review (2022). This contrasts with our findings, which see wellbeing in terms of relationships and relational practice across curriculum subjects (eg. Noddings, 2002; 2012). To recap, Brown and Donnelly outline three approaches to wellbeing within school policy, denoting three distinct conceptualisations. Of the three forms (competency/skills; an ethics-based approach; a capital-based approach from the sociology of education) seemingly the conceptualisation of wellbeing in our data fits most closely with an ethics-based approach, corresponding well with Noddings' conceptualisation of care practice in education as moral education (2010). Rather than focusing on universal morality systems (as in character education) the ethics approach emphasises the relative nature of ethics in young people's specific contexts and cultures, and takes a complex, whole-person approach. Our data also offer some support to Brown and Shay's (2021) third conceptualisation of wellbeing as

a form of social capital and identity-building. According to participants in this study, wellbeing is about giving students and teachers access to relationships, in which they are recognised, cared for, and allowed to grow as individuals, enmeshed in an ecosystem (as evident from theme three, on the importance of the environment and social context). Yet there is a lack of acknowledgement within the policy landscape as to the centrality of relationships, found both in policy analysis research (Brown & Shay, 2021) and in the teaching practice of wellbeing as conceived by teachers in this study. We suspect that emphasis on skills and competencies within wellbeing on the one hand, and, on the other, a recent policy emphasis on a knowledge capital-based approach to the purpose of education (Gibb, 2015; 2017; Ofsted, 2019) may in part account for this.

Care for being well versus pedagogy for doing well? – conceived as a conflict

Another key issue that arises from these data is the perceived conflict between a focus on care in the classroom (to promote 'being well') versus a dominant framing of academic performance as the purpose of teaching (to promote 'doing well'). The message in the study is that the priorities are either confused, or the wrong way round in school practice, due to the way in which policy has embedded a focus upon teachers' roles in subject performance. Yet the view in this study entails a shift in perspective: the rationale here is not that practice for wellbeing is pitted as competing against practice for 'doing well', but that practice for wellbeing supersedes practice for performance, since pupils who are well, and cared for will 'do well' as a consequence. This is indicated by

the quote from the Assistant Head, who stated that students who are flourishing are those who... 'have found something that they're really good at...they have something that helps them feel valued and...that they're contributing.' In other words, students who *are* well and *do* well are empowered to participate actively in their community and feel valued as such.

Though arguably, we have taken a rather straightforward approach to contrasting 'doing well' and 'being well' in teachers' conceptions of educational purpose and practice as they relate to wellbeing, it appears that teachers are not always conscious of these competing narratives, and where they are symbiotic versus in tension with each other. As alluded to by Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012) in their description of 'unreflexive ease' and later by Sellman (2020), teachers are subject to conditioned attitudes and behaviours from within the dominant normative structures of western education. This is particularly so in their conceptualisation of the self, for example: we might see the description of one teacher of 'a perfect person, a perfect student', who is yet 'feeling such emptiness' (Participant D), as reflecting this inherent contradiction. Teachers and society hold a set of expectations around success or 'perfection' at the individual level, in this case as it pertains to 'doing well' in school. These attributes or achievements are things *to do* or *to have*, which are widely and easily recognised by teachers, and yet which mask or distract from educational attention to the way in which students and teachers encounter their own *being*, in an interplay of relationships with others. Thus the tendency is to disregard the 'being', the inner experience of the individual, and to focus on the exterior, or performance in terms of outputs (grades, achievements in extra curricular activities, etc.) From such observations, it is all too easy for an appearance of 'doing well' to be interpreted as all there is to be concerned with.

This issue has been characterised, e.g. by Sellman (2020) and Ergas (2019) as a missing educational entitlement which is coming to the fore via the current polemic around wellbeing in schooling.

As detailed in the introduction, Noddings (2012) describes the relation of care in teaching in terms of stages of interaction: a need is expressed, the teacher attends, responds and finally there is a response from the 'cared-for'. Noddings contrasts this caring relation, as based on care ethics, with 'virtue care' (Noddings, 2012, pp773-4) where a conscientious attitude of care is applied but based upon 'assumed needs' rather than 'expressed needs'. Central to the care ethics approach in teaching is the action of modelling and dialogue (Noddings, 2010); while the teacher is still generally conceived as having more authority, as the carer, teachers model caring relations and place students' voices as central in determining the decision-making of the teacher, with students providing further feedback to the teacher to communicate that care has been received. The receipt of this response is as important for affirming (or confirming in Noddings' language) the teacher as carer, as it is for the student as 'cared-for'. Yet from this study we know, this approach is hard to prioritise: teachers can be 'so ... focused on...teaching students that content that they need in order to achieve grades and things ... we forget about the personal side of each individual.' (Participant N)

Supporting teachers' to practise awareness, flexibility and dialogue in the classroom is thus central to practice for care/wellbeing. It seems there is a parallel between the philosophies of education for 'doing well' and education for 'being well', and Noddings' (2012) critique of 'virtue care'. Education for 'doing well' (as divorced from 'being well') is like that of the 'virtue carer', over-riding the lived experience and present expressed needs of students with the 'assumed needs' of a prescribed curriculum or set of pre-meditated

outcomes. The subsequent practice approach therefore lacks space for responsiveness and dialogue. Accounts in this study position education for 'being well' as attending pro-actively to the real lived experience and needs of both students and teachers. Yet, the former requires a greater degree of flexibility in the way learning is designed, and the insight on the part of the teacher to determine what kind of response is appropriate in the case of an 'expressed need'. This is a teaching skill difficult to transfer other than through experience and reflection and runs against approaches to curriculum coverage which standardize content delivery to the day and time in order to ensure all students meet comparable milestones at the same time.

The relationship between teacher and student wellbeing

Finally, it is worth considering where there is symbiosis and where there is conflict in approaches to teacher and student wellbeing. Teachers' accounts express a degree of demotivation in their work, especially because of a lack of possibility to adapt learning to students' contexts or coach individual students according to their specific strengths. Teachers express a belief that the way things are done in education, and that the approaches teachers are expected to take, do not correspond to the best development opportunities for their students. Again, what seems apparent in accounts of this frustration is a lack of scope for dialogue between students and teachers and between students, teachers and curriculum, due to a rigid system of decision-making. In this context, it seems another inconsistency arises, when we think of teacher wellbeing largely around workload. These teachers

expressed concerns around their workload, but it was also about permission to prioritise the overall development of students as opposed to standardised approaches to content, delivery and assessment.

Yet where teachers felt their work had been particularly helpful and beneficial to their students' development as a unique individual, they enthused about their work and had a sense of positivity about their practice, which imbues a sense of wellbeing. It is striking here that the description of 'being well' appears to be reciprocal, for student and teacher. For example, the teacher recounting how a shy child became exceptionally involved and successful in their sport through the support of their relationship resonates once again with the argument that children flourish when they have found 'something they are really pushing into', enabling them to feel they are contributing and are valued. These examples suggest a positive feedback loop between sense of teacher satisfaction and student wellbeing through having had support in their unique development, and having the acceptance in the relationship to speak openly to teachers when adversity occurs. Yet, an activity, or a skill cannot be the whole of it, as indicated by the outwardly 'perfect student' who is feeling 'such emptiness inside'. Teachers' intimate knowledge of students and ability to see past appearances also matters here.

As such, we conclude that approaching teacher wellbeing through a workload lens alone in which decisions about practice are taken away from teachers fails to capture the centrality of professional judgment, freedom to act to support and respond to students' specific situations and how this mutually reinforces wellbeing. Collegiality between teachers also remains central – in sharing strategies and knowledge to tackle problems together, whether personal or professional. In this case, the capacity of teachers to

do their own 'self' work, to reflect, dialogue and develop their awareness of their own responses to students, becomes more central.

Thus, we suggest common features of the nature of teacher practice for wellbeing promotion; these are an approach which is: present-oriented, individualised and yet interconnected, in which teachers are enabled to listen and respond to the situation rather than having to drive home a rigid and pre-ordained plan (although this provides a core structure; curriculum was often characterized as being too rigid to invite adaptation). Such implications suggest contributions to the puzzle of how schools can support a sense of 'being well' as a foundation to, rather than as an appendage to 'doing well', both in terms of teachers and students.

4.7 Conclusion

For teachers and school cultures, we suggest there remains great uncertainty about the interconnection between achievement, or 'doing well', and 'being well' as connection (to self and others) through relationships. Accounts from this study suggest teachers' awareness of an outer and inner-life for students, and that a student who is 'performing well' by school's markers of success, does not necessarily equate to a sense of wellbeing. This appears true from teachers' observations of students, but also from their reflections on their own experiences in performing what it is to be a successful teacher: *'having to do this set of things ... to call yourself successful. .. replicating this spiral of a stress-inducing environment.'* (Participant E) This all matches with articulations of the 'terrors of performativity' established in the literature on neoliberal education (Ball, 2003; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2019;

Willis, Black and Hyde, 2019) but specifically in the case of this study, we see accounts of how the pressure to perform what it is to 'do well' in schools is consciously contradictory to teachers' ideas of promotion of wellbeing and flourishing, and evidence of the strain this generates for them in their day-to-day practice as a barrier to genuine 'being well'. We suggest that an over-emphasis on individualised conceptualisations of wellbeing in policy plays a part in this dynamic, and thus join with calls for a greater emphasis on a relational understanding of wellbeing (Billington et al., 2022; Brown & Shay, 2021).

Teachers in this study recognized that 'being well' looks different for each individual, and requires the flexibility of the curriculum in addition to being facilitated by the attentiveness of teachers. If 'doing well' builds from 'being well', then teaching should be open to learning about, and practices of, care: modelling; dialogue; and confirmation of students' *and* teachers' individual differences and strengths, within a relational 'web of care' (Noddings, 2010). This entails a particular emphasis on relationship, inclusion and recognizing/celebrating difference, and exploration of the self. In an education which prioritizes 'being well' or flourishing, these are foundational features, rather than an addition on top of 'doing well' in the mastery of content. Such inferences, of course have implications for how teacher training and development is shaped.

A refocus on care offers teachers, and in particular leaders, licence to shift the direction of decision-making in practice to 'what is best for the wellbeing of this class?', rather than 'what is best for their performance?'. Teacher accounts in this study suggest that 'being well' (both for teachers and students) does not emerge simply from the achievement of knowledge or performance standards, but the agreement in this study is that 'doing well' will follow for

students and teachers if allowed to genuinely prioritise the relationships underpinning 'being well'.

5.0 Study 2: Still surviving, rather than thriving - the need to reimagine post-pandemic wellbeing according to secondary school teachers

Published with Edward Sellman & Stephen Joseph in Journal of Pastoral Care in Education, 2023

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2023.2254792>

I begin this chapter with a reflection piece emerging from Study One regarding the need for space and preparation to explore 'the negative' when talking about emotional experience and wellbeing education in schools. These considerations offer a backdrop to the tone of Study Two's focus groups and interview content, offering indications of what goes under the surface when negative experience is disregarded or unpermitted in the educational space, as a potential distraction from productive 'business as usual' (Macy & Johnstone, 2012/2020 – see chapter seven).

5.1 Reflection: On the relationship between negative emotional experience and wellbeing in schools

It is late November 2020, and deep into the first term of schools operating under COVID measures. In the context of a week in which I have conducted three interviews with teachers, I have become aware of the importance of acknowledging and listening to negative emotions and experience for researching wellbeing and flourishing in schools. The teachers I have spoken to this week have been generous and authentic enough to talk about their wellbeing and mental health struggles and how these have interacted with the work of teaching. These accounts of chronic,

high-functioning anxiety, managing depression, and in other cases, just fatigue and frustration, drove home two important points for me, which I want to explore in my reflexivity work this week.

Firstly, the ubiquity of time pressure and outcomes-oriented approaches to the point of directing seemingly all teacher (and pupil) time seems incompatible with the non-directive and the exploratory in schools and in the lives of teachers. Perhaps ironically, to cope with the demands of performance pressure, responsibility for pupil wellbeing, behaviour and attainment, content overload and change adaptation, teachers and schools seem inclined to structure timings and pedagogy even more within their lessons and routines. I wonder what is the implication of this marginalising of non-directed time? It even extends to lunchtimes, where teachers and students lack time to properly sit down and eat.

Secondly, these experiences have highlighted for me how much our negative experiences inform our positions and approaches in education. Of course, we want schools and classrooms to be safe spaces where, within reason, routines and traditions allow us to focus attention on the subject of the lesson. Yet, as Sellman and Buttarazzi (2019) have argued, if we cultivate authentic awareness through mindful contemplation or practice, allowing emotions, ideas and thoughts to surface with space and distance for teachers or pupils, it can reveal to us negative and oppressive structures or fears, within ourselves or those that we observe around us. The point is not simply to 'cope' or be 'resilient' in terms of 'grit' as critics of positive psychology and character education such as Reveley (2016) and Jerome and Kisby (2020) have argued, but to explore and see these power structures for what they are. Then to see how they may create barriers to aims of wellbeing, growth or flourishing. Then, we have agency to change them. So it might be

said here that awareness, agency and wellbeing go hand in hand. And that they require time for non-directive cultivation of attention.

With this in mind, I feel I have a responsibility to explore and explicate my own struggles and mental health challenges in education, as a teacher.

When I started teaching (and training) as a secondary languages teacher, it was at a school in a northern, industrial English town serving two estates high on multiple indexes of deprivation. I moved there with my housemate, who was training to teach maths. We were both fresh-faced and with high aspirations and hopes for our time in the classroom.

In the first term, the school's Head left, it was inspected and put into special measures, and my housemate experienced a near fatal car accident, putting her in a back brace for three months, so she moved home to her parents. (Thankfully, she made a full recovery.) I was living alone in this strange context. My mentor went off on long term sickness leave and I was more or less alone trying and failing to inspire my pupils in French. Strangely, though there were many tears and struggles, and a lack of sleep or time to really look after my basic needs owing to my inexperience and the workload, I was, at the core of things, okay. I think this is because I was able to see that these circumstances were exceptional, that they would get better, and that I should not expect too much of myself as a very new teacher.

But, after I qualified, and the battles did not seem to be going away, I started to enter into periodic spirals of feeling deeply inadequate, anxious and stressed about trying to keep up with the workload, and meeting expectations for pupil engagement and progress in my lessons. In the Spring of my second year of

teaching, I ended up having panic attacks a couple of times when at school, and seeing a doctor. I left armed with some advice on creating space in my routine, and a new meditation app, but even with my new practices, the same patterns emerged in the Spring of my third year of teaching, accompanied by feelings of failure as I negotiated a difficult GCSE group who were unimpressed with the idea of compulsory GCSE French, and who essentially just did not like their new teacher. Although I could describe these periods of feeling more acutely stressed or anxious as being in relation to the job, one of the defining mental wellbeing challenges that emerged for me over the five years I taught full time was dumps of morning anxiety and low mood, coupled with existential dread around world events, from the referendum vote to climate change. I kept looking at my work, and the world around me, and asking, what can I possibly do to try to prepare these young people (and myself for that matter) to live well in this world in which we all seem to be losing the plot? I remember thinking that I was pretty sure a low grade in GCSE French was not going to cut it. I also remember moments in which the difficulties I was having with students stemmed from feelings of disconnect with the learning, self doubt or difficulties in relationships at home or outside the classroom, but the rule book, the assessments, the scheme of learning seemed to allow no space or resources to prepare me to properly address these inevitable needs of my students.

The reason I recount these things is not because I feel hopeless about the prospects for our young people, or for education. I also want to emphasise the many wonderful times, moments of flow and connections with my pupils in the classroom during these years. I think, though, that it is important to recognise the prevailing feeling that these negative emotions and experiences in education left me with – shared, as I am learning with other

teachers: it is not that we are all chemically imbalanced and need to take a course in positive psychology. It is that the world in which we are teaching and learning is in rapid flux, and we have not got our priorities straight. Instead of worrying about how we maintain and return things to the same as they were, we need to be asking ourselves what it is that is most important for our schools and young people, how we build real resilience through agency to address the continuing ups and downs of our complex 21st century world, and how to create space to be creative, authentic and self-knowing through the tipping points and crises.

5.2 Abstract

In Spring Term 2021 following the second school closure and third lockdown in England, educational recovery and catch-up were key concerns for secondary schools. Following teacher interviews regarding wellbeing in secondary school teaching practice in Winter 2020-21, teachers from ten schools (n=18) took part in focus groups and interviews to explore their understandings of practice for wellbeing in the classroom, and how the circumstances of the school return were impacting these understandings and experiences, mid-pandemic. Teachers reported their perspectives for reflexive thematic analysis. As with other reporting of school recovery post-disaster, re-establishing the safety of normality and routine was considered key. Yet promises of a 'new normal' sensitive to the already concerning landscape of youth wellbeing and mental health in the UK was soon re-prioritised as a focus on 'catch up' and re-establishing performance goals within subject disciplines. Accounts of challenging student behaviour and teacher stress were elevated but met with a response that focused on the role of teacher as purveyor of subject knowledge rather than care-givers. The duty of schools in providing trauma-informed cultures was also under-recognized though relevant to the needs articulated by teachers in this study.

5.3 Introduction

The return to school following three lockdowns and two school closures in Spring of 2021 in England (mid Covid 19 pandemic) represented an intense transition for students and their teachers interacting with a pre-existing landscape of poor mental health in

young people (Jerrim, 2022; Solmi et al., 2022). The Covid 19 pandemic can be understood as a global disaster affecting all communities at local level; schools encountered their own particularities yet the ubiquitous nature of this transition means the lessons learned from this time are salient for most school contexts, with secondary schools across England undergoing comparable challenges simultaneously. The implications of this wrenching from routine and expectations for the two years of schooling draw parallels with other disasters, and provoke insights from trauma-informed (Emerson, 2022) and community-based approaches to recovery (Mooney et al., 2021).

Wellbeing in schools and the role of secondary teachers

Prior to the Covid 19 pandemic, there were elevated concerns about both the mental health of teachers (Jerrim et al., 2021) and that of students (Maiese, 2022). Neoliberal educational culture over the past thirty years provided a backdrop to high levels of teacher burnout and attrition (Acton & Glasgow, 2015; Jerrim & Sims, 2019), as well as youth depression and anxiety, linked amongst other factors, to high stakes exams and other accountability measures characteristic of performative school systems (Timimi, 2010; Maiese, 2022; Perryman & Calvert, 2019). In such a cultural environment teachers and students struggle to be authentic, and to prioritise relationships, as our other research indicates (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023; Plust, Joseph & Murphy, 2020). This meant that good intentions for emotional recovery in Spring 2021 requiring care, empathy and compassion met with an education

profession and student cohort habituated to instrumentalism, competition and standardisation.

Teachers in England have significant responsibility for pastoral care and wellbeing via their policy context (Department for Education [DfE], 2011; Department of Health & DfE, 2017; DfE, 2019; Ofsted, 2019; DfE, 2022). Teachers are frequently the first access point to adult mentoring and coaching available to young people beyond the home. Students' wellbeing needs to be understood within the wider 'web of care' (Noddings, 2013; Billington et al., 2022) of the school community and the cultures which inform how teachers interact to support each other through struggle (Culshaw & Kurian, 2021).

Through their professional classroom experience, teachers have unique and rich insights into how to meet students' needs. They also see first-hand how these needs are changing. Recently described as 'the forgotten health workforce' (Lowry et al., 2022), teachers experience their own mental health challenges (Jerrim, Sims, Taylor & Allen, 2021). These are entangled with wider societal work trends, and compounded by policy narratives from the past thirty years which limit the capacity for teachers' agency in their interactions with students as part of a larger project of de-professionalisation (Ball, Maguire and Braun, 2012). Evidence suggests that students know when their teachers are 'struggling' (Mooney et al., 2021; Rose & Glazzard, 2019) and this has a knock-on impact on how safe and supported students feel in the classroom. It is therefore key that we understand how the school policy sphere and the context of the pandemic, alongside multiple other unfolding crises, interact with teachers' understandings of wellbeing in their role.

To understand what shapes teachers' perspectives of wellbeing, it is helpful to consider evidence of the conceptual and

emotional conflicts apparent in teachers' lived experiences of wellbeing and teacher practice. Culshaw and Kurian (2021) explore this conflict through teachers' own experiences of struggle whilst Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012) present evidence through the lens of policy implementation in secondary schools. Both show the tendency for teachers to feel they are alone and must hide or suppress difficulties and internal conflict relating to classroom management, in order to present the appearance of success and strength. The performance pressures on teachers are shown to favour a culture of 'unreflexive ease' (Ball, Maguire and Braun, 2012) in which teachers adhere to an expectation to switch unproblematically between contradictory roles (e.g. Kelly *et al.*, 2013), dependent on which policy lens a teacher is enacting. This context presents a barrier to the cultivation of compassionate awareness and care towards both themselves and others.

Teacher Care and Wellbeing in Practice

Noddings' (2002; 2003; 2010; 2012) theoretical explanation of care ethics in teaching practice is useful in explaining the accounts given by teachers. Noddings' (2012) account emphasises the importance of the reciprocal dialogue between 'carer' and 'cared-for' in teaching, not only for the benefit of the 'cared-for' being heard, but also for the validation, or confirmation, of the 'carer'. Thus, care ethics in education speaks to both student and teacher wellbeing. Noddings models five clear stages that can be practised: (1) a need is expressed by the cared-for, and (2) is observed by the care-giver/teacher, (3) the need is acknowledged, (4) a response is selected by the care-giver/teacher, including, based on professional judgment, the possibility of not being able to fulfil this

need immediately, but with an acknowledgement and an explanation to the cared-for, (5) the cared-for acknowledges the receipt of care. As a process-oriented approach to ethical practice in education, each of the steps in the model is important. Noddings also emphasises how the modelling of care demonstrates relational behaviour between students, teachers and students, and teachers and teachers. This creates a ripple effect in behaviour and attitude, promoting a collaborative concern for listening to, and where possible, meeting each other's needs.

Attention to the role of teacher agency and care practice in the context of wellbeing in schools is, however, extremely limited in policy interpretations. Major policy on wellbeing practice in schools affecting teachers such as Health and Relationships Education within statutory PSHE (DfE, 2019a), and the Ofsted (2019) framework strand for personal development, frame wellbeing as an area of knowledge, skills and competency. As found in our recent research with teachers: 'wellbeing... seems to fall between the cracks of PSHE and safeguarding' (Wilson et al., 2023).

Brown and Donnelly (2022) describe three framings of wellbeing in the policy context of schooling and teaching. These are:

- a competency and skills approach focusing on objectifiable qualities such as courage/confidence or self-regulation, focusing on the individual;
- a morals or ethics-based approach focused on identifying and providing the tools to address inequalities in society; morals implying universal morality and ethics emphasising a relative, situated, whole-person perspective;
- and a capital-based approach which sees wellbeing features as reflecting larger social structures.

In terms of the relational care aspect of wellbeing within schools, responsibility often falls to additional staff rather than classroom teachers, such as pastoral and early help teams (DfE and Department for Health, 2017). Who provides elements of education connects also to issues concerning the purpose of education in the 21st century, and how these interact with policy. 'Personal development' (Ofsted, 2019), 'character education' (DfE, 2019b) or older terms such as Social Moral Spiritual and Cultural educational entitlement (Joseph, Murphy & Holford, 2020) all refer to the role teaching and curriculum plays in whole person health and growth, and with a focus on individuals rather than systems. In recent efforts to better integrate school policies in England with aims towards wellbeing in education, these strands of school purpose and practice have received renewed attention.

Yet, treatment in policy is indicative of the dominant culture in secondary school teaching, in which teachers are viewed as experts in their subjects and encouraged within their roles as teachers to initiate students into the knowledge and practice of those subject disciplines (Hordern, 2021; Noddings, 2003). This can then be understood as in conflict with an expectation to support the broad growth of students, and with seeing the role of teaching as developing the capacity of students to deploy subject learning and their relationship with their teacher as a means for a) healing and support through childhood adversity or trauma (Kurian, 2022) and b) agentic self-development (or individuation) (Biesta, 2009; 2020).

Challenges to Relationships and Care for 'Being Well'

In a previous interview study (Wilson et al., 2022; 2023a), we sought to establish how teachers were meeting changing expectations to do with their role in wellbeing on the ground. We asked how teachers saw wellbeing in regard to their practice, and

how this mapped to policy framing and structural approaches to wellbeing in schools. We found that the teachers in our study interviewed during the Autumn/Winter of 2020/21, viewed wellbeing in schools principally in terms of the quality of relationships between students and teachers, students and peers, and teachers with colleagues. Teachers considered care-giving to be a foundational aspect of their role in supporting 'being well' in school, but considered that this foundational aspect of teaching was overshadowed by an expectation to perform 'doing well' according to a set of standards/qualifications which are insufficiently flexible to the needs and strengths of individuals. As such, teachers experienced conflict and confusion about how to prioritise care and 'being well' within their relationships with students. The status of wellbeing in teachers' practice was experienced as inferior to academic performance, as reflected in school policy and culture.

5.4 Methodology

In this current study, we aimed to examine our interview findings with teachers, to explore how the changing circumstances of the pandemic, and the progression of the school year, influenced their views. As such, from March to May 2021, eighteen teachers from our first interview study took part in either a focus group (n = 11) or where a participant was not able to attend one of the available focus group sessions, a follow up interview (n = 7). There were two focus groups of four and one focus group of three participants. Teachers were invited to hear about the main findings from the analysis of the first set of interviews (reported in Wilson et al., 2023), to consider the accuracy of how wellbeing was described in

teachers' practice, and to discuss together the implications of these findings considering their current circumstances in schools.

Specifically, we wished to:

- First, explore the initial findings (Wilson et al., 2022) from teacher interviews collected in Autumn 2020, in order to allow member checking of themes and to enable professional reflection via which we could enrich and improve the validity of the study findings.
- Second, understand how perspectives shifted over the course of the school year, in particular, the timing of the study offered a unique opportunity to explore the impacts of the return to school after the second school closure of the covid-19 pandemic in England in Winter 2021.

Additionally the research project aimed to provide benefits to participants by enabling them to share practice, approaches and discuss challenges around wellbeing in school, in the context of professional development. Teachers reported they had little opportunity to discuss these issues in depth within a professional context.

The over-riding questions of the study were the same as for our initial interview study. These were:

- How do English secondary school teachers' **view** wellbeing?
- What elements of English secondary teachers' **practice** relate to wellbeing in schools?
- What **barriers or tensions** are experienced in promoting wellbeing in schools?

From the initial findings of the interview study, we used the headlines of the themes to stimulate reflection and discussion. These headline themes were generated from the reflexive thematic analysis (Clarke and Braun, 2006) of the interview data set (Wilson et al., 2022). The themes were:

Table 5. Table of Discussion Themes (developed from Winter 2020-21 Teacher Interviews)

Theme
6 'Doing well' and 'being well' – what's the difference?
7 Relationships are the foundation but we need clarity and more training on how to grow them
8 We need ways to recognise the role of the body and adapting to students' contexts as part of wellbeing
9 Knowing 'the self' – being authentic, self-regulating and making decisions
10 The school community and culture as the 'soil' for flourishing and wellbeing

Teachers were asked to reflect on those themes/findings that most stood out to them, or with which they most agreed or disagreed.

In order to achieve a balance between the covering of theme content, and participant-directed responses within focus groups, a hierarchical focusing approach (Tomlinson, 1989) to questions was used. As focus groups/interviews were conducted, a set of sub-topics per theme was used to tick off areas covered, to determine which directions had been sufficiently explored, and which could be covered further. Drawing on the Rogerian non-directive approach to interview technique (Rogers, 1945) utilised in the interviews

conducted with the same participants in Winter 2020-21 (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023), participants were encouraged to participate and let responses arise organically, rather than to expect a list of questions to be asked as in a traditional interview. It is recognised that the overall approach cannot be described as truly Rogerian, but the guiding principles informed a more authentic discussion. The role of the researcher was more assertive in focus groups than in interviews in order to encourage the involvement of all participants and to seek to balance the discussion dynamic where-in some voices dominated (often those with more senior roles or more teaching experience).

Teachers were informed that this second stage of the study was to be followed by a third and final opportunity to take part in focus groups (or follow up interviews) at the end of the academic year 2020-21, allowing reflection back over the full school year and the opportunity to focus on sharing practical approaches to wellbeing.

Data collection approach

Focus groups and interviews were conducted and recorded largely via Microsoft Teams with a small number of follow up interviews conducted in person and recorded via MP3 recorder. Full transcriptions were then imported to NVivo 12 for analysis. The focus groups took place between the end of March (end of Spring Term 2021), and early May (2021) clustering around the Easter holidays. As such the build up to the usual exam season and the uncertainty around Teacher Assessed Grades for exam years formed a backdrop to the discussions.

Sampling

Eighteen teachers from an original sample of twenty from our Winter 2020-21 interview study took part in this study. In the Autumn Term of 2020 teachers were recruited to take part in interviews and focus groups in three stages, so most teachers from the original study were able to be part of this focus group and follow up study. Workload was cited as the reason for withdrawing after study one in just two cases. Teachers participating in this study were recruited to the whole research project based via network contacts with schools in the Midlands, Yorkshire and the North West (geographically close to the University of Nottingham, and network links of the lead researcher, a practising teacher). Networks included the regional National Education Union, and Teach First ambassador groups for these regions as well as via colleagues and their contacts.

Limitations

The accounts in this study do not represent the views of a proportionately representative sample of the English secondary teaching profession, due to the small scale qualitative design and self-selecting nature of participation. The context is also England specific, though parallels can be drawn with some other international settings. The accounts offer a set of exemplary experiences and interactions which can nonetheless offer rich accounts of teachers' views and experience at a key moment during the pandemic recovery, offering insights which can support further research in understanding the long term effects of the

pandemic on schooling, and specifically teacher and student wellbeing.

Ethical approach

Space to speak openly about wellbeing in the school context can be extremely limited both due to time pressures but also because such discussion is potentially threatening to professional identities in the performative, neoliberal educational setting. The ethical positioning of this study is informed by the rationale that it is important that teachers have time and opportunity to discuss matters of wellbeing as professionals in an honest and authentic environment, with other teachers.

It was thus important to establish an ethos of professional trust, and in addition to assuring anonymity for participants within data dissemination, all participants were asked to maintain professional confidentiality about the content of the focus groups/interviews, a commitment shared by the researchers. It was also important to consider the potential for matters to come up in conversation requiring further wellbeing support: all discussions began with an opening statement reiterating the ethical commitments of the project and signposting to further wellbeing support, in particular highlighting the Education Support² specialised helpline.

² <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/get-help/>

Analysis

Analysis of the data was conducted in NVivo 12 with a reflexive thematic analysis approach (Clarke and Braun, 2006). Initial codes were developed based on the close analysis of the transcripts. These codes were developed as driven by the data before relating the first code set back to the research questions and the development of domain summaries (categories by which to group inter-related codes). Following this, two stages of theme development occurred: initial themes were developed and discussed as a research team before the refining of themes to form the following list:

Table 6. Themes from Easter 2021 Teacher Focus Groups and Interviews

1. The need to reimagine 'doing well' in school
2. Conflict around the concept of care in teaching
3. Teachers 'surviving rather than thriving'
4. The importance of listening/dialogue to rebuild trust and community for wellbeing

In the following section, we present the analysis behind these findings and suggest implications.

5.5 Findings

The need to reimagine 'doing well'

In our preceding interview study (October 2020-February 2021) (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023) teachers identified the uncertainty they felt about 'doing well' and 'being well' within the purpose of education. We concluded that although sometimes 'doing well' in education may lead to 'being well', a focus on 'doing well' conceived as academic performance within neoliberal educational culture has led to 'being well' as an educational aim becoming an 'add-on' all whilst the pressures of educational and wider culture generate a context for strained or worsening mental health and wellbeing particularly amongst children and young people (Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2019; Glazzard & Stones, 2021). We therefore suggested that focusing on 'being well' and attendant skills, mindset and decision-making practices in the classroom, are more likely to lead to 'doing well' authentically than the other way around.

In this set of focus groups, teacher participants explored the uncertainty they and colleagues felt toward the vision of 'doing well' they experienced in school:

'(The) school environment doesn't really let you do well because it limits ...it sets parameters of... what it is to be to be doing well.'

(Participant I, Languages Teacher)

Teachers problematised how dominant economic thinking has led to certain stories lacing their way through school discourses, leading to questions for teacher ethics and values:

'I've been in Assembly; they've said: 'if you want a nice house and a big car, you need to get this many

As'...so if that's the 'doing well', that's going to cause poor mental health'

(Participant B, Maths Teacher).

Concepts of 'performance', 'outcomes' and 'process' come to the fore in accounts of this issue. 'Doing well' as performance can be extremely nuanced: teachers were habituated to thinking of performing as associated with quantitative outcomes or lesson observation gradings (in spite of these being de-emphasised within the new Ofsted inspection framework in England – Ofsted, 2019). Nevertheless, in the Venn diagram between 'doing well' and 'being well', relationships were considered to be at the core.

In fact, having good relationships was described as absolutely central to 'performing' or 'doing well' in the classroom: 'the glue' (Participant D) which enables the teacher to be a good leader of learning. In this sense, building relationships for 'doing well' was much more about attention to practice and process (the 'methods' underpinning both 'doing well' and 'being well') in the classroom.

Whilst there remained a good deal of uncertainty about the nature and relationship of 'doing well' to 'being well' in teaching, what seemed most important was the need for a common vision for 'doing well', greater clarity on educational purpose. In particular, this speaks to the need for 'doing well' either as a teacher, student or class, to be underpinned by authenticity and flexibility since teachers need to draw on their deep self and social awareness to craft curriculum and learning content to the group's needs. Nonetheless, the volatility of individual student needs (particularly following the third Lockdown in England), a lack of teacher expertise on emotional wellbeing and mental health, and a pressure for standardised approaches suggest teachers felt the

classroom was not a place where authentic 'doing well' could occur:

'I believe (teachers) are - should be - care-givers. In terms of whether that's a priority, it will depend on context but overall in my experience, in every school that I've worked in I would not say that as an English teacher, it's emphasised. We didn't discuss it at any of our meetings. It doesn't form part of our performance management, it doesn't form part of our INSET days. I think rather than care, we talk a lot about performance management and it shouldn't really be framed in that way.'

(Participant D, English Teacher and Pastoral Lead)

Why is care so important and yet marginalised?

'I think the two main barriers are the perception that they are competing so that they're mutually exclusive. You either focus on wellbeing, divert resources to that, or you do... academic. So I don't think that enough understanding is there around how it is kind of essential as a precursor that you support wellbeing. '

(Participant C, Humanities Teacher + Mental Health Lead)

As stated by a teacher in Study 1: 'teaching is caregiving'(Wilson et al., 2023a). Reported spikes in poor and difficult relational behaviour, alongside transitional issues in schools following the return from the school closure in Spring 2021 in England at the time of fieldwork, emphasised the need for comprehensive ways to support teachers with these added challenges. Speaking to mental

health and behaviour leads it was apparent that there was a perceived divide between teachers who see care and relationship - building as central to their role, and those who foreground a 'distant...very professional' (Participant T) attitude to students, potentially at odds with observing and responding to students' care needs around social and emotional challenges when the view was: 'I'm a teacher; I'm here to teach' (our own summary wording). Such concerns were contextualised with understanding, as rooted in concerns around 'doing too many things badly' (Participant C), again raising questions about the central purpose and conceptualisation of the teaching role.

The caring role within teaching was sometimes seen as a capacity that either came naturally, or not, as opposed to a skillset to be acquired and honed as can teaching techniques for knowledge acquisition. There is no reason to understand skill in care practice for teachers as less learnable than practices for memory and subject knowledge acquisition since they are learned through domain knowledge acquisition, habits, culture and approaches such as those described by Kurian in her account of trauma-informed teaching (2022). The perception that care should be the specialist domain of those in education with a predisposition to this skillset (and often to those with a specific pastoral additional responsibility) seems to indicate a reason why secondary teachers' access to training on mental health and wellbeing in schools remains limited.

Two contrasting experiences stand out as exemplars: one Assistant Head saw upskilling teaching staff on emotional awareness and wellbeing as a holistic need and part of the whole school development plan for all staff; another Assistant Head at a different school reported that their school turned down a request

for her to undertake mental health first aid training when she identified it as an important area for her own development in supporting staff she line managed. Instead, in this school and in others, pastoral leads (sometimes teaching staff, sometimes non-teaching) were allocated the majority of responsibility for wellbeing concerns. This in turn led to concerns being raised about the sustainability of teachers managing heavy responsibility for emotional support and safeguarding issues, yet simultaneously still being expected to manage routine teaching expectations when critical events occurred. For example, one Head of Year described a CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) disclosure which led to spending much of the school day in several hours of police interviews regarding a deeply distressing situation. She then described coming out of this interview and being expected to go straight into teaching a lesson. Such accounts simultaneously highlight the often under-recognised workload of care responsibility that teachers take on as significant adults in the lives of young people, and the lack of accounting for the energy, time and toll taken on teacher workload and wellbeing where supportive and robust, collegiate structures are not available due to reliance on a small number of individuals when it comes to supporting wellbeing concerns. We argue that this evidence shows a need for greater distributed expertise and responsibility amongst teachers when it comes to all aspects of wellbeing in the profession, so that support and flexibility can be provided for colleagues when teachers are called on to address immediate wellbeing concerns whether for colleagues or children.

Surviving rather than thriving

As data collection took place, it became clear that pressures owing to recovery from three lockdowns and two school closures were at high intensity. With associated social, emotional and domestic challenges thrown up, alongside the expectation for teachers to redesign and adapt assessment schemes (as one Head Teacher was quoted: 'we've done the exam boards' jobs for them' – Participant K), and circumstances which generally meant supporting organisations around education such as youth organisations were remote or non-existent, a stark pressure was placed on teachers to do what we describe as 'catch all' as much as 'catch up' (a dominant discourse around education at the time – Sibieta and Cottell, 2021).

Reflecting on wellbeing for the majority of participants felt ever relevant, and yet completely out of line with their day-to-day experience:

'for me, it's not about doing well, being well...it's just about survival at the moment'

(Participant E, English Teacher and Head of Year)

Any concept of thriving was beyond reach even for teachers with decades of experience.

After a period of time in which routines and social habits for positive school experience/behaviour had been eroded or lost (both for teachers and students), concerns about mental health and challenging in-school behaviour were elevated. It seemed that despite the fact challenges for pupil mental health and wellbeing were anticipated, and attempts to implement whole school strategies were sometimes present, accounts frequently indicated that support and adaptation time for teachers and staff members

were lacking. This was stated to be a particular issue in cases where there were prevalent numbers of early career teachers (in a particular subject department) or in cases where teachers were new in team leadership roles. One teacher described the challenges faced in her department as a 'mental health crisis' (Teacher G, Teacher of English). It is likely the subsequent effect on teacher-pupil interaction would be felt by both teachers and pupils as evidence indicates pupils are highly sensitive to the stress states of their teachers (Glazzard & Rose, 2019). We suggest this is likely to have led to a vicious circle where elevated concerns around pupil behaviour were reported. Indeed, several middle and senior leaders in the research project commented that they were seeing some of the most challenging behaviours from pupils of their career. One Assistant Head described the challenges that continued for tackling the behaviourist paradigms in managing this behaviour:

'The whole relationships thing is very much on my mind personally at the moment because of the context we were in coming out of lockdown trying to re-establish routines. With my responsibility for behaviour in the school, I'm coming across a lot of incidents of...just you know, poor behaviour in certain contexts. And I'm really, really keen that we don't just react to that purely from a punitive, behaviourist way, that actually we remember that the relationships are a really, really important part of behaviour management. And I'm struggling I guess with getting the balance of that message across because of the whole often polarized view of behaviour: you see that either punish them or look after them (view) to put it in very crude terms.'

Whereas of course it's more complex and we have to pay attention to both rules/routines (and) relationships. If any of those is missing or is deficient then, then I'm not sure you can achieve what you're after.'

(Participant T, Assistant Head)

It seems from these interviews and focus groups that although schools and teachers were attempting to put recovery and care at the centre of school return, the dominance of existing paradigms such as the prioritising of high stakes assessment, and an insufficient emphasis on collaborative, collegiate support often meant teachers and departments defaulting to working individually in silos on collective challenges. As a result, intentions or desires to take a careful, staged return to school routines were overcome by a reactive culture, characterised by challenging and stressed behavioural responses from students, and high reported teacher stress.

Listening to rebuild trust and community

The data from this study was clearly flecked with frustration. Within the previous twelve months teachers had taken a step back during consecutive lockdowns. During data collection for a Winter 2020-21 interview study (Wilson et al., 2023), teachers had collectively conceptualised a vision for education that sits in line with a purpose of 'being well' and care as a foundation for 'doing well', yet in Spring 2021 teachers in this study appeared to meet head on with the ground-level conflicts which make a vision for wellbeing difficult to achieve in practice. This is not to say that

teachers felt best intentions were absent amongst the multiple stakeholders involved in setting the direction for education post lockdown, but rather that this time seemed characterised by the consequences of the inherent confusion in educational priorities within the system: a constant tug of war between *'we need to make sure we are taking care of children and colleagues' wellbeing now* and *'we need to ensure we restore order and children perform well in their high stakes tests so that their futures are secure'* (our own wording).

Nonetheless, accounts in the data reflect frustrated optimism with regard to the disconnect between aims and outcomes, or policy and practice. Participants saw themselves as central actors in this landscape, and yet they described a need for space and an opening up of the power structures, between teachers and students, between teachers and policy makers. One teacher puts it simply:

'Our job is to listen'

(Participant H, Teacher of Languages).

We argue this means something more than what appears to be the dominant approach for gauging staff and student voice on wellbeing: *'they put a survey out'* (Participant _), an approach criticised in focus group dialogue by teachers in this study:

'they ask you the question, but people don't want to know the answer'.

(Participant E, Head of Year)

The period of this fieldwork was a time marked by wellbeing surveys as measures and metrics for leadership and accountability structures, in an attempt to gain a clearer picture (and a point of evidence collection for justification of action and decisions), yet frequently these approaches were experienced as 'a tick box

exercise' and even dismissive of genuine concerns raised through the process:

'We put surveys out and we ask, and we want feedback and we almost want feedback so we can go 'okay, everyone's fine'.'

(Participant A, Assistant Head)

'When I'm asked these questions in surveys about my wellbeing, and you know, that 20% is ignored, and the comments that that people have made are ignored... Well, it feels like it's been ignored for me, I still can feel the same intensity of... I'm going to say it, anger. I thought why did I bother filling this thing in if you're just going to throw a whole load of numbers at me?'

(Participant E)

Despite these efforts then to collect teachers' views, there was a persistent message in this study of frustration at not being heard.

This is a key issue across different sets of stakeholders in education, between government and school leaders, between teachers and pupils. It seems a strong conclusion of this research is a question about finding better ways of tackling this issue of communication and understanding between teachers, school community members and other educational actors.

5.6 Discussion

In the accounts in this study, we see a conflict met by teachers within English secondary schools wherein an emphasis on the importance of care and relationships in the work of the secondary school teacher was met with a somewhat unexamined attitude of

'my job is to teach'. In English schools, pastoral care responsibilities feature as a part of every teacher's professional remit (DfE, 2011; DoH & DfE, 2017). Nonetheless, the extent of this expectation varies by school. It is commonplace to have a small team of specialised teachers with pastoral responsibility (for example Heads of Year, often ostensibly responsible for year group performance even if the role is essentially regarding student pastoral needs and behaviour) alongside a team of non-teaching support staff as pastoral specialists. This responsibility structure can engender an ethos in which curriculum teaching and pastoral care are viewed as separate. Participants described such views as sometimes characterized by a 'distant...professional style' (Participant T) which appeared at odds with the increasing demands of secondary school children (and teachers) for care. Secondary teacher training has historically focused attention on the centrality of the teacher's role in subject knowledge. Whilst the love of the knowledge discipline is certainly key to inspiring and modelling a curiosity and interest for subject learning, the message in this study was that a love and interest for knowledge of one's students need be as, if not more, central to the success of a secondary school teacher.

Teachers express that the source of many of their struggles is a feeling of isolation in their care responsibilities, and of being ignored or unacknowledged when data about wellbeing is collected by school leaders or decision-makers. Following Noddings' (2003; 2005; 2012) care model and trauma-informed practice knowledge (Emerson, 2022; Kurian, 2022) we may understand the challenging behaviour seen in schools as a 'crying out' for acknowledgement or recognition of an unmet need. Indeed, trauma-informed approaches emphasise this issue, and provide a lens through which to tackle the 'polarised view of behaviour' as

'either punish them or look after them' articulated by one Assistant Head's challenges with teacher understandings of behaviour in school. In this account we see how the value of routines, rules and a kind of normality and familiarity which school and classroom practice can offer, are able to provide a context for building strong relationships, enabling students to feel safe.

It seems at the time of the pandemic, the tendency was to re-establish the safety of routine (according to former neoliberal norms), as it was in Mooney et al.'s (2021) post-disaster research with schools. Our data lead us to conclude that teachers, leaders and decision-makers would find value in re-focusing attention on the 'acknowledgement' stage and 'response' stages of Noddings' care model in teaching, whereby the carer or teacher listens, acknowledges the response so the cared-for knows their needs are being considered, the carer provides a response or explanation for choosing not to respond at this time (contextual factors may apply) and finally, the care response is acknowledged by the cared-for. These stages of the model highlight the centrality, circularity and reciprocity of dialogue in determining the effectiveness of care practice for relationship building, the under-pinning of 'being well' in school.

An increasing focus on seeing teachers and students in the context of a network of relationships would seem to illuminate issues created by leaving individual teachers to manage wellbeing challenges and incidents in isolation, on top of their academic responsibilities. Our conclusion here would be to encourage practices in which teachers step in for each other, debrief and check-in after distressing or high intensity events and recognise the knock-on effects of care labour .

Finally, we propose a reconsidering of the meaning and importance of 'normal' as a role of school and teachers. The power of 'normal'

in the form of routines, familiar relationships, space and a sense of belonging, connectedness and 'home', has been documented both in this study and in the disaster recovery research (eg. Mooney et al., 2021). Nonetheless, for schools and leaders, returning to what has been normal for approximately the last thirty years of the teaching profession, also means performativity, a disproportionate focus on exam outcomes and a 'push on through' approach to resilience and wellbeing for students (Brown and Dixon, 2020) as a means of enabling students to manage intensive school behaviour and performance expectations which may jar with the needs of students, and may well re-traumatise those who have experienced adverse childhood events (Kurian, 2022). This 'old normal' is clearly something that has contributed to the current circumstances of mental ill-health, and not something really deserving restoration; an opportunity to restore balance has initially been lost. Meanwhile, without universal access to training and development for tackling the complex demands of addressing wellbeing in the 21st century post-pandemic classroom, teachers are unsupported and overstretched to provide the care students are crying out for. We therefore conclude with a call for teachers, and all those involved in pastoral care culture including leaders and other education stakeholders to question the kinds of normal they seek to establish.

5.7 Conclusion

We have shown through focus groups and interviews with teachers at the moment of the school return, Easter 2021, that aspirations to prioritise relationships and being well as an educational foundation were under-mined in reality by a lack of scope for dialogue between teachers, leaders and policymakers, and a lack of

room to consider the role of teachers as carers, particularly in the secondary classroom mid-pandemic. The policy landscape that shaped expectations of teachers and leaders at the time indicated educational purpose was perceived by policy-makers as 'learnification' (Biesta, 2009) or 'doing well'; that is to say focus on qualification in pre-ordained knowledge and skills, above and beyond the purpose of promoting 'being well'.

Our findings suggest that the promise of opportunities in education hinted at by the 'new normal' instead slid towards an emphasis on re-establishing problematic, pre-pandemic standards in schools. This whilst the context of the situation called for an emphasis on rebuilding strong relationships and supporting students and teachers through the transition with an emphasis on a culture of care in education, as the underpinning of educational success. Our data indicates this 'normal' slid back into a 'survive rather than thrive' pattern that failed to allow teachers and educational communities scope to capture the possibility of the moment for adapting educational approaches for a changed and changing world. If wellbeing is to become truly embedded in school cultures in schools, then teachers need scope to emphasise care as underpinning 'being well' through teacher practice. Teachers in this research project saw 'being well' as essential to 'doing well' in school; yet there must be room to debate the performative approach to 'doing well' which has dominated schools throughout the neoliberal policy era and which has led to school becoming a place that 'doesn't really let you do well because it limits ...it sets parameters of... what it is to be to be doing well' (Participant I). From the evidence in this study, we argue that reimagining 'doing well' as rooted in the becoming which occurs in nurturing, trauma-informed contexts is key. For secondary schools and classrooms to become places of care then, we emphasise the importance of the

reciprocal, networked responsibility between teachers and education colleagues, which is in turn modelled and adopted amongst students. Through this, a cultivation of relationships, and achievement based on love and affirmation of individuals rather than a negation of their being could be foundational features of a normal that puts wellbeing first as an aim of teaching and education.

6.0 Study 3: Wellbeing and the importance of going 'out of the realm of the classroom': Secondary School Teachers' Perspectives

Published with Edward Sellman & Stephen Joseph in Educational Review, 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2024.2325060>

In a repetition of the pattern established within the two previous fieldwork chapters, I begin this final fieldwork chapter with a reflection piece written in the writing and editing period just prior to the publication of this research paper. The themes and events I note within this reflection point to the power of the push to the 'old normal' whilst simultaneously, signs of 'Unravelling' (Macy & Johnstone, 2014/2020) within the wider societal picture were evident. Again, I will refer back to these themes in more depth in chapter seven. These contextualising issues point to the links made with ecopsychological perspectives of Finn & Phillips (2023) within this final research paper.

6.1 Reflection: Workload, wellbeing and 'add on' culture

March 2024

I approach the final stages of the PhD and make amendments to the findings of four years of study, professional collaboration and inquiry, policy review and scholarship, all based on the question of how wellbeing should be understood in teaching practice and why it is such a difficult issue. As I do so, I reflect on my current role in teaching and find myself feeling simultaneously frustrated, angry and wanting to laugh (I have reflected previously on the

importance of valuing all the emotions). This is particularly in relation to my professional and personal experiences over the last two years, which resonate with the themes of this research project. I thought it pertinent to include some of these reflections within the thesis to shed additional light and context upon these research findings, and, as I will raise in the Discussion, of the adversity and precarity propagated by neoliberal 'business as usual' (Macey & Johnstone, 2014/2020, Macey & Brown, 2014, p5-6).

Having continued to work as a practising part time secondary languages teacher, and as a voluntary youth lead throughout the PhD, I found it helpful having a professional space which allowed me to take care over my practice, to arrive to the classroom on my teaching days with intention and not feeling the effects of being overscheduled. This was enabled because I had that non-contact time to recover and to explore some of the big questions generated by my career in education to date. Recognising the privileged position I was in to be able to say so, in 2022, it was starting to look feasible to properly recalibrate priorities towards 'being well'.

However, in the fourth year of the PhD, my contracted hours were reduced, my income constricted at the same time as the cost of living crisis was intensifying across the UK and globally. My partner and I were amongst those in the UK required to renew their mortgage in the middle of huge spikes in interest rates. We were not alone, nor by any means in the worst of situations – across the country strikes were taking place, including a major wave of teachers strikes, the largest scale of strikes I have seen in my lifetime. It is not the first time in this PhD and during the shocks of various versions of global instability that material and economic concerns have been at the centre of wellbeing issues in school communities. Both staff and students were majorly affected, as I heard within the Nottingham Citizens Youth Listening campaign in

2023 when young people prioritised the cost of living crisis and held an accountability assembly with local Lead Councillor candidates.

For my own part, needing to move forward financially, and wanting to take the next steps professionally, I took on additional teaching hours from September 2023 (a colleague left teaching following a long term struggle with mental health). I was then offered a maternity leave role for a Teaching and Learning Responsibility for PSHE, Careers and Teacher Wellbeing (three areas which require considerably more staffing than one person's extra hours around their main teaching workload, even if the aim is for greater distributed leadership in these areas).

The workload expectation has been regularly in excess of that of a full time contract in spite of remaining contracted part time. I say this because it demonstrates the tokenism and internal contradictions around wellbeing visible throughout the policy landscape, teacher accounts and findings of this PhD project.

I also experience, on an emotional and physical level, the degree to which one's capacity for empathy, reflection and mindful awareness are limited with an excessive intensity and quantity of tasks to complete, and when the number of work hours required is so significant (most full time teachers in the United Kingdom routinely work 50-70 hours per week – e.g. Trades Union Council, 2024; Jerrim & Sims, 2020). As mentioned this is a pattern of working practice visible across the world of work (Jerrim et al., 2021). This effect is significant in terms of teachers as care practitioners, and must also be so for family members as carers. It wears away the flexibility and mental/emotional space required to support students, colleagues and loved ones with their daily ups and downs – the objective, as mentioned in this research, becomes about survival, rather than embracing being well as the caring

foundation for supporting the essential needs of oneself and others. Of course, life brings adversity and compromises must be found; yet a 'normal' culture such as this seems to be sustaining and accelerating the harm caused by 'energies (being) invested into playing to win rather than redesigning the game to be inclusive' (Gunter & Courtney, 2023, p362). Thus, there is not time to reassess and build a better system. It also speaks to the low priority afforded to 'being well', where a small minority of teaching staff members (10% in my case) are afforded some responsibility in the area whilst 100% of staff must focus on performative outcomes. Such norms are fundamentally extractive, rather than sustainable. And as the saying goes 'one cannot pour from an empty cup'.

6.2 Abstract

Schools play a central role in supporting young people affected by mental health issues. This article reports a reflexive thematic analysis of focus group and interview data with English secondary teachers' about their perspectives on mental health and well-being in schools. Data were collected during the pandemic year 2020-21, with a research focus on evolving school practice for wellbeing. Our results show that although teachers recognised a shift toward school leadership and policymaking that acknowledged mental health, they also identified barriers that undermined attempts to embed wellbeing practices in their schools. Firstly, they expressed frustration with neoliberal education, and how it works against wellbeing, and specifically against relationality, which was seen to underpin good mental health. Secondly, teachers envisioned wellbeing education as breaking with the boundaries of the typical classroom space, structurally, physically and pedagogically. The boundaries described were shaped by an educational purpose logic of 'doing well' in terms of performance measures, whereas teachers articulated solutions as stepping outside the traditional limits of the classroom and curriculum, a move corresponding to greater environmental and community awareness. In conclusion, we point to an expanded view of educational purpose and the application of a more ecological psychology to embolden wellbeing practice in schooling.

Key Words

Wellbeing, secondary schools, teachers, neoliberal education, curriculum, care, relational pedagogy

6.3 Introduction

Neoliberal education poses a challenge to wellbeing education. It is an approach to designing education upon the logic of markets rather than care (Tronto, 2017). In this dominant paradigm, educational structures, actors and processes aim to enhance their market educational value via maximising their scores in national assessments and hierarchical league tables. The philosophy renders the individual as personally responsible for their success. Behind this is the idea that the market will determine 'the good', and competition will drive improved effectiveness (Maiese, 2022). Power structures and other impacting factors are reduced or made invisible to serve this standardised approach.

The educational aims communicated to teachers and students therefore have a focus on 'doing well' by the rules of neoliberal education. In our work, although teachers recognise many of the protective benefits of 'doing well' for some, they also see that an emphasis on schooling's narrow definition of success undermines teachers and students' relationships and their capacity for inclusion and adaptation. Contradistinctively, these are the foundations of 'being well' (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a). Teachers in our recent study suggested that if the educational priority became 'being well' then a broader definition of 'doing well' would follow. 'Being well' encourages 'doing well' much more than the other way around, which is nonetheless assumed by the neoliberal approach (Becker, Hartwich & Haslam, 2021; Maiese, 2022; Finn & Phillips, 2023).

These findings echo those of several previous scholars (e.g., Brown and Donnelly, 2022; Brown & Shay, 2021; Glazzard & Stones, 2021; McLellan, Faucher & Simovska, 2022) in pointing out that a view of wellbeing as a set of skills and competencies to be taught

to the individual to enable them to cope with the alienating and competitive norms of neoliberal educational culture is flawed. It fails to account for the fact that the erosion of value for care, place and community inherent to neoliberal culture has sown the seeds for the global wellbeing crises to which young people and teachers are now subject (Weare, 2022).

School Wellbeing Policy in England

In the face of rising concerns around deteriorating quality of life and mental health in the two decades prior to the global covid-19 pandemic, policy work to create national strategies and joint health-education approaches in England had been underway with particular fervour during the 2010s, coinciding nonetheless with austerity measures and widening inequality. Changes to school policy in England initiated in 2019 concerning the curriculum coverage of mental wellbeing alongside Ofsted's (2019) new criteria to assess personal development as part of a change in their inspection approach were all a product of this process. Yet, in retrospect and acknowledging concerns expressed in this project's data that wellbeing is "on a backburner" (Participant R, Wilson et al., 2023a, p994), it seems clear there has been an oversimplistic focus on symptom alleviation rather than addressing the root of rising mental health concerns within schools (O'Toole & Simovska, 2022; Brito, Sellman & Joseph, 2021).

Teachers and care for 'being well'

Empirical research (Culshaw & Kurian, 2021; Graham et al., 2016; Billington et al., 2022; Brown & Shay., 2021; Wilson et al, 2023a) and, theoretical work, particularly that of Noddings (2003; 2010; 2012), provides an account of teachers' practice that is foremost about care. In our research, 'being well' was about being relationally embedded in a 'web of care' (Noddings, 2013). Noddings illustrates how care is consciously cultivated and modelled by teachers, and culturally demonstrated to students and peers through four stages of practice: attention; listening; considered response, and carer acknowledgement.

Discussing the role of teachers in relation to care and wellbeing inevitably leads to wider discussions about the purpose of education and schooling. Care can apply to a range of contexts, explored by Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) scholarship, which draws upon Tronto's definition of care ethics as:

'everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair 'our world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web.' (Fisher & Tronto, 1990, p41)

Yet following Puig de la Bellacasa, we are troubled by taken-for-granted notions that care is ethically unproblematic '*because the work of care can be done within and for worlds that we might find objectionable*' (p6). Teachers may care for their students and each other; when taking a wider definition of care, they also care for and sustain the structures of competition and high stakes performativity which they worry damage the students and the colleagues they wish to care for. Perhaps for some, it is necessary to avoid caring to survive.

In this journal, paralleling dominant themes in our data, Finn and Phillips (2023) argued for a theoretical turning in education and learning which engages the importance of place, space and materiality in accounts of teaching and learning. What does this have to do with wellbeing in schools? In our data (Wilson et al., 2023a; 2023b; present paper), in talking about wellbeing, teachers described parallel ideas with Phillips and Finn's (2022) articulation of ecological psychology as:

'overcoming the constraints of classroom space to accommodate active, agentic learners (which is) beyond changes in design and aesthetics of classrooms, it is a pedagogical challenge for classroom teachers' (Finn & Phillips, 2022, p21)

In other words, we demonstrate here through our data that the pursuit of wellbeing in education appears closely associated for teachers with a desire to educate in ways that acknowledge the place, space, time and bodies in which we live (Wilson et al., 2023a). Frequently, within our data and within critiques of neoliberal education, there were calls for an education which enables authenticity and agency (Plust, Murphy & Joseph, 2020; Byrne, 2022; Ball, 2003) in the face of the performative and limited norms which have been established as possibilities for educational practices, present and future (Amsler & Facer, 2017).

Introducing this Study: Teachers envision educational practice for wellbeing

In this focus group and interview study with teachers in England, we explored the question of teachers' understandings of practice

for wellbeing in secondary schools. As fieldwork took place in England, July 2021 – February 2022, inevitably, the context of the covid 19 pandemic, the school return of 2021 and the landscape of policy uncertainty around Teacher Assessed Grades, alongside the rhetoric of 'catch up' at the time, shaped the nature of discussions (e.g. Harmey & Moss, 2021). Schools and individual teachers nonetheless reflected on innovations and shifts of focus towards wellbeing in schools as the year had progressed, and their reservations towards these.

Subsequently, teachers considered key issues for the sustainable future of schooling in the light of the changes that took place prior to and during the pandemic, as well as wider 21st century shifts and crises which frame what we describe here as an 'imaginary' for wellbeing in schools. We draw out this 'imaginary' based on teachers' comments on desirable practice for wellbeing, from both experience, and their ideas from reading, sharing practice and discussion. We chose to bring together these ideas and label this as an 'imaginary' because, largely, teachers in the study were drawing on ideas or experience from extracurricular events, clubs, visits or alternative provision rather than their day-to-day practice. There was nonetheless a consistency in their 'vision' for how an education more authentically oriented towards wellbeing would look and feel, and what sort of principles might guide it.

We next present the methodology and key results of reflexive thematic analysis of teachers' discussions.

6.4 Methodology

At the time of this research study in England, schools were returning after the second of two periods of lengthy school closure and a rapidly changing policy landscape around high stakes

assessment (Harmey & Moss, 2021). Discourse and policy focus on 'wellbeing for education recovery' (DfE, 2021) was experienced by many teachers and schools to be subsumed by a focus on restoring normality and re-establishing nationally awarded grades (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b). In previous focus group and interview studies, teachers had articulated how these forces shaped two contrasting articulations of school purpose in its aspirations towards wellbeing (see Figure 1 below to summarise):

Table 7. A summary of key implications from teachers views on 'doing well' and 'being well' (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a; 2023b)

'Doing well' and neoliberal education	'Being well' and education for care/relationality
<p>-Pressure to perform what it is to 'do well' in schools was consciously contradictory to teachers' ideas of wellbeing and flourishing</p> <p>-According to teachers, 'doing well' should build from 'being well', yet instead the two were framed as in competition for resources</p> <p>-A rigid system of decision-making impeded teachers' capacities to proceed according to care ethics when neoliberal 'doing well' was the dominant educational purpose</p>	<p>- A 'positive feedback loop' was proposed between a teacher's sense of satisfaction and student wellbeing</p> <p>- Interbeing, interdependence and quality relationships were seen as key to teacher and student flourishing (hence a broader sense of 'doing well')</p> <p>-Decision-making based on the purpose of 'being well' pointed to an expanded view of relationality for teachers and students, considering the needs and lessons to be learned of the body, the community, and the environment</p>

Research Design

This focus group and interview study was designed as the third round of data collection for a three-part qualitative research project exploring teachers' understandings of wellbeing, their

practice for wellbeing, and barriers/tensions experienced around wellbeing in secondary schools. The collection of data at three stages was to support the richness and validity of findings, so as to enable teacher reflection and connection within focus groups, to tell the story of the development of teachers' ideas through the project, to support participant validation (Birt et al, 2016) of research findings at each data collection point, and to enable us to consider the influence of changing circumstances in the policy and practice landscape throughout the project. Each study was distributed through the academic year, roughly lined up to one round of interviews/focus groups per academic term. The first and second studies are reported in previous articles (Wilson et al., 2023a; 2023b); findings for these two parts are not reported in detail here.

Teachers recruited for studies one and two were invited back to participate in this third study, which was positioned to provide a retrospective on the academic year 2020-21; to enable teachers to consider and build on earlier findings from the research project; and to share practice for wellbeing in secondary schools. New recruits to the study were also invited. The focal questions of Study 3 were:

'How do teachers understand wellbeing in school practice?'

'What barriers/tensions do they experience in the promotion of wellbeing in schools?'

Participants

Twenty secondary teachers from twelve schools took part in this study (part three of the research project). Fifteen teachers had

joined from the outset of the project. Five additional teachers were new to the research project, having connected via other participants of the study/word of mouth, or contacting the lead researcher following advertisement on social media. The participants who discontinued involvement in the study after studies one or two did so for reasons of moving on roles, or a need to let go of additional commitments to balance workload.

One teacher was in a state-maintained secondary for special educational needs. All other participants' schools were state-maintained mainstream schools, one with on-site alternative provision.

The study involved the following teacher roles and experience:

Table 8. Teacher participant sample showing roles and years of experience

Role	Number of participants	Years of experience (range) at start of involvement in project
Assistant Heads (Maths/Science)	2	7-19
Subject Leads (English; Languages; Science)	3	6-14
Teachers of English / English and Media (no additional role)	3	6-7
Teacher of Geography	1	<1

Teachers of Languages	3	1-7
Teacher of Maths	1	8
Teacher of Outdoors Education	1	3
Teacher of PE	1	18
Year Pastoral Lead (Specialisms: English, History, Science)	5	7-22

Gender ratio: 80% female, 20% male

By comparison to UK teaching workforce ratio (GOV.UK, 2023a):
76% female, 24% male (Secondary: 65% female, 35% male)

Ethics

The study was conducted in line with the University of Nottingham Ethical Review Process (approval Ref: 2020/23) and meets the Taylor and Francis ethics guidelines. We aimed to provide an ethos in which professionals could discuss matters of wellbeing openly. We were also mindful of the potential threat posed to professional identities in neoliberal education when critically discussing tensions presented within the research so far. Further to asking participants to be aware of ground rules (commitment to confidentiality; listening openly; allowing everyone to contribute), it was important to highlight further support available for any wellbeing matters.

The specialised Education Support ³ helpline was highlighted to participants.

Data Collection

Teachers were invited to take part in focus groups or interviews (based on availability) between July 2021 and February 2022. Teachers were encouraged to take part in focus group formats where possible to promote collegiate conversation and the sharing of ideas, but where this was not possible, interviews were arranged. Five focus groups took place (one group of four and of three; three groups of two). Seven individual interviews took place. The focus groups and interviews were semi-structured. The first section of the discussions involved sharing responses to examples of practice for wellbeing provided by teachers in schools within the research project. The second section of the discussion involved a short presentation of the themes of the previous focus groups from Spring 2021, and used a hierarchical focusing approach (Tomlinson, 1989) to support a conversation around these themes. Teachers were encouraged to respond to themes according to areas they agreed, disagreed with or felt unclear on. The facilitation role was to support discussion and exploration of themes as natural to participants.

Part 1: 'How do teachers understand wellbeing in school practice?'

Teachers were invited to share examples of practice for wellbeing in their own school settings ahead of the focus groups and interviews, via email or via Microsoft Teams group. Two teachers came forward ahead of meeting with examples they wanted to share in more detail, and these examples then became stimuli for

³ <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>

discussion. The first example was a whole school mind-body practice introduced as a feature of daily afternoon teaching in one school setting, the only teacher participant in a fully SEN setting. The approach was introduced to address difficulties with classroom behaviour and students being unsettled in the afternoons. The second example selected was a whole school approach to teaching counselling skills to all staff. A document was shared summarising the approach of this training which was provided for all staff in the school. An additional list was created of salient examples of wellbeing practice mentioned throughout interviews and focus groups from the study. This list included:

- Forest School facilities within the onsite provision for a set of secondary schools
- Mental health first aid training to all pastoral staff
- Use of Anna Freud Centre training on Mental Health and Wellbeing for teachers, internally sharing within one school
- Colour zones of regulation used across the school (Kuypers, 2011), drawing on social, emotional learning and trauma-informed research

In addition, all participants were invited to come along with specific examples of programmes and approaches to discuss, whether small or larger scale within their school or Trust. Some examples of these are discussed within the results section of this article.

Part 2: 'What barriers/tensions do they experience in the promotion of wellbeing in schools?'

Early themes emerging from Study 2 focus group and interview discussions (based on a first round of reflexive thematic analysis) were shared with participants and a summary list of themes were then provided in order to encourage participants to explore their understandings of these themes. The themes were:

Table 9. Themes from initial analysis of Spring 2021 focus groups/interviews discussed with participants⁴

Wellbeing treated as an 'add-on'
Expertise for cognitive <i>and</i> emotional growth
'Catch up' or 'catch all' – reviewing the role of teachers with teachers
Governance and teaching evaluation methods that reflect performance (doing well) and/or health (being well)
Moving with the times – adapting to a changing world

Data Analysis

The data from the focus groups and interviews was recorded and transcribed for reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019; 2020) using NVivo12. A process of manual coding at word and sentence level was undertaken on all data, resulting in 203 codes. A data driven approach to coding was taken. Nonetheless codes were inevitably informed by the themes from the previous two studies described in this research project (Wilson et al., 2023a; 2023b). These codes were then developed into an initial set of themes or 'stories' of the data, before a shared review of the themes and data as a research team. The reflexive themes were subsequently refined to consolidate over-riding issues, and also to isolate sub-themes. The themes identified are shown in table 10:

⁴ **Note on themes:** Themes discussed in summer focus groups are different to those themes reported in the final analysis of Study 2 (5.5, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b). This reflects the ongoing development of the analysis as informed by the member-checking process, and revisiting of data and themes after this step.

Table 10. Study 3 themes

Main theme 1: Teaching in a neoliberal context in the 2020s
<i>Sub-theme i – Competing currents: 'Old habits die hard' – Wellbeing and the return to the old normal</i>
<i>Sub theme ii – 'We are just everywhere' – What teachers do and what they 'should' do</i>
Main theme 2: Reimagining priorities in school: Challenges and hopes
<i>Sub-theme i – Going 'out of the realms of the classroom'</i>
<i>Sub-theme ii – Movement, opening and the outdoors</i>

Positionality

Our positions as educators inform and potentially shape the research; we highlight the capacity of these perspectives to enrich our insights into the data from lived experience. We are also mindful of the potential for our experience to influence our findings; nonetheless, we believe that the design of this research project which, throughout, has involved returning to review participants' views on the analysis of findings and an invitation to deepen these, provides a useful strategy of triangulation which has deepened our capacity for drawing out meaning from the data.

Limitations

The design of this research project is in the tradition of small-scale qualitative studies. It provides a rich set of exemplar teacher

experiences, as they pertain to the circumstances of time and place which shape this study (the English mainstream secondary context, schools regionally local to the University of Nottingham with which the researchers had connections or could travel to, the time period of the second academic year of the covid-19 pandemic: 2020-21). Participants on this project wanted to discuss the topic of wellbeing in schools, and therefore had an interest in the issue and how it relates to teachers. Consequently, the data we share is inevitably the product of a set of specific views and experience which cannot be applied to every teacher's position on wellbeing. Participants in the study were more likely to be female meaning gender differences are likely to influence our findings. This is pertinent given the roots of care research in feminist scholarship. Nonetheless, the gender ratio in the sample approaches the proportions in the wider teaching workforce in the UK (GOV.UK, 2023a). The design of the study, and the themes drawn out of the data from these discussions offer strong indicators around the concerns of teachers in a range of different school settings and roles, and their needs and imaginaries for how the approach to wellbeing in schools is and could be shaped in the future. These analyses provide clues as to why recent policy measures to strengthen wellbeing provision in school teaching approaches result in barriers on the ground, pointing to further enquiry opportunities around the evidence base for such changes.

6.5 Analysis

During the reflexive analysis of this study's data, two apparently conflicting thematic strands became apparent. The first strand related to the reestablishment of neoliberal 'business as usual'. Entailed within this, the way in which neoliberal conditions both

seeded a need to address wellbeing and simultaneously entrenched barriers to practice for wellbeing: this seems to be the neoliberal-wellbeing paradox. The second strand demonstrated how teachers' vision for wellbeing a) breaks with neoliberal norms and b) is rooted in a re-emphasis upon relationships of care amongst people and place. We seek to directly point out these two contradictory forces and offer empirical evidence in support of such discussions whilst signposting implications for theory/practice.

Teaching in a neoliberal context in the 2020s

In this theme, we represent beneath one umbrella the fragmented issues and frustrations voiced by teachers when wellbeing is structured as an 'add-on' to the neoliberal emphasis on 'doing well'.

i. Competing currents: 'Old habits die hard' – return to the old normal

Concurring with our focus group study undertaken at the return from school closures in Spring 2021, one teacher in this study summarised how an appetite for reset and recovery had been superseded by the dominance of the educational aim of performance of 'doing well' (Wilson et al, 2023a). A policy focus on curriculum 'catch up' was described as 'problematic (and) unhelpful' (Participant V):

'It's almost like we've just gone back to how we worked before without really...learning anything.'
(Participant V, Teacher of English)

Teachers described the challenge of a policy history of 'picking and choosing' (Participant I, Head of Languages), articulated as a means of communicating the apparent incoherence of education

policy, as experienced by teachers over their careers, and exemplified at the particular moment in 2021, as schools returned from consecutive lockdowns. This incoherence was represented in the policy discourse around school return, so 'recovery curriculum' and funds and resources allocated to schools following school return, such as the 'Wellbeing for Education Return and Recovery Grants' (DfE, 2021) were overshadowed by a system that was ultimately focused on grades:

'The problem... is... what we're measured on isn't it? ...We have to get a certain... score ...we don't get measured on...well we do a little bit but you know 'are your children nice'? ...That's not the biggest priority. It's all... 'what grades have they got?' Until you get rid of league tables and things like that it won't change.' (Participant F, Head of English)

So the return to 'old normal' was immediately dominant in our participants' accounts of school return in spite of a purported recovery focus.

Counter-current : wellbeing as an increasing focus of teaching and leadership practice

Nonetheless, teachers and leaders in this study described an increase in the salience of, and focus on, wellbeing both in their own practice and in the approach of school leaders. Examples included: full roll-out of mental health first aid training to all pastoral leads in one school; a whole school afternoon mind-body practice in another; adopting emotion coaching training for all staff; and an example of a Multi-Academy Trust investing in Forest School facilities and provision for secondary schools across the Trust (the second trust to do this in the study). These were all examples of new programmes and provisions being brought in over

the course of the academic year 2020-21. Thus, a counter-current to performativity was visible in the accounts.

Teachers concurred with the literature (e.g. Weare, 2022; Brady & Wilson, 2019) that whole school approaches which were pro-active, well-resourced, and where both training and provision were allocated time within the timetabled day, were key, yet not the norm. Teachers described their complicity in the culture of performativity. As one teacher put it: 'teachers make work for teachers!' (Participant I, Head of Languages). Still, participants emphasised the need to reclaim time and space from other pursuits to develop embedded routines for wellbeing for staff and students within the school day, rather than leaving an expectation for teachers to develop this area beyond their timetabled days on top of their other responsibilities:

'...just allowing teachers...within their work hours...because sometimes I think here comes the problem: you have to do your CPDs as well outside your work hours, and that's where it does affect your wellbeing...' (Participant H, Teacher of Languages)

So teachers and schools reflected the importance of wellbeing but as with other research (e.g. Brady & Wilson, 2021; Creagh et al., 2023), wellbeing training and opportunities for schools which seemed to be 'extra' to work focused on 'doing well' academically were seen as self-defeating.

ii. 'We are just everywhere' - What teachers do and what they 'should' do

The focus groups in this study reflected back over an extraordinary academic year. From a preceding set of focus groups in the Spring of 2021, a central theme for discussion in the end-of-year focus groups became evident: discussing wellbeing in secondary schools

led directly to questions of the role of the teacher. This, in turn, was shaped by the role of the teacher as determined by the neoliberal landscape.

Contextualising this issue, teachers described how well before the pandemic, schools were becoming a sort of 'catch all' (from theme wording generated in Spring focus groups – Wilson et al., 2023b) for students' concerns in and beyond the school environment. Teachers shared their frustrations that, due to an emphasis on dense subject content, that space for creativity, spontaneity and group work in teaching had been long lost, yet:

'Schools are picking up things (where) perhaps there are , or have been in the past, people better placed to do that... and that's now being the responsibility of... schools generally... I think that's been exacerbated by the pandemic.'

(Participant W, Head of Year)

So according to these accounts, the role of the teacher and school is now necessarily about wider matters of care for 'being well', rather than a sole focus on performance, despite a system which inadequately acknowledges this.

Teachers discussed a variety of approaches being taken in schools to address challenges to wellbeing, with the focal discussion around a counselling skills course offered to all staff in one school, as an example of practice to cultivate a culture of listening and support. One Head of Year reflected on the merits of such an approach as being around building teachers' confidence and agency to engage with students' needs directly, rather than consistently passing them on to dedicated pastoral teams:

'there's almost a culture that's flourished now of
'that is somebody's job in an office to deal with' .
And my job is this...It's almost staff feeling
that...they're not specialized enough to deal with
stuff when actually all you need to do is listen.'

(Participant X, Head of Year)

Yet as one teacher put it:

'at the moment, we are just everywhere. It's just
coping right? We were coping with what we've got,
coping with the times and the fact that all the
teachers just want the kids to be okay, and doing our
best, and muddling through. And we're not
counsellors or therapists... we're just trying.'

(Participant M, Teacher of Languages)

Teachers contrasted the view of teacher as purveyor of academic
knowledge with practice that emphasises:

'embedding wellbeing into everything you do and the
way you deliver. And to look after students... talk
about how you're in 'loco parentis' so...you are caring
for them. It's about not just focusing on the end
goal. It's about the process and making the process
nice for students and staff.'

(Participant S, Science Lead)

Questions were raised about how much was falling to teachers and
schools in terms of child-rearing matters traditionally handled in
the home/community, alongside the challenge of reducing
obligations that have gradually accumulated, as more health and
wellbeing responsibilities have been allocated to schools. The

pressure experienced by teachers because of being pulled in contradictory directions appeared counterproductive, either in enabling teachers to feel a sense of efficacy (to 'do well'), or in enabling them to authentically practise care and compassion towards themselves and others (to 'be well').

Reimagining priorities in school: Challenges and hopes for the future

i. Going 'out of the realms of the classroom'

The benefits for students and staff of going 'out of the realm of the classroom' were highlighted repeatedly in our data, in terms of relational benefits and skills:

'There's so much more to it...getting to spend that time with those kids and see them in a different light to how you see them in the classroom...seeing kids who perhaps aren't academically the most able and aren't really that bothered about the academic side of things, but then they're a really good leader, and they're really good at encouraging people in their groups and it's just really lovely to be able to see all that, to get out of the realm of the classroom and remind yourself that there's more to these kids than just when they're sat in rows facing the front trying their best to learn about energy (etc).'

(Participant W, Head of Year)

This point is one of many examples of references to the spaces in which teaching takes place, and its relationship to wellbeing practice. Indeed, one P.E teacher spoke of her own discomfort at being enclosed within classrooms when not teaching practical P.E

lessons, and reflected: 'if I feel like that, how do they feel after five lessons?' (Participant J) The suggestion that the traditional classroom space limits the possibilities for skill development and relationship building is a frequent motif.

It was emphasised repeatedly in this study, as in previous studies (Wilson et al. 2023a; 2023b) that the outdoors, extra-curricular activities or youth leadership elements of students' education are being marginalised to emphasise subject knowledge acquisition and grade attainment. This effect is not only in terms of physical constraints. Teachers described the constraints they experienced from curriculum density and limited time with students as a key barrier in enabling them to deepen the quality of interaction with their students, to build relationships of care. As Noddings' (2012) emphasises in her philosophy of care ethics in teaching practice, the role of conversation between teachers and students, imbued with authenticity and genuine emotional awareness is central to building the relational culture that underpins wellbeing, a sense of safety and promotion of emotional learning in the classroom:

'We're not teaching them ...what we need to be teaching them, which I know is a massive statement to make ... in terms of the curriculum itself... I sometimes teach the lesson and I think: how am I actually preparing you for life outside of here? And I... feel the conversations I have with them that aren't necessarily linked to the lesson, that's when we have the most important conversations that actually link to life outside of the classroom.'

Participant L, Teacher of English

Repeatedly, discussions in the focus groups recognised the need for what we define here as eco-psychological education, with

opportunities for students to move and explore the natural world building connections with the needs of local and global communities .

Teachers described the view that the future of schooling rests on the framing of subject knowledge in the context of solving local and global problems:

'I think things could be framed differently, so instead of the way I was in secondary school, I was just scared all the time it was 'oh no, if I want a nice life...I have to get these really, really good grades'. It was never ...'I need nice friends and a solid network'... So ...I think if you framed all the subjects in a different way and put them into a context of: what global issues are there at the moment and how could we use these skills to help solve them? ...what can we do to be... Kind, helpful citizens to create a nicer, better world instead of 'how can you get the highest grade so you can get the biggest house and the biggest car?'... that would be really helpful.'

(Participant B, Teacher of Maths)

Yet one organizer of the Duke of Edinburgh award cited the challenges of getting teachers involved in active citizenship work on top of their other commitments:

'the main barrier that we have to (it) in school is staffing, and part of that is because it's yet another thing that staff are being asked to come and do...'

(Participant W, Head of Year)

Teachers highlighted the challenge of including students who are disadvantaged or lacking access to transport and parental support

for extra-curricular activities when they are, as the name implies, extra, both in terms of time and resources.

'...with these clubs...are we targeting the right people, because we want the people that want to do it, but what about Johnny, who you know will never go to that club, and why isn't he going?

1.He's never experienced it...and

2.He can't use the internet to log on... (to order kit)

...because Dad doesn't know how to use the internet...'

Participant SC, Teacher of PE

Questions were raised here, as elsewhere, in terms of addressing wellbeing practices at school that provision of outdoors and community-based opportunities be integrated in teachers' and students' timetabled days, available to all. Acknowledged, rather than being an extra. Yet time, money and policy were all considered factors of why this is not the case in mainstream schools:

'I got an email today from a (parent).... Her point was ... Can we set aside time for them to have a half termly trip for each year group and my short answer was no...because of risk assessments and staff time and so on, but the deeper level that she was trying to get at is: there's so much thrown at them, especially later on in school and school life about performance and academic rigor. Have they not just got the time to enjoy themselves now?

... We need to have the ability and the confidence to...relieve the top down pressure ... that would increase the sustainability in wellbeing...'

(Participant X, Head of Year)

ii. Movement, opening and the outdoors

Teachers in this study talked enthusiastically about Forest School as a provision seeing new uptake at secondary schools included within the research project, whether that be for the purpose of supporting inclusion and student resilience, persisting through wild weather, engaging in making, building or problem solving outdoors, or for:

'providing those students with something different that perhaps suits them a bit better...if that encourages greater buy-in in the wider things in school I can see how that would have a really positive impact on their wellbeing' (Participant T, Assistant Head)

The valuing of outdoors provision outside the classroom was seen in the significant commitments of time and resources in two secondary schools participating in the project, one of which was to be used for all students across a Multi-Academy Trust. Teachers spoke of the perception that Forest School was increasingly available at Primary level, but not a provision widely adopted in secondary education, reinforcing the notion that there is a narrowing of educational provision around secondary exam subjects and performance measures (Maguire et al., 2019):

'This is not big in secondary. Definitely a primary school thing.' (Participant F)

‘two out of the 8 feeders that we've got at (our school) are Forest schools so effectively that support has been ripped away the second they've transitioned up into secondary.’ (Participant X)

Nonetheless, an Assistant Head within one such Trust emphasised the need to carefully consider the framing of these provisions, highlighting the ever pervading current towards treating education solely as a training ground for academic attainment:

‘This is the first thing that our school jumped up to do with it: oh, we could take them there and they could learn Maths and English for two days in a different environment... I worry that you know they've built this facility and they're losing some of what's amazing about it.’ (Participant A, Assistant Head)

A challenge is faced in promoting the outdoors here, when neoliberal education requires that such approaches/resources be justified in terms of ‘doing well’.

Teachers talked about how the scope for moving and making creative use of spaces was inherently linked to their capacity to adapt to their students and build relationships, as well as to build students’ agency rather than restrict it:

‘I think it’s a massive thing because every single room is set up with that whiteboard or these chairs; it’s same, same, same until you get out to PE or cooking...’ (Participant J, Teacher of P.E)

Movement and going outdoors stimulated the imagination and afforded opportunities to work with students’ moods. They were associated with creativity, positive feeling and relationships: thus

fostering 'being well'. For most classroom teachers of academic subjects, flexibility in movement and space was an aspiration rather than core to practice. Teachers spoke of their hopes for educational practice for wellbeing:

'using imagination loads more and being in nature more, and living with less. Like I think that would be so beneficial if we could expose kids to that in schools, get them to open their minds a bit about how we can live differently.' (Participant B, Teacher of Maths)

'(to) develop their own sense of who they are and their place in the world and how they want the world to be around them.' (Participant V, Teacher of English)

'Being in nature' and developing 'a sense of their place in the world' again speaks to a place-based, ecopsychological understanding of wellbeing practice.

Building on this notion of greater flexibility in use of affordances offered by spaces, and avenues within (or beyond) the curriculum, teachers' descriptions implied an authentic engagement with 'being well' as entailing connectedness to community and place, both as individual practitioners, and as a school:

'we need to be a bit more outward looking and accept that there are other things around us that we need to tap into... we're not just here for bits of paper ...that say grades on them. It's... a case of... a more sustainable, well sort of broader...aspect of sustainability, saying that actually we're here to serve the local community. And what does that need? ... it can't be doing much good for kids who

are realising that actually it comes to school and it's becoming more and more different to the world they're seeing outside.'

(Participant X)

These examples point to a growing awareness of the importance of taking learners outside the traditional classroom, engaging the 'web of care' and lessons from interactions with the immediate community, nature and place around them.

6.6 Discussion

Although this study asked teachers to reflect about their practice for wellbeing, participants responses were deeply entangled with constraints imposed by neoliberal education structures juxtaposed with both relational and eco-sensitive ideas as alternatives. The data in this study described once again how a focus on progress measures and 'academic attainment', conceptualised within our work as 'doing well' by performance indicators, overshadowed a well-meaning focus on wellbeing within education recovery during 2021, where wellbeing is conceived by schools in the neoliberal system as an 'add-on' to attainment. As such, teachers and students' care-giving, and need for care-receiving was experienced as running against the prevailing current. Yet, in correspondence with advocates of embodied and ecological understandings of education (Finn & Phillips, 2023; O'Toole & Simovska, 2022) via work 'outside the realm of the classroom', teachers pointed to the importance of building relationships with community, place and 'the world' for student development, and wellbeing practice in teaching.

Matters of care undermined

Teachers conveyed how the dominance of 'doing well' as the established, and oft-unquestioned axiom in educational policy and purpose is well-rooted in a nexus of established power structures and histories which teachers and schools feel coerced into upholding. This culminates in a logic of following 'what we're measured on' (Participant F) to become an agenda of 'we must compete for the best grades' above all else (our own wording). Teachers understood that this was a paradigm shaped at an international level, by economic logic of competition between nation states. This set of circumstances has not gone away post-pandemic, despite efforts to prevent the 'gamifying' and injustices of such a system (Maguire et al., 2019).

As with other literature, it is important to trouble the taken for granted notion that schooling exists to serve greater equity, opportunity and wellbeing within communities and society (Phillips & Finn, 2023; Ball & Collet-Sabé, 2022; Francis et al., 2017). Furthermore, whilst care for wellbeing and the 'in loco parentis' role (Participant S) are considered pillars of the teaching role (Noddings, 2003; Hordern, 2021), we see evidence of the pertinence of Puig de la Bellacasa's caution that care as maintenance, repair and attention 'can be done within and for worlds that we might find objectionable' (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p6.), as evidenced by Participant F above. This, particularly given that opportunities for reset and refocus on trauma-informed cultures of care (Emerson, 2022) during education recovery have reportedly been swept aside in favour of the return to an attainment focus. In such a dynamic, the space for Noddings' (2003; 2012; 2013) emphasis on listening, conversation and responsiveness is squeezed out of practice.

Teachers were ultimately concerned that their care was in service of a system which asks 'what grades have they got?' (Participant I) over and above questions like 'what are children's capacities for agency, relational support, and work on the self?' (our wording). Rather teachers described ethically problematic messaging around how to live well, and in relation to what a good life looks like: 'how can you get the highest grade so you can get the biggest house and the biggest car?' (Participant B) These conditions, characteristic of the neoliberal era, are widely critiqued for undermining relationality and care (Tronto, 2017; Phillips & Finn, 2023). Here we demonstrate how these forces are played out in secondary school classrooms in England as they came through the pandemic. We hence strongly question the claims made in policy guidance (e.g. DfE, 2019b) that a focus on attainment, in its current form, aligns with education for 'being well'.

Participants described how they considered much of the most important learning in their job came through 'those conversations' (Participants L) that happen spontaneously in relational interactions, in the space between highly structured content and delivering objectives, and through learning 'out of the realm of the classroom' (Participant W). In spite of this conviction, teachers voiced frustration that the key priorities they were exposed to in returning from the school closures of the pandemic continued to be centred around the 'unhelpful' (Participant V) notion of 'catch up', with a focus on 'all this cognitive stuff' (Participant I) whilst the emotional, and relational was a grey area, acknowledged but ultimately swept aside. This seems highly regrettable given increasing post-pandemic rates of Special Educational Needs diagnoses (GOV.UK, 2023a), significant rises in adolescent mental health needs (Garratt, Kirk-Wade & Long, 2023) and increased rates of non-attendance/elected opting out of mainstream

education (e.g. Burtonshaw & Dorrell, 2023; Long & Danechi, 2023). Surely this is the time to reprioritise care in education.

The future is relational, embodied and turned towards the world

Repeatedly, teachers talked about the importance of space 'out of the realm of the classroom' for wellbeing, and the value of breaking from the constraints of classroom spaces. Space was both to do with exposure to the outdoors, acknowledgement of the body in the learning process (as opposed to brain/cognition only) and to the opportunity to learn from dynamic environments centring neither teacher nor student. It was also about the capacity to exercise agency. In the context of extra-curricular and outdoor learning, teachers described seeing students come into their confidence and developing leadership skills, alongside making connections for themselves between different knowledge domains. Thus, teachers demonstrated the role of these broader, embodied and contextualised learning experiences for a broader conception of 'doing well' underpinned by 'being well'.

Teachers considered that activities and approaches that took students outdoors, out of school settings and into new environments was undervalued and yet should be integrated far more consistently into secondary school provision. Notably forthcoming National Nature Education Park and Climate Leaders Awards may provide opportunities for English schools to prioritise such approaches (DfE, 2022) as they prioritise embedding the educational right of all children to a connection with nature/the environment in spite of the U.K's status as one of the most nature depleted countries in Europe (State of Nature Partnership, 2023).

We described in our first study within the project that teachers identified the role of the body and its relationship to space (e.g. classroom space, outdoor learning contexts, and the environment, - extending to the community, national and global environment) as central to their conceptualisations of wellbeing and teaching practice (Wilson et al., 2023a). Teachers also spoke about the need to better address self-development and our relationship to the world through the curriculum via framing learning as solutions to global (and local) problems. All this supports Biesta's (2022) recent proposal to the problem of subjectification in education, as world-centred education, in which teachers turn the attention of their students to what 'the world' has to teach them.

What ties together these conceptions, and also the centrality of relationships and care in teaching that prioritises being well, is an educational philosophy of interconnectedness centred on relationships and place (e.g. White, 2017). We therefore return to this finding to consider its relevance to applications of ecological psychology to education. Alongside others (e.g. Billington et al., 2022), Philipps and Finn (2021) problematise the way learning is conceptualised within the school system via constructivist traditions which treat the learner and the world as separate. Emphasising that learning is relational, as does our research, but to the environment around us as well as to other humans, they consider how pedagogy may reflect the realities of emergent learning from the environment and the body's actions and perceptions within it, to conceive of a simultaneously more relational and agentic understanding of pedagogy and learning.

They emphasise the observation from eco-behavioural science that humans and other species 'perceive to learn and learn to perceive' (p.21) highlighting the role of the sensory, the body in its environment, and of learning through building awareness of what

are known as 'affordances' – perceiving possibilities for action and agency through relationship with one's environment. In a time when the average young person in England (as internationally) has a notably higher proportion of 'screen time' than 'green time' (Oswald et al., 2020), it seems the educational need that schools must fulfil needs to shift. This would entail offering more opportunities to engage with the non-cognitive, relational and environmental, thus prioritising 'being well' and enabling 'doing well' as a by product, through the intellectual and motivational development that subsequently occurs.

Bringing this back to the classroom, wellbeing and the frustrations and hopes of teachers in our study, we conjecture that frustrations with the classroom, and conversely, positivity about learning opportunities 'out of the realm of the classroom' are suggestive of the limits that the decontextualised classroom environment places on students' and teachers' agency to cater to such needs. Equally, this is not simply a limitation embedded in the spaces but in the perceptions, understandings and worldviews of teachers, their pedagogical practices and the curriculum. We suggest from our data that going 'outside the classroom' cultivates this relationality and capacity for agency in learning in a way that the classroom space and the territorial organisation of the school environment may not.

Within the limits of this article, we acknowledge that the implications of these theoretical directions are under-explored. We nonetheless point to lessons to be learned from environmental and place-based education and, in this study, have pointed to evidence that these practice traditions should be examined both in terms of approaches to embedding sustainability and wellbeing in education.

6.7 Concluding Remarks

Through the analysis of these in depth focus groups and interviews with teachers on perspectives of wellbeing in English secondary schools during the academic year 2020-21, we highlight the paradoxical nature of wellbeing approaches implemented within a neoliberal system. This context limits the capacity for agency, trust and collaboration between teachers. Yet, highlighting the paradox, neoliberal norms appear accompanied by a growing open-ness and awareness amongst teachers of the importance of the world beyond the classroom, and breaking with the constraints of the exam-driven curriculum. We point to recent empirical and theoretical work which draws parallels between this conception of wellbeing as educational purpose and a realisation of the need to see wellbeing, in concept and practice, as a product of a deep relationship with the world. This entails developing embodied self-awareness, and strong connections to community, place and environment.

Teachers talked about the need to better accommodate relationships in balance with the delivery of the curriculum, also highlighting the role of neoliberal educational culture in constraining attempts to embed wellbeing, as they occur through piecemeal initiatives shouldered by individuals in under-resourced contexts. In this scenario, 'being well' is instrumentalised to attain 'doing well' rather than the other way around. Nonetheless, we also see an acknowledgement that the culture is made by teachers and leaders, as well as policy-makers: 'teachers make work for teachers!' (Participant I). As teachers and leaders are increasingly alert to the reconfiguration of priorities entailed in a secondary education that aims at wellbeing, they have the power to play an

important role in reshaping constraining structures and policies. Nonetheless, they emphasise the need for support 'from the top'.

Still, as one Head of Year put it, 'bravery' (Participant X) and conviction of will are entailed to let go of previous priorities. Teachers' views indicate that this move is required, for the necessary allocation of time to embedding a school experience which builds a web of care in and beyond the classroom, alongside high-quality opportunities for young people to connect with the world, and through it, themselves.

6.8 Reflection: On wellbeing 'outside the realm of the classroom' and placebo policies for wellbeing and sustainability

I had the opportunity to meet and work with Lynda Dunlop and Lizzie Rushton through the British Educational Research Association and a special interest viewpoint paper written for their edited Special Issue of Children's Geographies in late 2022/2023. Within these conversations, I learnt a lot from their work and noticed parallels evident between wellbeing policy and their analysis of sustainability policy in England's schools (more recently put into place following COP26 in 2021).

When Dunlop & Rushton (2022) analysed the Department for Education's (2022) Sustainability Strategy, they found that the response to the policy problem of 'young people's worries' (Dunlop & Rushton, 2022, p1097) over the effects of the climate and ecological crisis, and the ensuing economic demands for 'Green Skills' (DfE, 2022) produced a 'depoliticising' effect (Dunlop & Rushton, 2022, p1083). This emphasised techno-scientific responses to the climate crisis through schooling, and a series of

programmes. Whilst interesting and potentially beneficial (the Climate Leaders Award, potential compulsory carbon literacy testing of future school cohorts), like 2019's PSHE changes (DfE, 2019a), these approaches are nonetheless additive, rather than integrative or holistic.

This 'placebo policy' (Dunlop & Rushton, 2022, p1085) understanding seems to mirror that in the arena of wellbeing in schools (i.e. Health Education, in PSHE) within this research. Like the Health Education curriculum (DfE, 2019a) , and the Personal Development strand of the Ofsted framework (2019), rather than engaging with the set of assumptions and value systems which feed both the climate crisis and reproduce the extractive norms of neoliberal values and behaviour, they allow these systems to be perpetuated. Rather, they give the appearance of a surface or symptom-level answer, what Brito, Sellman & Joseph (2021) describe as an 'iatrogenic' effect (Bruto, Sellman & Joseph, p268 – for full explanation). This occurs when a treatment for a medical issue actually facilitates the underlying complaint to persist, rather than improving the prognosis of a person's condition.

Nonetheless, as is the case with England's 'Personal Development' (Ofsted, 2019) and PSHE approach emerging with 'Life Lessons' (UK Parliament, 2013), put forward by young people as part of the British Youth Council's campaigning, the DfE Sustainability Strategy is in part a response to pushes from youth movements such as School Strikes for Climate and Teach the Future in England. In its foreword and introduction, the DfE and Education secretary at the time made a point of emphasising the meetings and consultations that took place in the process of the strategy's development and publication (DfE, 2022).

So in the contextual policy environment of this research, we have two significant, albeit highly compromised, pieces of policy

responding to young people's organising taking place beyond traditional school structures (e.g. UK Youth Parliament, Teach the Future). These rely on youth sector, charity sector, and in the case of the UK Schools Sustainability Network, teachers' additional time, to support and resource young people to access the skills, information, venues and powerbrokers necessary to organise for such changes. I see this as an example of a living curriculum (see section 7.2.3 and section 7.4.5 for development), mutating and reshaping itself. Nonetheless, their effects are limited by neoliberal norms and values. As one such young campaigner comments, and colleagues and I raise in our own article (Wilson et al., 2024):

'I have to teach myself about basic concepts about climate change that I was never taught in school, whilst preparing for GCSEs that will be useless in the world of climate chaos I am being thrown into.'

(Marshall, 2022, paragraph 12)

These reflections are emergent from my own work in young people's participatory democracy during this time, and which I describe in more detail in section 1.5. I share them here for two reasons. The first is to acknowledge the importance of the perspectives, needs and desires of young people in the conversation about wellbeing in schools. They are, perhaps wrongly, absent from this research except in the accounts shared by teachers, though of course, as for the work of teachers, they remain at the centre. The second reason is to illustrate the importance of participation and agency when we are talking about schooling for wellbeing/sustainability. Simovska's work (Griebler et al., 2017; Simovska & Jenson, 2009; Simovska, 2008) has highlighted the importance of participation to the promotion of

wellbeing through schooling; yet there is extremely limited mention of participation in educational decision-making where England's policymaking on wellbeing practice in schools is concerned. Though there exists significant research and knowledge about children's rights perspectives and intergenerational justice, one has to question if a curriculum and school system that seeks to 'virtue care' (Noddings, 2012, pp773-4) for students through a cognitive curriculum in which they have little say can ever truly aim at wellbeing and sustainability. As such, valuing educational work 'out of the realm of the classroom' (Participant W, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p11) becomes paramount.

SECTION III

7.0 Discussion: What do we learn about the state of education from secondary teachers' perspectives on wellbeing in schools in England?

7.1 Introduction to the Discussion

In this discussion chapter, I first offer a review of the key findings from the ensemble of the research. Secondly, contextual considerations and limitations of the research design are considered in order to precis the further theoretical developments drawn out here. To support the discussion of the whole project's findings and implications, I draw on three narratives from the work of Joanna Macy (Macy & Johnstone, 2012/2020; Macy & Brown, 2014, p5): 'Business as Usual'; 'The Great Unravelling' and 'The Great Turning' (explained in section 7.1.3). In each case, I explore what the research adds to knowledge within the domain of the narrative, and look at links to the 'bigger picture' in schooling or education. To help with this process of 'storytelling' with the development of themes from the research, I use capitalised headers to indicate the headline message or finding as relevant to each sub-section. A synthesis of key messages and implications drawn from these research findings is then presented within the Conclusion (Chapter 8).

7.1.1 Key findings from each study

To begin the discussion, it is valuable to recap the key findings from the three studies.

In study one, teacher interviews were conducted with a sample of twenty teachers (ranging in experience and subject specialism) from eleven state secondary schools in England. The aim was to determine teachers' conceptualisations of wellbeing and how this applied to their practice, alongside that of schools. Teachers considered that:

- Wellbeing could be understood both in terms of 'doing well' and 'being well'
- 'Being well' was foundational to 'doing well' and to be understood in terms of relationships
- Relational wellbeing (White, 2017; Brown & Donnelley, 2022) therefore provided an appropriate fit to the conceptualisation of wellbeing best suited to teachers and the school setting according to this study
- Care practice (e.g. Noddings, 2013) provided the clearest fit to teachers' understandings of practice for wellbeing; challenging the view that wellbeing should be taught in terms of skills and knowledge, in a didactic or cognitive approach via PSHE (Brown & Donnelly, 2022)

In study two, teacher focus groups and a small selection of follow-up interviews were conducted with the same cohort, following the school return post school closure owing to the effects of the second winter of the covid 19 pandemic (2021). Teachers were invited to discuss the key themes of the first study and to reflect on how this resonated with their practice/experience at this time. The findings illustrated:

- A clash between the pressure to perform neoliberal business as usual (as understood as a measure of 'doing well') whilst schools were grappling with the return from the second covid-19 lockdown and the shocks this had caused to school communities

- A concern that initiatives to measure and focus on wellbeing were experienced as a tokenistic 'add-on' within this culture – due to a perception that 'being well' and 'doing well' compete for resources
- An undermining of trauma-informed approaches and care in school due to polarized views of behaviour management
- A persistent focus on performance in cognitive tasks and exams as the purpose of schooling

In study three, twenty teachers (fifteen from the outset of the study) participated in focus groups or follow up interviews, sharing practice approaches to wellbeing from over the course of the academic year 2020-21.

These findings reflected:

- The dominance of neoliberal power structures in limiting teachers' and schools' capacities to focus on wellbeing
- Some new directions in practice, including exploration of embodied approaches
- An awareness that enhanced connectedness to place, relationality and the world 'out of the realm of the classroom' was key to wellbeing (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p11)
- A consideration of ecological psychology as an approach to understanding education for wellbeing (as in Finn & Phillips, 2023)

7.1.2 Limitations relating to the scale of the research – how inferences are drawn by contextualising data in broader research and scholarship

The interpretation of the data in this study requires contextualising within interpretivist traditions. It is noteworthy that these contextualising factors can also be seen as strengths of the study. A description and defence of limiting feature of the research follows. Some contextual considerations for evaluation of the research design include:

- **the situated nature of the context for the research and data:** detailed and rich accounts from a small sample of teachers in interviews/focus groups, responding to the research questions, nonetheless should not be straightforwardly generalised to the whole teaching population in England, or globally. These close-up perspectives can offer illumination of national trends, such as increased interest in home schooling, a sustained rise in persistent absence rates, and an ongoing push for access to green space and outdoors education. It also sheds light on patterns in international neoliberal education, such as that around teacher retention and the mixed reception of wellbeing policies and initiatives in schools (e.g. McLellan, Faucher & Simovska, 2022).

- **the context and time of the study:** 2020-21 was a salient but nonetheless unique moment in time to be collecting data on wellbeing in schools. In the research design, decisions were made to intentionally reflect a broad range of school and teacher contexts: the type of school (regional English secondary mainstream schools) and a range of classroom teacher participants with varied experience levels, subject specialisms and roles within schools. Nonetheless we must recognise that there are particularities about each school setting, local context, teacher and, at a more macro level, the English setting versus other nations of the United Kingdom and Great Britain/Europe/global education. This needs to be considered when reviewing findings and implications. Of course, this was also a snowball sample

involving teachers who had chosen to participate in a study on wellbeing, thereby also possibly influencing the data.

- a research design informed only by transformative and participatory approaches:

One key research intention at the outset of this project was to design a research programme which allowed data collection and research outputs to be shaped by and with participants. Here I will describe how this project responded to those aims, nonetheless in sections 3.4 and 8.0 I also explore further how the approach taken can only be described as drawing on transformative approaches, since though aims at consciousness raising may be visible, the extent to which the project became participatory was minimal.

The aim of the research design was to allow the participants to shape the research and the research to shape participants, all the more so in the context of the covid-19 pandemic which was not a factor considered at the initial planning stages. The design of the interview and focus group stages, taking place at termly intervals throughout the academic year, reflects this intention for the findings of the project to be shaped by the lived experience and reflections of participants, and also for the data collection and focus groups to be shaped by participants, including sharing practice between them such as the adoption of Forest School, counselling skills training, and embodied practice (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024).

As the findings show, it also provided a space for participants to see that their frustrations with neoliberal educational norms were shared, and to explore and articulate these, rather than to perpetuate a situation of 'unreflexive ease' (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012, p95 – see also sections 2.1, 2.4, 2.6; Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p995; p1000; 2023b, p3). The planning of staged

interviews and focus groups thus reflects drawing on transformative research which informed the design (Fals Borda, Reason & Bradbury, 2006) as well as a Rogerian ontological perspective about learning and growth (see Methodology, section 3.2 – Role of the Researcher section). These factors entail a recognition that the research design is likely to have influenced the thinking and ideas of the participants, so that the data collected must be seen in the light of this consciousness raising process.

It also became clear as the project progressed, however, that my positionality as researcher, and coming to this project as the lead designer of the research, would make it unlikely that the research project would become a true collective endeavour amongst participants. It should be noted that the research design of this project does not fit properly within a participatory framework; for example, the research design and interview/focus groups themselves were not planned in a participatory way – e.g. Fals Borda, Reason & Bradbury, 2006; Bergold & Thomas, 2012; Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020). The research outputs, such as research papers and conference presentations were also not participatory, although participants were invited to collaborate in later stages of the project's dissemination (see Methods chapter, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6). Although most participants wanted to stay involved in the research and to share their findings, the project was ultimately researcher-led, rather than participant driven. The pragmatic benefits of a design which fit well to the academic year and time-poor teacher context, meant sacrificing on the degree to which this project committed to a participatory ethos. One example was the non-participatory design process of the project. During the course of the project, it was clear that the nature of the subject matter of wellbeing was at odds with teachers' sense of their own

technical/professional expertise. To reiterate Participant D in Study 2 (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b, p11):

‘It doesn’t form part of our performance management, it doesn’t form part of our INSET days. I think rather than care, we talk a lot about performance management and it shouldn't really be framed in that way’.

Within the subject matter of wellbeing itself, there was also a conflict in terms of the pressures teachers were experiencing around their own wellbeing at the time. At times, this affected participants’ involvement in the research.

Thus, this project explicitly draws on participatory and transformative research design approaches, but taking into account the pragmatic challenges of context, and the urgent need to better understand matters of wellbeing pertaining to teachers in secondary schools, the decision was made that these research traditions should be an influence only and would not be fundamental to the research approach. I do consider this a significant drawback of the research approach. Notwithstanding this, whilst these decisions entailed sacrificing on some of the possible directions and outputs that the project might have achieved, reflections from other participatory and transformative work (including me own, see Wilson, Keddie, Arya & Henn, 2024), highlight the resource intensive and logistical challenges that would have likely hampered project completion given the wider circumstances, and the collection of truly valuable data and insights.

- thematic analysis approach and research position:

Inferences in this research have been drawn through constant iterative reflection back to both the broader picture in policy and

literature, as well as through consideration of ground level changes in a school teaching setting. Key changes were shaped by the major school wellbeing policy changes of 2019 through the covid-19 pandemic and subsequent work around safeguarding, addressing persistent absence in schools and the broader picture of children and young people's mental health needs versus provision.⁵

The data analysis approach of this project was thematic reflexive analysis (e.g. Braun & Clarke, 2019 – see Methodology, 3.5; and in the methods of studies 1, 2 & 3 – Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p992-993; 2023b, p10; 2024, pp7-8). It is important to note within the limitations for discussion of findings that:

- My own research positionality is central throughout the research design, data collection and data analysis
- Throughout the project, I have experienced insider-outsider positionality (Merton, 1970; Mercer, 2007; Holmes, 2020) in a constant back and forth, and often simultaneously as I have interviewed, and developed understandings with colleagues in the profession and grappled with similar challenges as a secondary teacher
- This positionality comes with both benefits and downsides. As Holmes (2020) explores, it is essential, and yet to some extent, an irresolvable problem, to be aware of our blind spots as researchers, hence transparency and reflexivity is key, both as researcher, and also as readers of research. Nonetheless, I will inevitably be unable to account for all of my own missed preconceptions and blind areas – I am

⁵ Note: a useful summary for the English context is available in the House of Lords Library (2024): <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/mental-health-wellbeing-and-personal-development-in-schools/>

particularly grateful for the peer review process in article publication in aiding with this work.

- As stated in the Methodology chapter (section 3.5) steps have been taken to expand, explore and interrogate findings from the analysis, including: rigorous review of data driven steps for theme development (Braun & Clarke, 2019), sharing and interrogation of findings with my PhD supervisors as co-researchers, and member-checking with study participants within the focus groups and follow-up interviews (see Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b, p5; 2024, pp 7-8). Results and methods have also been subject to external peer review within all three studies for the publication of papers, and discussed within scholarly conference discussion/presentation.
- I have also undertaken positionality work and written pieces in an ongoing way throughout the research. This was via journalling, in addition to specific written research positionality pieces. Samples are included within this thesis (sections 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, 6.8).

7.1.3 Three narratives

As the findings were brought together, it became clear that there was a story of concurrent narratives in tension with each other: doing well and being well as educational aims; new and old normal; surviving while hoping to thrive; teacher as carer and 'performance manager'.

With the increasing relevance of relational and place-based perspectives in the face of global problems, and the application of an eco-psychological approach to the findings, it became helpful to

understand the data in the context of seminal ecological scholar, Joanna Macy, via relating to her three concurrent global societal narratives. I will explain each of these in detail within the discussion. Here I introduce the three narratives applied:

1. 'Business as usual', or neoliberal normal
2. 'The Great Unravelling' – surviving the breakdown
3. 'The Great Turning' – directions towards a more sustainable and wellbeing-oriented education

Macy & Johnstone (2012/2020) emphasise that these narratives are concurrent; they explain over-arching trends within 21st century global societies. The narratives are seemingly conflicting yet they co-occur, making sense of the dissonance experienced by us as actors within greater societal and systemic patterns. The narratives also appeal to the human need for story, to make sense of the world's complexity. The narratives have been chosen to ground this discussion for two main reasons:

- i) their explanatory power in tying together the seemingly conflicting/paradoxical rise and rupture in approaches to wellbeing in education and society;
- ii) the way they explain the experience of teachers, in oscillating between each narrative, one moment holding up neoliberal 'business as usual' or 'normal as saviour', the next experiencing the distress of unravelling (pandemic, behaviour, school community wellbeing), and the next participating in/building towards practices which protect and build sustainable wellbeing and planetary flourishing.

I also note that, as a teacher, I found this account a beneficial explainer for my own experience and subjectivity during this time.

7.2 The dominance of educational 'Business as Usual'

I refer to 'business as usual' and 'education as usual' interchangeably in this discussion. Joanna Macey refers to 'business as usual' as the extractive systems of profit generation which exploit people and planet with the intention of economic gain. Human societies have come to view this worldview as normal over time, since the Industrial Revolution (Macey & Johnstone, 2012/2020; Macey & Brown, 2014). What is 'business as usual' in education? Throughout this study, the dominance of accountability and performance structures (Ofsted, League tables, exam outcomes), what I term 'the old normal', have been raised as a ubiquitous motif in the data. This system is determined by the logic and technical-rational mechanisms that result from neoliberal governance. As stated in previous chapters on neoliberal education and schooling (e.g. Study Two, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b, pp2-3; p10 'Wellbeing in schools and the role of secondary teachers' and 'The need to reimagine doing well' and Study Three, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, pp1-2; p9) the 'good' (or, in this case, 'good result') can be achieved by individuals and educational establishments (as businesses), competing against each other, to achieve the highest performance outcomes and find the most efficient systems.

7.2.1 WHY TEACHERS FEEL FRUSTRATED AND SCHOOLS FAIL TO CHANGE THE STATUS QUO ON WELLBEING

Educational purpose under neoliberalism

As discussed, under neoliberalism, the purpose of education is to create economically productive individuals. The school happens to be only a 'convenient site' for wellbeing initiatives (O'Toole & Simovska, 2022), rather than its function being understood as fundamentally in alignment with wellbeing. Wellbeing is 'on a backburner' and 'falling between the cracks of safeguarding and PSHE' (Study One, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p994; p996). More broadly, and certainly in the English context, educational aims are often couched in language aspiring towards educational excellence of the being 'the best' (e.g Brito & Wilson, 2023; Gibb, 2015). In neoliberal culture then, the purpose of education is underpinned by a deficiency logic. To clarify: the need to be strong, to accumulate economic assets in order for individuals to hold their own should difficulties occur, and to outcompete others in the educational landscape (Gunter & Courtney, 2023).

In recent years, this aspiration towards educational excellence and attainment, has become tied up with a position on learning which places propositional knowledge acquisition as paramount (e.g Gibb, 2015; Ofsted, 2019; Willingham, 2009; Apple, 2014). Therefore, cumulative knowledge acquisition should be a core method of achieving education's aims. This rationale is what informs participants' sceptical comments on 'all this cognitive stuff' (Participant I, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p16) and a concern about the nature of learning, especially in the English curriculum, where-in teachers expressed concerns at the way students were disadvantaged by the extent of content learning for their exams, and how this constrained lessons to be highly focused on learning of quotes and facts, with limited space for creativity and criticality. Additional quotes from this study reinforce this point, made also in research with Gewirtz et al (2019):

'since the new GCSE I've never dealt with so many tears'

(Participant G, Study 1, additional material)

'there's no time anymore. I've lost the creativity in the classroom because at the end of the day what they need is the content...'

(Participant W, Study 3, additional material)

Within the neoliberal educational system in England, the strong movement towards what O'Toole & Simovska (2022) call 'cognitive advancement' (p25) was entangled with a more knowledge dense exam programme, resulting in a stronger focus on memorisation, and direct instruction within teaching methods in schools (starting with reforms to the exam system from 2014, DfE, 2014; Gerwitz et al., 2019). Teachers in this project repeatedly highlighted the inflexibility of this curriculum to enable relationship building opportunities or flexibility to support different students' needs. Notably, this view of educational purpose has a narrow view of socialisation (as being about learning to acquire and mobilise knowledge within a hierarchical social structure: the school, and on into society), and one's subjectivity is understood to develop through the acquisition of specialised propositional knowledge/skills, rather than any contemplation or introspective practices.

7.2.2 HOW DO TEACHERS' FRUSTRATIONS ABOUT WELLBEING AND THE 'COGNITIVE ADVANCEMENT' AGENDA LINK TO THE WIDER PICTURE IN ENGLISH SCHOOLING?

It is interesting that subsequent major reforms involved the addition of personal development and health education as a focus of Ofsted inspections (Ofsted, 2019) and major reviews of Special Educational Needs provision (DfE, 2022/2024) followed. Perhaps these were, at least in part, a necessary reaction to problems emerging from the previous set of reforms⁶. Wellbeing, as stated, rather than being conceptualised within teaching practice across the school and subject disciplines, was viewed as a discrete subject knowledge area (see Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p993, p988; Brown & Donnelley, 2020; Simovska et al., 2024) through statutory updates to PSHE (DfE, 2019). This was in response to calls for a 'curriculum for life' from the British Youth Council / UK Youth Parliament (UK Parliament, 2013; UK Youth Parliament, 2022). Yet, as discussed, one hour within the week would seem an incomplete, if not tokenistic response to such calls, bringing into question any serious commitment to intergenerational justice within 'education as usual' (see discussion section 7.2.5, 'Intergenerational and intragenerational justice').

7.2.3 HOW THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT CONSTRAINS THE ROLE OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS TO PREVENT PRACTICE FOR WELLBEING

Yet the practice and purpose of teaching in the school context is debated. From a grounded perspective, referring to the voices of teachers in this project, teaching is not primarily 'imparting knowledge' (Participant E, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p995). When they speak of knowledge here, teachers refer to

⁶ This befits arguments for the cycles of policy mortality that pervade neoliberal education (Gunter & Courtney, 2023).

specific propositional subject knowledge, rather than a more open understanding of knowledge and knowledge-making (e.g. Apple, 2014) rooted in relationships. In agreement with Nel Noddings, data in this study suggests teachers are caregivers first. Teaching as caregiving opens up teacher professional subjectivity to questions of epistemology – what kind of knowledge and knowledge-making am I committed to and how am I recognising this within the relational web that teaching and learning occurs?

Within Biesta's framing, 'teaching as caring' offers a more dynamic balance between all three educational functions. This is in contrast to the rigid hierarchical arrangement of expert knowledge transfer in a purely qualification focused educational approach. In 'Is teaching a practice?' (Noddings, 2003), later developed by Hordern (2021) it is argued that teachers' professional decision-making is framed not around their positions as disciplinary experts in their subjects, but in their judgment as to what is best for the wider development of their students. Here I introduce the notion of the 'living curriculum', to propose a framework for the sort of knowledge acquisition sought in teaching for care. The 'living curriculum' refers to the way that the structure of knowledge, knowledge-making and pedagogy along a specific learning route within a teacher-class context, is influenced constantly by the dynamics of the actors (teachers, students, their communities) and systems (local and global geographies) within which this process is nested. The living curriculum material of the classroom (the medium with which the teacher crafts their pedagogy and the students craft their learning) is not principally the pre-ordained knowledge material on the lesson plan or pre-planned scheme of learning, but in the interactions and relationships of teachers and students and what they bring to the place of learning each day. Unfortunately, 'the living curriculum' does not describe the

experience of knowledge acquisition brought about through business as usual, being incompatible with rigid and dense exam schemes, time-poor teaching contexts and high stakes accountability.

'Business as usual' is not usual

Throughout this research project, teachers talked repeatedly and unprompted about the constraints of performance measures: 'until you get rid of League Tables and Progress 8, nothing will change' (Participant F, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p9). This was in a wider context of depleted resources, increased wellbeing needs amongst children and staff, and thus a significant set of limitations upon creativity and innovation. As indicated by the data in this research ('for me, it's not about doing well, being well...it's just about survival at the moment' – Participant E, English Teacher and Head of Year, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b, p13), in such environments, schools and organisations focus on what they *must* do to ensure their own survival; they focus on attainment.

In neoliberal education, it is uncontroversial to state that ensuring pupil attainment of threshold grades in core subjects is the main objective of schooling. Wider purposes of education may sit alongside, but not supersede this aim. And this is due to a wider economic perspective that children must be employable and have economic opportunities in the future (e.g. Gibb, 2015), regardless of if the methods used to get them to this stage undermine children's ability to learn to self-regulate emotionally, to know themselves, and to develop strong, supportive relationships with their teachers and community. Where wellbeing is addressed, it is in the context of self-management of one's health and care needs (Tronto, 2017; Glazzard & Stones, 2021; DfE, 2019a), rather than based on an acknowledgement of the individual's fundamental interdependence.

This focus on economics as educational purpose, in the context of an individualised philosophy of 'the good life' (relatively new and unusual in terms of human cultures – White, 2017), is focused around 'having' and 'doing', as quoted within the third study: 'if you want a nice house and a big car, you need to get this many As' (Participant B, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b, p11). A long history of Western philosophy and ideas has led to this view of separated individuals from community (Billington et al., 2022), place and the natural world (Finn & Phillips, 2023) so that schools have to engage in a confusing tension between value systems which promote 'good behaviour' and care for the community, whilst also holding up individual success as the ultimate pinnacle.

Economist Kate Raworth (2017) describes neoliberal, Western cultures as 'weird societies' (Raworth, 2017, p89). As social beings, for tens of thousands of years human cultures centred around community (albeit these were sometimes quite isolated); one's 'success' or 'happiness' was implicitly tied to relationships within the community and one's connection to the place. Neoliberal, Western consumer cultures have led to the proliferation of the view that self-made individual success is what equates to happiness and wellbeing, just as endless progress and economic growth is what determines the wellbeing of society. In spite of the plethora of projects and research focusing on wellbeing in research and practice over the last twenty years, the entrenched norms of industrial capitalist, and subsequently neoliberal culture remain strongly rooted – indeed it was recently enforced in policy that teachers must not challenge them (DfE, 2020).

In this research project, it became clear that it was impossible to talk about the promotion of wellbeing in schools without talking about the performativity of neoliberal education; the patterns established in Stephen Ball's work on the teacher's subjectivity

remain ever relevant (2003; 2016). Increasingly, it appears that it is neoliberalism's very undermining of wellbeing and simultaneous thirst for progress, productivity and success which is feeding a stronger focus on wellbeing, as proposed by scholarship on mindfulness in schools (Reveley, 2016; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2019), and across wider social science scholarship (Becker et al., 2021; Maiese, 2022; Finn & Phillips, 2023). Simultaneously we see that neoliberal structures and value systems erode wellbeing and mental health, in particular because of the individualistic and extractive assumptions/processes on which neoliberal societies are based.

7.2.4 WELLBEING POLICIES ACT AS 'PLACEBO POLICIES'

Wellbeing as an 'add-on'

In previous sections of the thesis, I describe the parallels between treatment of wellbeing and sustainability in education policy as 'placebo' policies, in which a policy solution is presented as an apparent 'fix' to a policy problem without truly engaging in the problem's causes or facilitating solutions (in Dunlop & Rushton, 2022). In the context of neoliberal 'education as usual' promoting wellbeing as a means to attainment/economic outcomes, which favours standards culture as serving the exams and accountability system, it is unsurprising that wellbeing approaches are and have been used instrumentally, as pointed out within all three studies, alongside wider research (e.g. Carlsson, 2022). Children and teachers pick up on this incoherence, and hence reports on implementing wellbeing interventions convey dissatisfaction,

scepticism and limited impact (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a; 2023b; 2024; Brady & Wilson, 2021; Kuyken et al., 2022; Billington et al., 2022). This dynamic is visible in one teacher's observations following the sharing of a mind-body practice used in another school:

*'It's that difficult thing about ...wellbeing isn't it?
Promoting your wellbeing is not necessarily setting
up a yoga session in the afternoon, which I think you
know, that would be brilliant but just because you
have a yoga session in the afternoon in your school...*

*One. It takes a long time to kind of convince the kids
that that's a good thing.*

*And then by the time it's kind of established, if
you're going to take it away, it will have achieved
nothing.'* (Participant I, Teacher of Languages, Study
3, additional quote)

In 'Adding Lemon Juice to Poison', Sellman and Buttarazzi (2019) highlight the mismatch of philosophies within which wellbeing and mindfulness interventions are integrated into schools. Within 'neoliberal education as usual', there is a need for students and teachers to conform to standards culture, and to endure any emotional adversity or injustices that this may entail (e.g. Brown & Shay, 2021). Yet coming from a philosophical position coherent with the origins of mindfulness, anti-oppression should be a central purpose of mindfulness and wellbeing approaches (e.g. Berila, 2015; Brito, Sellman & Joseph, 2021; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2019). With mindfulness and wellbeing interventions focusing on the development of contemplative consciousness and awareness (as well as agency over one's attention), they may make the discomfort or injustice of standardisation structures more visible to

conscious awareness. This is whilst the intention from an institutional perspective is to enable students or teachers to be better at coping with these injustices (e.g. Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a; Brown & Dixon, 2020; Brown & Shay, 2021). The 'lemon juice' hence highlights the attempt to mask the bad taste, and in some cases may raise the distress levels of pupils or teachers, since, as Ball, Maguire & Braun (2012, p95) argue, a position of 'unreflexive ease' is a more comfortable position from which to endure 'education as usual', at least unless one's behaviour or needs are such that one cannot function in this context.

The alternative view of this wellbeing 'add-on' movement in neoliberal 'business as usual' is articulated by Reveley (2013). As more teachers, students and their families turn to wellbeing measures only to observe the incoherence of such programmes with the aims and practices of 'education as usual', there is potential for transformative awakening, which with a collective response, could, as Reveley articulates it 'turn a blow torch on capitalism' (Reveley, 2013, p545), an interestingly contrary outcome to those expounded by recent English education policy (DfE, 2020; Busby, 2020). Yet, in a time of increased vigilance and sensitivity around what kinds of materials and philosophies are acceptable material for school discussion and debate (e.g. Daley, 2023), the question is raised as to whether the classroom will or can be the site of such transformation.

7.2.5 BEYOND 'EDUCATION AS USUAL': EVIDENCE OF TEACHER SUPPORT FOR MORE RELATIONAL AND ECOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO EDUCATION

Intergenerational and intragenerational justice

A new theme which emerges from the data is *intergenerational* and *intragenerational* justice (e.g. Wilson, Keddie, Arya & Henn, 2024), especially where wellbeing education is situated 'out of the realm of the classroom' and hence is unevenly distributed in terms of access, as pointed out in Study 3:

'... with these clubs ... are we targeting the right people, because we want the people that want to do it, but what about Johnny, who you know will never go to that club, and why isn't he going?

1. He's never experienced it ... and

2. He can't use the internet to log on ... (to order kit)

... because Dad doesn't know how to use the internet '

(Participant J, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p13, 'Reimagining priorities in school'.)

There is a niche but growing history of linking wellbeing in education and young people's access to Learning for Sustainability (LfS in Disterheft, 2023; Simovska & Mannix- McNamara, 2015; Dunlop & Rushton, 2022; Walshe, Moula & Lee, 2022). With increasing calls to refocus on the role of education to address climate and ecological breakdown (UNESCO, 2021; DfE, 2022), the importance of enabling young people as 'change agents' (UNESCO, 2021, p5) and supporting life and educational practices for wellbeing interlock. As mentioned in the Literature Review, (section 2.6) agency means the capacity for awareness, reflection and self-

leadership in decision-making based on one's own knowledge and consciousness. This is not at odds with relationality, but rooted in it (see Part I, section 2.3, 2.4, 2.7 and Part III, section 7.1, 7.4). Yet definitions and measures of wellbeing which decontextualise individuals and ignore the relational nature of wellbeing require challenging in this context since: 'one person's happiness can be another person's unhappiness' (Lazarus, 2003, p98 in Disterheft, 2023, p11). Without this understanding, one person's success within the neoliberal educational landscape entails built-in failure for others (Gunter & Courtney, 2023).

This research project along with a wider body of research (Disterheft, 2023; Simovska et al., 2017; Hickman et al.,) have highlighted the interlocking concerns between wellbeing and sustainability in schooling. This is further highlighted in terms of access to the natural world, as emphasised in the third set of focus group findings and analysis. It seems that 'education as usual' has cut students and teachers off from their connection with place: 'it can't be doing much good for kids who are realising that actually it comes to school and it's becoming more and more different to the world they're seeing outside.' (Teacher of History, Head of Year; Year Performance Lead). The implication is that schools can and should play their part in addressing this gap, indeed this is also observed in educational policy strategy (DfE, 2022; DfE 2023).

Teachers in this project saw breaking with education as usual as entailing breaking with the limits of the realm of the classroom. Nonetheless, working from within neoliberal norms, schools who try to implement Forest School or Place-Based Education come up against dominant barriers of additive approaches and under-resourcing (Yemini et al., 2023), especially in secondary schools (by comparison with primary schools), observed in Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, where the resource focus is on exams, and where

the school community is larger and more unwieldy (Body, 2023). Our findings thus support other research in noting the precarity of schools in promoting intergenerational and intragenerational justice and agency.

Within wellbeing literature, the importance of voice, participation and agency is clear (Ryan & Deci, 2012; Simovska et al., 2015), as highlighted by participants in their definitions of flourishing ('do they have something that they're really pushing into...so they can contribute?' - Study 1, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p997), and in their vision for a curriculum oriented towards wellbeing: 'what global issues are there at the moment and how could we use these skills to help solve them?' (Study 3, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p12). Yet education and business as usual exclude young people from engaging with change-making and political process beyond micro-level and tokenistic matters (Arya & Henn, 2019; Wilson, Keddle, Arya & Henn, 2024; Walker, 2017; 2020). The age segregation which is normalised and institutionalised for young people via schooling contributes to this exclusion, where perceiving schools as a factory line for knowledge acquisition and qualifications prevents schools and teachers from taking time and experimenting to establish relationships with community stakeholders, or developing place-based or problem-solving dimensions to the curriculum which address school contexts (Yimini et al., 2023): 'when it comes to school, it's becoming more and more different to the world they're seeing outside' (Study 3, Participant X, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p14). As Participant K explores in Study One (additional quote):

'We often tend to think about school like these little voids. It's like a vacuum ...and don't think about what's going on outside but I think it's really really important and I think we need to tailor what we do to thinking about the context and

what might be going off at home ...a lot of things to do with wellbeing aren't necessarily spoken about, particularly, you know with white working class men: 'don't talk about your feelings'. That's a big problem in this community...Lots of people I know that have drink, alcohol consumption problems, things like that. We as a school need to think about what's going on in the community and address them.'

Despite various innovations described within this project, particularly the use of Forest School methods, since the pandemic and as resources have become more constrained in schools, it appears schools have become less, rather than more open to community engagement (e.g. Body et al., 2023). Schools are required to engage with external/community providers within the context of careers/technical training rather than wellbeing (DfE, 2023). It appears the affordances in reconfiguring educational purpose towards wellbeing which came about during the lockdowns and school closures of the pandemic have given way to a refocus on 'catch up', embedding old normal routines and addressing severe reductions in school attendance (Centre for Social Justice, 2022; Long & Danechi, 2023b), a focus on symptoms rather than causes.

Young people are nonetheless anxious about the world they are growing up into (e.g. Lakasing & Mirza, 2020; Hickman et al., 2021; Haidt, 2024) and frequently see the adults and structures around them failing (e.g. Intergenerational Foundation⁷). Simultaneously, young people often experience a lack of support to grasp the power and mobilise the knowledge to intervene in problems at local or global level. Children who are more engaged

⁷ Research and education charity promoting intergenerational fairness and representing interests of younger and future generations. <https://www.if.org.uk/about-us/>

in civic action are likely to be more economically privileged, or at least in a school context free from the threat of low Ofsted ratings (though not always – this is also down to school community context – Body, 2023). These circumstances highlight the intragenerational injustice experienced within and between school contexts whereby students and teachers’ capacity to develop agency and civic engagement varies significantly.

7.3 Breakdown and The Great Unravelling in Education

The second narrative to be examined in this discussion is ‘The Great Unravelling’ (Macy & Johnstone, 2013/2020; Macy & Brown, 2014). Here the focus is on the shock and grief experienced during multiple system failures within education and the wider world. Naturally this narrative feels pertinent to the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, but it also speaks to the apparent unravelling of mental wellbeing for young people, their teachers and the school system, as well as the global cost of living and climate and ecological crises contextualising the time of this research.

7.3.1 BARRIERS TO WELLBEING: CURRICULUM OF THE LONE SURVIVOR

A second major story in this project’s data and in its wider context is around the nature of teachers’ experience in schools as ‘surviving’ – far from flourishing (see Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b). At the same time, teachers observed the inappropriateness or inadequacy of the curriculum they were required to cover. As such, they articulated a need and desire for

their work to better reflect events in the world around them, to explore the forces impacting the students they teach. Wider societal trends beyond the data from this project reflect this disconnect between schooling, education, and the world in which young people are growing up: high numbers of persistent absence, and elected homeschooling have sustained themselves after the covid-19 pandemic (Burtonshaw & Dorrell, 2023); teacher attrition elevated; recruitment and retention remains stubbornly low (Maisuria et al., 2023). So in characterising these seemingly disparate features of the challenges in education around a 'lone survivor' logic, I mean to draw out the notion of the 'lone' individual as decontextualized, separated from the world. Students are inadequately accompanied in their learning, since neoliberalism has reshaped the role of actors in education, 'altering social connections and power relations to less democratic and caring forms' (Ball, 2016, p 1046). In this nexus of norms, teachers and students become schooled in 'lone survival', a far cry from the 'flourishing' aspired to in discourses of positive education.

Circumstances are extremely difficult for schools trying to ensure the correct student-teacher ratios for qualified teachers, and to ensure the care support required by children (and teachers) in the community are met. The cost-of-living crisis that followed heightened strains on all members of school communities, with schools continuing to serve the role of 'the fourth emergency service' (Participant X, Study Two, additional quote) or 'quasi-welfare state' providers (Body, personal communication, September 8th 2023; Child Poverty Action Group, 2023⁸). Meanwhile, global instability in the political and economic sphere, and breakdown in the environmental sphere, heighten these concerns. In this section of the discussion, I examine these issues

⁸ <https://cpag.org.uk/>

in light of the notions of breakdown and the Great Unravelling, in order to articulate the way in which neoliberal education appears to be floundering, and potentially sinking in the face of these issues, rather than embracing the concept of 'reset' (Rolph, 2022) or 'building back better' which was heralded during the pandemic (e.g. Robinson, 2020).

7.3.2 HOW FOCUSING ON RESILIENCE OR HAPPINESS PRESENT A BARRIER TO WELLBEING EDUCATION FOR TEACHERS

Acknowledging difficult emotions

In Disterheft's (2023) analysis of the synergies between Learning for Sustainability and education for wellbeing, one of the key themes identified was: 'facing and dealing with difficult emotions' (p15). Within this study, when teachers were asked to speak about how they envisioned wellbeing in education, there was a visible trend in interviews to talking about negative experiences and emotions. In the context of breakdown and Joanna Macy's 'Great Unravelling' these difficult emotions are highly prevalent, and yet teachers in this study voiced their frustrations at a lack of space to articulate these in their day to day professional experience, as I explored in 'Reflection II: On the Negative' – section 5.1. It is useful to recall this personal reflection here: in Winter 2020, as I was part way through collecting data for the first interview study, I realised that I had inadequately prepared to address the role of the negative in this research, and that for all the different approaches to promote wellbeing that we could potentially discuss in the interview schedule, what many teachers I spoke with wanted to do

was openly discuss their struggles. Just as Culshaw and Kurian (2021) voiced from their research later the following year, teachers wanted the space to acknowledge and process difficult feelings, since under 'education as usual', they felt they must push aside these needs to prioritise curriculum coverage and performance.

It was important that the interviews were informed by the work of Carl Rogers on non-directive interviews to allow for this space to explore 'the negative', to grieve over numerous and distinct losses and struggles. Yet, it is untrue to say interviews followed Rogers' approach due to the use of a 'meet in the middle' approach following 'hierarchical focusing' (Tomlinson, 1989). The use of Rogers' work informed the philosophy of the interview, so when teachers wanted to go into detail and explore their personal difficulties, they were given space to do so, rather than being steered away from these topics and through the topic 'checklist'. I reflect that the design of interviews to follow a topic 'checklist' seems a neoliberal way of doing things, to get things done, emphasise performance, as Ball (2016) would note, though I would argue that it was chosen as a compromise between a strongly structured and totally unstructured approach. Nonetheless, perhaps this is something that could be done differently in future work, having the bravery to allow teacher participants to self-direct more within discussions.

Tools and philosophies within positive education approaches have emphasised behaviours and habits which promote positive emotions; yet the idea of training young people and teachers to choose happiness, or to be resilient (whilst masking or repressing other emotional experiences) sends a problematic message. In fact it potentially encourages denial, and suppression of important truths. Notably, this is in contrast with messaging on mental health, whereby children are validated in their emotional

experiences (e.g. Sorgenfrei et al., 2022). Yet the problem still persists if supporting adults are too busy or emotionally overstretched themselves to be present for these emotions ('a lot of (teachers) wouldn't consider themselves to be in touch with themselves or experience a sense of wellbeing' so 'replicating that spiral', Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p995). This is certainly a norm reflected in comments on lack of time to address student needs, worries and interests, highlighted in particular in Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, pp993-994). Furthermore, in the context of economic precarity, climate and ecological breakdown, and the loss of the 'progress myth' inherent to 'business as usual', feelings of anxiety and loss are natural.

In 'Positive Psychology in Practice', Pauwels (2015) (see section 2.2) highlights the need to acknowledge 'the role of the negative' in positive psychology. In particular, processing worry and metabolising grief in healthy ways is an important part of the process of maturation (Weller, 2015), enabling individuals and communities to move forward, share pain in safe space with others and, as Macy and Johnstone (2020) write, move to active hope and empowered agency. In a time of global breakdown which is ever more difficult to shelter children and schools from (Hickman et al., 2021), young people and teachers require the support to engage healthily with their grief and negative emotions in order to find the empowerment needed to become the 'change agents' described in policy, and required of them in the 21st century (UNESCO, 2021, p5; DfE, 2022). Learning to do this requires commitment and training, directions towards which are offered by the work of such scholars as Berila (2015), Ergas (2017) and Palmer (1997). Yet, returning from lockdowns, rather than talking about adjustment, trauma, emotional metabolising, the focus according to participants

was on restoring behaviour norms and strengthening behaviour systems.

7.3.3 WHY CURRENT SCHOOL WELLBEING POLICIES IN ENGLAND ARE INADEQUATE: THE STORY OF RECENT WELLBEING POLICY

Zooming out to the big picture: Wellbeing in schools pre-pandemic

Within the literature review and three studies, I have discussed how rising concerns around deteriorating quality of life and mental health in the two decades prior to the global pandemic generated policy work to create national strategies and joint health-education approaches in England during the 2010s (coinciding with austerity measures and widening inequality). 2019's changes to school policy on curriculum coverage of mental wellbeing alongside Ofsted's new criteria to assess personal development and to change their inspection approach were a product of this process. Yet, this project's data supports the view that there has been a simplistic treatment for the symptom of wellbeing issues via Health Education, rather than tackling the precarity at the root of rising mental health concerns within schools (e.g. Glazzard & Stones, 2021; Brito, Joseph & Sellman, 2021).

Workload, work intensification and time poverty strains (Creagh et al., 2023) created a context in which space for reflection, awareness and compassion were eroded: 'the to do list is just neverending' (Participant J, Study 1, additional quote). Work intensification refers to:

'the frequency of needing to work at a high speed and the frequency of working to tight deadlines (Green, 2021) ...(with) evidence that no other profession work(s) as intensively as the teaching profession, and that from 1992, teachers' work intensity had followed an upward trend'.

(Creagh et al., 2023, p10)

This work intensification was not unique to the school setting, but was indicative of the wider impacts of neoliberal culture (see also Jerrim et al., 2021) on working practices: 'we are just everywhere...just...coping with the times' (Participant M, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p11). It was in this context that wellness and wellbeing interventions such as mindfulness apps were thriving (e.g. Maiese, 2022). On the extreme end of such cultural norms, in which work and productivity reign as the purpose of one's life and energy, there is the erosion of reflexive space for agency, as under totalitarian regimes. Though drawing on an extreme case, Nadya Tolokonnikova's observations from Russian prison labour reflect this dynamic, and the impact, as Ball (2003) would put it, on the soul. Although of course the circumstances are thankfully less extreme, teachers on the project spoke of being driven to work seventy hour weeks. Such accounts recall Tolokonnikova's experiences:

'What happens when people have to work sixteen hour days with no day off and just perform... I detached from my body. I didn't see a way out of that and I think that's one of the most dangerous places to be, where you lose any sense of hope, agency or motivation.' (in Scharma, 2023, Interview with Nadia Tolokonnikova)

The notion of having to suppress negative emotion to relentlessly serve a system constantly demanding more labour and workload resonates with regimes which suppress and oppress freedom, individuality and relationships, in order to serve a top-down power structure and narrative. In a time in which governance and government is becoming increasingly difficult, it is perhaps favourable to those benefiting from the neoliberal system:

'playing to win rather than redesigning the game to be inclusive' (Gunter & Courtney, 2023, p362).

It is informative to review the wider backdrop against which concerning statistics on children's wellbeing were arising and in which teachers were facing the ensuing challenges in schools. These include: the adverse effects of neoliberal education policy such as normalised gaming of the reporting system and 'off-rolling' students (encouraging students' parents to remove their child from the school mid-way through GCSE preparation to improve the school's performance statistics); a culture of 'deliverology' (Barber in Gewirtz et al., 2019, pp504-507; also Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012) in schools faced by teachers (see literature review section 2.6); rising national and global inequality post 2007 global recession; increasing geopolitical unrest (rise of the far right in the Anglo-American world and globally; migrant crises); technological shifts radically reshaping children's worlds⁹, alongside accelerating climate and ecological breakdown with accompanying political movements such as youth-led School Strikes for Future.

⁹ See for example 'Smartphone Free Childhood Campaign' (Banfield-Nwachi, 2024 - <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/feb/17/thousands-join-uk-parents-calling-for-smartphone-free-childhood>) and Woodhouse & Lalic (2024) for material debated in the UK House of Commons <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cdp-2024-0103/>

It is against this backdrop that schools in England were implementing more rigorous, linear course content at GCSE and A Level, and having to adopt increasingly rigid curriculum content for the entire secondary cohort to adequately prepare them (Gewirtz et al., 2019). This did not change the fact that heightened inequalities nonetheless were feeding large numbers arriving to secondary school with developmental, social and emotional needs, and with difficulties in literacy and numeracy such that the secondary school curriculum was inappropriately pitched. Teachers in this study talked repeatedly about their frustrations with these features of the system. In this context, it perhaps seems unsurprising that teachers were struggling to find time to build relationships with students, or to tend to their own wellbeing.

During the covid-19 pandemic

Teachers described harm to young people during the pandemic across multiple domains. It is for this reason that understanding schools' responsibilities post-pandemic to be 'catch up' was considered inappropriate and 'unhelpful' (Participant X, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p16). Teachers described how during the lockdowns, they were unable to determine how students were looking and feeling, or how much they were able to engage in learning, due to remote learning removing the capacity to observe students' demeanours and behaviours. Teachers thus struggled or were unable to see if students were finding something difficult whether in learning or linked to issues beyond the classroom. This lone experience was further heightened by strains on parents and families, frequently expected to be working at a laptop, unavailable to spend time supporting their children.

On returning from the second lockdown, during data collection for the second study (the first round of focus groups), teachers described the behaviour challenges they were seeing as being unlike anything they had seen in their careers. These comments were made by experienced teachers with 20 years of experience in the classroom. These behaviour challenges in schools were underpinned by a plethora of complex situations. Some children had experienced significant isolation at home, with severely limited adult input into their learning. This was due to a huge range of circumstances such as working arrangements, family loss of care support, bereavements, shielding vulnerable family members, and financial struggles as well as a lack of knowledge and a loss of support.

Many students therefore experienced significant challenges in terms of self-regulation on remote digital platforms with very limited support. It is known that many children were exposed to domestic instability and complex challenges in the home environment during this time, exacerbated by the isolation of the pandemic (Centre for Social Justice, 2022). As described in Study Two, all children had experienced an abrupt loss of routine, many weathering the mental health, financial or relationship difficulties endured by their parents, unequipped as were their teachers for such unexpected circumstances. The perception of stability and social support provided by routine and broader adult input within school had been shattered. At this moment in time, both experiencing classrooms directly and trying to make sense of the data from teachers' accounts, I found the words of Mary Oliver's (1986/2017) poem 'Shadows' powerfully pertinent. She writes:

*'We continue walking into the future...while the
power of the earth rampages...*

*Everyone knows the great energies running amok
cast*

*terrible shadows, that each of the so-called
senseless acts has its thread looping
back through the world into a human heart.*

... Whatever

power of the earth rampages we turn to it

dazed but anonymous eyes; whatever

*the name of the catastrophe, **it is never***

the opposite of love.'

From Shadows by Mary Oliver

(Mary Oliver, 1986/2017, p340)

Teachers, schools and parents had the best intentions during the pandemic, themselves turning to it 'dazed eyes'. The pandemic's 'great energies running amok' looped through those hearts and minds. So as one teacher put it 'we're all just doing our best. We all want the kids to be okay, but we are just everywhere' (Participant M, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p11). These feelings seem to have led to a frantic scramble to restore routine and the road to qualification ('never the opposite of love'). The tragedy is the lost opportunity to change the direction of that road, with a greater spotlight on growth, healing, connection and purpose for young people and teachers. Rather, in spite of all good intentions, on returning to school in March 2021, an initial set of policy messages (DfE, 2020; MindEd, 2024) and a desire in schools to refocus on relationship building and recovery was quickly

superseded by a push to tackle Teacher Assessed Grades and to restore 'normality'.

In this environment, stressed teachers unused to and unprepared for the natural pushback from children at this rupture in routine found a discourse of 'polarised' behaviour debate (Participant T, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b, p16) ill-informed by disaster recovery or trauma-informed approaches. Indeed, as I argued in the findings and discussion of Study Two, the urgency to restore a sense of normality and routine (acknowledging this as an important feature of the disaster recovery research), quickly moved into a performance of 'business as usual' even as a sense of Unravelling continued. An opportunity to grieve, integrate the collective experience, and move forward whole, had been lost to the relentless march of progress creating a dissonance and a sense of being forgotten amongst young people, as evidenced particularly amongst the generation of students in key transition years during the pandemic (e.g. Hill, 2022).

In his study on grief in 'The Wild Edge of Sorrow', Francis Weller (2015) writes about the loss of the 'village'. In terms of ancestral norms over most of human history, children and individuals had access to a village or community of people who would share responsibility for each other's care and wellbeing, collectively marking important life moments of joy and loss, and providing a network of care so that the burden of individual's needs was not carried on too few shoulders. Hence the adage: 'it takes a village to raise a child'. White (2017) writes about this same value system around the village as characterising research on wellbeing in traditional non-Western and indigenous communities, challenging individualised approaches to wellbeing in the West or Global North. As modern Western societies have moved away from such ways of

life, and as neoliberal culture has pushed back responsibility for wellbeing onto the individual (e.g. Glazzard & Stones, 2019; Brown & Donnelley, 2020; Maiese, 2022), it can be understood that schools have become the closest approximation of this village to young people. At the same time, as articulated in the first sub-section of the discussion, this is not the purpose for which schools are conceived within 'education as usual'.

Acknowledging Unbalance

According to this research project, teachers and students know that measures of performance are out of line with the 'Unravelling' and 'Turning' which are occurring with increasing obviousness in the world around them, especially so during the covid-19 pandemic. Although awareness of this may vary, in this project, teachers were critical and openly frustrated with the neoliberal norms under which they had to operate. As the school policy environment presented placebos, examples in the data showed how teachers, and students, looked 'out of the realm of the classroom' to explore the kind of education they wanted or needed. It appeared teachers and students felt this is a school system that is divorced from the moment (e.g. Amsler & Facer, 2017; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2019). The vision of education at the centre of neoliberal education appears to lack the capacity to bring us into contact with the 'now' (Brito, Joseph & Sellman, 2021).

This discomfort expressed by teachers and students at the rift between educational norms and present needs, also has to do with a conceptualisation of wellbeing, which is strongly shaped by 'doing' and 'having', as opposed to being, or indeed 'interbeing' (see Discussion, section 7.4). Again, it takes the matter in the

direction of underpinning philosophy (Brito, Joseph & Sellman, 2021) so that understandings of wellbeing change to be rooted in relationships to self, to each other, and to place in our time. What instead seems to be visible in school settings, is a denial of the time and place in which we are situated, or at best, a reluctant and uncomfortable accommodation of it. Schooling and learning thus happen separate from the world, rather than as deeply rooted in it.

I have argued that this alienating process is one of the fundamental barriers to promotion of wellbeing in schools, and join with educational theorists such as O'Toole and Simovska (2022): to understand wellbeing and education as two fundamentally dialogic phenomena, in light of the embodied nature of mind and being, and with an ecopsychological view of learning and development, suggesting:

'a realignment of problems away from individual brains towards greater recognition of mind-body connections and dynamic relationships with others and the world.' (O'Toole & Simovska, in McLellan, Faucher & Simovska, 2022, p27)

Building on O'Toole & Simovska's observation, interestingly, having a school culture approach and ethos rooted in the specific school community is strongly encouraged in government/third sector guidance and statutory requirements on behaviour (e.g. Bennett, 2017; DfE. 2024). Yet, certainly in England, this is not an approach, which is widely applied to curriculum design or approaches to wellbeing.

In England, recent comparative analysis (Donnelly & Brown, 2022) found that attempts to add to and update the policy landscape around school wellbeing have resulted in a proliferation of piecemeal policy with limited 'policy traction' in terms of adherence

in schools. This was as compared to the other nations of the United Kingdom (having devolved education systems). Thus, a lack of coherence and shared vision for wellbeing and the future of education was found, as compared, for example, with Wales and Scotland. This specific difference in England may contribute to the inertia and sense of unravelling experienced within this study, though further research would be required to compare differences in teachers' experiences across nations during the covid-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, perhaps a reason for which schools become focused on the simpler, surface level phenomenon of behaviour management (also a keen area of focus in recent policy and research with teachers, e.g. Teacher Tapp, 2023) can be explained via this wider lack of coherence around the role of education and its relationship to social/emotional wellbeing.

By way of rounding off this section, I observe that instead of grieving and allowing a change to come, schools, teachers and the wider system have worked to rebuild the old normal: 'It's almost like we've just gone back to how we worked before without really...learning anything.' (Participant V, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p9). It is, as in Stockholm syndrome, as though the captives have developed psychological attachment to their captor to the degree that neoliberal normal is viewed as saviour, despite so much evidence to the contrary. Acknowledging and making way for a better schooling and education system will involve accepting the problem, grieving and saying goodbye to the old normal. I suggest this work involves marking and sharing this change as a community, alongside a planned transition to finding rhythm and routine in alternative systems, better rooted in the real, living and more than human world, of curriculum and learning.

7.4 School's out? The place of the Great Turning in Education and Schooling

Joanna Macy (Macy & Brown, 2014; Macy & Johnstone, 2020) described The Great Turning as the actions of individuals and collectives which move social norms and practices from the extractive state of 'business as usual', and a consequent state of 'Unravelling', toward the life-sustaining society. Here, I use this third narrative of the 'Great Turning' towards a life-sustaining society to make sense of a third and more hopeful story in the data from this project. The two strands embedded within the data in the third study and final round of focus groups (Summer 2021 – Winter 2021/2022) represent divergent but nonetheless simultaneous paths in education.

7.4.1 WHY RELATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF WELLBEING ARE NEEDED FOR SCHOOLS TO RESPOND TO COMMUNITY WELLBEING NEEDS

The first strand from Study Three's theme development seems to suggest that schooling is synonymous with the inculcation of business as usual ('until you get rid of league tables and things like that it won't change' – Participant F, Wilson. Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p9). In this story, all practice for wellbeing leads back to the inevitable dominance of neoliberal power structures. This keeps teachers and students busy and stressed enough that they cannot intervene in the status quo. The second strand entails breaking with the constraints of the classroom, embracing teachers and young people as 'change agents' (UNESCO, 2021, p5) and reimagining the purpose of education in terms of sustainable

wellbeing or flourishing. Teachers concerns imply that pedagogical methods aiming towards wellbeing at the individual level, whilst sustaining a blindness to the 'unravelling' at the collective level serve to perpetuate harm, in terms of cognitive dissonance and a sense of alienation for both teachers and students. Thus such approaches are deemed to be unhelpful (Brady & Wilson, 2021), and insincere (Wilson, Sellman and Joseph, 2023b).

For teachers in this research, the concept of wellbeing makes sense when it is contextualised within its relational definition. Education serves wellbeing and flourishing when it embraces its fundamental work of building compassionate relationships which reinforce the 'web of care', and extend to 'a broader aspect of sustainability...we're here to serve the local community. And what does that need?' (Participant X, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p14). Nel Noddings (2010) raised this implication and duty of the teacher when she couched her work in the context of peace-building: through modelling care and compassion, education can build the relational fabric which can sustain transformation and change. For Noddings (2002; 2013; 1992/2005), this requires teachers to become conscious in their engagement with this practice, through modelling, conversation and confirmation:

'To confirm another, we need to know him quite well. Then we can attribute a better motive to an act of which we disapprove. For example, in the bullying case, we might say to the bully: I know you wanted to show that you are strong, but that is not the way to do it. You are a better person than that. Confirmation is among the loveliest of moral gestures. Instead of condemning the other, it points him upward toward his better self.'

(Noddings, 2010, p395)

This research project shows how the dynamics of education as usual leads to a situation in which teachers practice 'virtue caring' (Noddings, 2012, pp773-4) as opposed to authentic care practice. According to Noddings, virtue care assumes the needs of the cared-for and precludes dialogue. The teacher's professional judgement and experience may well provide a guide for predicting what the cared-for will need, but without the dialogue and interaction, the care process is not experienced or felt from both sides; it is therefore hollow and inauthentic. Thus, for the care process to be felt, the teacher must coherently communicate: '*I am HERE (in this time and place, attending in the present) with YOU (accepting and acknowledging the individual, amongst a collective, with their unique and specific histories and ways of being).*' (My own wording) This communication starts with attitude, and non-verbal language before the cognitive and verbal; it is something that is felt between teachers and students. Noddings pointed out how the ongoing care dialogue operates in a web or network of responses. Of course, navigating this ongoing network of responses requires practised skill and attention from the teacher. It requires time, and space to reflect and negotiate responses with students and colleagues. This is time not easily allowed in a time and resource poor system, whose principal purpose is prioritising grade outcomes.

7.4.2 UNPICKING BARRIERS TO WELLBEING AS EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE: LOOKING TO HISTORY TO UNDERSTAND THE FORCES AT PLAY IN SCHOOL PURPOSE AS 'BEING WELL' AND 'DOING WELL'

'The double movement' of doing well and being well

Joan Tronto is a useful theorist to explore further at this stage. A natural companion to Noddings whose lens on care ethics focuses specifically on educational settings, Tronto has a wider sociological lens, and looks at care systems, and the organisation of care within democratic society. Tronto's (2017) proposition in answer to neoliberalism takes a historical view drawing on Karl Polanyi's (2001/1944) analysis of a double movement in political philosophy, which looks remarkably like the forces at work behind 'doing well' and 'being well' within the educational system, described by teachers in this study. Polanyi (and Tronto's) historical analysis of political shifts notes the origins of neoliberalism, in 19th century liberalism, the push towards freedom of people and markets, and away from social responsibility. Polanyi critiqued the commodification that occurred within this process so that it was no longer simply outputs of production which became monetised or commodified, but labour (people) and land (environment/ecosystem). Against this first movement towards maximising human potential for profit from people and land, came social protection:

'aiming at the conservation of man and nature' (Polanyi, 2001/1944 in Tronto, 2017, p36).

Tronto outlines how this movement led the way to the establishment of many of the social structures put in place in the first half of the 20th century, particularly in Northern Europe, such as widening access to education, state healthcare, welfare and housing support, which subsequently built towards movements for greater equalities amongst different genders, ethnicities and abilities.

Returning to this research project, we might understand the first movement towards marketisation as being about competitive 'doing well' by our measures of performance. The second movement is about 'being well' in terms of our relational capacity for fair distribution of support and meeting of care needs. Tronto argues that after more than forty years of neoliberal market dominance, it is time for the double movement to swing back towards the dominance of social protection, and perhaps if schools play the role of 'the fourth emergency service' (Participant C, Study Two, additional quote), they present a visible tipping point towards this shift. Tronto (2017, p28) reframes 'homo economicus' as 'homines curans' (caring people), foremost carers rather than seekers of personal material gain. For Tronto, 'homines curans' (caring humans) is a more natural expression of the fulfilment of human capacities than is the individualistic rational economic actor promoted from the time of the Industrial Revolution. Homines curans pursues relational wellbeing, including but not reduced to individual hedonism or eudaimonia (see Literature Review, 2.2).

'Stockholm Syndrome' for 'The Old Normal' – A wider lens

'Stockholm syndrome'¹⁰ is a term used to describe the attachment of a captive to their captor, for example in the event of a kidnapping. Despite the damaging and entrapping role of the captor, the captive comes to see this person or persons as a source of comfort or reassurance. Within this project I have described the way in which schools, teachers and policy-makers hurried for the

¹⁰ See the Encyclopaedia Britannica entry on the origin of this term: <https://www.britannica.com/science/Stockholm-syndrome>

restoration of the widely problematised 'old normal' of schools pre-pandemic times as akin to 'Stockholm syndrome'. In this section I explore some of the evidence which suggests how teachers, students and policymakers saw 'education as usual' as damaging and yet how their collective behaviour was complicit with, even grasping for, restoring rather than reframing this system.

Teachers in this project condemned the dominance of the grading and attainment system. Further evidence suggests this is not such an unconscious experience (e.g. Ball, 2016) of discomfort with the system for students or teachers. This project resonates with wider evidence of disillusionment in the English schooling system amongst students, as indicated by a recent extensive study with young people in England:

'For nearly 1 in 2 young people aged 15-16, secondary school is not an enjoyable or meaningful experience, but is rather something they feel they need to 'get through' because of its bearing on their futures.' (McPherson et al., 2023, p4)

Evidence from both this thesis and the wider educational research landscape suggests many teachers share this sense of disenchantment, particularly in the English context:

*'teachers reported that the anachronism, ethnocentrism and increased difficulty of the new GCSEs...make ...qualifications less accessible ...Whilst in a lower-stakes accountability environment, there would be greater flexibility for teachers to deviate from the mandated curriculum, and hence teach in ways that are more responsive to students' diverse capabilities and interests, **the intense pressure to perform within the current high-stakes regime***

substantially limits teachers' freedom of manoeuvre to mitigate the worst effects of ...new measures.'

(Gerwitz et al., 2019, p 521 – emphasis added)

Furthermore, recent evidence into the reasons driving persistent school absence suggest that parents and families view the 'social contract' between schools and communities as broken, characterised, particularly amongst socioeconomically disadvantaged families, as a lack of care, and a mistrust between schools and their families (Burtonshaw & Dorrell, 2023). As Gerwitz et al., (2019, p522) argue:

'a climate in which such complexities and contestations are acknowledged, talked about and responded to is much to be preferred over one in which there is just one authoritative measure or set of measures of what counts as success.'

Yet it appears that instead of acknowledging the breakdown and a need for reset, as was suggested during the covid-19 lockdowns (e.g. Rolph, 2021; Robinson, 2020), what occurred was a grasping to restore the old normal. In disaster recovery, normality can be a healer (Mooney et al., 2021); yet as established throughout this thesis, 'normal' in schools prior to the covid-19 pandemic was oppressive, actively creating the conditions that additive wellbeing initiatives attempted to resolve and yet were failing to address.

7.4.3 UNPICKING BARRIERS TO WELLBEING AS EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE: THINKING DIFFERENTLY ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DOING WELL AND BEING WELL

Dialogue over dichotomy: the relationship between 'doing well' and 'being well' as educational purposes

When analysing the data from Study one of this research project, I pointed out that the contrast between 'doing well' and 'being well' may appear simplistic, but is not so straightforward. Teachers are sometimes aware that appearances can be deceiving when it comes to students 'doing well' or 'being well', and at other times are less critical of their notions of the 'perfect student', for example, in Study one: 'she seems like a perfect student, a perfect person. She's obviously performing at the top of her game and yet she's feeling such emptiness ...' (Participant D, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p995). In the same study, participants described barriers to the implementation and resourcing of good practice for wellbeing as issuing from the idea that 'doing well' and 'being well' are in competition with each other (Participant C, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b, p11). This experience of being pulled in opposing directions appears to exacerbate teachers' experience of 'Unravelling'.

The 'trickiness' (Brito, 2023) of the relationship between 'doing well' and 'being well' can easily lead into the trap of viewing the two in dichotomy, as in the case of other timeless tensions in education: the individual and the collective; knowledge and creativity; tradition and innovation; the cognitive and non-cognitive. O'Toole and Simovska (2022) highlight the trap of this way of thinking. Like Western philosophy traditions which individualise wellbeing to a misleading extent, unmooring 'being well' from its relational nature, the dichotomy lens entrenches Western enlightenment fallacies of thought. Picking up from

Tronto's (2017) application of Polanyi, so examining 'doing well' in light of the push towards individualised market independence, and 'being well' as the re-engagement towards social responsibility, it is helpful to consider these 'double movements' (Tronto, 2017, p36) in education as a dialogue, through which problems are encountered, explored and deliberated over.

How and why is the distinction between dichotomy and dialogue important? If 'doing well' and 'being well' are in dichotomy, they are in competition: one must win the argument for resources whilst the other loses (problematised by participant C, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b., p11 'You either focus on wellbeing, divert resources to that, or you do... academic.'). If in dialogue, the two are co-creative and co-constitutive; then the practical question of resourcing each becomes about constantly examining the relationship to arrive at a balance. This does not do away with the evident tension between the two educational purposes, but does acknowledge the need for negotiation of resources and solutions which equally recognise the conditions of both movements. At an intuitive level, this seems to make sense: 'doing well' is about having enough of a range of different types of capital (financial, cultural, identity – see Brown & Donnelley, 2022); yet this movement is never satiated, and at a societal level has led to some humans/communities exceeding planetary resources while others lack the basics. 'Being well' could as well be called 'interbeing well'; it acknowledges the needs of the self to be deeply rooted and connected in relationships to self, others and world. This is the dimension in which finding the self is symbiotic with serving others, as described by Participant T (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p997): *'Do they have something that helps them feel valued and feel that they're contributing something?'*. Through 'interbeing well' then, the drive to secure and grow our material wealth is

counterbalanced through a need to contribute and live sustainably by others. The question then becomes, how are these aims represented in teaching practice?

7.4.4 TURNING SCHOOLING TOWARDS WELLBEING: WHY 'TEACHING WELLBEING' MEANS TAKING PEDAGOGY BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Out of the realm of the classroom

The cognitivist focus on knowledge acquisition in schooling is built on the assumption that certain kinds of knowledge and knowledge-making are superior, or permitted (e.g. Bernstein, 2000; Apple, 2014; Wall-Kimmerer, 2013; Perry et al., 2021). Knowledge chosen to be part of the school curriculum is so based on a proposition of what is valuable, permitted, and what the economy requires, according to those with a seat at the decision-making table (government, business owners, established thought leaders). For example, within the project data 'all this cognitive stuff' (Participant I, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, p16) sets the expectation on teachers and schools for a pedagogical focus on memorising of propositional knowledge in core subjects, and erodes the space teachers have for embedding creative approaches, practices of care and youth leadership. It also tends to silo teachers practice to subject disciplines rather than encouraging learning application to interdisciplinary problems and questions.

To varying degrees, teachers in this project saw themselves as mediating between the demands of curriculum and assessment, and the needs of students themselves, as though curriculum and

assessment existed as fully independent entities irrespective of students engaging with them, and irrespective of students' needs. Nonetheless, despite this awareness, the view that ultimately students needed grades dominated: 'we are so ... focused on...teaching our students that content that they need in order to achieve grades and things ... we forget about.. the personal side of each individual' (Participant H, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p994).

This constraint was articulated not only in terms of content, time and outcomes, but also in terms of physical space, and philosophy about the relationship between mind, body and place: 'that there's more to these kids than just when they're sat in rows facing the front trying their best to learn about energy (etc)' (Participant W, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p11). This point indicates the frequently drawn link between, on the one hand, the more intangible aspect of learning: the building and maintenance of caring relationships, and, on the other hand, the tangible aspect of learning embedded in spaces and places. I borrow this concept of the separation of the tangible and intangible from the concept of tangible and intangible capital in the economics and psychology approach of Gratton and Scott (2016).

7.4.5 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS: HOW THIS RESEARCH POINTS TO AN ECOLOGICAL APPROACH TO WELLBEING PEDAGOGY IN EDUCATION

When considering what makes up the tangible aspects of learning in terms of space, place and materials, we might think of classroom spaces, and the materials of school curricula (resources such as textbooks, devices, physical materials and equipment

dependent on the subject discipline or focal area of learning). I would also argue the importance of the embodied role of the teacher and their history, and this is evidenced within the data of this project. We know the teacher's professional positionality, skillset and their own life story is how students build a relationship to the learning and to the subject. Of course, this may be positive, neutral or negative. Ask any individual how they got onto a given professional or disciplinary path and invariably there will be a person, a specific relationship with a mentor or mentors, if not a formal teacher, who provides this guiding course.

The teacher's embodied history then (including but not limited to gender, ethnicity, life experiences, socio-economic background), present with students via their physical mannerisms, their live translation of space and materials into guided meaning-making – this too is part of the physical matter of the classroom (e.g. hooks, 1994; 2008; 2014). Teacher training and professional development (and all that feeds into this formally and informally) can therefore also be viewed as a fundamental part of the material pedagogy and curricula experienced by students. Through this material, are conveyed the philosophy and value system behind the educational experience.

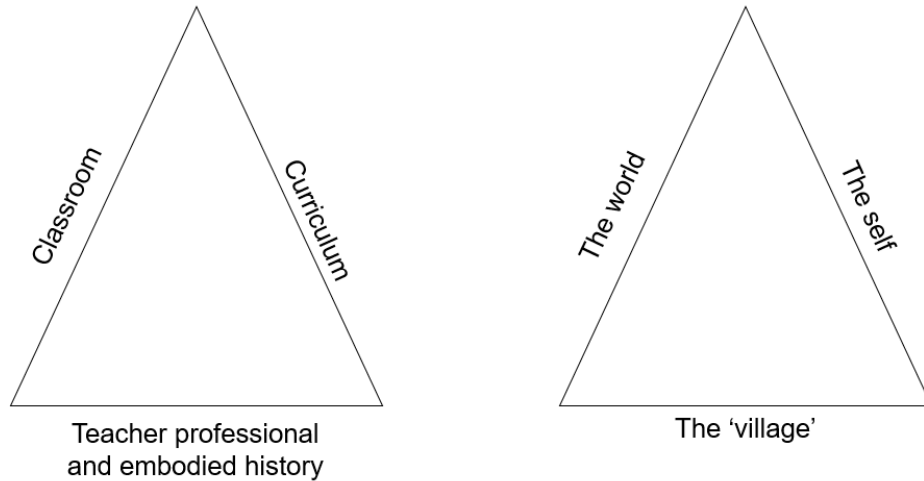
Reflecting the comments of teachers in this study, the typical classroom does not promote enough space for adapting to the living communities and curricula that unfold there. Most classrooms are 'same, same, same' (Participant J, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, p14) with whiteboards and rows facing the teacher. In all the change of the eighty years since compulsory secondary education was implemented in Britain, remarkably little about the nature of the educational space has changed, except perhaps a re-narrowing around the range of educational spaces available to schools since

the early 2000s¹¹. Meanwhile secure physical boundaries between school and community tend to be reinforced through locked high gates and fencing, albeit with genuine safeguarding concerns in mind.

If teachers in this study suggest that transforming schools to be oriented towards wellbeing requires going 'out of the realms of the classroom' (Participant W, Wilson, Sellman and Joseph, 2024, p11), why and how is this? What are the implications for pedagogy and curricula? Having first outlined the importance of the space/place of education alongside relationships for 'being well' in the preceding paragraph, I attempt to scope out the important features of the educational space or place: classroom, curriculum, teacher (their professional story and embodied history). To illustrate the features of the place/matter of the classroom, I use a triad, shown in figure 1 as triad one. These features make up what I describe as the tangible, material aspects of place in the classroom.

Importantly, their materiality is also living. This matter therefore inevitably reverberates with the dynamism and changeability of the living world, as suggested by Chris Bache's (2004, p98) notion of the group 'field' in his work 'The Living Classroom'. No place or matter of learning stays the same forever; simultaneously it cannot be detached from its own history.

¹¹ In the 2000s, many schools had invested in a range of broader facilities, including hair salons, theatres, language labs, garden spaces, with links to the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme (Sibieta, 2023). These facilities have frequently not been maintained.



Triad 1. The 'matter' of education – what and how? [Doing/having]

Triad 2. The relations of education – who and how together? [Being]

Figure 1: Thinking through features of pedagogy and curriculum in relational pedagogy and 'education as usual' via two triads: Triad One (left)– the 'matter' of education; Triad Two (right) – the 'relations' of education

Moving on to the 'intangible' aspects of education, in figure 11, triad two, I attempt to isolate components of the relational care web. First, there is the relationship with the self¹², having consciousness of one's gut feelings (e.g. Maté, 2022), the ability to identify and discern sensations, emotions, thoughts, beliefs and to navigate between them, the cultivation of one's deep knowledge and awareness, and the ability also to separate one's own needs and urges from those presented by others. This is also about the ability to recognise one's own strengths, skills, particularities and limitations so as to communicate what one needs (as in the care relation) and to judge how to engage at both the matter level and the relational level) in learning. Developmental psychology

¹² I define the self here in line with Sellman (2020, pp1-2) as 'witnessing consciousness' as differentiated from a separate self from the world.

scholarship demonstrates this knowledge: awareness is primed for and developed through dyadic interaction (e.g. Pinker, 1994; Tomasello, 2019). Gibson (1988) would argue from an ecological psychology perspective that this interaction occurs with the wider environment and not only through human relations.

Second, there is the relational level of the 'village'. This is the network of immediate relationships. Traditionally in groups of around 100 human individuals in a place, in the case of our ancestors, it is easy to see where school communities of 1000-2000 individuals have more difficulty in sustaining the relational 'glue' of the village, not to mention the wider community to which they belong. Some important features of the village are that it is intergenerational, offering access to greater experience and expertise through older members and teachers, and that it is diverse, so that there are a range of ways of thinking and being available to support understanding and development from a wide range of perspectives. Relationships within the village are oriented to both survival and flourishing – they are needed in an evolutionary sense because we are not able to develop into capable adults within society without it (e.g. Weller, 2015; Vince, 2019). This is also because in order to develop a deep awareness of self and to identify our own individual strengths to flourish, we need the care, support and guidance of mentors and peers, just as an ecosystem such as a rainforest relies on the web of inter-relations in order for the optimal development of individual organisms within it. Typically, we think of the village as exclusively human. I argue that the focus on place and space in the data from discussions of wellbeing within this research project indicates the importance of relationships with the non-human within this 'village' level of relationality.

Third, there is the world. Each individual and community is fundamentally connected to the living and changing world within an open system (Meadows, 2008/2018; Capra & Luisi, 2014; Monbiot, 2022; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bateson, 2000). What happens to other individuals, and communities at micro and meso-level affects all 'selves' and 'villages' through the macro world level, in different ways at different moments. This level of relationality is complex and requires the mediation of the self and community level in order for sense-making to be possible, and for world events to be engaged with rather than feared. De Beauvoir (2018) described the importance of this aspect of education and development to prevent the mob response: those failing to engage with their subjectivity in the world experience 'the desert of the world in (their) boredom' and '(realise themselves) in the world as a blind uncontrolled force' (De Beauvoir, 2018, pp18-19). Biesta (2022) also argues the essential role of education as mediating this more difficult, remote and nebulous relationship to 'the world' and what it has to teach us, in relationship to the self. I conjecture that the traditional remote treatment of world level relations and knowledge/knowledge-making without sufficient reference to self and village is behind much disillusionment and alienation within the educational experience, particularly for students but also for teachers. Connecting iteratively back to the body and place that individuals inhabit, appears to be the missing link for establishing this relational link between self and world, and thus to practise both 'being well' and 'doing well'.

The figure (11) shows these two triads, which, I imagine as overlaid. When placed together, they illustrate thinking through education in terms of the tangible matter ('what/how') of education, and the intangible relational web of education ('who/how'). The findings of this research suggest that the 'matter'

of education (what/how, associated with 'doing'/'having') and the relations of education (who/how, associated with 'being') are intertwined: relationships and pedagogy are part of one process. As our body-minds respond to each other, nested in places and histories, it is here we find the embodied site of education, and it is in recognising this whole that we can try to access greater agency in learning and unpick oppressive norms (as have pointed out many scholars before – e.g. Rogers & Freiburg, 1994; Esbjorn-Hagens et al., 2010; Singh, 2021).

From disembodied and displaced to embodied in place

Teachers and students experience the emotional and embodied reverberations and repercussions of 'education as usual'. O'Toole and Simovksa (2022) highlight the fundamental link between experience and body:

'Our actions, thoughts and feelings depend non-trivially on the body; the body is not merely a puppet to be controlled by the brain/mind...given this profound entanglement with the social/material world, our actions are not necessarily the product of deliberated, rational intention; much of our agential lives unfold at a pre-reflective level; we are often motivated by a perceptual grasp of what a given situation in a particular time or place affords (Gibson, 1979).

...When a child experiences trauma, like living with an abusive parent, she holds the experience viscerally. Feelings of horror, rage, shame, alienation

are registered in her body. Memory of the experience continues to be held in her body shaping subsequent perceptions, thoughts and actions, even though her conscious mind lacks a narrative that can communicate the experience to herself or others...'
(p26)

When we consider teachers who are experiencing struggle as in the cases of Participants J, Study 1, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p998, and E, in Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b, p13), or students who have experienced trauma, whose behaviour is challenging, and whose emotions are unregulated, the role of the school relational web can have either an acknowledging, or a negating approach to these experiences, as discussed by Culshaw & Kurian (2021) and O'Toole (2022). When a person's being/experience is negated, their capacities for connection, and reflection are inhibited (van der Kolk, 2014). In light of this knowledge, schooling approaches which 'privilege cognitive advancement over emotions and social responsibility over personal fulfillment' (O'Toole & Simovska, 2022, p25), which can be seen within the reflections of teachers in this research, have capacity for harm . This, since it denies dimensions of education essential to a greater understanding of self and world:

'The view of the student that emerges ... is a disembodied one: a student capable of producing rational arguments and aware of her civic responsibilities, yet detached from her own bodily feelings; unaware that it is her embodied engagement with the world – and the feelings that arise from this engagement – that will orient her in various contexts and give sense or meaning to

situations she encounters'. (O'Toole & Simovska, 2022, p25)

As suggested by the interest in Forest School approaches across school contexts within this project, teachers show an appetite for approaches which adopt such philosophies. Place-based education presents dynamic, problem-based learning (e.g. Yemini et al., 2023) and various iterations of Learning for Sustainability promote the connection of inner emotional awareness with the development of knowledge and skills (Disterheft, 2023). Going out of the realm of the classroom could also involve stepping out of habitual roles or time, such as in the creative drama-based learning adopted in the work of Dorothy Heathcote (e.g. Handley & Allen, 2023). Such approaches also begin with explicitly inclusive values, since although the teacher may be the guide and expert in learning in some respects, the knowledge and unique insights of learners, community members and physical space or place are equally respected and sought.

The inevitability of the living curriculum

I use the label 'living curriculum' to denote the ways in which curriculum shapeshifts, adapts and evolves with the lived experience of teachers and students, in relationality with each other and their world, for example, an English teacher responding to Jo Biden's presidential inauguration (Study 1, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p996) a middle leader embedding embodiment practice into all afternoon classes (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p7; p10) or even Ofsted and education policy adapting curriculum requirements to reflect the demands of students for 'life lessons' (DfE, 2013). The accountability, power and workload structures of

'education as usual' inhibit much organic development of the curriculum. These quickly outdated constraints challenge public trust in the quality and integrity of educational practice, for example, recently in relation to exam revision for GCSE Geography in 2024, a social media post from an environmental professional went viral raising concerns about the topic 'the benefits of climate change', including greater interest in tourism to the United Kingdom - thoroughly ill-advised and outdated information nonetheless requiring rote-learning and examination by nearly 300,000 students in 2024, alongside a similar number in preceding years. Many similar examples can be provided; this rote learning of rigid course content as facts in preparation for exams prevents teachers and students from responding to complex lives and a complex world.

The interesting matter of the living curriculum I wish to point out here though, is that whatever may be the 'official knowledge' proposed for a prescribed curriculum (Apple, 2014), the inevitability of the curriculum's metamorphic, evolving and complex living nature lies in the debate and questioning generated amongst young people and the public when established curricula and pedagogy run against scientific evidence, against a position of social justice or simply omit evident truth and knowledge-making from its sphere of attention (e.g. Lautensach, 2019). This speaks to the demotivation and frustration of teachers evident in this project's data: *'I sometimes teach the lesson and I think: how am I actually preparing you for life outside of here? And I... feel the conversations I have with them that aren't necessarily linked to the lesson, that's when we have the most important conversations that actually link to life outside of the classroom.'* (Participant L, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p12). Yet, it is in these spaces of dissent and questioning that new directions for the curriculum and power

over it emerge, sometimes brought in by teachers and students in their classrooms. Nonetheless, in this project, a sense of empowerment to take on this challenge within the classroom was very limited. Rather such work seems once again to take place 'outside the realm of the classroom' in such learning settings as the Students Organizing for Sustainability project 'Teach the Future' in which young campaigners replan the English school curriculum (Catallo, Lee & Vare¹³, 2022).

This research project indicates that with the same old pedagogy, curriculum and policy methods, the same old results arise. Ahead of the 2019 PSHE changes (DfE, 2019b), the British Youth Council's (2013) 'Life Lessons' campaign was seemingly a call for a curriculum more comprehensively grounded in the present, and the realities of young people's lives - outside of the classroom. Yet, this was implemented as an additive set of knowledge to be didactically taught to students via a PSHE curriculum with low status on the timetable (as argued in Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p989). Classroom bound lessons with standardised curricula delivered by classroom teachers of other subject disciplines provide the principal approach to this incarnation of Health Education, seen as 'on a backburner' (Participant R, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p994). Where standardisation of messaging can certainly have its place, I argue that in terms of enabling the agency of students and teachers or of creating a curriculum that is alive to the constantly changing world (enabling communities to challenge the status quo), the changes to PSHE do little to serve this role. Rather, the changes to PSHE appear to fit Rushton & Dunlop's (2022, p1085) description of a 'placebo policy'.

¹³ <https://www.teachthefuture.uk/tracked-changes-project>

As times continue to change and trust in 'education as usual' appears to be eroding, there is a growing demand amongst young citizens to see secondary school curricula radically reshaped. Looking to teaching, this project proposes a pedagogy and curriculum of care, shaped by relationality. Still there remain numerous unanswered questions: how can such pedagogies and approaches be supported and resourced given the scale at which schools and teachers operate in terms of numbers? How can teachers be supported to structure and design new approaches to learning without overburdening them? How can communities and the public, particularly the world of employment, support such moves away from a focus on standardised qualifications as the means for entry into the adult world and workforce, and how in turn can they be educated to learn with and from young people and school communities as we collectively adapt to rapidly changing times when 'challenges of ecology, inequality, multi-culturalism, and mental wellbeing are (so) intertwined' (Wessells et al., 2022, p762)?

8.0 Conclusion

In this final chapter, I first focus attention on the headline conclusions of the findings, with the three subtitles of this section representing the key messages that come through from the data as relevant to policymakers, leaders and practitioners, indeed anyone who is a stakeholder within the broad community of secondary schools. These findings are an important contribution to knowledge given the gap in data on lived experience of England's secondary school teachers through several critical influences to the landscape of wellbeing in schools over the last decade (statutory teaching of wellbeing topics from 2020; the covid-19 pandemic; the subsequent cost of living crisis all following an upheaval of the curriculum from 2014). The subtitles that follow are: 'education as usual' undermines teacher and student wellbeing; understanding 'relational wellbeing' underpins both 'being well' and 'doing well' and yet is missing from policy definitions; and the current lack of emphasis on care practice in education policy and practice as relevant to teachers in England. Subsequently the chapter turns to implications for action, where curriculum and pedagogy design, teacher professional development and community engagement around schools are concerned. These implications are: i) a recognition of relationships/ relationship-building as curriculum itself; ii) outlining the severe shortcomings of a 'cognitive curriculum'; iii) the role of 'place as teacher' and the underexplored opportunities of engagement with place for curriculum and pedagogy in secondary schools; iv) the need to recognise the simultaneous importance of, and pressures on, teachers 'on the front line' of shifts to focus priorities on wellbeing. A table of affordances for change at multiple levels of school leadership is

offered as a means of galvanising and empowering those in schools to reassess and resource these priorities.

'Education as usual' undermines teacher and student wellbeing

We see the accounts of teachers in the data from this project reinforcing findings in the wider literature, that poor wellbeing amongst teachers and students is increasingly understood as a product of neoliberal culture (both at the level of individuals and the collective) (Becker, Hartwich & Haslam, 2021, Maiese, 2022; Wilson et al., 2023b; 2024, Ball, 2016; Tronto, 2017; Gewirtz et al., 2019). Beyond the school, widening inequalities, and erosion of the social net mean children and families are at the receiving end of health and material precarity. As neoliberalism's logic entails that personal responsibility is the first line of defence for health (Tronto, 2017) and civic education (Body, 2024), the school has been seen as a 'convenient site' for wellbeing interventions due to reach, rather than education's purpose being fundamentally tied to wellbeing (O'Toole & Simovska, 2022, p28). This entails that schools must continue to be sites of performance, with staff and students moving through dense curricula and rigid assessment schemes, at the same time as they provide 'fourth emergency service' care (Participant C, Study Two, additional quote) *and* deliver policies and schemes aimed at tackling health inequalities (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a; Jani & Lowry, 2022; DfE, 2017).

Meanwhile, teachers are expected to additively 'teach wellbeing' without space to scrutinise or engage with what 'teaching wellbeing' actually means, or recognising that this meaning is

discursive (e.g. McLellan, Faucher & Simovska, 2022; Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a). Simultaneously, the school is fundamentally designed within a competitive structure, creating winning and losing schools/ individuals/communities; and beggars and choosers in terms of educational options. The research data highlights the focus on cognitive advancement and measurable outcomes in schools. This leads to denial of embodied minds, and entangled lives, whilst teaching is conceived as 'imparting knowledge' (Participant E, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p995) to students as rational economic subjects preparing to receive knowledge and act competitively within the economy (Weare, 2022). These patterns and norms collectively inhibit relationships, creativity and democratic agency. They inhibit the cultivation of education as a caring practice (Noddings, 2010; Tronto, 2017).

This relationship between neoliberal culture/policy, and poor wellbeing at the level of schools and society is not reflected in policy or practice approaches in schools. Rather, the data in this research project presents wellbeing as an 'add-on' to attainment, as educational purpose. In this conceptualisation, wellbeing and mental health are not truly conceived as a holistic aim for education (as in Kristjansson, 2020; Kristjansson et al., 2023) but as a discrete problem to be fixed in order to serve the wider concern of attainment, and also to neutralise conversations about the political nature of education, i.e. to depoliticise its function, as serving for example, sustainability (Dunlop & Rushton, 2022), inclusion (Grind et al., 2023) or flourishing. Partially, teachers accounts supported the conclusion that this is done by keeping everyone so busy 'there is no time to question because energies are invested into playing to win rather than redesigning the game to be inclusive' (Gunter & Courtney, 2023, p326).

Initiatives and evaluations around wellbeing are thus piecemeal and incoherent as experienced by teachers and students. And yet, the teachers on this project, agreed with the perspective of O'Toole & Simovska (2022):

'that wellbeing and education are co-dependent and co-constitutive'. (p33)

Participants highlighted that the possibility for cognitive-focused learning rested on a fundamental awareness of student wellbeing and relationships (see Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a; 2023b - Sections 4.5 and 6.5). The piecemeal approach to wellbeing in schools appears to generate a cognitive dissonance and the strain from this is compacted within the norms of work intensification and time poverty (Creagh et al., 2023; see also Section 4.5, themes 1, 2 and 4, Section 5.5, theme 2, Section 6.5, main themes 1 and 2). Thus, teachers experience a lack of space for awareness, reflection or rest, as is also evident in wider work culture (Jerrim et al., 2021). Through both workload, and work intensification, teachers experience a persistent sense of time poverty. This naturally has an adverse impact on the time allowed teachers to build relationships with students and colleagues.

I argue that these dynamics for teachers are symptomatic of schools pushing to sustain 'education as usual', or the old normal (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b; 2024) as they simultaneously undergo shocks from wider local or global unravelling and breakdown. A wider contextual review of evidence (see Discussion, section 7.3, 'Wellbeing in schools pre-pandemic') reveals this is in the form of widening inequalities, economic pressure, and the strains of material and social needs within communities, all entangled with geopolitical upheaval. In hope of an education for sustainability (Disterheft, 2023; Simovska & Mannix-McNamara, 2015; Hursh, Henderson & Greenwood, 2015) which enables a

'Great Turning' towards life sustaining social norms and practices, such aspirations are endemically hampered by the technologies of 'business as usual'. Yet, evidence from this project and the wider policy and school stakeholder environment, suggests elements of a Turning in values/practice are nonetheless present (DfE, 2022; see Discussion, section 7.4; also Conclusion sections 8.1.ii and iii). Whether this current will be able to overcome the dominance of education as usual is in question.

Relational wellbeing underpins 'being well' and 'doing well' for teachers

As made clear in the data from this research project, teachers understand wellbeing both as 'being well' and 'doing well'. Despite the school policy environment's axiomatic orientation towards competitive attainment as the means of 'doing well', teachers see 'being well' as foundational to 'doing well'. It is important to point out that this view implies the need to supersede an understanding of 'being well' and 'doing well' as 'competing' (Participant C, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b, p11). Teachers described such thinking as a barrier to promoting wellbeing and flourishing (see also Discussion section 7.4 on 'dialogue over dichotomy'). Furthermore, 'being well' is predominantly relational in the data, supporting arguments for relational wellbeing, as a stronger conceptualisation of wellbeing in educational practice, than for example subjective wellbeing, or eudaimonia (White, 2017; Brown & Donnelly, 2022), as discussed in the literature review (section 2.2 and 2.3).

Relational wellbeing captures the way in which all humans, are situated within a web of relations through which, at some stage

they will both receive and provide care. It offers an alternative to more individualised conceptions of wellbeing which have emerged from Western psychology, scientific and philosophical traditions (e.g. Billington et al., 2022). Relational wellbeing means the fair fulfilment of one's care needs through relation to others in the 'web of care' (Noddings, 2013, p. xiii), at the same time as enabling the capacity for reciprocity, the ability to provide care to others. Such understandings are more fitting with cross-cultural perspectives of wellbeing – albeit if the material dimension cannot be ignored (e.g. McLellan et al., 2022; White, 2017; Brown & Donnelley, 2022a; Wall-Kimmerer, 2013). Relational wellbeing hence acknowledges that 'being well' is not achieved simply by individuals, and it accepts the fundamental vulnerability and need for care of every human. It can also easily apply to the more than human (as included in Study 3, sections 6.4 and 6.5; Discussion, section 7.4).

When contrasted with policy, we see repeatedly in the data from this research and other empirical, ground level work with school staff and students that there is an incompatibility between a neoliberal framing of wellbeing and lived experience. Neoliberal policy characterises wellbeing and flourishing as personal mastery, resilience or individual capacities/resources (McLellan & Simovska, 2022; Brown & Shay, 2021; Billington et al, 2022; Brown & Donnelly, 2022; Culshaw & Kurian, 2021). This project's findings point to the relevance of calls for a shift in ontology in education and society, oriented by the foundational principles of care theory (Tronto, 2017). This challenges schools and education to move away from a prime purpose of shaping educational subjects in the image of rational economic actors, and to recognise their foremost role in growing what Tronto (2017, pp 27-43) calls 'homines curans' (caring people), which grounds economic aims in the wider purpose of care.

Education for care?

Often teachers may be unconscious of the dynamics inherent to an education dominated by neoliberal business as usual, nonetheless, teachers in this research project (and their colleagues) experienced distress because of the clash between caregiving and prioritising performance. A consequence of this state is that the education system weakens, as teacher wellbeing, retention and recruitment suffer (Maisuria et al., 2023; Jerrim & Sims, 2019; Simms et al., 2022; Jerrim & Simms, 2022; Perryman & Calvert, 2019), and the availability of experienced education professionals to young people dwindles. Consequently, students experience lower quality relationships with their teachers (and vice versa), because teachers must firstly prioritise performance, and because reduced teacher numbers and resources in ratio to students (Maisuria et al., 2023) compound the strain already experienced by teachers as a result of the policy environment.

In this context, students receive 'virtue care' (Noddings, 2012, pp773-4) wherein the needs of students are assumed by teachers and schools (see section 7.4 and 4.6). Where teachers establish genuine dialogue and relationship with their students, this is generally despite 'education as usual' rather than because of it. This project's data thus concurs with observations by Apple (2014) and hooks (1994) that teachers must be transgressive to promote care and take a stance against Freire's banking system of education (in hooks, p5). Where teachers move beyond reductive interpretations of behaviour management or disproportionately cognitive focused education, it is arguably also a source of resentment between staff in cultures emphasising a system of

consistency of reward and punishment, at the expense of prioritising well-defined relationships of trust and respect. Yet variation in teacher approach would be expected and even celebrated within an ecosystem of individuals in a community aiming at collective relational wellbeing. The return from school closures in 2020 saw the shortcomings of the cognitive focus of education for students and teachers. Such tensions were inferred by the Participant and Assistant Head when he described: the 'polarised view of behaviour' as 'either punish them or look after them' (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b, p16) and by Participant K (additional quotation, study 2): 'I've been teaching for 20 years, and I've never seen behaviour like this.' Where these behaviours suggested evidence of a greater need for focus on care practice, ultimately the focus for schools and teachers became restoring educational 'business as usual', containing behaviour and care needs to emphasise the promotion of cognitive 'catch up'.

Limitations and gaps for further research

As reviewed in section 7.1, there are a number of limitations to consider regarding the design of this research project. Here I return to a methodological and ethical question: that this project, though informed by transformative approaches and Etienne Wenger's communities of practice theory, offers more of a scoping understanding of how a transformative wellbeing research programme for teachers might look, rather than offering a project example true to the transformative aspirations of such research traditions (Fals Borda, Reason & Bradbury, 2006): involving its key stakeholders (teachers, and/or potentially students) from the outset. Although the pandemic was partially behind this limitation, the compromises made for efficiency in the research design, especially not planning the design of the project with the teaching community involved, meant that the project was not truly

participatory. Finding or cultivating organic communities of practice amongst teachers in secondary schools, rather than facilitating a group from scratch would be more coherent with participatory and transformative approaches, and could likely be achieved 1) by enabling access to funding/resources and time for teachers within their schools via, for example, research council/funding body support, and 2) by enabling more informal interactions between participants from the start of the project (rather than the first meetings between participants not occurring until after a round of interviews). This would certainly be easier to facilitate in a non-pandemic context, but was not foreseen as an issue at the research design phase and is certainly a lesson learned.

Openings exist to work with schools, for example through the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter in England (DfE, 2021/2024) designed and developed between school, government and union stakeholders, via which schools can commit to working with their staff to assess and develop the space for wellbeing work across the whole school, as well as committing to its continual evaluation. Trusts and schools could work with educational researchers to develop a research-engaged approach to this work in which practitioners and researchers collaborate and share participation in the project. These suggestions build on the findings of this thesis project. It must nonetheless be asked, when the remit of what a teacher is and does continues to be narrowed (McIntyre, Youens & Stevenson, 2017; Daley, 2023), whether schools and teachers would commit to this kind of professional development and research. Notwithstanding, such projects would show commitment to addressing issues for teacher retention and recruitment.

Another consideration within this project's limitations is which influential theories around wellbeing in schools have been engaged or discarded and why. It seems more 'content' oriented theories

(hedonia/eudaimonia/virtues/flourishing and mental health) have been less readily applied to findings than those interested in 'process' (care theory/relationality). Still, arguably missing from this project's theoretical analysis is a greater engagement with the contents of these 'content' there is, in particular the work of Amartya Sen (1993; 1999) and Martha Nussbaum (2000; 2003; 2011), and the human development perspective of wellbeing through a 'capabilities approach' (see section 2.2). This I mention particularly due to the orientation of this project towards the development of agency (see Wilmott in Walshe, Moula & Lee, p3; also section 2.6) and findings emphasising relational and ecological understandings of wellbeing in pedagogy and curriculum. In future work on school wellbeing research with teachers, there is scope to examine proposals of 'eco-capabilities' understandings of wellbeing practice, for example that engage nature and arts-based methods (Walshe, Moula & Lee, 2022). Nonetheless, albeit that Sen and Nussbaum's approach to wellbeing reflect the importance of social capital to wellbeing (e.g. McLellan & Steward, 2015), the relational and embodied nature of experience and practice raised within this project ultimately fit well with care practice and relational pedagogy, I argue due to their dynamic representation of teaching practice, and engagement with the 'interworld' (Merleau-Ponty, 1963 in Simovska & O'Toole, 2022, p27) of relationships highlighted.

8.1 Implications

i. Relationships *are* curriculum

From acknowledging the change of paradigm entailed in any educational 'Great Turning' comes an important realisation which opens out the possibilities of curriculum and pedagogy for wellbeing: relationships *are* curriculum. All our knowledge, emotion, perceptions, embodied responses are reflected in the 'interworld' (Merleau-Ponty, 1963 in O'Toole & Simovska, 2022, p27) the space of our relationships. This interworld is shaped by the specific people, time and place in which education occurs; hence a curriculum that acknowledges the relational 'web' as the main 'course text' or 'source' is a curriculum which connects teachers and learners with the world, locating the self within this web of life (Biesta, 2022). Practices acknowledging relational wellbeing as at the forefront of educational purpose are marginal in a system dominated by 'education as usual' so there is a need for clear direction as to how teaching and pedagogy can adapt. There is a growing interest in practice for relational pedagogy and care practice (see Open University, 2024). Still the data in this project has suggested that schooling which made relationships curriculum would involve:

- mind-body practices (drawing on critical literature on mindfulness in schools – Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2019; Ergas, 2019; Crawford et al., 2021)
- outdoors provision and nature education, e.g. Forest School
- interdisciplinary approaches, combining for example, physical education with core academic subjects; arts with science.
- local and global problem-solving approaches oriented towards citizenship education

- a curriculum design that embeds these activities through the core curriculum rather than siloing these approaches to extra-curricular activities, or 'one-off', low stakes PSHE lessons (in particular a product of the piecemeal policy environment in England – Donnelly & Brown, 2022)

Relationships as curriculum implies a re-engagement with strands of education rejected/neglected following a shift towards knowledge-based, cognitive curricula promoted within a dichotomising lens that placed social/emotional learning, problem-based learning and citizenship in contrast rather than alignment with knowledge-rich education (e.g. Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009; Gibb, 2015). Relationships as curricula implies intentional integration of knowledge from trauma-informed and care practice approaches in education (O'Toole, 2019; Emerson, 2022; Noddings, 2013). It also implies empowering young people and learners with an education which engages the world 'in here', alongside the world 'out there' (Ergas, 2017) through, for example, contemplative and embodied practices. Finally and importantly, relationships as curriculum recentres methods of teaching which foreground learners' roles as learning carers (Tronto's 'homines curans' - 2017, pp 27-43), rather than principally rational economic actors, by allowing focus on:

- awareness of the web of reciprocal need for responsibility and receipt of care
- collaborative learning
- conflict resolution
- peaceful communication

Noddings (2010) offers the starting point to this approach for teachers as indicated by the focus on relationships and conversation in this research:

-modelling

-conversation

-confirmation (attributing the best possible motive compatible with reality)

As indicated by Tronto, ultimately what is at stake here is a 'caring democracy' (Tronto, p38). I join her in highlighting the clear 'crying out' for care (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b, p16; p17) visible in this data, needed ever more acutely in order to support Macy's 'Great Turning' in a time of breakdown. None of this means foregoing well-planned, knowledge rich education (though an expanded definition of 'knowledge rich' is required), but it does involve the tailoring of such knowledge with and by the people the education is intended to serve. Thus acknowledging relationships as curriculum means starting from body-minds, people and places, rather than abstract knowledge, and a 'disembodied' view of education (Simovska & O'Toole, 2022, p25).

ii. The cognitive curriculum falls short

One significant recommendation from the findings of this research is that teachers, schools and policymakers recognise the disproportionately cognitive nature of existing models of curriculum and pedagogy. The over-emphasis on individual skill/knowledge acquisition (Brown & Donnelly, 2020) and on cognitive approaches to learning for wellbeing are based on a dualistic vision of mind and body, citizen and society, emotions and intellect. Curriculum speaks to us from the past whilst engaging in conversation with the present and potential future (as 'communication among older and younger generations, informed by academic knowledge, and characterized by educational experience' – Pinar, 2019, Abstract)

and as identified by Tronto (2017), Billington et al. (2022) and Simovska & O'Toole (2022), our education systems were forged in the legacy of Cartesian and Enlightenment philosophy. These splits are thus embedded in the subjectivities and practices of what a school or education setting is: curriculum and pedagogy as we know it is fundamentally shaped by them. Yet, these dualistic separations which teaching today continues to perpetuate, have generated neoliberal business as usual, and the harms caused by it.

The logic that social justice is best served by schools through each child achieving a threshold grade in core subjects is damaging: it means schools act as machines in a system of numbers (e.g. Gunter et al., 2023; Apple, 2014). Time is therefore squeezed out for relational 'being well' (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a) and for an appropriate range of inclusive methods and approaches to learning (Maguire et al., 2019). Any efforts towards these aims are additive and lacking in time and resources. Most English secondary school teachers have been trained in the era of neoliberal norms, and have been practising in a time when education's purpose has been conceived principally in terms of 'cognitive advancement' (O'Toole & Simovska, 2022, p25) in knowledge and skills (up to and including where wellbeing has come into the picture – Brown & Donnelly, 2022). Space to engage iteratively with the curriculum and the specific needs of present students is costly in terms of time and creative energy; there is also a sense of risk in terms of missing out on an element of knowledge 'banked' (Freire, 1996/1970) within the cognitive curriculum. Yet the cognitive curriculum and the subjectivities it trains inhibit practice for 'being well' in school: as indicated by teachers in the project who were criticised for giving exam classes time to work in self-directed ways, or who spent time deviating from core exam material.

Although on the face of it, teachers in England (within school faculties and academy structures), have considerable power to adapt the subject curriculum they teach, in practice there are substantial barriers. Teaching practices around curriculum in schools, certainly concerning wellbeing, have evolved inadequately (e.g. Priestley, 2012; Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023b; 2024). This is due to the constraints enforced by projecting forward to GCSE exam requirements, the demands of resource provision (e.g. in terms of staffing, budgeting and training), and the physical constraints of time and space in schools. At various stages in this research project, participants expressed frustration with the rigidity of the curriculum. During the pandemic, they appreciated the opportunity to creatively adapt learning to work along current affairs as in lessons on President Joe Biden's Inauguration poem, 'The Hill we Climb' or to bring outdoor learning approaches to those attending in smaller group sizes during school closures (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a). Yet, as described, adjustments to wellbeing provision have limited accommodation through overall frameworks such as behaviour and culture policy or a joined-up vision of subject curricula, and are handled largely in terms of allocated time towards didactic teaching of PSHE (Wilson et al., 2023; Brown & Donnelly, 2022).

The findings of this project suggest that teachers and students need time and space to go deeper with curriculum and pedagogy, to be spontaneous and to go with the flow in learning. Such calls are not new. School leaders and policymakers need to set supportive cultures to nurture this professional development, difficult/impossible to achieve under a regime of precise curriculum coverage and strict time constraints. Teaching with a relational focus on care also requires teachers to take a deliberate approach, deeply attuned to themselves, their students and the moment. It

requires the pedagogy, curriculum and organisation of time for deep conversation and space. Furthermore, it calls for an awareness of the need to release the self (teacher and pupils) from the conditioned behaviours and modes of thought inculcated by performativity culture, which alienates individuals from communities, and from one's gut sense of what is essential: to care for ourselves, each other, our places and our planet.

iii. Place as teacher

As pointed to in Study 1 (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, pp996-997) and outlined in Study 3 (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, pp16-17) when exploring the position of Phillips & Finn (2022), an expanded view of relationality in pedagogy (through place) also offers important links to wellbeing practice in education. In this project's data, expanding learning 'out of the realm of the classroom' (Participant W, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p11) framing learning as 'how to solve global problems' (Participant B, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p12) and privileging '(serving) the local community' (Participant X, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p14) as an understanding of sustainability all speak to a desire/need to channel resources and attention towards the places in which young people and schools are rooted.

Neoliberal education has created a context in which schools often feel separate from the local culture and places to which they belong (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p996; Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024). This is true in terms of:

- **curriculum** – standardised knowledge content unmoored from locality is generally favoured

- **use of physical space** – students stay in uniform classrooms inside a fenced off school site, many of which lack a connection to nature through parks and open spaces
- **people and staff structures** (schools frequently employ staff, and particularly teaching staff, from outside of the local community or neighbourhood; they are also governed by Trusts who are often unmoored from local communities and authorities – of course this depends on the Trust, e.g. Greany, 2023)

Nonetheless, schools and education are inherently rooted in place. Here, I point out the connections that have been made between relationality and wellbeing. Relationships with others in the community are routinely central both to young people's conceptualisation of 'being well' now, and to future opportunities (e.g. Maguire et al., 2023; Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2014; Hanson et al., 2021). This conclusion supports a need to carve out educational time in which young people can experience intergenerational encounters (and in turn, older members of the community can encounter young people) in a positive and instructive/supportive capacity. This would enable young people to grow their 'web of care' (Noddings, 2013, p. xiii), mobilising a sense of support and understanding, increasing exposure to adult mentors and networks for future opportunities to find that:

'something that they're really good at, and that they're really pushing into. So you know, maybe it's an artistic ability a musical ability...or...not necessarily to do with school... Do they have something that helps them feel valued and feel that they're contributing...'

(Participant T, Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a, p997).

When such encounters and opportunities to build new relationships also entail the chance to engage with, problem-solve and improve the place in which one lives, for example, through Youth Social Action or community volunteering (Department for Digital Culture, Media and Sport, 2021; Department of Health and Social Care, 2024; Body et al., 2024; Body, 2024), reciprocal benefits emerge for older adults and young people. Such work can then point back out to the global picture, to knowledge and understanding of the subjects. This is because this knowledge can be more readily digested and applied to our enmeshed world when our bodies, personal experiences and home or place are recognised in this picture. In addition, the contribution towards the improvement of place, and feeling more connected to it, contributes to a greater sense of agency and confidence in learning. Thus students embody and enact their learning, experiencing a sense of coherence, as opposed to the disconnect that can be experienced as a result of physical inaction and emotional lack of resonance (or lack of emotional resources). Such experience is an issue when learning is conceptualised principally at a cognitive level, under someone else's instruction in a classroom.

Expanded relationality in pedagogy also takes learners 'out of the realm of the classroom'. Moving from the principally human web, to the broader life-sustaining web of care and interconnection (e.g. Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Tronto & Fisher, 1990). Employing relational pedagogy means taking learners into green and community spaces beyond the classroom and designing lessons which engage with the opportunities of perception, affordances, and relationships on offer amidst local wildlife and community life. In an era when children and young people's unstructured time is

increasingly likely to be spent indoors engaged with a screen (Oswald et al., 2023), and in which the 'village' of care is no longer available in the way it was for the first tens and hundreds of thousands of years for our hominid ancestors (Vince, 2019; Weller, 2017), the need for education to construct and support material encounters with the world 'outside the realm of the classroom' becomes more significant. This state of affairs becomes more evident when looking at the rise in popularity of Forest School approaches and increasing turns to alternative, home-led education, as mentioned in this research (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2024, p10, p13) and government data (Burtonshaw & Dorrell, 2023; Long & Danechi, 2023).

iv. Teachers are on the front line of the shift

It is worth noting that the first data set in this project revealed a clear link between teachers' sense of wellbeing and that of students: teachers love their work when they are moving with students to help develop their unique strengths, showing them how they can contribute to supporting others. Such an example was given: when a P.E teacher helped a shy, female student thrive in their subject, and the subsequent sense of positivity for both: 'that sense of feeling amazing... you're not tired...you want to do more.... It makes you feel good and it makes others feel good and you feel happy about yourself.' (Study 1, participant J, additional quote). Teaching, like parenting, is a resource intensive activity, demanding personal attention and sacrifice; regardless of financial recompense, it must be motivating and rewarding, since it is one of the key ways in which our species (for whom an enormous number of survival behaviours are not innate) is able to survive and adapt (Vince, 2019). For teaching to receive the energy it needs, it

cannot be informed by a disembodied and extractive logic of 'doing well' (performance, economic outcomes) alone: it must rest on 'being well', fuelled through love and craft (Culshaw & Kurian, 2021), *alongside* economic resourcing.

Throughout work on this PhD project (2019-2024), widescale industrial action took place in the education sector: with Higher Education strikes in 2019-2020, followed by mainstream and cross-educational action in 2023. It is worth noting that progress on pay makes the headlines (particularly in the years immediately following this research fieldwork), but these findings highlight that it is in conditions and work culture where the most is at stake for school wellbeing. Allowances, for example, on workload, often focus on minor details of work practice such as types of administrative task that should be avoided, some directly impacting those 'out of the realm of the classroom' such as external trips (Teacher Workload Taskforce, 2024). Considering the findings of this project, this is a myopic approach to take to workload, rather than a holistic re-examination of teacher time use based on purpose and culture.

Teachers are uniquely privileged with insights into their students' needs and strengths, but must also constantly handle tensions between the needs of their many students, and the demands put upon them by school structures, policymakers and exam boards. The present data indicates that too often, teachers end up doing what is required to avoid friction with a system of 'deliverology' (Gewirtz et al., 2019; Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012), which entails putting aside reflective practice, innovation, and active engagement with the expressed needs of the students in front of them to perform 'what works' according to a limited 'virtue care' logic (Noddings, 2012, pp773-4). Teachers and schools are remarkably hemmed in by educational 'business as usual'; school

status and teacher professional status are closely wedded to its upkeep. Yet there are affordances which give individual teachers, leaders, and more significantly, teachers *collectively* (e.g. Knight, 2023) the opportunity to rebalance the scales towards 'being well'.

Seizing upon policy affordances, the desires of pupils and community members, and upon the support of each other, the following avenues present themselves. These are explored in Table 11.

Table 11. Table of policy and practice affordances for wellbeing promotion in schools based on this research, for use by practitioners

Action area (from findings)	Policy areas	Affordances for action
1. Leadership to 'relieve the top-down pressure' ¹⁴ for a dense exam-curriculum focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Transforming children and young people's mental health provision: a green paper</i> (DoHSC & DfE, 2017) • <i>Education Inspection Framework</i> [EIF] (Ofsted, 2019) • <i>Careers guidance and access for education and training providers</i> (DfE, 2023) • <i>Good Career Guidance: The Gatsby Benchmarks</i> (The Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures and decision-making which enables time for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - student leadership - time outdoors - youth social and community action - connections with the community <p>Rationale for general greater planning, prep and follow up time for teachers.</p>

¹⁴ See participant quote, in Study 3, Participant X, section 8.4

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mental health, wellbeing and personal development in schools</i> (House of Lords Library, 2024) 	
2. Treating 'being well' as a foundation to 'doing well'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Policy traction' on social and emotional wellbeing: comparing the education systems of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.</i> (Brown & Donnelly, 2022) Policies in England lack coherence compared with other UK nations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the policy environment in England for wellbeing in schools holds internal contradictions (Brown & Donnelly, 2022), these policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - set the scene for whole school promotion of pedagogy for wellbeing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education.</i> (DfE, 2019) • <i>Character education framework</i> [non-statutory guidance] (DfE, 2019) • <i>EIF</i> (Ofsted, 2019) – Personal Development section¹⁵ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a teacher training and professional development focus on 'being well', not only in terms of behaviour management
3. Foregrounding care and trauma-informed practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Education Staff Wellbeing Charter</i> (DfE, 2021) • <i>Home Office and Youth Endowment Fund £5.8m 'trauma-informed practice' research</i> (Whittaker, 2023; Youth Endowment Fund, 2022) • <i>Teachers Standards</i> (DfE, 2011) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the rationale to free up time to support with student relationships and needs • A rationale for smaller class sizes and increased adult ratios where possible, and where there is more need. • Reduced pressure in curriculum coverage

¹⁵ Note ongoing issues with the relationship between Ofsted and practices for wellbeing, see (e.g. von Stumm et al., 2020; Waters & McKee, 2023)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater emphasis on schools and teachers working with other stakeholders knowledgeable about care and trauma (early help teams, youth sector)
4. Going 'outside the realm of the classroom'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>EIF (Ofsted, 2019)</i> • <i>Sustainability and climate change: a strategy for the education and children's services systems (DfE, 2022, 2023)</i> • <i>National Education Nature Park and Climate Action Awards (Natural History Museum, 2023)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject areas and careers to prioritise nature and community connection • School time and resources to support this
5. Promoting understanding of pedagogy and wellbeing as fundamentally relational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Policy traction' on social and emotional wellbeing: comparing the education systems of England, Wales,</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As well as the above... • Time and space for sufficient rest for staff

	<p><i>Scotland and Northern Ireland.</i> (Brown & Donnelly, 2022)</p> <p>Policies in England lack coherence compared with other UK nations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Education Staff Wellbeing Charter</i> (DfE, 2021) • <i>Teachers Standards</i> (DfE, 2011) • <i>Careers guidance and access for education and training providers</i> (DfE, 2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular reflection time for curriculum content • Development of emotional and contemplative awareness amongst staff, leading to work of this kind with students
--	---	--

I identify two major challenges to progress and exploration in the above directions:

1. Amongst established and more experienced teachers, the fall back to 'education as usual' feels like a 'safety net', where new policy directions and approaches are frequently seen as impermanent, labour intensive and liable to rollback. To recap, in under-resourced contexts, the basic structure of the school as provider and protector of 'education as usual' has a 'Stockholm Syndrome' like effect on the teaching profession, whereby what holds them captive is clung to when all else is uncertain.
2. New teachers in England are training within a newly marketized landscape in which Initial Teacher Education (ITE) has been re-envisioned as 'best learnt through observation and imitation of teachers in school settings' (McIntyre et al.2017, p153), and in which teacher practice is reduced to a list of knowledge and procedures which appear highly premised on the replication of existing norms, and expanding successful exam learning via standardised approaches, within the models of a small number of dominant national Multi-Academy Trusts (Daley, 2023). This structural framing of education severely confines the conversation about what a teacher *is* to a new generation of teachers, and risks curtailing or omitting altogether the possibility for new teachers to think and understand critically the education profession they are entering.

Relating to both of the above concerns, ongoing work to address the challenges of teacher workload within the English system (DfE, 2024) (and mirroring other work internationally – OECD, 2021) focuses on reducing teacher time spent on 'non-teaching' and

administrative tasks. If, however, the understanding of what constitutes teaching has been so narrowed as to circumscribe care and time 'outside the realm of the classroom', there is a risk that workload measures further entrench wellbeing issues for both teachers and students in the education system.

For the changes laid out to occur in a 'Turning' towards relational pedagogy, teachers, leaders, community members, local organisations, parents and young people need to see themselves as part of Francis Weller's (2017) village again. The work of schools should be consciously turned towards the purpose of a life-sustaining society, tackling social and environmental injustice. Examples of work towards this goal are increasingly evident in policy and practice though they swim against the powerful tide of 'education as usual'. The 'being well' described in this research project arises from coming together, pooling resources and finding solutions to support individuals out of isolation and stasis, and into growth, connection and belonging to place, home, and our world.

Post-script: Final Positionality Reflection

October 2024

Where do I find myself at the end of this research?

I answer this final reflective question by going back, to look forward. Back in 2015/16, at the beginning of my time exploring wellbeing and flourishing in education, the field seemed dense and closed. As a Newly Qualified Teacher only beginning to gain an understanding of educational research, the landscape of wellbeing, and how to critique it, it seemed we had the literature to define wellbeing, the tools to measure it, and prescribed routes to teach and improve it. My question was why were we doing so little about this in schools?

It was this response that led me in 2016 down the route of education innovation, following a Teach First Innovation Series programme. I developed and piloted a resilience and character education tutor programme in my school at the time, analysing the course as case study as part of a Masters in Education – yet critical questions about the impact and reach of such approaches remained unanswered to me. And I was a lone actor in that school setting. A lone actor teaching my tutees to become lone actors in turn.

Over the five years of doing this research, I have worked with teachers, with an aspiration to transformative and participatory approaches, scoping possibilities for collective learning together. The introspection this process has provoked in me challenged my own hidden assumptions and beliefs both as teacher and researcher (the two intimately connected), as well as those implicit in much of the earlier wellbeing literature I had consumed. One

example was the level of vulnerability required, the ability for open-ness and acceptance to explore the 'negative' in teachers' emotional worlds when it comes to wellbeing, rather than sidelining the negative for the positive. Brushing aside the negative seems an interpretation of wellbeing approaches that leans into the logic of performativity inherent to neoliberal interpretations of wellbeing which quash authenticity and honesty amongst colleagues/individuals (e.g. Section 7.3; 5.1) and separate. Notwithstanding the value of finding ways of measuring and assessing wellbeing patterns and understanding at scale, I remain convinced that interpretive, qualitative research will continue to offer valuable insights to questioning their truthfulness, and the cultural patterns and shifts around wellbeing practice in schools, particularly as it relates to educational practice and purpose as a whole. It is about amplifying those voices and that experience on the ground and in the complex places that are our schools.

The ubiquitousness of awareness of the 'interbeing' in 'being well' indicated by teachers within this project points to an essential awareness of relationships as fundamental to being well, and to the aims of education. Yet we teachers have learnt a script for enacting schooling which conflicts with this awareness. This conflict sits beneath the surface of our consciousness and so the importance of dialogue around this issue is too often under-appreciated. To improve the situation for mental health and wellbeing in schools, and beyond, it will be critical that we acknowledge the implicit conflict between conceptions of doing well and being well, and in this way, deliberate towards shared understanding and school improvement practices that genuinely have benefit, rather than simply performing benefits whilst masking or ignoring fundamental problems.

Thus the notion of wellbeing moves from existing in separated units to a paradigm of 'interbeing' in which I see myself and my fellow members of the educational community as a potential 'mycelial network', a metaphor from the system of interconnected 'hyphae' which form the 'body' of fungi, often below the soil, and any visible 'fruit' or mushroom in the natural world (which we humans, teachers, students are also a part of!). To explain this point, I should mention that as I complete this thesis, I am reading Merlin Sheldrake's 'Entangled Life' (2021). It strikes me, as he explains how our understandings of biology and ecology have and are being reshaped by new understandings of fungi, that there are many parallels with the implications of this research project. For example, from lichens, which are organisms composed of multiple organisms - as it turns out, not only fungi and algae (as originally believed) but potentially many others, such as diverse bacteria. These relationships are fundamental to the identity of the lichen.

Lichens lead scientists to question the notion of a living individual: 'places where an organism unravels into an ecosystem and where an ecosystem congeals into an organism (as)...stabilised networks of relationships' (Sheldrake, 2021, p99). Building on this research project's findings, I suggest we teachers, and students can draw understandings from lichens, as individuals whose identities are almost inseparable from the relationships which form them. We respond emergently to our environment, reliant on a process of careful, collaborative and reciprocal connections which are essential to any "success" or achievement seen as 'doing well'. Though not all ecological relationships are symbiotic; those which are imbalanced or ultimately parasitic will eventually lose access to the relationships on which they rely.

Is this notion of 'being well' in education as 'interbeing' through symbiosis an ideal rather than a potential reality? This uncertainty

seems especially evident considering difficulties encountered engaging in a transformative model of research within this project. Are we too entrenched in neoliberal and individualist notions of 'doing well' in education to refocus our practice on 'interbeing'? I do have a greater sense of how powerful our existing performative educational system is at foreclosing avenues for thinking differently about what education is for and how it may empower, and enable all to 'feel valued' and find 'that something they are really pushing into' (Wilson, Sellman & Joseph, 2023a) *through* 'being well' collectively. Yet avenues of possibility to enable a greater reckoning with education's role in subjectification, and to support engagement with tackling global issues do seem potentially visible via, for example, England's imminent curriculum review, calling for evidence from all stakeholders, notably young people and teachers, by late November 2024. Parallel youth led projects such as within youth-led national campaign body Teach the Future, again indicate that the 'living curriculum' is indeed alive. Such developments give me cautious hope, but it is a hope that requires acting upon (e.g. Macy & Johnstone, 2014/2020). Still, the lesson of the pandemic: the old normal is what we cling to in education, so even when the cage is open, a bird may not know how to take flight, as in the metaphor used by Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2015) following Eisner (1992):

'If a bird has been in a cage for a decade and suddenly finds the door open, it should not be surprising if the bird does not wish to leave.

(p. 617)'

So where to from here? The opposite of the problem of being decontextualised and 'disembodied' learners (Simovska & O'Toole, 2022, p25) is *re-contextualising* ourselves. As bell hooks (2008)

explores, what seems vital is rooting into our place and our senses, where we can walk, make a home amidst others, and enable those around us to do the same. This process is about our environment and our relationship to it, extending multi-directionally, outwards *and* into our relationship to self. The outer world teaches our inner world and vice versa; the aim being to feel comfortable enough and confident enough to hone our inner observation post, our 'witnessing consciousness' (Sellman, 2020), and respond with care to each other and our world.

So do I think schooling can be better for 'being well'? I consider it important work to help school and the community beyond it serve this purpose, through a focus on recontextualising and connection with place. As Keri Facer (2017) puts it: 'education is a collective social responsibility that cannot simply be left to schools' (Facer, 2017, 31:06). 'Education as usual' is not designed to promote 'being well', so suggests this research project. Yet, in a commitment to practice as the site of the work needed, I have not changed through the project.

Even if I remain questioning of how best to support teachers (including myself) hemmed in within our systems, I am increasingly convinced that freeing teachers to the world 'out of the realm of the classroom' holds the most possibility. In particular, I suggest that it is 'out of the realm of the classroom' that teachers can best expose their students to the freedom to lead. When young people lead, they can teach us teachers and each other. Then, we teachers are positioned to listen, perceive and respond with care and experience, engaging in that dialogue so important for growth, for relationships, for being well. For me, this is not against knowledge – some traditional knowledge acquisition may have its place but not at the expense of 'being well'. Again, I highlight the value of the term 'dialogue over dichotomy' (see Section 7.4,

'Dialogue over Dichotomy') in education for 'interbeing well', and nurturing the 'living curriculum' (see sections 7.2.3, 7.4.5). Even if schools are built to embody the top-down power structures of education as usual, and Freire's banking model, still I observe that through the 'living curriculum' at least some subversion is inevitable.

More than in the past I find myself uncertain of the path forward; I now intend to act based on listening, on the emergence of new ways in which I can serve more liberating futures, amidst the constraining norms of secondary schools, and the call to reach out my hand as part of that mycelial network, to generations younger than me, and to my peers, as we go forward into the uncertain future together. I do not have a neat wellbeing or resilience programme to offer students or their teachers; instead I want to look for the organic communities of practice that inevitably emerge in these times and places, to nurture them in light of the affordances, the 'cracks', 'where the light gets in' as Leonard Cohen sang¹⁶.

¹⁶ Lyrics from Cohen, L. (1992) Anthem [Song] on *The Future* [Album], Columbia Records.

References

Acton, R., & Glasgow, P. (2015). Teacher wellbeing in neoliberal contexts: A review of the literature. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(8), 99–114.

<https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2015v40n8.6>

Adams, R. (2023, May 18) 'More children than ever are being home-schooled in England, data shows' The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/may/18/more-children-than-ever-are-being-home-schooled-in-england-data-shows>

Aldrup, K., Klusmann, U., & Lüdtke, O. (2017). Does basic need satisfaction mediate the link between stress exposure and well-being? A diary study among beginning teachers. *Learning and Instruction*, 50, 21-30.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2016.11.005>

Ampartzaki, M., Kypriotaki, M., Voreadou, C., Dardioti, A., & Stathi, I. (2013). Communities of practice and participatory action research: the formation of a synergy for the development of museum programmes for early childhood. *Educational Action Research*, 21(1), 4–27.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2013.761920>

Amsler, S., & Facer, K. (2017). Contesting anticipatory regimes in education: exploring alternative educational orientations to the future. *Futures*, 94, 6-14.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2017.01.001>

Anderson, R. & Braud, W. (2011). *Transforming self and others through research: Transpersonal research methods and skills for the human sciences and humanities*, SUNY Press.

Anderson, S., Ozseser Kurnuc, S. & Jain, P. (2023) *Professional judgement and standard frameworks: Exploring duplexity in assessment of teachers' practices* [Conference session], Society for Educational Studies Conference 2023, University of Oxford, Friday 8th September 2023. <https://soc-for-ed-studies.org.uk/events/teachers-teaching-and-teacher-education-trajectories-threats-and-transformations/>

Apple, M. (2014) *Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*, Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203814383>

Arya, D., & Henn, M. (2021). The impact of economic inequality and educational background in shaping how non-activist “Standby” youth in London experience environmental politics. *Educational Review*, 75(1), 93–114.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.2007051>

Arthur, J. (2010). *Of good character : exploration of virtues and values in 3-25 year-olds*. Imprint Academic.
<http://books.imprint.co.uk/book/?gcoi=71157106358380>

Arthur, J., Kristjánsson, K., Harrison, T., Sanderse, W., & Wright, D. (2016). *Teaching character and virtue in schools*. (1st ed.) (Citizenship, Character and Values Education). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315695013>

Arthur, J., Kristjánsson, K., Cooke, S., Brown, E. & Carr, D. (2015). *The Good Teacher: Understanding virtues in practice*, The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, The University of Birmingham.
http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/1970/1/The_Good_Teacher_Understanding_Virtues_in_Practice.pdf

Ball, S. J., (2003) The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity, *Journal of Education Policy*, 18 (2), 215-228, DOI: [10.1080/0268093022000043065](https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093022000043065)

Ball, S. J. (2016). Neoliberal education? Confronting the slouching beast. *Policy futures in education*, 14(8), 1046-1059.

Ball, S. & Collet-Sabé, J. (2022) Against school: an epistemological critique, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 43(6), 985-999, DOI: [10.1080/01596306.2021.1947780](https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2021.1947780)

Ball, S., Maguire, M. & Braun, A. (2012). *How Schools Do Policy. Policy Enactments in Secondary Schools*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203153185>

Baker, C. & Kirk-Wade, E. (2024) *Mental health statistics: prevalence, services and funding in England*, House of Commons Library.
<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06988/SN06988.pdf>

Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.1>

Bateson, G. (2000). *Steps to an ecology of mind*. University of Chicago Press.

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1997). Writing narrative literature reviews. *Review of general psychology*, 1(3), 311-320.

Becker, J.C., Hartwich, L. and Haslam, S.A. (2021), Neoliberalism can reduce well-being by promoting a sense of social disconnection, competition, and loneliness. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 60, 947-965. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12438>

Bergold, J., & Thomas, S. (2012). Participatory research methods: A methodological approach in motion. *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung*, 37, 191-222.

- Berila, B. (2015). *Integrating mindfulness into anti-oppression pedagogy: Social justice in higher education*. Routledge.
- Bernstein, B. (2000) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique* (Revised edition) Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield.
- Bhaskar, R., Danermark, B., & Price, L. (2017). *Interdisciplinarity and wellbeing: A critical realist general theory of interdisciplinarity*. Routledge.
- Biesta, G. (2009) Good education in an age of measurement: on the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability (formerly: Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education)*, 21, 33-46.
- Biesta, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2015). The role of beliefs in teacher agency. *Teachers and Teaching*, 21(6), 624–640.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044325>
- Biesta, G. (2017) 'The Beautiful Risk of Education' (Video). HKW 100 Years of Now, Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMqFcVoXnTI>
- Biesta, G. (2020), Risking Ourselves in Education: Qualification, Socialization, and Subjectification Revisited. *Educational Theory*, 70, 89-104. <https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12411>
- Biesta, G. (2022). *World-Centred Education: A View for the Present*. Routledge.
- Billington, T., Gibson, S., Fogg, P., Lahmar, J. and Cameron, H. (2022), Conditions for mental health in education: Towards relational practice. *British Educational Research Journal*, 48, 95-119. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3755>

Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: a tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation?. *Qualitative health research*, 26(13), 1802-1811. DOI: 10.1177/1049732316654870

Body, A., E. Lau, J. Cunliffe, and L. Cameron. (2024). "Mapping Active Civic Learning in Primary Schools Across England—A Call to Action." *British Educational Research Journal*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3975>.

Body, A. (2023) *Teachers as Civic Leaders of Change: Rethinking civic education within our primary schools*. [Conference Session] Society for Educational Studies Conference 2023. University of Oxford, Friday 8th September 2023. <https://soc-for-ed-studies.org.uk/events/teachers-teaching-and-teacher-education-trajectories-threats-and-transformations/>

Body, A. (2024) Raising Philanthropic Children: Moving Beyond Virtuous Philanthropy, Towards Transformative Giving and Empowered Citizenship. *Journal of Philanthropy and Marketing*, 29 (1). ISSN 2691-1361.

de Botton, A. (2023) *A Therapeutic Journey: Lessons from the School of Life*, Penguin.

Boniwell, I., Osin, E. N., & Martinez, C. (2016). Teaching happiness at school: Non-randomised controlled mixed-methods feasibility study on the effectiveness of Personal Well-Being Lessons. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 11(1), 85-98. DOI:10.1080/17439760.2015.1025422

Bradbury-Jones, C., & Isham, L. (2020). The pandemic paradox: The consequences of COVID-19 on domestic violence. *Journal of clinical nursing*, 29(13-14), 2047–2049. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.15296>

Brady, J., & Wilson, E. (2021). Teacher wellbeing in England: Teacher responses to school-level initiatives. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 51(1), 45-

63. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2020.1775789>

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. DOI: [10.1191/1478088706qp063oa](https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa)

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2016). (Mis) conceptualising themes, thematic analysis, and other problems with Fugard and Potts'(2015) sample-size tool for thematic analysis. *International Journal of social research methodology*, 19(6), 739-743.

Braun, V., Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qual. Res. Sport Exerc. Health*, 11(4), 589–597
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2020). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 18(3), 328–352.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238>

British Educational Research Association [BERA] (2018) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*.
<https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018>

British Medical Association (2024) *Mental Health Pressures in England*. <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/nhs-delivery-and-workforce/pressures/mental-health-pressures-data-analysis>

Brito, R., Joseph, S., & Sellman, E. (2021). From Instrumental to Integral Mindfulness: Toward a More Holistic and Transformative

Approach in Schools. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 1-19.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-021-09810-8>

Brito, R., Joseph, S., & Sellman, E. (2021). Mindfulness “in” Education as a Form of Iatrogenesis. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 19(3), 261-283.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344620987231>

Brito, R. & Wilson, R. (S) (2023) *Well-Being In Schools: Reflecting On The Paradoxical Role Of Teachers*. [Conference session] Society for Educational Studies Conference: Teachers, Teaching and Teacher Education: Trajectories, Threats and Transformations, 7 September, University of Oxford <https://soc-for-ed-studies.org.uk/events/teachers-teaching-and-teacher-education-trajectories-threats-and-transformations/>

Bronfenbrenner U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. & Ceci, S. J. (1994). Nature–Nurture Reconceptualized in Developmental Perspective. *Psychological Review*, 101 (4), 568-586.

Bronson, M. C. & Gangadean, A. (2010) Encountering the (w) hole: Integral education as deep dialogue and cultural medicine. In Esbjorn-Hagens, S., Reams, J. & Gunnlaugson, O. (2010) *Integral education: New directions for higher learning* (pp. 149-165).

Brown, C & Donnelly, M. (2022) Theorising social and emotional wellbeing in schools: a framework for analysing educational policy, *Journal of Education Policy*, 37(4), 613-633, DOI: 10.1080/02680939.2020.1860258

Brown, C. & Shay, M. (2021), From resilience to wellbeing: Identity-building as an alternative framework for schools’ role in

promoting children's mental health. *Review of Education*, 9, 599-634. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3264>

Brown, C., & Dixon, J. (2020). 'Push on through': Children's perspectives on the narratives of resilience in schools identified for intensive mental health promotion. *British Educational Research Journal*, 46(2), 379-398. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3583>

Brulle, R. J., & Norgaard, K. M. (2019). Avoiding cultural trauma: climate change and social inertia. *Environmental Politics*, 28(5), 886-908. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2018.1562138>

Burtonshaw, S. and Dorrell, E. (2023) Listening to, and learning from, parents in the attendance crisis, Public First. <https://www.publicfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/ATTENDANCE-REPORT-V02.pdf>

Busby, M. (2020) 'Schools in England told not to use material from anti-capitalist groups', The Guardian. Accessed: May 2023, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/sep/27/uk-schools-told-not-to-use-anti-capitalist-material-in-teaching>

Byrne, J. (2022) Reframing teacher education in England: the case for a Bildung orientated approach, *Educational Review*, 74(5), 1012-1028, DOI: [10.1080/00131911.2020.1725450](https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2020.1725450)

Capra, F., & Luisi, P. L. (2014). *The systems view of life: A unifying vision*. Cambridge University Press.

Carter, S. M., Shih, P., Williams, J., Degeling, C., & Mooney-Somers, J. (2021). Conducting Qualitative Research Online: Challenges and Solutions. *The patient*, 14(6), 711-718. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40271-021-00528-w>

Carlsson, M. (2022). Reimagining Wellbeing in Neoliberal Times: School Wellbeing as an Adjunct to Academic Performance?. In: McLellan, R., Faucher, C., Simovska, V. (Eds) *Wellbeing and Schooling*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95205-1_3

Catallo, A., Lee, E., & Vare, P. (2022) *Curriculum for a Changing Climate: a track changes review of the national curriculum for England. Final Report*. Teach the Future.
<https://www.teachthefuture.uk/tracked-changes-project>

Challen, A., P. Noden, A. West and S. Machin (2011). *UK resilience programme evaluation: Final Report*, Department for Education. Enterprise LSE Ltd.
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7a2a9740f0b66a2fc00602/DFE-RR097.pdf>

Cherkowski, S. and K. D. Walker (Eds) (2018). *Perspectives on flourishing in schools*. Lexington Books.

Coghlan, D., & Brydon-Miller, M. (2014). Communities of practice. In *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Action Research*, 2, 136-137. SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446294406>

Cohen, L. (1992) Anthem [Song] on *The Future* [Album], Columbia Records.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2017) *Research Methods in Education*. Routledge

Collishaw, S., Maughan, B., Goodman, R. and Pickles, A. (2004), Time trends in adolescent mental health. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 45, 1350-1362. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2004.00335.x>

Collishaw, S., Maughan, B., Natarajan, L. and Pickles, A. (2010), Trends in adolescent emotional problems in England: a comparison of two national cohorts twenty years apart. *Journal of Child*

Psychology and Psychiatry, 51, 885-

894. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2010.02252.x>

Collishaw, S. (2015) Annual Research Review: Secular trends in child and adolescent mental health. *Journal of Child Psychol Psychiatry*, 56, 370-393. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12372>

Cook, J. W. (ed.) (2019) Sustainability, Human Well-Being, and the Future of Education, Palgrave Macmillan.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-78580-6_1

Cooke, P. J., Melchert, T. P., & Connor, K. (2016). Measuring well-being: A review of instruments. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 44(5), 730-757.

Cornelius-White, J. H. D. (2007b). The actualizing and formative tendencies: Prioritizing the motivational constructs of the person-centered approach. *Person-Centered & Experiential Psychotherapies*, 6(2), 129–141.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14779757.2007.9688436>

Craske, J. (2021), Logics, rhetoric and 'the blob': Populist logic in the Conservative reforms to English schooling. *British Educational Research Journal*, 47, 279-298. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3682>

Creagh, S., Thompson, G., Mockler, N., Stacey, M., & Hogan, A. (2023). Workload, work intensification and time poverty for teachers and school leaders: a systematic research synthesis. *Educational Review*, 77(2), 661–680.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2023.2196607>

Culshaw, S., & Kurian, N. (2021). Love as the lifeblood of being-well: a call for care for teachers in England's schools. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 39(3), 269–290.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2021.1938647>

Cybulski, L., Ashcroft, D.M., Carr, M.J. et al. (2021). Temporal trends in annual incidence rates for psychiatric disorders and self-harm among children and adolescents in the UK, 2003–2018. *BMC Psychiatry*, 21, 229, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-021-03235-w>

Daley, C. (2023a) *Powerful pacts: controlling the knowledge base for teacher education* [Conference session]. Society for Educational Studies Conference 2023, University of Oxford, Thursday 7th September 2023. <https://soc-for-ed-studies.org.uk/events/teachers-teaching-and-teacher-education-trajectories-threats-and-transformations/>

Daley, C. (2023b) The National Institute of Teaching and the Claim for Programme Legitimacy. In Ellis, V, (Ed.) *Teacher Education in Crisis: The State, The Market and the Universities in England*. (pp. 149-162). Bloomsbury Publishing.

Davies, E. L. & Matley, F. (2020) Teachers and pupils under pressure: UK teachers' views on the content and format of personal, social, health and economic education, *Pastoral Care in Education*, 38(1) 4-22, DOI: 10.1080/02643944.2020.1713868

Davies, C. A. (2008) *Reflexive ethnography: A guide to researching selves and others*, Routledge.

de Beauvoir, S. (2018). *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1st ed.). Open Road Integrated Media, Inc.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2012). Self-determination theory. *Handbook of theories of social psychology*, 1(20), 416-436.

Deci, E. L., R. J. Vallerand, L. G. Pelletier and R. M. Ryan (1991). "Motivation and Education: The Self-Determination Perspective." *Educational Psychologist* 26(3-4): 325-346.

Department for Digital Culture, Media and Sport (2021) Youth social action rapid evidence assessment, alma economics

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60f1a21f8fa8f50c6ef85052/DCMS_youth_social_action_REA -
Alma Economics final report accessible .pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60f1a21f8fa8f50c6ef85052/DCMS_youth_social_action_REA_-_Alma_Economics_final_report_accessible_.pdf)

Department for Education (DfE) (2011) *Teachers' Standards: Guidance for School Leaders, School Staff and Governing Bodies*.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>

Department for Education (DfE) (2014) *GCSE and A level reform*.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/gcse-and-a-level-reform>

Department For Education (DfE). (2019a). *Physical health and mental wellbeing*.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/physical-health-and-mental-wellbeing-primary-and-secondary>

Department for Education (DfE). (2019b) *Character Education Framework Guidance*.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904333/Character_Education_Framework_Guidance.pdf

Department for Education (DfE). (2019/2024) *Early Career Framework*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-career-framework>

Department for Education (DfE). (2021) *Teachers Standards: Guidance for School Leaders, School Staff and Governing Bodies*.
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1040274/Teachers__Standards_D
ec_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1040274/Teachers__Standards_Dec_2021.pdf)

Department for Education (DfE). (2022). *Sustainability and climate change: a strategy for the education and children's services systems*, April 21.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainability-and-climate-change-strategy/sustainability-and-climate-change-a-strategy-for-the-education-and-childrens-services-systems>

Department for Education (DfE). (2021) *Education Recovery Support* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-recovery-support/education-recovery-support--2>

Department for Education (DfE). (2020) *Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum*

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-your-relationships-sex-and-health-curriculum#using-external-agencies>

DfE (2024) Special educational needs in England. Accessed: 31 Jul 2024, <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans>

Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2003). *Every Child Matters: Green Paper*. Department for Education and Schools.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2005). *Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning*. DfES.

Department of Health & Department for Education (2017). *Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper*.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664855/Transforming children and young people s mental health provision.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664855/Transforming_children_and_young_people_s_mental_health_provision.pdf)

Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) (2024) *Improving the mental health of babies, children and young people:*

methodology, literature review and stakeholder feedback that informed the framework

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people-methodology-literature-review-and-stakeholder-feedback-that-informed-the-framework>

Derry, M. (2017). Writing Strategies: What's Your Positionality? The Weingarten Blog [Online]. Available from:

<https://weingartenlrc.wordpress.com/2017/01/09/research-writing-whats-your-positionality/> [Accessed 20 June 2020 2020].

Dewey, J. (1938) Experience and Education. Macmillan Publishers.

Dillon, J., M. Rickinson, K. Teamey, M. Morris, M. Y. Choi, D.

Sanders and P. Benefield (2006). "The value of outdoor learning: evidence from research in the UK and elsewhere." School science review, 87 (320), 107.

Disterheft, Antje (2023). *Student well-being and learning for sustainability. Synergies and shared challenges*: NESET ad hoc report 2023, Publications Office of the European Union.

DOI:10.2766/30095

Donnelly, M., & Brown, C. (2022). "Policy traction" on social and emotional wellbeing: comparing the education systems of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. *Comparative Education*, 58(4), 451–469.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2022.2052446>

Downey, B. (2015). The looking glass self and deliberation bias in qualitative interviews. *Sociological Spectrum*, 35(6), 534-551.

Dunlop, L. & Rushton, E. A. C. (2022). Putting climate change at the heart of education: Is England's strategy a placebo for

policy?. *British Educational Research Journal*, 48, 1083– 1101. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3816>

Education Endowment Foundation (2021) *Cognitive science approaches in the classroom: a review of the evidence (summary)*. <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/cognitive-science-approaches-in-the-classroom>

Ehrenreich, B. (2010). *Smile or die: How positive thinking fooled America and the world*. Granta Books.

Eidinger, A. (2017). The Historical is Personal – Redux: Positionality. *Unwritten Histories: The Unwritten Rules of History* [Online]. Available from: https://www.unwrittenhistories.com/the-historical-is-personal-redux-positionality/#_ftn7 2020].

Emerson, A. (2022) The case for trauma-informed behaviour policies, *Pastoral Care in Education*, 40(3), 352-359, DOI: 10.1080/02643944.2022.2093956 /

Ergas, O. (2017). Reclaiming "self" in teachers' images of "education" through mindfulness as contemplative inquiry. *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy*, 14, 218-235. DOI: 10.1080/15505170.2017.1398698

Ergas, O. (2019) A contemplative turn in education: charting a curricular-pedagogical countermovement, *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 27(2), 251-270, DOI: [10.1080/14681366.2018.1465111](https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2018.1465111)

Esbjorn-Hargens, S., Reams, J. & Gunnlaugson, O. (2010). *Integral Education: New Directions for Higher Learning*. SUNY Series in *Integral Theory*. SUNY Press.

Facer, K. (2017) Learning Futures: Education, Technology and Social Change [Video] *HKW 100 Years of Now*, 2017, May 4 — 6. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLoW1WhI3BY>

Fals Borda, O., Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (2006). Participatory (action) research in social theory: Origins and challenges. In Bradbury, R. & Reason, P. *The SAGE handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and practice*, 27-37.

Ferrari, R. (2015). Writing narrative style literature reviews. *Medical writing*, 24(4), 230-235.
<https://doi.org/10.1179/2047480615Z.000000000329>

Finn, R. & Phillips, L. G. (2023) On the certainty of entanglements with ecocide: pragmatic action for responsive pedagogy inspired by ecological psychology and permaculture, *Educational Review*, 75 (1), 115-133, DOI: [10.1080/00131911.2021.2001438](https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.2001438)

Fisher, B., & Tronto, J. (1990). Toward a feminist theory of care. In E. Abel & M. Nelson (Eds.), *Circles of care: Work and identity in women's lives*, (41). SUNY Press.

Francis, B., Archer, L., Hodgen, J., Pepper, D., Taylor, B. & Travers, M. (2017) Exploring the relative lack of impact of research on 'ability grouping' in England: a discourse analytic account, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 47 (1), 1-17, DOI: [10.1080/0305764X.2015.1093095](https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2015.1093095)

Fredrickson, B. L. (2004). The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *Philosophical transactions of the royal society of London. Series B: Biological Sciences*, 359(1449), 1367-1377.

Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogy of the oppressed (revised)*. New York: Continuum.

Fugard, A. J., & Potts, H. W. (2015). Supporting thinking on sample sizes for thematic analyses: a quantitative tool. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 18 (6), 669-684.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2015.1005453>

Fugard, A. J., & Potts, H. W. (2016). 'Shine bright like a diamond'? A reply to Braun and Clarke. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 19(6), 745-746.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2016.1205794>

Fuller, K. and Stevenson, H. (2019) Global education reform: understanding the movement, *Educational Review*, 71(1), pp. 1–4. doi: 10.1080/00131911.2019.1532718.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2019.1532718>

Gallie, W. B. (1955). Essentially contested concepts. In *Proceedings of the Aristotelian society*, 56, 167-198. Aristotelian Society, Wiley.

Geldhof, G. J., E. P. Bowers and R. M. Lerner (2013). "Special section introduction: thriving in context: findings from the 4-h study of positive youth development." *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 42(1): 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-012-9855-7>

Gewirtz, S., Maguire, M., Neumann, E., & Towers, E. (2019). What's wrong with 'deliverology'? Performance measurement, accountability and quality improvement in English secondary education. *Journal of Education Policy*, 36(4), 504–529.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2019.1706103>

Gibb, N. (2015). *The purpose of education: Schools Minister Nick Gibb addresses the Education Reform Summit*. Department for Education. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-purpose-of-education>

Gibson, J. J. (1979). *The ecological approach to visual perception*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH).

Gibson E. J. (1988). Exploratory behavior in the development of perceiving, acting, and the acquiring of knowledge. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 39, 1–42. 10.1146/annurev.ps.39.020188.000245

Gladwell, M. (2019). *Talking to Strangers: What We Should Know About the People We Don't Know*, Penguin UK.

Glazzard, J and Stones, S (2021) Supporting Young People's Mental Health: Reconceptualizing the Role of Schools or a Step Too far? *Frontiers in Education*. ISSN 2504-284X DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2020.607939>

Glazzard, J and Rose, A (2019) The Impact of Teacher Well-Being and Mental Health on Pupil Progress in Primary Schools. *Journal of Public Mental Health*. ISSN 1746-5729
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMH-02-2019-0023>

GOV.UK (2023a, June 8) *School Workforce in England*. Office for National Statistics, Crown. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england#dataBlock-55a183d0-57a9-4cbf-972b-7121fb80e6a2-charts>

GOV.UK (2023b, June 22) *Special Educational Needs in England*, Office for National Statistics, Crown. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>

Graham, A., Phelps, R., Maddison, C., & Fitzgerald, R. (2011). Supporting children's mental health in schools: teacher views. *Teachers and Teaching*, 17(4), 479–496.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2011.580525>

Graham, A., Powell, M. A., & Truscott, J. (2016). Facilitating student well-being: relationships do matter. *Educational Research*, 58(4), 366-383.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2016.1228841>

Greany, T. (2023) *Do School Leaders' Values Really Matter?* [Conference Key Note Speech]. Society for Educational Studies

Conference 2023, University of Oxford, Thursday 7th September 2023. <https://soc-for-ed-studies.org.uk/events/teachers-teaching-and-teacher-education-trajectories-threats-and-transformations/>

Griebler, U., Rojatz, D., Simovska, V., & Forster, R. (2017) Effects of student participation in school health promotion: a systematic review, *Health Promotion International*, 32(2), 195–206, <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/dat090>

Guilherme, A. & De Freitas, A. L. S. (2017). 'Happiness education': A pedagogical-political commitment. *Policy Futures in Education*, 15, 6-19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14782103166374>

Gunningham, N. (2019). Averting Climate Catastrophe: Environmental Activism, Extinction Rebellion and coalitions of Influence. *King's Law Journal*, 30(2), 194–202. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09615768.2019.1645424>

Gunter, H. and Courtney, S. (2023) 'Policy Mortality and UK Government Education Policy for Schools in England', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 71(4), pp. 353–371. doi: 10.1080/00071005.2023.2193066.

Hammersley, M. (2005). What can the literature on communities of practice tell us about educational research? Reflections on some recent proposals¹. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 28(1), 5–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01406720500036653>

Handley, A. & Allen, D. (2023) 'DOROTHY HEATHCOTE: FROM "LEARNING ABOUT" TO "LEARNING FOR" THE OTHER', [Conference Session]. Society for Educational Studies Conference 2023, University of Oxford, Thursday 7th September 2023. <https://soc-for-ed-studies.org.uk/events/teachers-teaching-and-teacher-education-trajectories-threats-and-transformations/>

Hanson, J., Moore, N., Neary, S. and Clark, L. (2021) *An evaluation of the North East of England pilot of the Gatsby Benchmarks of good career guidance*. University of Derby.

<https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/ne-pilot-evaluation-full-report.pdf>

Harmey, S., & Moss, G. (2021). Learning disruption or learning loss: using evidence from unplanned closures to inform returning to school after COVID-19. *Educational Review*, 75(4), 637–656.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.1966389>

Harper, G. W., & Neubauer, L. C. (2021). Teaching during a pandemic: A model for trauma-informed education and administration. *Pedagogy in health promotion*, 7(1), 14-24. doi: 10.1177/2373379920965596.

Hart, T. (2004). "Opening the Contemplative Mind in the Classroom." *Journal of Transformative Education*, 2(1): 28-46.

Hascher, T., & Waber, J. (2021). Teacher well-being: A systematic review of the research literature from the year 2000–2019. *Educational research review*, 34, 100411.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100411>.

Hefferon, K. (2013). *Positive psychology and the body: the somatopsychic side to flourishing*. McGraw-Hill Education

Henderson, J. A. & Hursh, D. W. (2014). Economics and Education for Human Flourishing: Wendell Berry and the Oikonomic Alternative to Neoliberalism. *Educational Studies*, 50, 167-186.

Haidt, J. (2024). *The anxious generation: How the great rewiring of childhood is causing an epidemic of mental illness*. Random House.

Hickman, Caroline et al. (2021) 'Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey', *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 5

(12), e863 - e873, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196\(21\)00278-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(21)00278-3)

Hill, L. (2022) Two years of COVID-19: the pandemic, young people and what next?, *Intergenerational Foundation Blog*. Accessed: July 2023. Available at: <https://www.if.org.uk/2022/01/28/two-years-of-covid-19-the-pandemic-young-people-and-what-next/>

Hoare, E., D. Bott and J. Robinson (2017). Learn it, Live it, Teach it, Embed it: Implementing a whole school approach to foster positive mental health and wellbeing through Positive Education. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 7(3). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v7i3.645>

Holmes, A. G. D. (2020). Researcher Positionality--A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research--A New Researcher Guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 8(4), 1-10.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress : Education as the practice of freedom*. Taylor & Francis Group.

hooks, b. (2008). *Belonging : A culture of place*. Taylor & Francis Group.

hooks, b. (2014). *Feminism is for everybody : Passionate politics*. Taylor & Francis Group.

Hostetler, K. (2005). What Is "Good" Education Research? *Educational Researcher*, 34, 16-21.

Hordern, J. (2021). Why close to practice is not enough: Neglecting practice in educational research. *British Educational Research Journal*, 47(6), 1451-1465. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3622>

Holmes, A. G. D. (2020). Researcher Positionality--A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research--A New Researcher Guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 8(4), 1-10.

Hudson L, D. L. (2022). Mental health of children and young people since the start of the pandemic. *Clinical child psychology and psychiatry*, 27(1), 3-5.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/13591045211072721>

Humberstone, B. (2015). *Embodiment, Nature and Wellbeing: More Than the Senses? Experiencing the outdoors*. Brill Sense.

Hursh, D., Henderson, J., & Greenwood, D. (2015). Environmental education in a neoliberal climate. *Environmental Education Research*, 21(3), 299-318.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2015.1018141>

Imants, J., & Van der Wal, M. M. (2019). A model of teacher agency in professional development and school reform. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 52(1), 1-14.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2019.1604809>

IPCC, (2018) Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, H.-O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J.B.R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M.I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, and T. Waterfield (eds.)] Summary for Policymakers. In: *Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, pp. 3-24, doi:10.1017/9781009157940.001.

Jackson, T. (2016). *Prosperity without Growth: Foundations for the Economy of Tomorrow* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315677453>

Jani, A. & Lowry, C. (2022) Promoting health and wellbeing through children's education. *The Royal Society of Medicine*.
<https://www.rsm.ac.uk/latest-news/2022/promoting-health-and-wellbeing-through-children-s-education/>

Jayawickreme, E., Forgeard, M. J., & Seligman, M. E. (2012). The engine of well-being. *Review of general psychology*, 16(4), 327-342.

Jerome, L., & Kisby, B. (2019). *The rise of character education in Britain: Heroes, dragons and the myths of character*. Cham, Switzerland Palgrave Pivot.

Jerrim, J. (2022). The mental health of adolescents in England: How does it vary during their time at school?. *British Educational Research Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3769>

Jerrim, J., Sims, S., Taylor, H., & Allen, R. (2021). Has the mental health and wellbeing of teachers in England changed over time? New evidence from three datasets. *Oxford Review of Education*, 47(6), 805-825.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2021.1902795>

Johannesson, P. (2020). Development of professional learning communities through action research: understanding professional learning in practice. *Educational Action Research*, 30(3), 411-426.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2020.1854100>

Joseph, S. (2015). The Future of Positive Psychology in Practice. In Joseph, S. (Ed.) *Positive Psychology in Practice: Promoting Human Flourishing in Work, Health, Education, and Everyday Life* (2nd Edition, pp. 823 -828), John Wiley & Sons.

Joseph, S. (2015). Positive psychology in practice: Promoting human flourishing in work, health, education, and everyday life. John Wiley & Sons.

Joseph, S., Murphy, D., & Holford, J. (2020). Positive education: A new look at Freedom to Learn. *Oxford Review of Education*, 46(5), 549-562. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2020.1726310>

Karmakar, S. (2023) 'Unveiling the Looking Glass Self: Decoding Charles Horton Cooley's Profound Insight', Medium. Accessed: 17 Oct 2023, Available at: <https://santu2x.medium.com/unveiling-the-looking-glass-self-decoding-charles-horton-cooleys-profound-insight-fb3a181091fa>

Kasser, T. (2016). "Materialistic Values and Goals." *Annual Review of Psychology*, 67(1): 489-514.

Kelly, P., Hohmann, U., Pratt, N., & Dorf, H. (2013). Teachers as mediators: An exploration of situated English teaching. *British Educational Research Journal*, 39(4), 609-634. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411926.2012.665433>

Keen, S., Lomeli-Rodriguez, M., & Joffe, H. (2022). From Challenge to Opportunity: Virtual Qualitative Research During COVID-19 and Beyond. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221105075>

Kibe, C. & Boniwell, I. (2015). Teaching Well-Being and Resilience in Primary and Secondary School. In. Joseph, S. (Ed) Positive Psychology in Practice: Promoting Human Flourishing in Work, Health, Education, and Everyday Life (Second Edition) John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118996874.ch18>

Klem, A. M., & Connell, J. P. (2004). Relationships matter: Linking teacher support to student engagement and achievement. *Journal*

of school health, 74(7), 262-273. DOI: 10.1111/j.1746-1561.2004.tb08283.x

Klein, N. (2019). *On Fire: the (burning) case for a Green New Deal*, Simon & Schuster.

Khan, T. H., & MacEachen, E. (2022). An Alternative Method of Interviewing: Critical Reflections on Videoconference Interviews for Qualitative Data Collection. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221090063>

Kowal, J. and M. S. Fortier (1999). Motivational Determinants of Flow: Contributions From Self-Determination Theory. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 139(3): 355-368.

Knight, B. (2023). *Nurturing Professional Judgement*. Critical Publishing.

Kristjánsson, K. (2016). Flourishing as the aim of education: towards an extended, 'enchanted' Aristotelian account. *Oxford Review of Education*, 42(6), 707–720.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2016.1226791>

Kristjánsson, K. (2017). Recent Work on Flourishing as the Aim of Education: A Critical Review. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 65, 87-107.

Kristjánsson, K. (2020a). *Flourishing as the aim of education : a neo-Aristotelian view*. Routledge.
https://www.routledge.com/Flourishing-as-the-Aim-of-Education-A-Neo-Aristotelian-View/Kristjansson/p/book/9780367727970?srsId=AfmBOoplkCfWq_ZFKK6IHxEYfV01jJYxV2r_8C8VPruGuyfYYNANOLio

Kristjánsson, K.(2020b). Aristotelian Character Friendship as a 'Method' of Moral Education. *Stud Philos Educ* 39, 349–364 (2020).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-020-09717-w>

Kristjánsson, K. (2023). Flourishing as the Aim of Education: An outline—and Ten Remaining Problems. In White, M., McCallum, F. & Boyle, C. (Eds.) *New Research and Possibilities in Wellbeing Education* (267-280). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

Kurian, N. (2022). School as a Sanctuary: Trauma-Informed Care to Nurture Child Well-Being in High-Poverty Schools.

Kuyken W, Ball S, Crane C, et al. (2022) Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of universal school-based mindfulness training compared with normal school provision in reducing risk of mental health problems and promoting well-being in adolescence: the MYRIAD cluster randomised controlled trial, *BMJ Mental Health*, 25, 99-109.

Kuypers, L. M. (2011). *The zones of regulation*. Think Social Publishing Incorporated.

Lautensach, A. K. (2018). *Educating as if sustainability mattered* [Conference Paper]. ICERI2018 Conference. Seville, Spain.

Lakasing, E & Mirza, Z. (2020) Anxiety and depression in young adults and adolescents. *British Journal of General Practice*. 70 (691): 56-57. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp20X707765>

Long, R. & Danechi, S. (2023) *Home Education in England*, House of Commons Library. Accessed: July 2023, Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05108/>

Long, R. & Danechi, S. (2023) *School Attendance in England*. House of Commons Library. Accessed: July 2023, Available at: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9710/CBP-9710.pdf>

Lowry, C., Leonard-Kane, R, Gibbs, B, Muller, L., Peacock, A., & Jani, A. (2022a) Teachers: the forgotten health workforce, *Journal*

of the Royal Society of Medicine. 115 (4), 133-137.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/01410768221085692>

Lowry C, Rees J, Gregson D, et al. (2022b) The poor relation: health education in English schools. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine. 115(2)*, 52-57. doi:10.1177/01410768211067187

Mackenzie, K., & Williams, C. (2018). Universal, school-based interventions to promote mental and emotional well-being: What is being done in the UK and does it work? A systematic review. *BMJ open*, 8(9), e022560. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2018-022560

Macy J., & Brown M. (2014). *Coming back to life: The updated guide to the Work that Reconnects*. New Society.

Macy J. & Johnstone C. (2012/2020). *Active hope: How to face the mess we're in without going crazy*. New World Library.

Maguire, M., Gewirtz, S., Towers, E. & Neumann, E. (2019) Policy, contextual matters and unintended outcomes: the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and its impact on physical education in English secondary schools, *Sport, Education and Society*, 24 (6), 558-569, DOI: [10.1080/13573322.2019.1611555](https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2019.1611555)

Maiese, M. (2022) Neoliberalism and mental health education, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 56(1), 67–77, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12640>

Maisuria, A., Roberts, N., Long, R. & Danechi, S. (2023) *Teacher recruitment and retention in England*. House of Commons Library. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7222/CBP-7222.pdf>

Maldonado-Castellanos, I., & Barrios, L. M. (2023). Ethical Issues when Using Digital Platforms to Perform Interviews in Qualitative Health Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231165949>

Marshall, L. 2022. *A Fifteen-Year-Old's Powerful Speech from Nottingham's COP27 Rally*. Nottingham: Left Lion. Accessed: May 2023, Available at: <https://leftlion.co.uk/features/2022/11/cop27/>

Martela, F. and K. M. Sheldon (2019). Clarifying the Concept of Well-Being: Psychological Need Satisfaction as the Common Core Connecting Eudaimonic and Subjective Well-Being. *Review of General Psychology* 23(4): 458-474.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1089268019880886>

Maté, G. & Maté, D. (2022) *The Myth of Normal: Illness, Health and Healing in a Toxic Culture*. Vermillion, Penguin Random House UK

McCloskey, C. (2019). The Citizen Shift. the hub of qualitative thinking [Online]. Available from:
<https://www.aqr.org.uk/a/20190610-citizen-shift>.

McIntyre, J., Youens, B., & Stevenson, H. (2017). Silenced voices: the disappearance of the university and the student teacher in teacher education policy discourse in England. *Research Papers in Education*, 34(2), 153–168.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2017.1402084>

McLellan, R., & Steward, S. (2015). Measuring children and young people's wellbeing in the school context. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 45(3), 307–332.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2014.889659>

McLellan, R. (2017). Children and young people's wellbeing in the school context. In Maclean, R. (Ed.) *Life in Schools and Classrooms: Past, Present and Future*, (455-471). Springer Nature.
<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-10-3654-5>

McLellan, R., Faucher, C., Simovska, V. (2022). Wellbeing and Schooling: Why Are Cross-Cultural and Cross-Disciplinary

Perspectives Needed?. In: McLellan, R., Faucher, C., Simovska, V. (Eds) *Wellbeing and Schooling. Transdisciplinary Perspectives in Educational Research*, vol 4. (1-17) Springer.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95205-1_1

McLellan, R., Faucher, C. & Simovska, V. (2022) (Eds) *Wellbeing and Schooling: Cross Cultural and Cross Disciplinary Perspectives. Transdisciplinary Perspectives in Educational Research*, vol 4.

Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95205-1_1

McNeil, L. (2002). *Contradictions of school reform: Educational costs of standardized testing*. Routledge.

McPherson, C., Bayrakdar, S., Gewirtz, S. Laczik, A., Maguire, M., Newton, O., O'Brien, S., Weavers, A., Winch, C & Wolf, A. (2023) *Schools for All? Young People's experiences of alienation in the English secondary school system. Young Lives, Young Futures Report*. <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/assets/research/project-upload-2021/young-lives-young-futures-schools-for-all.pdf>

Mele, A. R. and H. William (2001). *Self-deception unmasked*, Princeton University Press.

Mercer, J. (2007). The challenges of insider research in educational institutions: Wielding a double-edged sword and resolving delicate dilemmas. *Oxford review of education*, 33, 1-17.

Merton, R. K. (1972). Insiders and outsiders: A chapter in the sociology of knowledge. *American journal of sociology*, 78, 9-47.

De Meyer, K. (2023) *Why we need to change how we talk about climate change* [Video]. TEDx London.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yty9OtMHbLw>

De Meyer, K., Coren, E., McCaffrey, M., & Slean, C. (2021). Transforming the stories we tell about climate change: from 'issue' to 'action'. *Environmental Research Letters*, 16(1), 015002.

Montero-Marin J, Allwood M, Ball S, et al. (2022) School-based mindfulness training in early adolescence: what works, for whom and how in the MYRIAD trial? *BMJ Ment Health*, 25, 117-124.

Mooney, M., Tarrant, R., Paton, D., Johnston D., & Johal S. (2021) The school community contributes to how children cope effectively with a disaster, *Pastoral Care in Education*, 39 (1), 24-47, DOI: 10.1080/02643944.2020.1774632

Morgan, A., Pennington, H., & Milton, E. (2023) Key considerations essential to developing a curriculum that supports learners' mental health and wellbeing. *Impact, Journal of the Chartered College of Teaching*, https://my.chartered.college/impact_article/key-considerations-essential-to-developing-a-curriculum-that-supports-learners-mental-health-and-wellbeing/?_gl=1*17jx6tn*_up*MQ..*_ga*MTA5MTYyNzkwMi4xNjg2ODE5NjQ1*_ga_RNHLD18NVN*MTY4Njg4OTY0NC4xLjAuMTY4Njg4OTY0NC4wLjAuMA.

Mori, C. & Todaka, E. (2009). Establishment of sustainable health science for future generations: from a hundred years ago to a hundred years in the future. *Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine*, 14, 1-6.

Morris, I. (2015). *Teaching happiness and well-being in schools: Learning to ride elephants*, Bloomsbury Publishing.

Morton, T. (2018). *Being ecological*, MIT Press.

Natural History Museum (2023) *National Education Nature Park and Climate Action Awards*, Accessed: 28 July 2023, Available at: <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/national-impact/national-education-nature-park-and-climate-action-awards-scheme.html>

Neff, K. (2003). Self-Compassion: An Alternative Conceptualization of a Healthy Attitude Toward Oneself. *Self and Identity*, 2(2), 85–101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860309032>

Nettle, D. (2009) *Personality: What makes you the way you are*. Oxford University Press

Noddings, N. (2002). *Educating moral people: a caring alternative to character education*. Teachers College Press.

Noddings, N. (1984/2003) *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education*, University of California Press

Noddings, N. (1992/2005) *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education*. *Advances in Contemporary Educational Thought series*, vol. 8, Teachers College Press

Noddings, N. (2003), Is Teaching a Practice?. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 37, 241-251. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.00323>

Noddings, N. (2010). Moral Education in an Age of Globalization. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 42(4), 390–396. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2008.00487.x>

Noddings, N. (2012). The caring relation in teaching. *Oxford review of education*, 38(6), 771-781.

Noddings, N. (2013). *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (2nd ed.). University of California Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt7zw1nb>

Noman, A. H. M., Griffiths, M. D., Pervin, S., & Ismail, M. N. (2021). The detrimental effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on domestic violence against women. *Journal of psychiatric research*, 134, 111–112.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2020.12.057>

Norwich, B., Moore, D., Stenford, L. & Hall, D. (2022) A critical consideration of 'mental health and wellbeing' in education: Thinking about school aims in terms of wellbeing, *British Educational Research Journal*, 48, 803–820.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3795>

Ng, Z. J., S. E. Huebner and K. J. Hills (2015). Life Satisfaction and Academic Performance in Early Adolescents: Evidence for Reciprocal Association. *Journal of School Psychology*, 53(6): 479-491.

O'Brien, T. and Guiney, D. (2021), Wellbeing: How we make sense of it and what this means for teachers. *Support for Learning*, 36, 342-355. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12366>

Odell, J. (2019). *How to do nothing: Resisting the attention economy*, Melville House.

Oliver, M. (1986/2017) *Shadows in Oliver, M. (2017) Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver*, UK: Penguin.

OECD (2021), "Building fulfilling working conditions, well-being and satisfactory jobs", in *Teachers Getting the Best out of Their Students: From Primary to Upper Secondary Education*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/8c6140b2-en>.

OECD (2024), *Reimagining Education, Realising Potential*, International Summit on the Teaching Profession, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b44e2c39-en>.

O'Toole, Catriona (2022) When trauma comes to school: Toward a socially just trauma-informed praxis, *International Journal of School Social Work*, 6 (2). <https://doi.org/10.4148/2161-4148.1076>

O'Toole, C., & Simovska, V. (2022). Wellbeing and education: Connecting mind, body and world. In: McLellan, R., Faucher, C., Simovska, V. (Eds) *Wellbeing and Schooling. Transdisciplinary Perspectives in Educational Research*, vol 4. (21-33) Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95205-1_2

Ofsted (2019) *Education Inspection Framework*
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework>

Oswald TK, Rumbold AR, Kedzior SGE, Moore VM (2020) Psychological impacts of “screen time” and “green time” for children and adolescents: A systematic scoping review. *PLoS ONE* 15(9): e0237725. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0237725>

Papadopoulos, D., de La Bellacasa, M. P., & Myers, N. (Eds.). (2021). *Reactivating elements: Chemistry, ecology, practice*. Duke University Press.

Paré G., Trudel M.-C., Jaana M., Kitsiou S. (2015) Synthesizing information systems knowledge: A typology of literature reviews. *Information & Management*. 52(2):183–199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2014.08.008>

Paré G, & Kitsiou S. (2017) Methods for Literature Reviews. In: Lau F. & Kuziemsky C. (Eds) *Handbook of eHealth Evaluation: An Evidence-based Approach [Internet]*. Victoria (BC): University of Victoria. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK481583/>

Pauwels, B. G. (2015). The uneasy—and necessary—role of the negative in positive psychology In. Joseph, S. (Ed) *Positive Psychology in Practice: Promoting Human Flourishing in Work, Health, Education, and Everyday Life* (Second Edition, 807-822) John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118996874.ch18>

Perry, T., Lea, R., Jørgensen, C. R., Cordingley, P., Shapiro, K., & Youdell, D. (2021). *Cognitive Science in the Classroom*. London: Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/evidencereviews/cognitive-science-approaches-in-the-classroom/>

Perryman, J. & Calvert, G. (2020) *What motivates people to teach, and why do they leave? Accountability, performativity and teacher retention*, British Journal of Educational Studies, 68 (1) 3-23, DOI: [10.1080/00071005.2019.1589417](https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2019.1589417)

Phillips, L. G. & Finn, R. (2022) Learning with environments: Developing an ecological psychology inspired relational pedagogy, *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 17(1), 18-36, DOI: [10.1080/1554480X.2020.1781639](https://doi.org/10.1080/1554480X.2020.1781639)

Pinar, W.F. (2019). *What Is Curriculum Theory?* (3rd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315625683>

Pinker, S. (1994). *The language instinct* (1st ed.). William Morrow and Co.

Plust, U., Murphy, D. & Joseph, S. (2021) A systematic review and metasynthesis of qualitative research into teachers' authenticity, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 51(3), 301-325, DOI: [10.1080/0305764X.2020.1829546](https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2020.1829546)

Priestley, M., Biesta, G., & Robinson, S. (2015). *Teacher agency : an ecological approach*. Bloomsbury.

Priestley, M., Biesta, G.J.J. & Robinson, S. (2015). Teacher agency: what is it and why does it matter? In R. Kneyber & J. Evers (Eds.), *Flip the System: Changing Education from the Bottom Up*. (134-148) London: Routledge.

Puig, de la Bellacasa, M. (2017) *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds*, University of Minnesota Press

Pulkki, J., B. Dahlin and V. M. Värri (2017). Environmental Education as a Lived-Body Practice? A Contemplative Pedagogy Perspective. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 51(1): 214-229. DOI: 10.1111/1467-9752.12209

Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut economics: Seven ways to think like a 21st-century economist*. Chelsea Green Publishing.

Reschly, A. L., E. S. Huebner, J. J. Appleton and S. Antaramian (2008). Engagement as flourishing: The contribution of positive emotions and coping to adolescents' engagement at school and with learning. *Psychology in the Schools*, 45(5): 419-431.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20306>

Reveley, J. (2013). Enhancing the Educational Subject: Cognitive Capitalism, Positive Psychology and Well-Being Training in Schools. *Policy Futures in Education*, 11, 538-548.
<https://doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2013.11.5.5>

Reveley, J. (2016). Neoliberal meditations: How mindfulness training medicalizes education and responsabilizes young people. *Policy Futures in Education*, 14(4), 497-511.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210316637972>

Rio Poncela, A. M., Romero Gutierrez, L., Bermúdez, D. D., & Estellés, M. (2021) A labour of love? The invisible work of caring teachers during Covid-19, *Pastoral Care in Education*, 39(3), 192-208, DOI: 10.1080/02643944.2021.1938646

Robinson K. (2020). A global reset of education. *Prospects*, 49(1-2), 7-9. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09493-y>

Rogers, C. R. (1945). The nondirective method as a technique for social research. *American Journal of Sociology*, 50(4), 279-283.

Rogers, C. R., & Freiberg, H. J. (1994). *Freedom to learn*.

Merrill/Macmillan College Publishing Co.

Rogers, C. R. (1961/1995). *On becoming a person: A therapist's view of psychotherapy*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Rolph, C. (2022, February 16) Post-pandemic: return or reset?, *BERA Blog*, <https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/post-pandemic-return-or-reset>

Ryff, C. D. (2014). Psychological well-being revisited: advances in the science and practice of eudaimonia. *Psychotherapy and psychosomatics*, 83(1): 10.

Savage, G. (2017). Neoliberalism, education and curriculum. In Gobby, B. & Walker, R. (Eds) *Powers of Curriculum: Sociological Perspectives on Education* (2nd Edition, 143-165). Oxford University Press Australia and New Zealand.

Sayer, A. (1999) *Realism and social science*. Sage.

Schutte, N. S. and J. M. Malouff (2019). The Impact of Signature Character Strengths Interventions: A Meta-analysis. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 20(4): 1179-1196.

Shute, R. H. & Slee, P. T. (2016). *Mental health and wellbeing through schools : the way forward*, Routledge.

Seligman, M. E. (2004). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*, Simon and Schuster.

Seligman, M. E. (2012). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Simon and Schuster.

Sellman, E. (2020). The nature of self and its challenges to educational orthodoxy and 'discipline'. In Ergas, O. & Ritter, J. K. (Eds) *Exploring Self toward expanding Teaching, Teacher*

Education and Practitioner Research (55-73). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-368720200000034003>

Sellman, E. M. & Buttarazzi, G. F. (2019). Adding Lemon juice to poison – raising critical questions about the oxymoronic nature of mindfulness in education and its future direction. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 68 (1) 61-78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2019.1581128>

Sheldrake, M. (2021) *Entangled Life: How fungi make our worlds, change our minds and shape our futures*. Vintage, Penguin Random House

Sibieta, L., & Cottell, J. (2021). *Education reopening and catch-up support across the UK*. Education Policy Institute/The Nuffield Foundation. Available online at: https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/37396/1/UK-responses-report-reopening-catch-up_EPI.pdf

Sibieta, L. (2023). *The decline in spending on school buildings [Comment]* Institute for Fiscal Studies. Available at: <https://ifs.org.uk/articles/decline-spending-school-buildings> (accessed: 27 September 2024).

Silcock, Peter (1994). The Process of Reflective Teaching. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 42 (3):273 - 285.

Simovska, V., & Mannix-McNamara, P. (2015). *Schools for health and Sustainability: Theory, Research and Practice*. Springer.

Sim, J., Waterfield, J. (2019). Focus group methodology: some ethical challenges. *Quality & Quantity*, 53, 3003–3022 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-019-00914-5>

Simovska, V. (2008). Learning in and as participation: a case study from health-promoting schools. In Reid, A., Jensen, B., Nikel, J. & Simovska, V. (Eds) *Participation and learning: Perspectives on*

education and the environment, health and sustainability (61-80).

Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Simovska, V., & Bruun Jensen, B. (2009). *Conceptualizing Participation: the health of children and young people*. WHO, Regional Office for Europe. http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/youth/index_en.htm

Simovska, V (2018, June 22) Revisiting the concept of wellbeing in schools. *BERA Blog*, <https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/revisiting-the-concept-of-wellbeing-in-schools>

Slee, A., Nazareth, I., Freemantle, N., & Horsfall, L. (2021). Trends in generalised anxiety disorders and symptoms in primary care: UK population-based cohort study. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 218(3), 158-164. doi:10.1192/bjp.2020.159

Singh, J. (2021) *The Breaks*. Daunt Books

Sixsmith, J., Nic Gabhainn, S., Fleming, C., & O'Higgins, S. (2007). Childrens', parents' and teachers' perceptions of child wellbeing. *Health education*, 107(6), 511-523.

Smith, M. K. (2003, 2009). 'Jean Lave, Etienne Wenger and communities of practice', *The encyclopedia of pedagogy and informal education*. [<https://infed.org/mobi/jean-lave-etienne-wenger-and-communities-of-practice/>. Retrieved: insert date].

Solmi, M., Radua, J., Olivola, M. et al. (2022) Age at onset of mental disorders worldwide: large-scale meta-analysis of 192 epidemiological studies. *Molecular Psychiatry*, 27, 281–295. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41380-021-01161-7>

Sorgenfrei, M., Gross, J., Smith, J., Liverpool, S., Motiani, S., Mulcahy, J. & Clarke, A. (2022) *Classroom Wellbeing Toolkit: Simple Ways to Support Secondary Students' Mental Health*, Anna

Freud Centre and Early Intervention Foundation.

<https://www.annafreud.org/classroom-wellbeing-toolkit>

Spilt, J.L., Koomen, H.M.Y. & Thijs, J.T. (2011) Teacher Wellbeing: The Importance of Teacher–Student Relationships. *Educ Psychol Rev*, 23, 457–477 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-011-9170-y>

Spratt, J. (2017). *Wellbeing, equity and education : a critical analysis of policy discourses of wellbeing in schools*, Springer.

State of Nature Partnership (2023) *State of Nature Report*.

https://stateofnature.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/TP25999-State-of-Nature-main-report_2023_FULL-DOC-v12.pdf

Teacher Tapp (2023, October 24) *Burnout, the behaviour paradox, and locking the door*.

<https://teachertapp.co.uk/articles/burnout-the-behaviour-paradox-and-locking-the-door/>

Tennant, R., Hiller, L., Fishwick, R., Platt, S., Joseph, S., Weich, S., Parkinson, J., Secker, J., & Stewart-Brown, S. (2007). The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS): development and UK validation. *Health and quality of life outcomes*, 5, 63.

<https://doi.org/10.1186/1477-7525-5-63>

The Children’s Society (2012) *The Good Childhood Report 2012: A review of children’s well-being*. The Children’s Society.

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-08/GCR%202012.pdf>

Timimi, S. (2010). The McDonaldization of childhood: Children’s mental health in neo-liberal market cultures. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 47(5), 686–

706. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461510381158>

Tomasello, M. (2019). *Becoming human: A theory of ontogeny*. Harvard University Press.

Tong, P., & An, I. S. (2024). Review of studies applying Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory in international and intercultural education research. *Frontiers in psychology, 14*, 1233925. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1233925>

Tronto, J. (1993) *Moral Boundaries. A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*, London: Routledge

Tronto, J. C. (2013). Redefining Democracy as Settling Disputes about Care Responsibilities. In Tronto, J. *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice* (17–45). NYU Press.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qgfvp.6>

Tronto, J. (2017). There is an alternative: homines curans and the limits of neoliberalism. *International Journal of Care and Caring, 1*(1), 27-43.
<https://doi.org/10.1332/239788217X14866281687583>

Tomlinson, P. (1989), Having it Both Ways: hierarchical focusing as research interview method. *British Educational Research Journal, 15*, 155-176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0141192890150205>

UK Parliament (2013) 'Youth Select Committee launch inquiry into education and life skills', Accessed: 30 June 2023

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/news-by-year/2013/april/youth-select-committee-launch-inquiry-into-education-and-life-skills/>

Wilson, R. , Sellman, E. & Joseph, S. (2022) , 'Doing well and being well' – what's the difference?: A study of secondary school teachers' perspectives, *Impact: Journal of the Chartered College of Teaching [online]*
https://my.chartered.college/impact_article/doing-well-and-being-

[well-whats-the-difference-a-study-of-secondary-school-teachers-perspectives/](#)

UNESCO. (2021). *Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development*. UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381229>.

United Nations (2015) *Take Action for the Sustainable Development Goals*.
<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

Van der Kolk, B. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Mind, brain and body in the transformation of trauma*. Penguin: UK

Varela, F. J., Thompson, E. & Rosch, E., (1991/2016). *The embodied mind*. MIT Press.

Vaughn, L. M., & Jacquez, F. (2020). Participatory Research Methods – Choice Points in the Research Process. *Journal of Participatory Research Methods*, 1(1).
<https://doi.org/10.35844/001c.13244>

Vince, G. (2019). *Transcendence: how humans evolved through fire, language, beauty, and time*. Penguin UK.

von Stumm, S., Smith-Woolley, E., Cheesman, R., Pingault, J.-B., Asbury, K., Dale, P.S., Allen, R., Kovas, Y. and Plomin, R. (2021), School quality ratings are weak predictors of students' achievement and well-being. *J Child Psychol Psychiatr*, 62, 339-348. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13276>

Walker, C. 2017. Tomorrow's Leaders and Today's Agents of Change? Children, Sustainability Education and Environmental

Governance. *Children & Society* 31 (1): 72–83.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12192>.

Walker, C. (2020). Uneven Solidarity: The School Strikes for Climate in Global and Intergenerational Perspective. *Sustainable Earth*, 3 (1), <https://doi.org/10.1186/S42055-020-00024-3>.

Wall Kimmerer, R. (2013). *Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants*. Milkweed editions.

Walshe, N., Moula, Z., & Lee, E. (2022). Eco-Capabilities as a Pathway to Wellbeing and Sustainability. *Sustainability*, 14(6), 3582. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14063582>

Ward, H. (2019, February 23) *So-called character education is 'offensive' to working class*, tes magazine.

<https://www.tes.com/magazine/archive/so-called-character-education-offensive-working-class>

Watt T, Raymond A, Rachet-Jacquet L (2022). *Quantifying health inequalities in England*. Health Foundation website.

www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/charts-and-infographics/quantifying-health-inequalities (accessed on 24 April 2023).

Waters, S., & McKee, M. (2023). Ofsted: a case of official negligence?. *BMJ (Clinical research ed.)*, 381, 1147.

<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.p1147>

Weare, K.(2022) Foreword. In: McLellan, R., Faucher, C., Simovska, V. (Eds) *Wellbeing and Schooling. Transdisciplinary Perspectives in Educational Research*, vol 4. (v-x) Springer.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95205-1_1

Wenger, E. (1999). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press.

Wenger-Trayner, E. and Wenger-Trayner, B. (2015, June) *An introduction to communities of practice: a brief overview of the concept and its uses*. Retrieved June 25, 2024 from: <https://www.wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice>.

Wessels, K. R., Bakker, C., Wals, A. E. J., & Lengkeek, G. (2024). Rethinking pedagogy in the face of complex societal challenges: helpful perspectives for teaching the entangled student. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 32(3), 759–776.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2022.2108125>

Whittaker, F. (2023, Sep 25) *Home Office and Youth Endowment Fund £5.8m 'trauma-informed practice' research*, Schools Week
<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/home-office-and-yef-fund-5-8m-trauma-informed-practice-research/>

White, S.C. (2017) Relational wellbeing: re-centring the politics of happiness, policy and the self, *Policy & Politics*, 45(2), 121–36,
DOI: 10.1332/030557317X14866576265970

Wilber, K. (2016). *Integral Meditation: Mindfulness as a Path to Grow Up, Wake Up, and Show Up in Your Life*. Boulder: Shambhala.

Wiles, R. (2012). *What are qualitative research ethics?*, Bloomsbury Academic.

Willingham, D. T. (2007). Critical thinking: Why it is so hard to teach?, *Arts Education Policy Review*, 109 (4), 21-32
<http://dx.doi.org/10.3200/AEPR.109.4.21-32>

Willingham, D. T. (2009). *Why don't students like school?: A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works and What It Means for the Classroom*. Wiley.

Willis, A., Hyde, M. & Black, A. (2019). Juggling With Both Hands Tied Behind My Back: Teachers' Views and Experiences of the Tensions Between Student Well-Being Concerns and Academic Performance Improvement Agendas. *American Educational Research Journal*, 56, 2644-2673.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219849877>

Willis, R., Curato, N., & Smith, G. (2022). Deliberative democracy and the climate crisis. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 13(2), e759. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.759>

Wilkinson, R. & Pickett, K. (2010). *The spirit level: Why equality is better for everyone*, Penguin: UK.

Wilson, R., Sellman, E. & Joseph, S. (2023a). 'Doing well' and 'being well'—secondary school teachers' perspectives. *British Educational Research Journal*, 49 (5) , 987-1004. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3878>

Wilson, R., Sellman, E. & Joseph, S. (2023b) Still surviving, rather than thriving - the need to reimagine post-pandemic wellbeing according to secondary school teachers, *Pastoral Care in Education*, 42(4), 513–533. DOI: [10.1080/02643944.2023.2254792](https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2023.2254792)

Wilson, R., Sellman, E., & Joseph, S. (2024). Wellbeing and the importance of going “out of the realm of the classroom”: secondary school teachers' perspectives. *Educational Review*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2024.2325060>

Wilson, R., Keddie, K., Arya, D., & Henn, M. (2024). Climate policy, youth voice and intergenerational justice: learning from Nottingham Youth Climate Assembly. *Children's Geographies*, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2024.2352368>

Woolcock, N. (2022) 'Times Education Commission Calls for Schooling Reset', *The Times*, Retrieved at:

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/times-education-commission-report-welcomed-by-tony-blair-john-major-qwc3b7ktx>

World Health Organization. (2004). *Promoting mental health : concepts, emerging evidence, practice : summary report / a report from the World Health Organization*, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse in collaboration with the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation and the University of Melbourne. <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/42940>

Yemini, M., Engel, L., & Ben Simon, A. (2023). Place-based education – a systematic review of literature. *Educational Review*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2023.2177260>

Appendices

Appendix 1a – Interview and Focus Group Schedules (Studies 1,2 + 3)

S1. Opening Statement

Interview Script Opening script

This statement about the interview outlines a few principles of the approach I am using, for you to bear in mind. Firstly to say that I am developing my practice in this style of interviews as it involves a different kind of dialogue to the sort of typical conversation we might have. I have a list of questions and prompts, but where possible I aim to be non-directive, so giving you the reigns on the conversation. One of the keys to this is that I will try to avoid interjecting too much into what you say (with 'hmms', 'ahs' etc). This is something I do a lot in normal conversation, so a. please don't be alarmed by my silence, and b. if I slip don't be surprised! The aim is simply to seek the best balance possible. Finally here are some guidelines:

- *Silence is okay; it allows reflection.*
- *There is no 'right answer'; you cannot be 'wrong' and there is no judgment about anything you do or don't want to explore.*
- *As interviewer, I will try to give space to think and reflect on the questions as much as possible.*
- *The questions are intended for you to take in your own way and define as you see makes sense to you.*
- *You have an invitation to be honest and authentic without judgment. Nothing you say in these interviews will be personalised or identified to you.*

- *I'm going to do my best to go with you. I have a set of questions but the order isn't strict and the intention is that we follow the thread of the conversation so if it makes sense to follow a theme that's come up or explore an example in more detail, we might do this in order to get the most meaning from the conversation. In this way the intention is to be relatively non-directive. In the focus group I will present you with a bit more information at the start to guide us, but in the interview it's about really going into these issues from your perspective.*

Finally, in the context of talking about wellbeing, our own wellbeing as teachers is central, and we are going to look at what it means personally as well as in school. If in the process of this reflecting you feel like 'actually, I could do with talking a bit more about this' or whatever it is, there is a really great organisation called Education Support that I just want to flag. You can look them up online and they have a 24/7 helpline. Obviously we hope it isn't needed but I think it's important that we acknowledge that this job has its massive ups and downs and that we are in the middle of an incredibly tough time in education with the pandemic not to mention personal circumstances, so please consider if you might find any of their information helpful.

Share in chat / docs:

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/helping-you/telephone-support-counselling>

Tel: 08000 562561

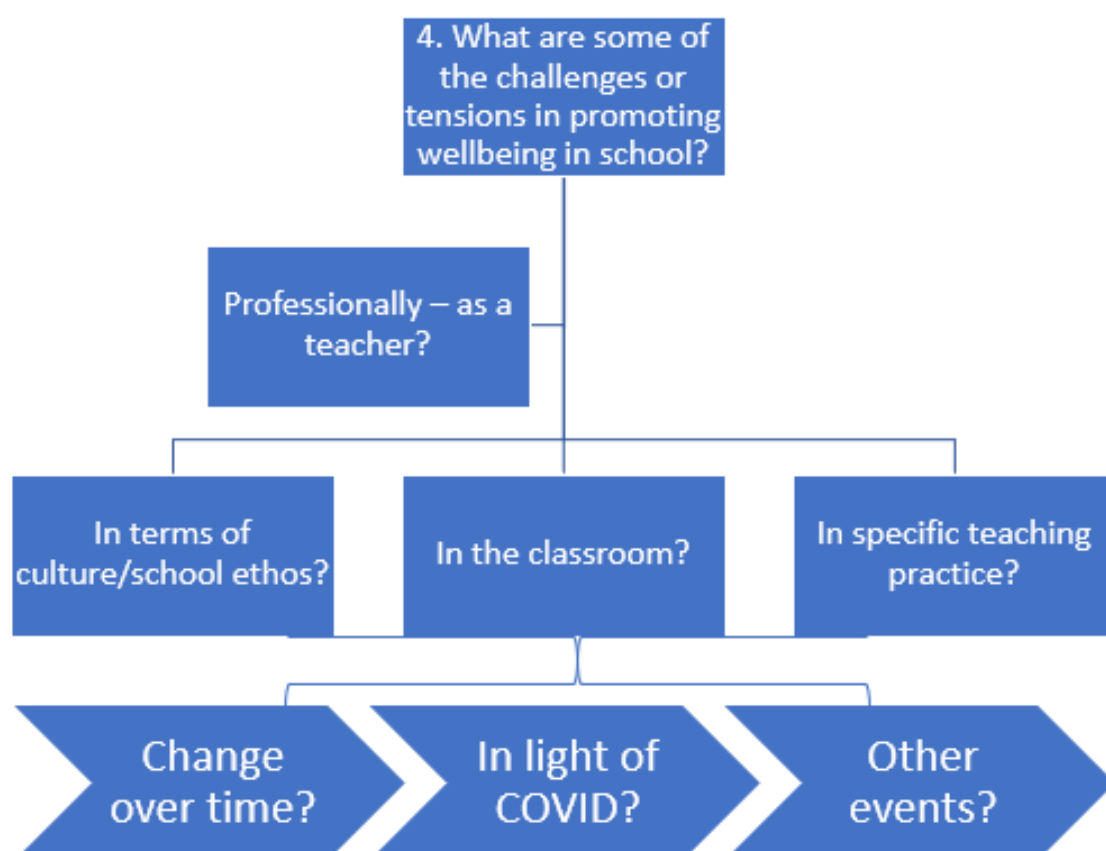
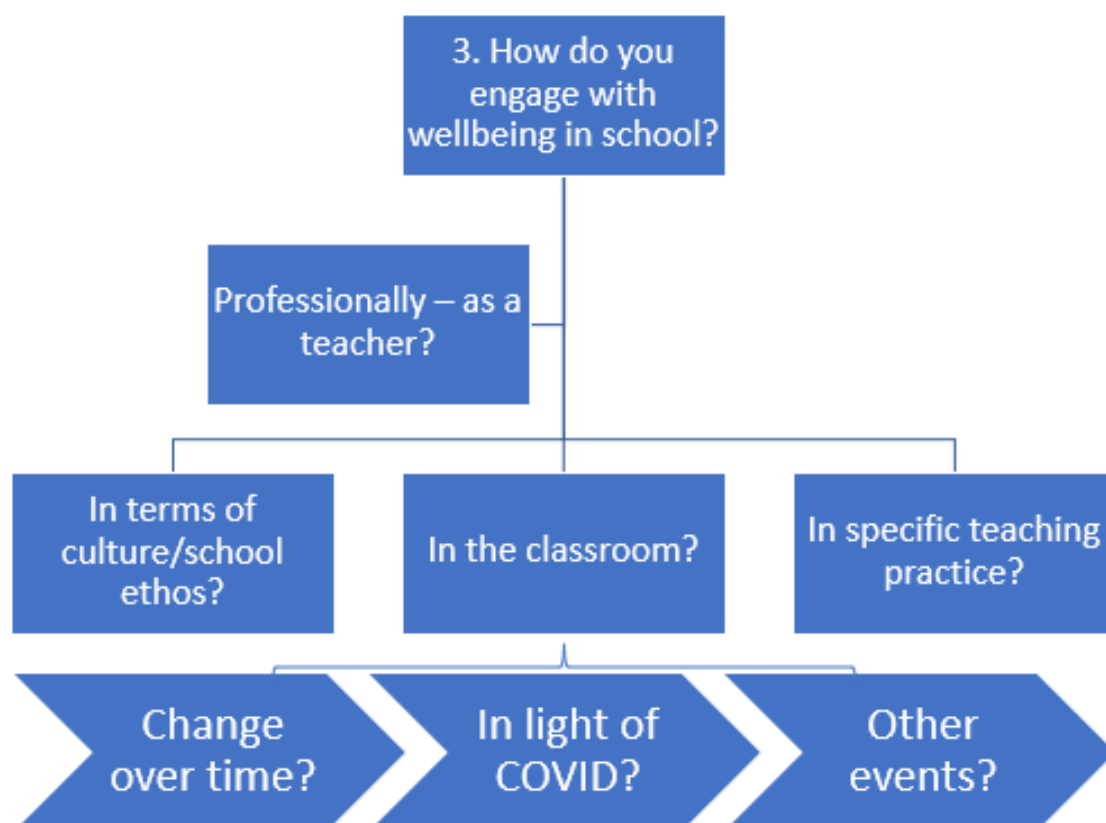
So with that being said, I plan to let you do the talking from now on, but before we begin, is there anything you want to ask?

Finalised: 17th November 2020

S1. Interview schedule

Teaching Flourishing and Wellbeing in Secondary Schools – Interview Schedule [Hierarchical Focusing]





Question 2, checklists for hierarchical focusing



S2. Opening statement

FOCUS GROUP 1 Opening script

'Thank you for giving your time to be here.

First off we'll do a quick introduction round the group, then we'll go to the information and questions.'

Introductions

I'll be briefly sharing the initial findings from stage 1 of the research and will then guide you through a discussion around the themes that we consider to be most important. You might well have some questions which I will do my best to answer. There might be some terms that need clarifying because they relate to the literature etc, but the focus of our time today is really to check and go deeper with where we agree and where we have uncertainties.

I will listen and may take some brief notes to guide the conversation forward. We will be recording. A reminder about everyone's right to full confidentiality and anonymity, as well as the right to withdraw at any time. Some of us here know each other, other's not but hopefully we will all get a chance to share and hear each other's views over the course of the hour. Whilst the conversation is going on, the aim is to give everyone space to speak. If you have a thought whilst someone else is speaking, you can indicate by putting a hand up or raising a hand using the reaction symbol on Teams. Otherwise you can just participate naturally.

I might come in and summarise just to check a point for the notes, and will watch the time. I might also come in to ask you to wrap up your point if we are running out of time or need to give someone else time to come in so please don't be worried if this happens. An

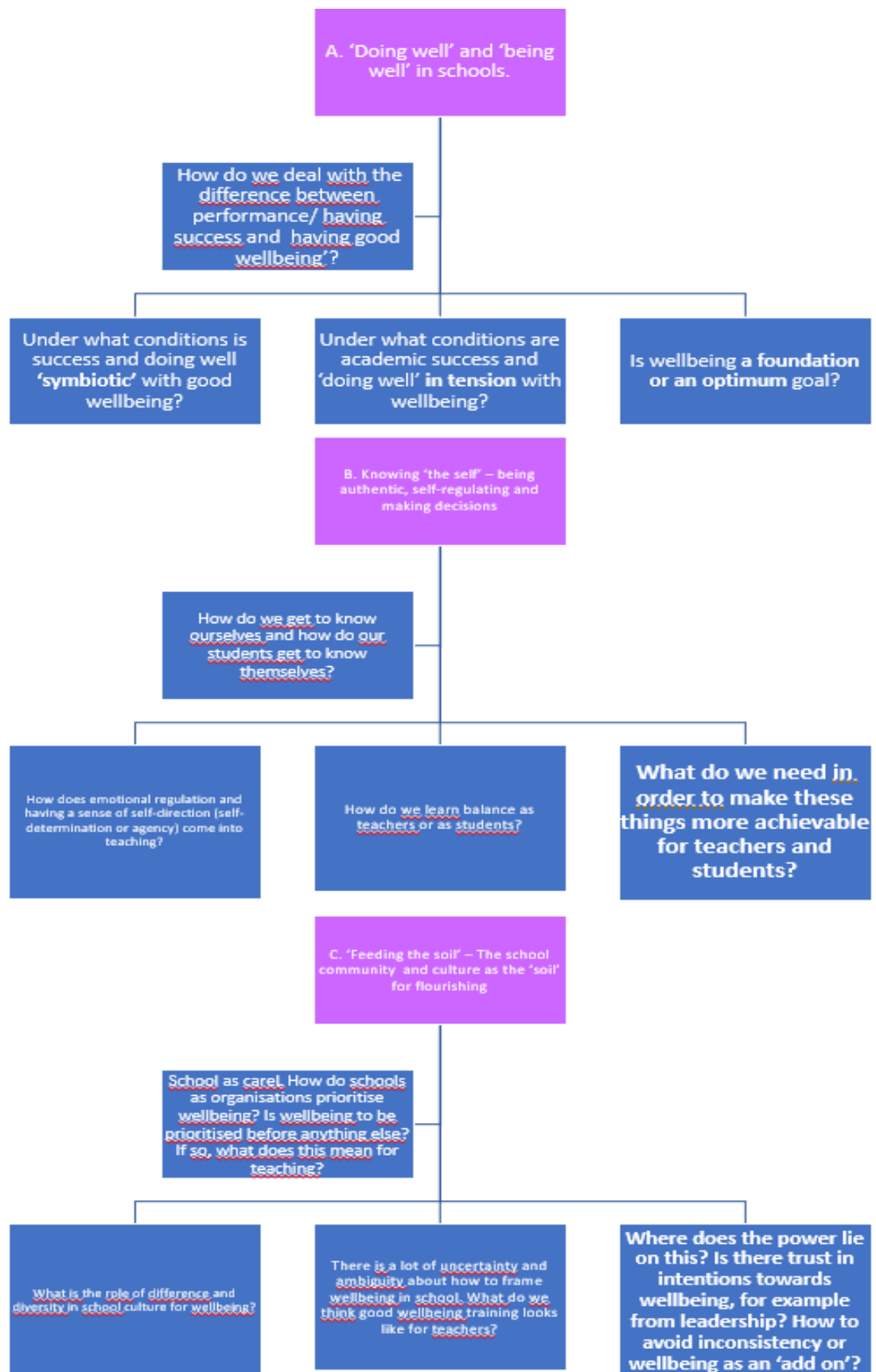
important point: silence is fine and welcome to give time to reflect.
It'll be great to hear your ideas.

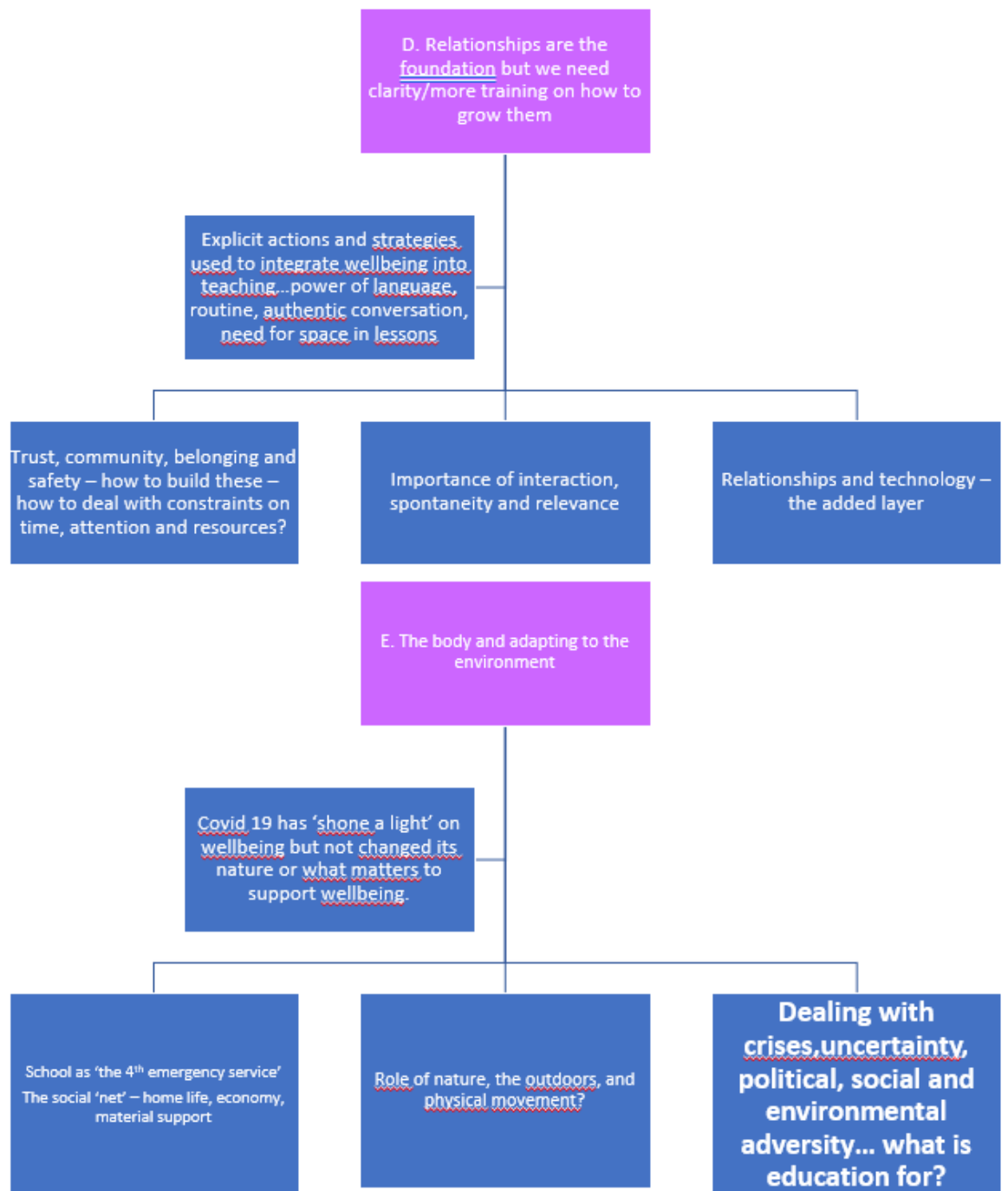
'Okay before we start looking at the themes and questions, does anyone want to ask anything?'

Finalised: March 2021

S2. Focus Group Schedule

Teaching Flourishing and Wellbeing in Secondary Schools – Focus
Group Schedule [Hierarchical Focusing]





S3. Focus Group Structure and Timings

Focus Group 3: Notes on Timings

15 mins – Introductions and brief overview of the project

10 mins – Open discussion about examples of practice

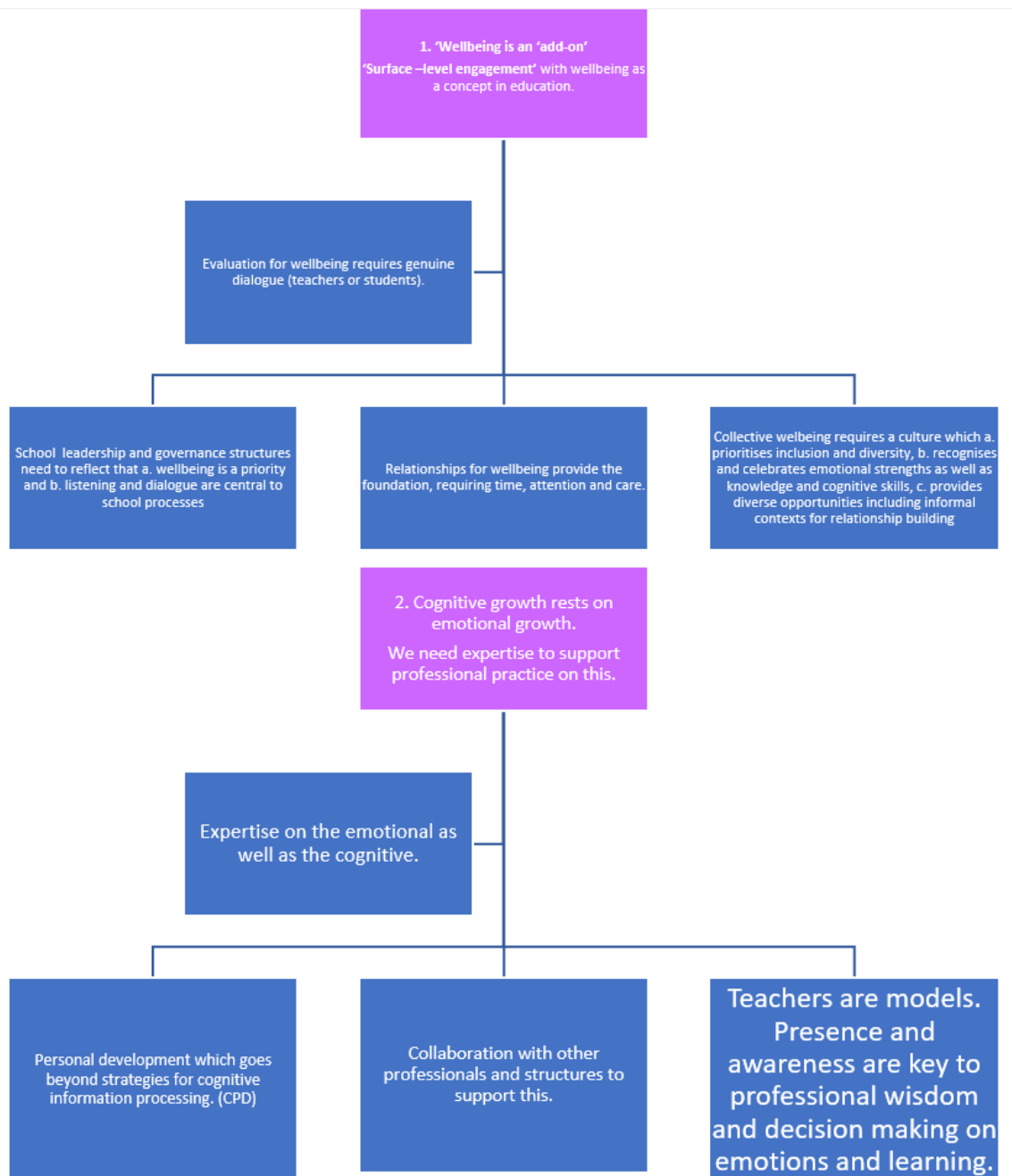
8 mins – Brief overview of themes at study 1 and study 2

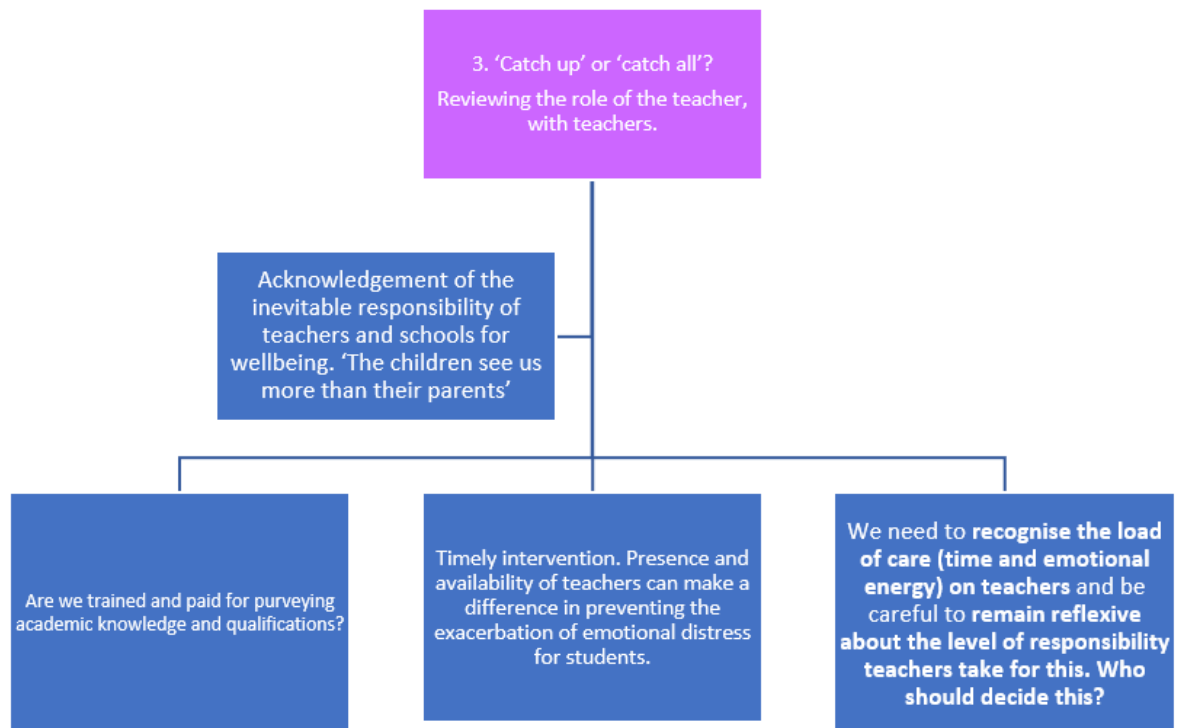
10 mins (approx.) – Brief opening for questions around the themes

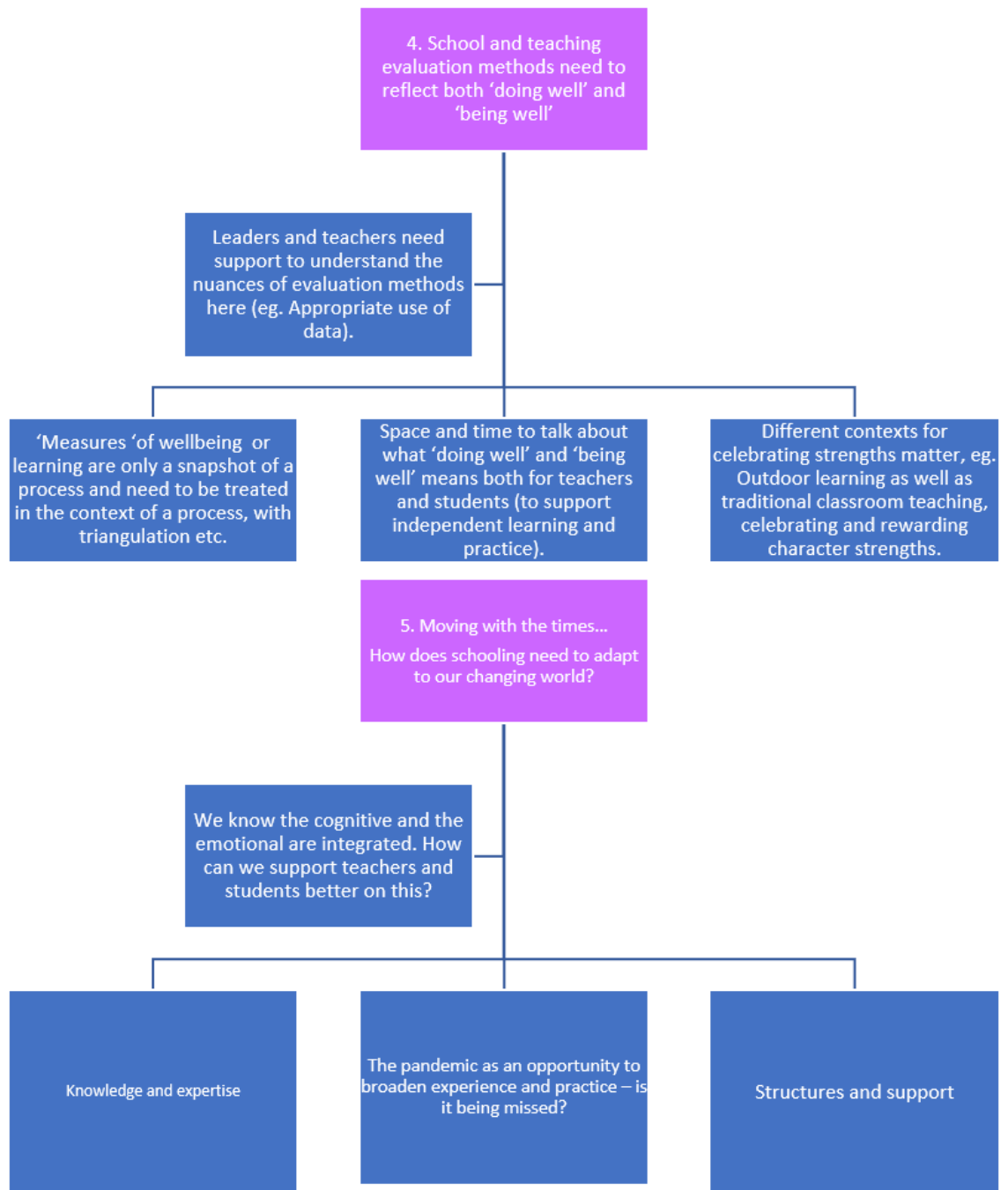
20 mins – Discussion of the themes

– Wrap up; thank you and keep in touch

S3. Interview schedule







Appendix 1b - Participant Information and Consent Forms

Participant Information Sheet

Research Project Information Sheet: PhD Project – Teaching wellbeing and flourishing in secondary schools

Secondary teacher colleagues are invited to participate in this PhD study on wellbeing and flourishing in education. Before deciding whether to take part, it is important to know the purpose of the study and to know what is involved. Please take the time to read, discuss with others if you wish and feel free to make contact and ask questions.

What are the aims of the project?

This project aims to understand teachers' changing views and practice in relation to wellbeing in schools. To do this we will draw on teachers' experiences, perspectives and practice. Together, we will explore:

- wellbeing and flourishing as a concept (from the personal to curriculum and pedagogy)
- wellbeing education in practice
- tensions and critiques in how wellbeing is represented in curriculum, policy + practice

Wellbeing education, character and resilience, positive education, mindfulness in schools – these are just a handful of recent approaches shaping wellbeing education. Within the literature, wellbeing and flourishing are treated as a joint-concept, so we will be exploring wellbeing in light of this close relationship to flourishing.

With the new Health Education policy for wellbeing provision in England, which is statutory from September 2020, and the

dramatic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, perspectives are shifting. This study aims to understand how secondary school teachers see recent developments in wellbeing in the classroom and to deepen understandings of how wellbeing education works in secondary schools.

The study will bring together secondary subject teachers to share their views and practice in relation to what wellbeing means in education. The project aims to allow teachers to share resources and insights as well as to consider the impact of recent events on how teachers address wellbeing with their students. We will look at the issue of purpose in education and bring a critical lens to discourses around wellbeing and flourishing.

Few studies exploring teachers' views on new models of wellbeing in schools in England have yet taken place, so this is an opportunity to contribute to new knowledge on this important topic.

What does participating in the project involve?

Activities:

- One-to-one 30-minute interview (term 1)
- One-hour focus group (term 2)
- One-hour focus group (term 3)

Additional Opportunities:

- Opportunity to **network with secondary teaching colleagues** working on development of wellbeing education
- Opportunity to **share best practice, resources** and learn from a range of approaches
- Opportunity to be involved in **further dissemination of the research** and follow-up research

When? Termly participation during the school academic year 2020-2021.

Using a 'communities of practice' model, secondary school teachers are invited to participate termly, at interview, and two focus groups to discuss these issues and feed into the research field.

Although welcomed, engaging in any discussion between sessions is a fully optional element of involvement in the research. Data from any of these discussions will not be collected but may inform focus group discussions. The essential requirement of participating would be one interview and two focus groups or follow-up interviews by arrangement.

Interviews and focus groups will be audio recorded, saved securely (see confidentiality) and transcribed for thematic data analysis.

Confidentiality - How will information be stored?

All information shared during the research project will be kept confidential unless you choose to make your contributions to the study public through involvement in dissemination of the research. If you think this is something you would be interested to do, you will need to discuss this with your Head Teacher before participating in the study. In this case only, a formal written request needs to be made by you and supporting voluntary written consent provided by your school senior leadership to indicate voluntary consent for you to become involved in further dissemination of the research.

Unless you and your senior leadership choose and consent to involvement in further dissemination of the research, any identifiable information, for example, relating to your school, will be fully anonymised. It is essential to ensure the right to confidentiality of all schools in which participants teach so all participants must agree to observe this in relation to their own schools and those of other participants as per professional expectations of teachers. All data will be stored securely and confidentially, accessible only by the investigator (Rosanna Wilson), and the supervisors of this project, Professor Stephen Joseph and Assistant Professor Edward Sellman, University of Nottingham. Data will be kept securely on record with the University of Nottingham for a minimum of seven years from publication or dissemination of the research. The data will be subject to GDPR rules, and a copy of the University's GDPR Privacy notice is also provided with this information.

Voluntary participation – May I withdraw from the project?

Participation in this research is completely voluntary and you have a right to withdraw at any time without consequence. If you decide

to withdraw after completing a one-to-one interview, this will be deleted. If you have participated in a focus group, it would not be possible to delete your data after the event so please be mindful of this before agreeing to participate in the study. You still have the right to withdraw after a focus group; in this case, your statements would not be used in the study.

What are the risks and benefits of participating?

This study has been considered of low risk to participants by its supervisors and has been approved by the University of Nottingham School of Education Research Ethics Committee; however, all participants need to be mindful that they are participating in the context of their professional teaching roles and are therefore held to all professional legislation, including statutory safeguarding rules and teaching standards.

The study has the potential to offer a useful professional networking opportunity and to support development of practice, understanding and resources on wellbeing education. As we engage with critical perspectives around wellbeing and implications of global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic within the research, participants should expect the possibility of uncovering new perspectives and questioning established views within a supportive and collaborative ethos. The study will offer a contribution to knowledge of wellbeing in schools. Participants are invited to share and connect as part of the ethos of the project; precise outcomes around this element will be defined by the needs and desires of the group. There is no set expectation to share or produce anything beyond contributing to the conversations in the activities outlined; however, there will be an invitation for further involvement through sharing the research with other education professionals.

Contact

This PhD study is being conducted under the Centre for Human Flourishing within the School of Education at the University of Nottingham.

Research contact: Rosanna Wilson - PhD candidate; Email:
Rosanna.Wilson@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor Contacts: Professor Stephen Joseph; Email:
Stephen.Joseph@nottingham.ac.uk

Assistant Professor Edward Sellman; Email:
Edward.Sellman@nottingham.ac.uk

Research Ethics and Complaints

Should you wish to make a complaint on ethical grounds, please contact the Research Ethics Coordinator at:
educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

Participant Consent Form

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project title Teaching wellbeing in secondary schools - concepts, perspectives and practice for wellbeing and flourishing in secondary teaching.

Researcher's name: Rosanna Wilson

Supervisors' names: Professor Stephen Joseph and Assistant Professor Edward Sellman

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.

☐ Yes

☐ No

- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.

☐ Yes

☐ No

- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.

☐ Yes

☐ No

- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential. I agree to maintaining the right to confidentiality of the school(s) in which I teach and of other teachers and their schools involved in the focus groups. I understand that the only exception to this will be if I choose to become formally involved in dissemination of the research and choose to be named in this process. I understand that in this case, I would need to give formal written permission and seek the voluntary consent of the leadership at my school.

☐ Yes

☐ No

- I understand that I will be audio recorded during the interview and focus groups.

☐ Yes

☐ No

- I understand that data will be stored as audio files, and transcribed into a word processed document. I understand that this data will be stored securely in a University of Nottingham OneDrive folder overseen by the project supervisors and kept for a minimum of 7 years from the end of the research project. I understand that this information is

held to the GDPR regulations also provided with this information.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Continued overleaf

- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Signed(research participant)

Print name **Date**

Contact details

Researcher: Rosanna.Wilson@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisors: Edward.Sellman@nottingham.ac.uk;
Stephen.Joseph@nottingham.ac.uk

School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator:
educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 2 – Ethics Approval



**University of
Nottingham**
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

School of Education

University of Nottingham
The Dearing Building
Jubilee Campus
Wollaton Road
Nottingham
NG8 1BB

educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

27/10/2020

Our Ref: 2020/23

Dear Rosanna Wilson
CC Stephen Joseph, Edward Sellman

Thank you for your research ethics application for your project:
Teaching wellbeing and flourishing in secondary school - concepts, attitudes and practice for flourishing and wellbeing in secondary teaching.

Thank you for confirming you will make the minor changes we requested in a letter on 19/10/20. We have added your amendments notes to your application file.

Based on the above assessment, it is deemed your research is:

- **Approved**

We wish you well with your research.

*This research is approved provided it is completed by December 2025
If your research overruns this date, please contact the Ethics Team to arrange an extension and update on any additions/changes to your work.*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M Oliver".

Prof Mary Oliver
Ethics Committee

+44 (0)115 9514470
educationadmin@nottingham.ac.uk
nottingham.ac.uk/education

Appendix 3 – Exemplar analysis: coding

S1. Coding example

	Codes (as logged via NVivo 'nodes')	Content
1		What does wellbeing mean to you as a concept?
2	Wellbeing as supporting self and others	It's quite an abstract concept isn't it? This idea of wellbeing. But I think for me it means both physical and mental health being you know of good health and I think you can't have one without the other. So I don't know at the very core it's about your mental health and your physical health but then at the core of all of that it's about feeling good about yourself, feeling good about what you're doing, the contributions that you make. And feeling like not only are you looking after yourself but you're being looked after as well you know ? It's about everything to do with your being really. But it is quite abstract isn't it? Because it means something different for everybody I think. You know, for some people it

Wellbeing and mental health	might be more about mental health uhm...for others it might just be about their physical health, for others it might just be an issue that they need clearing up or need clarifying but for some people, their wellbeing is very much linked to their mental health so there can be varying levels of uhm...how people perceive wellbeing and
Wellbeing, support from others, support from self	how much help that they need. But it's about gaining external and internal help, all the things that make us a human being, you know, isn't it. And sort of our homes, our families, our communities, all that kind of stuff. So you know it's huge isn't it and it can't be one size fits all. It can't be uhm.. oh we'll do this
Wellbeing as individual	for a group of people, say in an institution like ours and that's it, that's a tick for everyone. Everyone's fine now. Because it just means something different for everyone. You know? And other
Trust, cohesion and feeling safe	people need more help with their wellbeing because they find it difficult to deal with their wellbeing and find ways of regulating themselves and making themselves feel good, and others don't need a lot of help. You know? But yeah. It's a huge idea isn't it. It is an idea as well. I guess it's about feeling safe, happy, healthy. All those sort of things.

3		Yeah. You've touched on so many strands of it there but I suppose the next thing to say is, in your everyday life, what does wellbeing mean day to day for you?
4		Okay, am I able to be brutally honest here.
5		Yeah.
6	<p>Teacher wellbeing and support</p> <p>Managing anxiety and depression</p> <p>Importance of safety/routine – impact on students/professional practice</p>	<p>So, I probably uhm would have what a lot of people and I guess the medical profession refers to as high functioning anxiety. Uhm so I am pretty much anxious 24/7. So you know to be really honest with you that is a diagnosis I've had for a very long time, depression, anxiety and I've had lots of help with that. I've done cognitive behaviour therapy, lots of traditional therapy etc etc. So on the day to day, what that means to me is being able to regulate myself and being able to use those strategies that I've learnt through therapy to make sure that I'm okay. So I guess being high functioning in terms of my anxiety, I present as someone who's very together and very in control of their own emotions and their own wellbeing and all of that sort of stuff but</p>

<p>Importance of trust, collegiate relationships</p> <p>Reliance on self</p>	<p>that could not be further from the truth. I think for me on a day to day basis in terms of coming here everyday, you know. I like routines, I like knowing what I'm doing, I mean there always is in our job, [REDACTED] I know that there are variables and there's going to be this sense of unknown. But I do like routines, and I like... in the past I like having my own space my own environment. Uhm but yeah I guess it's just about being somewhere where I feel safe and feel comfortable and where I can regulate myself as best as I can throughout the day. And I do. I do regularly battle with anxiety throughout the day. You know sometimes it's linked to being here and sometimes it's to do with other stuff going on in my life. But yeah, I'm anxious a lot of the time. And it's hard but routines, and a common place, and having... I don't really talk to... I do present myself I guess as being quite extroverted but I guess I'm not, I'm quite introverted so I have a very small circle of people that I trust. But those people... I try not to rely on people because I don't think that's fair uhm... having done a lot to do with my own mental health over the years... you know, you can ask people for support, to support you but you can't ask them to fix things. You've got to do</p>
--	---

<p>Importance of community for wellbeing</p>	<p>that work. Uhm... so what I'm saying is there's a small amount of people in this school that I would feel comfortable talking to about things if I needed to. But on the whole I have done a lot of work and I have learnt strategies to regulate myself. Uhm so you know please dont think it's all dire... You know I'm not walking around going 'ahh' all the time but uhm yeah I guess that's what that means to me on the daily basis. I do like a sense of community, I do like the sense of... we all do I think like this sense of familiarity. That's why I would never make it as a supply teacher, cause that life is just...too uhm...too many variables in that life. Too many unknowns. And that's not to say I can't deal it with you know... Because that comes with... the longer you teach the more you have strategies and things that you can go to when something happens because the situations that occur are not any different than what happened 4 or 5 years ago with another student or whatever. But you know there are things that... there's a sense of you know where you are , you know what's going to happen if you're coming to the same place everyday. So yeah. Community is really important, familiarity, routines, you know I do miss my own classroom, and all of those things because I guess... if you</p>
--	--

	Control and autonomy Impact of the pandemic on teacher autonomy	do, well I think for me, I'll talk about my own anxiety because I don't like to talk about other people's. I'm not them. But in terms of myself, I like to be able to control. And I'm not a control freak but I do like to control my surroundings. So that's why having your own classroom is something, at the moment, that I'm really missing. Because there's a lack of control there, but you know. We all have to do what we have to do at the moment don't we. I don't know if that answers your questions.
7		Yeah, it's a huge topic but also such a personal topic so thank you for sharing that really.
8		So, I want to explore how covid has impacted your view on this topic. You've talked about how it changes things in school. Does it bear in any other way on anything you've said?
9		In terms of my anxiety? Or...?
10		In terms of what wellbeing looks like personally but also earlier you talked more broadly about it being both physical, mental? Do

		you think covid has changed your view at all?
11	<p>The role of negative experience on professional relationships</p> <p>Impact of the pandemic</p> <p>Leadership and seeing the whole picture</p>	<p>I think for me, what I have found kind of striking is... I have dealt with anxiety on a daily basis probably since I was very very young. Uhm so that's a natural state for me to be in. But what has really struck me and I guess is quite unsettling to do with covid, is that there are people who...there are people who don't experience anxiety, like someone who experiences it like I do. And watching people like that actually feel anxiety uhm I think in terms of covid, has had a huge impact. Uhm on... my experience of it. You know watching people who are normally... they're not blasé about their lives but they're able to regulate themselves in a much better way because they don't have these chemicals going on in their heads that I do. I find that actually quite unsettling. And then...you know... I think there's like a plethora of reactions that people have had. I mean part of my anxiety is health anxiety so you know covid is not great for that. But then watching other people, you know other people's reactions and how that impacts on you. You know some of our senior leaders who uhm are very interested in solving problems...you know solve, solve, solve, solve. Almost like</p>

<p>Trust, community, cohesion, feeling safe</p> <p>Impacts of social context: covid, community, culture.</p>	<p>they're medical and political strategists or whatever and I think the impact... the way that they've reacted, by: 'we've got a problem', 'we need to fix it'; 'we've got another one - we need to fix this.' I think that's been unsettling for a lot people. Particularly in that first lockdown. You know people making sort of flippant blasé comments. Look around the room, you probably won't see these people for 6 months. You know a lot of the people that I interact with on a daily basis live alone... You know so watching other people becoming unsettled by other people's reactions has been really... I guess it is interesting when you think about it, but it impacts on wellbeing in terms of uhm... you know in terms of how other people don't realise that their actions and the things that they say can affect people you know. I think a lot of people are very keen on telling you facts and figures, and this is happening, there's this many people have had this and whatever. And that's unsettling for a lot of people as well and I think it's, it's been interesting watching how people deal with stress and anxiety and trying to regulate themselves, and look after their own wellbeing, so a lot.... some people can find solace in facts and figures... others that's too stark. You know knowing that that sort</p>
--	--

<p>Grief and the impact of negative experience.</p>	<p>of information is too much. Uhm you know and yeah I think that has been quite eye opening. It's almost like grief. You see people deal with grief in all sorts of different ways and this whole thing with covid is a little bit like grief because we're like grieving. We've spent a lot of time really grieving our past freedoms and the things that we took for granted and I think people grieve differently or deal with tragedy or a difficult situation differently and I think the way people deal with that has become more heightened or more obvious, you know?</p>
<p>Teacher professional relationships - impact of different emotional regulation strategies</p>	<p>Uhm so some of us. Some people internalise, some people tell you facts and figures, some people completely, you know to be honest will completely lose it. Other people will hide away from it, others will become super vigilant and you know all that sort of stuff... other people will become quite emotional, other people will laugh it off.. You know and I think that's hard for people to control isn't it. People normally control those things. These are exceptional times. And none of us.</p> <p>YOu know we're lucky. I guess for the majority of people that</p>

Resilience and adaptation to change	<p>work in this school, they've not had to live through wars, they've not had to live through anything that's taken away their freedoms and their daily routines and I guess this is the first thing that has happened so people have reacted in all sorts of different ways. And therefore I think that those reactions have a knock on effect for other people's wellbeing. You know? Because I don't want to know all those facts and statistics because that scares me you know? But other people really do need to know that. They need to hold on to that.</p>
Student wellbeing and teacher wellbeing are inter-related	<p>So there's a sense of us not thinking about each other's wellbeing cause we're trying to deal with our own. Does that makes sense in a real roundabout way? I think we're getting better, but I think in those initial stages and during lockdown and early stages of coming back to school, I think we were very... everyone was just trying to survive the day. And sometimes that happened to me. You know with the differences in the day and the anxieties of the kids and anxieties of us. I think that takes it's toll. And you know the other day I said to one of my trusted people how the hell am I going to get through this day? I literally woke up this morning and</p>
Importance of place and routine in feeling safe	
Trust in colleagues	

	<p>Normality as supporting wellbeing?</p>	<p>thought I can't see an end to this day because it's just too much. And you do. you survive. Everyone's dealing with their own stuff.</p> <p>And what they need to do to perform their roles, and an already difficult job, because teaching is incredibly taxing and incredibly hard on your physical and mental health, is already hard, and it's just become harder unfortunately. But, you could think on the other hand. There have been moments where... I think you always go to the negative don't you. Well I know I do. I think there are other things that have been good for our wellbeing. I think that coming back and having a sense of routine, having a sense of having to go somewhere. I do feel... you know a lot of people in this country still haven't gone back to work. So yeah...there is that element of that as well. That potentially moving towards normality, because it's not normal. Moving towards that normality and towards that routine, you could say it's had a positive impact.</p>
12		<p>There is a relationships between what we're doing in schools and wellbeing. How do you see that relationship?</p>

13		So what staff or students or...?
14		So we're going to talk about practice but again I'd like you to define the question how you want, so we've talked about the perspective from staff, but you've also talked about students so define the question as you want to really. What do you think the relationship is between wellbeing and education?
15	<p>Education motivated by caregiving</p> <p>People looking after people</p> <p>Purpose of teaching - caregiving</p> <p>Importance of relationships</p> <p>Care-giving, wellbeing and growth</p>	<p>Uhm... I think... I think that a lot of people that go into education like a sense of community and like a sense of care, and people who go into education are therefore naturally caregivers, and people who think about wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. So I think naturally it is just a natural link isn't it? Education and people, you know because education is about people. And whether that's staff or it's students, it's all about people looking after people and as we know, you know as practitioners, it's so much more than just standing in a classroom and imparting knowledge. You know because we give care all day. You know and so the link between education and wellbeing is huge and the lack of those links and those connections and those interactions over that</p>

	lockdown for staff but particularly for our kids has had significant...I would say significant dire effects. Uhm on the natural growth and wellbeing of particularly our students.
School is about what people need	But it also has had an effect on us as teachers because you know teaching is... and belonging... Schools are places where people belong, whether you're a student or staff, that sense of belonging was taken away from us. And so that has got to affect people's wellbeing. And I think, it became really glaringly obvious to me, particularly over lockdown, over my communications with parents and students because one of the things that I had to do was to
Education as imparting knowledge?	phone and be in consistent contact with vulnerable students and that could be vulnerable for all sorts of reasons. Uhm and it became glaringly obvious to me that school is absolutely essential for everyone and not just about education, it's about people's wellbeing, you know, what people need.
Challenges of remote learning	You know uhm and...the things I guess that a lot of people take

Importance of resources and access to people	for granted like having access to the internet and resources and stationary, and somewhere to work. That was so difficult. A lot of our students suffered with their wellbeing because they didn't have access to those things and then that created anxiety for
Role of technology in relationships/education	them because they wanted to do their work, they didn't want to fall behind. You know... most of our students want to achieve and want to be successful. Uhm and so there were huge barriers to that.
	And then I think on the other side of the coin in terms of me phoning vulnerable students, some of it was to do with economics, and you know that's the thing.
Role of economic needs	Their wellbeing was being fractured because of all of that because they didn't have access to things and they have access to that stuff here.
Over 'doing' it	Uhm and then the other side of that was some of the more able students just overdoing it and working you know from 7 in the morning until 8 at night and their wellbeing was being compromised. Uhm then I just think in terms of wellbeing and

	schools and the links and all of that sort of stuff, it is just so obvious and so it's just so glaringly obvious that I think it's kind of...
Community, care and 'stunted growth'	For want of a better phrase it's stunted growth. You know, these sorts of rites of passages that kids go through as they move through the year groups. You know uhm I'm seeing real sort of stunted growth in all year groups, you know. Not having grown up, not having had those things that we would do as a school community to get them to the next stage. You know those rites of passage ... things like take year 11 into year 12. The idea of sitting exams... You know? And going to a prom and getting results. And having that time to grow up. I don't believe that they've/...well they haven't had any of that and... I don't believe that it will completely stunt them but you can see they're not in
Collective 'rites of passage'	the same place as other year 12 cohorts. They're still year 11 students. There's still some things that you have to do with them like just reminding them about expectations and all that sort of stuff. And I think that's what has worried me.
Wellbeing and education as process	

School as 'Places about people'

You know, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], I would have done a load of stuff preparing them for that next stage, going in to KS4 and what it means to be growing up and moving towards GCSEs, you know, choosing your options.

We can have that whole uhm...process. You know they would have had that with all their teachers and everyone who works here moving them on the next stage.

So I think just ...education by its very nature and schools by their very nature. They're places about people. And the people weren't there. And therefore the things that we normally do to support each other as a community just didn't happen and I think that that has had a huge effect on our student, but I do think it has had an unprecedented effect on our staff. On teachers you know...

Because despite what anyone wants or what anyone says, it is more than a job isn't it and you can't detach from schools and education. If you work in schools, in education you can't detach

		from it. So yeah... it has had a huge effect on our wellbeing.
16		What about wellbeing in practice?
17	<p>Explicit teaching of wellbeing strategies and knowledge (pastoral)</p> <p>Implicit teaching of wellbeing through curriculum (English texts)</p>	<p>I guess from the progress manager side of things it's quite explicit, and the explicit teaching about how to look about their mental health and what to do if they need help and all of those sorts of things and what wellbeing's about and what wellbeing looks like, and what all these things mean. I think we teach that quite explicitly through PSHE, relationships, sex education, all of those things. Uhm so I would say that's just quite explicit, just teaching wellbeing, but in my own practice as an English teacher....</p> <p>Uhm I would say that we're quite lucky in English because teaching about wellbeing is embedded in texts that we teach. You know teaching about all of that stuff to do with wellbeing just naturally comes out of the texts that we teach. So I guess that I...we would explore that... because we're constantly exploring those big ideas about society and humanity. So it would be far</p>

Importance of relationships	<p>more implicit. I wouldn't be saying oh well now we're teaching about wellbeing or how to treat other people, you know but I would say that it's far more implicit and inferred, but we would be touching on all those big things about what it means to be human and I guess therefore wellbeing.</p>
Relationships and conversation	<p>But then I guess the other things that I would do in my practice. Being a teacher is about knowing and having relationships with students and that is at the very core. Like I said, schools are about people. And like I said in terms of my practice I very very... and you get better and better at doing it... you interweave sort of... taking your subject with looking after those that are in your care so...you know you know your kids, you know the people who are in front of you so if they look upset or a bit dishevelled or...you have those,... it's about conversations, it's about relationship building. It's about saying 'are you okay?' Yeah you don't look very good this morning or whatever and I guess it's that sort of very subtle stuff that we do within our practice, which I would do in the classroom also as a progress manager, you know. You develop relationships, you know these kids, and you might</p>

		just have a conversation... you know 'are you okay?'...'anything I can do?' all of that sort of stuff. Yeah I mean... does that makes sense.
18		*Interview brought to a close.*

Exemplar Sub-theme from 'Doing Well and Being Well'

Name: Wellbeing 'should be' the foundation of education

<Files\\ Interview - Teaching Wellbeing in Secondary Schools
(3)> - § 2 references coded [100.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 100.00% Coverage

You know the reason I came into teaching wasn't because I trained as a science teacher. As a scientist, I came into it because I want to work with young people. And if we don't get the well being right, then we're not going to be able to teach them well, you know we need happy kids to put it bluntly. So everything that we do and and this is you know where the behaviour policy sits as well. You know, we we state very clearly is one of our behaviour principles that the relationship between students and staff is the best way to secure good behaviour. So we emphasize that and we and we push the meet and greet at the start of lessons. We push students, every student feeling that they can talk to a member of staff if possible. If they have a need to and the role of the tutor has been massively emphasized this year and tutors make regular contact with their tutor groups during lockdown to to maintain that connection. So for me. Well being comes first as a foundation really before you even start thinking about knowledge acquisition

Reference 2 - 100.00% Coverage

Uhm I think accountability measures. Can definitely go against that. Um? I actually feel quite privileged to work in a school that isn't. All about data. Um, and that does prize well being quite

highly. And again for obvious reasons, 'cause actually if you don't get the well being right then you're going to struggle to get the academic achievement,

<Files\\[REDACTED] Interview - Wellbeing Education in Secondary Schools
(3)> - § 1 reference coded [100.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 100.00% Coverage

Ensuring that we are able to cope with the daily pressures of life and ensuring in a school context that pupils are able to manage what would be a normal, expected. You know set of expectations that are set upon them by the school.

<Files\\[REDACTED] Interview - Teaching Wellbeing in Secondary Schools
(6)> - § 2 references coded [100.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 100.00% Coverage

I think that is a very important link between well being and education, both in terms of students well being making sure that they're safe they're content, and therefore they are able to learn. But then equally important for teachers as well to make sure again that there safe their content and therefore able to teach effectively.

Reference 2 - 100.00% Coverage

I think what I would say is that well being is. Is quite kind of intrinsic to success or flourishing in schools and just academia in general, because if you don't. If your well being is poor and if you

don't have the kind of strategies to regulate your moods, the strategies to express how you're feeling and be able to kind of rationalize how you're feeling. When you are in a school context or University or whatever it is, you will probably get quite overwhelmed and quite stressed out at times like we all do. And if you don't have effective well being strategies, you may not be able to overcome those stresses and those anxieties that just naturally come with being in education at whatever stage it is.

<Files\\[REDACTED] Recording 152920-112520> - § 6 references coded
[100.00% Coverage]

References 1-2 - 100.00% Coverage

Uhm so... it's so important I guess. If you think like...hierarchy of needs isn't it? If you haven't got your basic needs met, how can you do the other stuff like learn, when you basic needs, survival needs almost, aren't being met? Uhm I just think it's just fundamental. It's like the first building block for learning really I think

References 3-4 - 100.00% Coverage

Yeah. Because flourishing is...Wellbeing is more of a basic. I would define it...wellbeing is a basic. Flourishing feels stronger, like you're thriving but I think in order to be able to flourish you need those basics but then I think you probably need more on top of that as well, things like parental engagement, parental support... which I think like here, a lot of our children don't get...and I think in terms of teaching it's having the extra time to help those kids flourish. It's like we don't have that...the resources that... I think is a big problem, parental and from a school perspective as well.

References 5-6 - 100.00% Coverage

you can't separate the two. For the children to be successful in their GCSE they need to know how to regulate their emotions and if they feel stress motivates themselves to revise... success in GCSEs is wellbeing and through wellbeing as well and you can't separate the two. A lot of students have not got those skills so we need to address that.

<Files\\[REDACTED] Interview> - § 2 references coded [100.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 100.00% Coverage

We know more than probably most about the impact and the detrimental impact that the lock down has had in terms of students home lives and how school normally provides a safe haven for that well being. But I still think. However you define it, however, you define well being and charter Childs life. Obviously, if a child has a safe home environment which allows them to be 6, you know which allows him to come into school, rested well fed, well clothed, warm. They've had the ability to do their homework and their studying, but hopefully as well have had their wellbeing time, you can't see me, but I'm putting this in quotation marks because obviously well being what what helps keep their mental health balance right. We don't know where that's their Xbox or going to do. You don't know after school clubs, doing sports, seeing friends and family. Um, that helps them be successful in school because they've got that, then got that supportive home.

Reference 2 - 100.00% Coverage

But also that well being beyond um. Beyond you know, seeing a teacher who you know getting that free school meal, being warm for a few hours, being with your friends for a few hours, getting away from you know the arguments at home. Having, you know almost... It's funny, isn't it? School for some kids is escapism and school for other children is less so about that and their home is their escape. So one way or another I think.... Education really... In terms of a child's everyday life, crucial to their well being, whether they enjoy coming to school or not

<Files\\[REDACTED] Interview - Teaching Wellbeing in Secondary Schools (7)> - § 2 references coded [100.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 100.00% Coverage

I would say it's it's. It's a point. Like an optimum point of feeling. Well if that makes sense for me anyway.

Reference 2 - 100.00% Coverage

But I just don't know how well it's working. Of this, from the teacher side of things we do, we do the PSHE sessions where we spend a fair amount of time talking about mental health and well being and then we're also most of us are tutors as well, so we see each time twice a day as we get. So we get to know our little by little bubble really really well, which is lovely and you can get a really good close relationship. And I did say that you don't necessarily get to learn about you know every specific students context, but you do get to know your duties pretty well. At my school, which is a nice benefit. So I think we've got. It's tough

because it's what I would perceive as possibly the most important thing in terms of well being is having those people that you can rely on. But in my school we have. We have people we've got plenty of people that the students can come too, and I'm still not sure it's enough so I don't know whether we need to be taking things even further than just having those dedicated people and systems in place. Whether it requires that explicit kind of education about how, how to be, how to reach that state of well being, how to be mentally healthy. That we're just not going into enough detail about, I don't know, but I would say what what I'm currently experiencing and granted it's a very limited experience because I've been teaching for a year and a half. I don't think it's working and just simple without going into a huge amount of detail, just it just seems to me that kids are struggling the really really struggling.

<Files\\[REDACTED] Recording 124050-112520> - § 2 references coded
[100.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 100.00% Coverage

as practitioners, it's so much more than just standing in a classroom and imparting knowledge. You know because we give care all day. You know and so the link between education and wellbeing is huge

Reference 2 - 100.00% Coverage

it became really glaringly obvious to me, particularly over lockdown, over my communications with parents and students because one of the things that I had to do was to phone and be in consistent contact with vulnerable students and that could be

vulnerable for all sorts of reasons. Uhm and it became glaringly obvious to me that school is absolutely essential for everyone and not just about education, it's about people's wellbeing, you know, what people need.

<Files\\[REDACTED] Interview - Wellbeing Education in Secondary Schools>
- § 1 reference coded [12.11% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 12.11% Coverage

well being. I think it. I think it's at the very very heart of education and I would go even for far as to say it it should be. The foundation of it because. What's the point? What's the point of educating people who are insecure? What's the point? Educating people who are stressed? What's the point of educating people? And what I mean educating people, I mean making sure they getting As and A*s or nines and all of this. What's the point of doing all of that when they're not happy with themselves or they don't have a sense of purpose?

Appendix 4 - Analysis Materials – Domain studies and final themes

S1. Example: Initial analysis Slides

Study 1 Qualitative Data Analysis

- Interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic data analysis (Clarke and Braun, 2006; 2020).
- All coding was conducted using Nvivo 12.
- Initial detailed coding was conducted on all interviews before the development of a thematic framework. This was developed iteratively, and then organised in reference to the research questions.
- 176 initial codes were consolidated and grouped into 6 'Bucket' themes or categories relating to the research questions.
- 'Storybook' sub-themes are to be conceptualised.

7

Study 1 Domain Summaries

Domain Summary	Number of Sub-themes	Key Sub-Themes
1. Meanings of Wellbeing	30	Purpose, Self-determination (14, 14) Balance (12), The Body (11), Resilience (10)
2. 'Doing' wellbeing in schools	30	Relationships (15) Explicit emotional and wellbeing actions and strategies (14), School and flourishing (14)
3. How teacher wellbeing works	6	Teacher professional relationships, trust and support (17)
4. How student wellbeing works	6	Importance of interaction (14) Student home life and wellbeing needs (10)
5. Barriers to wellbeing	8	Ambiguity and teacher uncertainty about wellbeing (11) Wellbeing as a priority in competition with exams/ accountability (11) Education system as barrier (10)
6. Impacts of social context – covid, community, culture	6	Covid 19 has shone a light on the issue of culture (7)

8

1. Meanings of Wellbeing

● Balance	12	26
● Positive attitude, resilience and reframing	10	19
● Purpose	14	26
● Safeguarding	2	3
● Self-determination - Sense of control, agency, capability	14	46
● The Body	11	21
● Wellbeing and flourishing are separate concepts	9	16
● Wellbeing and happiness	8	14
● Wellbeing and mental health	7	17
● Wellbeing 'should be' the foundation of education	7	16

9

2. 'Doing wellbeing' – 'It's about growing, isn't it?'

● Education and wellbeing are 'everything' to each other	15	29
● Emotion, emotional self-regulation	16	37
● Explicit wellbeing actions and strategies, planning for emotions in lessons	18	124
● Inclusion	10	17
● Nature and the Outdoors	7	13
● Relationships	19	108
● Self-reflection, self-regulation, freedom and constraint	16	73
● States of wellbeing: Wellbeing as integrated	17	59
● The institution of school and flourishing	19	114
● Wellbeing and the curriculum	16	33

10

3. How teacher wellbeing works

11	School support structures for staff wellbeing and mental health	6	14
12	Teacher job satisfaction	3	4
13	Teacher mental health	4	4
14	Teacher professional relationships, trust and support	13	17
15	Teacher Wellbeing, workload, attitude to work	7	12
16	Work, play and social life	9	15

11

4. How student wellbeing works

17	Gender Differences	3	4
18	Importance of interaction	7	14
19	Positive perception of school	3	3
20	Presence in school	3	4
21	Student home life and wellbeing needs	7	10
22	Student self-direction, students as independent thinkers	5	8

12

5. Barriers to wellbeing in schools

23	A wellbeing and mental health crisis triggered by uncertainty about the future	3	3
24	Ambiguity and teacher uncertainty about wellbeing	13	21
25	Lack of money and resources	4	5
26	Performance Pressure	13	27
27	Reductionism, student data and gaming	5	9
28	Schools need to accept the responsibility of wellbeing and mental health	4	4
29	The education system as a barrier to promoting wellbeing for teachers	13	23
30	Wellbeing is an educational priority in competition with exam subjects	13	43

13

6. Impacts of Social + Environmental Context – Covid-19, Community and Culture

31	Covid 19 has 'shone a light' on the issue of wellbeing	18	79
32	Navigating change and resilience	15	29
33	Technology	9	15
34	Exams, qualifications and accountability	7	9
35	Wider social 'net'	7	12
36	English society and culture as work not wellbeing focus	3	9

14

Areas of agreement

'Doing' wellbeing was the most talked about 'bucket' theme.

- Relationships underpin both teaching wellbeing and teacher wellbeing. By extension, student wellbeing?
- Explicit emotional and wellbeing actions and strategies were also a prevalent theme. In relation to both student and teacher wellbeing, the importance of interaction was clear.

Related to the above: a key barrier was ambiguity and uncertainty about how to frame wellbeing and a need to be explicit about how it should be approached, including how to build good relationships.

- Covid 19 has shone a light on wellbeing, but it does not seem to have changed the fundamental nature of wellbeing for teacher participants. Rather it has caused reflection and strengthening of values and practices.
- Self-determination and purpose were most popular themes in relation to the meaning of wellbeing.

Areas of uncertainty

- 'Doing well and being well' - Within the topic of 'school and flourishing', a key question is around the perceived relationship between wellbeing, productivity and 'doing well'. How do teachers and schools address this question in terms of the difference between achievement or academic success and having good wellbeing?
- English culture and wellbeing - how comfortable are we as teachers in talking about wellbeing? Are we 'work not wellbeing' focused? Is wellbeing still a sign of 'weakness' for some?
- Is wellbeing a foundation or an optimum?
- What is the role of nature, the outdoors and the body? If we think they matter, how do they fit into school?
- If we think self-determination and choice matter, how does this fit in?
- School as care and the pastoral/subject teaching hierarchy.

"I do think it is a shame that schools have become, and I think I've seen this crop up...in literature, like basically the 4th emergency service, I think it just has to be accepted that schools have taken on more than just an educational role. I think there has to be a way that schools can adjust and accept that it actually that helps...if they can actually support mental health that is going to help the young people. They shouldn't just say it's not my responsibility."

- Some say Covid-19 doesn't impact as much as social, economic and other environmental influences on school and learning. Given the degree of change in response to the pandemic, what is or could or should be taught in light of these influences?
- What is education for?

S1. Domain summaries

Domain Summaries	Number of Sub-themes	Key Sub-Themes
1. Meanings of Wellbeing	10	Purpose, Self-determination (14, 14) Balance (12), The Body (11), Resilience (10)
2. 'Doing' wellbeing in schools	10	Relationships (158), Explicit emotional and wellbeing actions and strategies (124), School and flourishing (114)
3. How teacher wellbeing works	6	Teacher professional relationships, trust and support (57)
4. How student wellbeing works	6	Importance of interaction (14) Student home life and wellbeing needs (10)
5. Barriers to wellbeing	8	Ambiguity and teacher uncertainty about wellbeing (51) Wellbeing as a priority in competition with exams/accountability (43) Education system as barrier (33)
6. Impacts of social context – covid, community, culture	6	Covid 19 has shone a light on the issue of wellbeing (79)

S2. Coding and domain summaries

Domain Summaries	Number of Main Sub-themes	Key Sub-Themes
1. Tensions and barriers for wellbeing	10	Wellbeing as an 'add-on' (12) , Lack of recognition of the teacher's role in student wellbeing (12) The pandemic adds to the pressure on wellbeing provision (12)
2. Pedagogy and practice for wellbeing	8	Culture for wellbeing education – leadership, metrics and measures, teacher peer support (24) ; Resourcing wellbeing in schools (20) Wellbeing pedagogy – teacher modelling of self-regulation + emotional awareness; adapting to assessment approaches which acknowledge wellbeing; juggling pastoral and academic (19)
3. Meanings of wellbeing	8	'Doing well and being well' is an important distinction (12) Wellbeing in schools requires <u>care</u> – the role of school as integrating emotional/material needs with opportunities for knowledge acquisition and growth (10)

S3. Codes and theme development

Domain Summaries	Key Sub-Themes
1. <i>Teaching in a neoliberal context in the 2020s</i>	<p>a. Competing currents – wellbeing and ‘the old normal’</p> <p>b. ‘We are just everywhere’ - What teachers do and what they ‘should’ do</p> <p>What teachers do and what they ‘should’ do (46) Divisions over responsibility for care and wellbeing, time for conversation, mentoring, counselling, counselling skills in teaching</p> <p>Change ‘with’ vs ‘to’ teachers (42) Value of training, professional development + autonomy, issues of inconsistency, poorly thought out evaluation methods, lack of listening at decision making level, need to account for long term effects of the pandemic</p>
2. <i>Reimagining priorities in school: Challenges and hopes</i>	<p>a. Going ‘out of the realms of the classroom’</p> <p>b. Movement, opening and the outdoors</p> <p>Providing a supporting structure (61)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prioritising time for wellbeing, community, relationships / extra-curricular and engagement of experts - Flexibility in space, high importance of outdoor learning <p>Tackling issues for the future (52)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prevention first, school engagement with the local and global community, the ‘bigger world out there’, addressing information overload