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Transforming Teaching: Wellbeing and Professional Practice

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Faye McCallum dedicates this book to future generations of teachers and school leaders. On a personal note, she also dedicates the book to her grand-daughters—Isla and Edie.

Mathew White dedicates this book to his parents Jennifer Helena White (1938–2018) and Alan Graham White (1930–)

Foreword

Each year for the past ten years, education ministers and teachers' union leaders from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) high-performing and fast-improving education jurisdictions have come together for the International Summit on the Teaching Profession. Jointly hosted by the OECD and Education International (EI) the 2021 Summit was co-hosted by the United States in Washington DC.

The 2021 Summit was organised around a central overarching question:

- 'How can governments, teacher organisations and schools as centres of their communities collaborate around the future of education and the whole child to build back better and provide an excellent education to all?'

This broad question lent itself to several specific areas of focus. Those areas included:

- addressing the wellbeing of students, teachers, and other critical educators as a precursor to improving education … and how the Teaching Profession can best support student wellbeing
- valuing and supporting the Teaching Profession and supporting the wellbeing of teachers … including collaboration with other educators and other professions, in enhancing wellbeing and mental health
- building on learning sciences research to identify what is needed to support each person's learning with mental and physical health and social and emotional learning

This publication, by authors Associate Professor Mathew White and Professor Faye McCallum from the University of Adelaide in Australia, at this time could not be more relevant nor more needed.

The dynamic interplay of research, policy, and practice directed at 'Wellbeing and Professional Practice' is crucial to the transformation of teaching—to ensure an excellent education for all.

It is clear that 'teacher professionalism and wellbeing' and 'whole child education and equity' form two interdependent pillars.

Research and practice are directing our attention to Policy Levers that:

- establish clear pathways for continuing learning for students and teachers—for teachers through preservice preparation, professional learning, and peer-to-peer sharing
- provide holistic support for health and wellbeing, so that every child and every teacher can access the physical health, mental health, and wellbeing services that enable them to be healthy, happy, and productive—some in-school services and some linked to other sector offers

It is equally clear that without intentional collaboration between education systems and other agencies, including Health and Labour, we will not achieve wellbeing in education.

This publication provides a vital contribution to the field of teacher wellbeing in all its dimensions—including self-efficacy, creativity, ingenuity, and capacity to exercise leadership.

Transforming teaching with this focus is particularly crucial in the present moment when empowered teachers who experience job satisfaction will stay in the profession and where attention to wellbeing and professional practice become attractors to the profession.

The International Summit on the Teaching Profession 2021 placed the spotlight on the 'Teacher Wellbeing Matters' message.

The range of qualitative and quantitative evidence shared at the Summit revealed the impact on teacher retention, school climate and culture, student wellbeing, and student learning outcomes.

The work of authors Mathew White and Faye McCallum enlarges the spotlight—to an illumination of the field—exactly what is being called for by the OECD and EI—by Education Ministers and System leaders and the profession alike—and across all geographies.

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Anthony Mackay AM
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Preface

Interest in wellbeing education appears to be reaching a crescendo across the world. But, conceptual challenges still face the field of education. It could be argued this interest is a response to the shockwaves of the COVID-19 pandemic and its implications for school students, teachers, and school leaders. This book represents the culmination of five years of joint research. It also engages with issues related to initial teacher education, preservice teachers' experience, school leaders, and teachers generally.

Each chapter presents new knowledge and studies to investigate issues related to teaching transformation. Chapters consider the impact of the current reforms for initial teacher education in Australia and issues worldwide. It is a book that may benefit initial teacher educators, school leaders, researchers, policymakers, and those part of the joint endeavour to transform teaching to improve student learning outcomes for all young people regardless of personal circumstance.

This book was written in the intervening years of the first two waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. The unseen impact of the pandemic has challenged teachers, teaching, and school leaders in ways that have challenged pre-existing discourses on what constitutes quality teaching and priorities in education.

While COVID-19 is not the focus of this book, it does emerge as an underpinning theme given the pervasive nature of the disruption caused by the pandemic. In that case, it appears that wellbeing education is at a critical juncture to progress to the next level of discourse, engaging wellbeing research more systematically with theories of learning and teaching. This time then presents the unique opportunity for the next decade to realise the promise of wellbeing education and its potential to transform teaching.

Adelaide, Australia

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Acknowledgements

This book presents new knowledge, concepts, methodologies, and understandings of the relationships between wellbeing and professional practice. Last, we propose a map for the next decade of research.

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Chapter 1
Wellbeing and Professional Practice: A Turning Point

Faye McCallum and **Mathew A. White**

Abstract With increasing demands and challenges being placed on the wellbeing and professional practice of teachers and whole-schooling communities, school students and their parents/carers are being subjected to new ways of learning with a re-prioritisation of their educational aspirations. Change is inevitable; however, the rapid influences of global digitisation and significant world events are transforming teaching at a pace previously unknown. This chapter aims to provide an overview of international issues captured in this book and situate the various case studies showcased in later chapters that demonstrate how educational transformation is occurring across the world. Each chapter draws on unique theoretical underpinnings to situate these case studies in real time, making them applicable to many global contexts. The overall conceptual framework for this book highlights many influences on teaching and argues for the wellbeing of students, teachers, leaders, and whole communities. A body of evidence is offered to reinforce the importance of wellbeing education to support the profession's sustainability and the fundamental aim of education in preparing children and young people for the future.

Keywords Curriculum and pedagogy · Education policy · Teacher education · Teacher wellbeing

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) is committed to developing teaching expertise and empowering teachers and school leaders to create better outcomes for Australian students. Established in 2010, AITSL has embarked on key initiatives like developing the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and the *Australian Professional Standards for Principals.* Its mission is to promote excellence so teachers and leaders impact learning in all Australian schools. The

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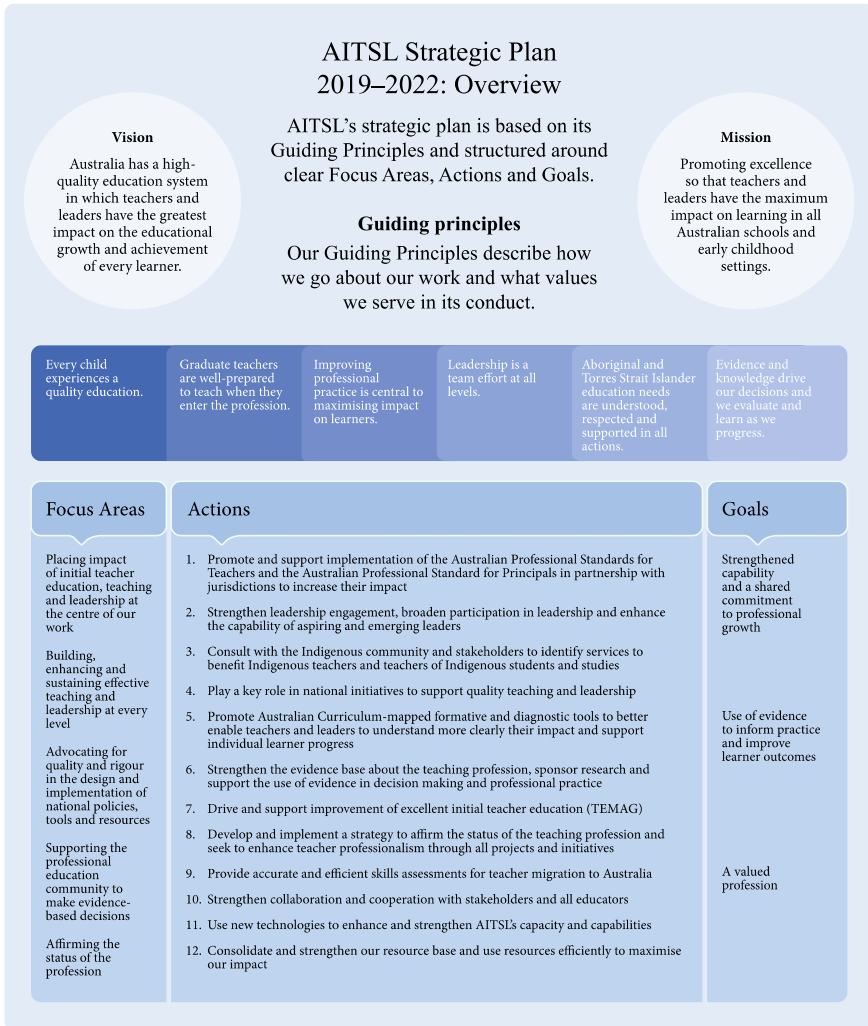
Fig. 1.1 AITSL 2019–2022 strategic plan (AITSL, 2019, p. 2)

AITSL 2019–2022 Strategic Plan (see Fig. 1.1) is based on Guiding Principles structured around focus areas, actions, and goals. Their work is founded on the premise of what matters most for the greatest in-school influence on outcomes: *a professional, evidence-informed teaching and leadership workforce that understands and improves its own impact on learning.* At the time of publication a new AITSL Strategic Plan was released. The 2022–2026 priorities are to:

- shaping expertise
- influencing expertise

- enhancing expertise
- esteeming expertise
- supporting expertise.

Under the 'Enhancing expertise' priority AITSL claims that one objective is to 'curate and create content that supports teachers and leaders in changing contexts like emergency education scenarios and increased wellbeing needs' with the overall outcome to be 'The delivery of high quality, practical and evidence-based tools and resources that are created in partnership with the profession, and support quality teaching and leadership' (AITSL, 2022, pp. 6–7). In August 2021, the Department of Education Skills and Employment (DESE, 2021a) launched the *Australian Youth Policy Framework* to assist Australia's 3.2 million young people (and their issues) in transitioning to adulthood to be successful in education, work, and life. Structured around five objectives, it acknowledged that young people were hardest hit by COVID-19. The framework was the result of a consultation with young people about the issues that matter to them so they can be captured in policies. It also outlines services for young people and alludes to an ongoing partnership or 'journey' with government.

This Australian landscape is mirrored across the globe, with governments promising a more targeted approach to support children and young people. Heightened by the pandemic is the importance of wellbeing for all at a time when predictions of mental health are rising (especially for young people), teachers are experiencing greater acknowledgement for their work, and the future appears to be more uncertain. It is against this political backdrop that this book is set, raising serious educational issues and questions to guide the next decade. We might ask: Are the Standards working to raise teacher quality and result in greater learning outcomes for our children and young people? Are our children and young people really prepared to be successful in post-schooling years? Do we even know what the future will be like and therefore whether schools are purposefully working for our children and young people? Is wellbeing education afforded enough attention in our school policies and curriculum, and is it adequately resourced?

We do know that the links between teachers and young people are strong, and teachers have a profound impact on educational success and satisfaction for children and young people. This can help guide us as we set about finding solutions to some of these questions. Through research into best practice examples of wellbeing, the chapters in this book demonstrate educational transformation by teachers, leaders, children, and young people and their communities.

1.1 How This Book Was Developed

This book is the culmination of five years of collaboration in research projects, publications, international conference presentations, and consultancies by Mathew White and Faye McCallum at the University of Adelaide, Australia. Both authors have

researched and produced many scholarly works for over a decade. They are considered international experts in their respective fields, having consulted for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Catholic Education South Australia, Catholic Education West Australia schools and colleges across Australia and in Canada, Finland, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, and Mexico.

The goal of White and McCallum's research collaboration has been to narrow a school-university theory and application gap in wellbeing education. The arc of their collaboration includes research publications addressing the domains of leadership and governance in schools, wellbeing and the professional practice of teachers, measurement of student and teacher wellbeing, integrating a wellbeing framework into accredited initial teacher education (ITE) programs, and preservice teachers' perception of character and wellbeing education (White, 2020). For example, McCallum has published on implications of COVID-19 on teacher wellbeing (McCallum, 2021), teacher and staff wellbeing (McCallum, 2021), issues of teacher quality and wellbeing (White & McCallum, 2021b), the changing nature of teachers' work and wellbeing (McCallum & Price, 2016; McCallum, 2021) and the link between well teachers, well learners, and community wellbeing (Price & McCallum, 2015). White has published on the past decade of positive education (White & Kern, 2018; White, 2021a), the impact of COVID-19 on wellbeing education in schools (Waters et al., 2021; White & McCallum, 2021a), strengths and teacher professional practice (White, 2021b), future directions of wellbeing education (White et al., 2017), and whole-school approaches to wellbeing education (White & Murray, 2015).

White and McCallum (2020a) have argued for holistic approaches to wellbeing to be included in each and every school regardless of socio-economic status, for non-teaching school staff, teachers and leaders, whole-school communities, and ITE. They have pioneered one of the only integrated wellbeing frameworks in ITE (White & McCallum, 2020b) and argue for wellbeing to be included as a national standard for teachers. *Transforming Teaching: Wellbeing and Professional Practice* focuses on the major forces affecting teachers' wellbeing and their professional practice and targets the future of education, claiming that it is time for change. Further, in *Wellbeing and Resilience Education: COVID-19 and Its Impact on Education,* they challenged colleagues from around the world to examine the early impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on wellbeing and resilience education (White & McCallum, 2021b).

1.2   Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework proposes a comprehensive way to situate local, national, and international influences on teachers' professional practice and wellbeing and its linkages to the future of educational purpose (see Fig. 1.2). The core concept of this framework defines wellbeing around five components: social, physical, cognitive,

Influences on Education
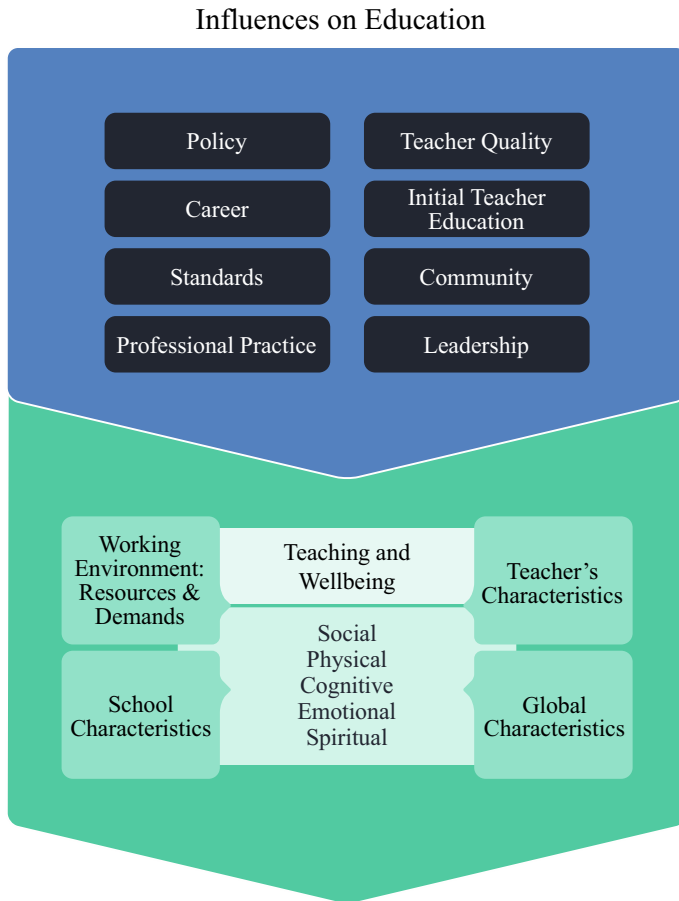
Fig. 1.2 Conceptual framework for transforming teaching: wellbeing and professional practice [adapted from Viac & Fraser (2020)]

emotional, and spiritual. The framework then explores how the working environment, a teacher's disposition, the school, and global events can impact and shape teaching and wellbeing, both positively and negatively. In the final chapter, the conceptual framework presents five types of expected outcomes regarding professional practice and wellbeing. It also includes the role of leadership and education systems and a harsh reminder about the critical importance of including issues related to equity and access in future education debates, policies, and practices.

The political climate in Australia, like elsewhere, has had a relentless and profound impact on teacher preparation, teacher quality and effectiveness, and workforce planning. These influences on education are evident across the globe, with poor student results often being blamed on teachers. In 2014, Mayer undertook a historical analysis of teacher education in Australia and found that it is a highly scrutinised domain.

Since the 1970s, there have been more than 100 reviews of teacher education in Australia, with another one announced that year. The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group's (TEMAG) review included 38 recommendations for ITE providers and the teaching profession generally (Department of Education [DoE], 2014). ITE providers in Australia have completed the implementation of these recommendations. Then in April 2021, with the appointment of a new Federal Minister of Education, another review was announced—the *Quality Initial Teacher Education* (QITE) *Review*—which has now been completed, awaiting the release of the report (DESE, 2021b). Mayer's, 2014 paper claims that teacher education is positioned as a 'policy problem' requiring a national solution. In her 2017 paper, Mayer et al. continued to situate teacher education as a policy problem and found that in the past decade in Australia, as in many other countries, there continues to be federal intervention. The terms of reference across these types of reviews identify many influences on education and are consistently framed. For example, TEMAG was established in 2014 in Australia to advise the government on how teacher education courses could better ensure new teachers have the right mix of academic and practical skills needed for the classroom. The report stated that the evidence is clear:

> Enhancing the capability of teachers is vital to raising the overall quality of Australia's school system and lifting student outcomes. Action to improve the quality of teachers in Australian schools must begin when they are first prepared for the profession. (DoE, 2014, p. xi)

This statement was based on the premise that the Australian Government knows that having well-trained and knowledgeable teachers provides the foundation for a strong, high-quality education system. Yet, while Australia has a high-quality teaching workforce, there continues to be room for improvement. The QITE review's intentions were to build on the recommendations of TEMAG, especially in relation to the development of the Australian Professional Standards and ITE accreditation (DESE, 2021b). While it acknowledged the last decade's positive reform, its goal is to ensure graduate teachers start their teaching career with the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be successful teachers in any Australian school. So, there are two main foci:

1. Attracting and selecting high-quality candidates into the teaching profession
2. Preparing ITE students to be effective teachers.

This Australian context illustrates how political influences on education impact teachers, their professional practice, and wellbeing. There is little doubt that well-intended politicians and policymakers enact such reviews with a view to transform education for the better and achieve more successful learning outcomes for students. However, in the process, teachers and leaders can experience ill-being because of these intentions, resulting in decreased wellbeing, motivation, and performance, which influence teachers' relationships with students and colleagues (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2021). Such influences on education can have serious consequences on teachers' careers (e.g., absenteeism, lower commitment, and job satisfaction, leaving the profession early) and on the students (e.g., less positive interactions with teachers, poorer teaching, and lower academic achievement) (Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999).

The quality of the working environment is shaped by these system-level factors, which take the form of national policies and institutional arrangements. School factors and policies also play a part in teachers' working conditions. For example, teachers from the same school share common tasks and goals and are exposed to the same workplace environment compared to teachers from different schools, and this can provide a positive environment (OECD, 2019). These higher and lower-level influences can then play out locally in specific school contexts and types of working environments, with individual teacher traits also playing a part in wellbeing and ill-being. Van Droogenbroeck et al. (2021) report that school context plays an important role in wellbeing, yet few studies have looked at the individual- and school-level variance, claiming that individual and school context is crucial, and school organisational factors can lead to prevention strategies. The work challenges and resources model is arguably one of the most popular models used to define teacher wellbeing. Dodge et al. (2012) describe this as the balance point between an individual's resource pool and the challenges faced in the workplace:

> Stable wellbeing is when individuals have the psychological, social and physical resources they need to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge. When individuals have more challenges than resources, the see-saw dips, along with their wellbeing, and vice-versa. (p. 230)

Wellbeing is a multidimensional concept, so in this book, we touch on five dimensions that influence teaching and wellbeing (social, physical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual). These should all be considered as we work towards transforming education.

Teachers relate to others daily, and it is well understood that positive relationships are a key component of learning and teaching and can have positive or negative influences on wellbeing (Wang et al., 1997). McCallum et al. (2017) refer to social wellbeing as including the various stakeholders with whom teachers interact, which can result in challenging situations with students and/or parents and colleagues, and support (or not) from leadership. Physical health and fitness are important to maintain to perform well at work, and it is noted that difficult or challenging work conditions can alter good health. There are a plethora of works that document the impact of ill-being on teachers' physical health dating back to the 1960s when scholarly interest in wellbeing emerged (McCallum et al., 2017; also see Curry & O'Brien, 2012; De Nobile, 2016; Falecki, 2015; Kidger, 2016; Maslach & Leiter, 1999; Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2021). Simply put, Van Horn et al. (2010) describe cognitive wellbeing as the set of skills and abilities teachers need to work effectively. It refers to the mental action needed to acquire factual information and understanding to function at work and encompasses attention, judgement, problem-solving, and decision-making. Later, Schleicher (2018) added that it also related to teachers' self-efficacy and belief in one's abilities to perform. Teachers experience high levels of emotion while undertaking the many facets of their work, and these can be either positive or negative. A positive state captures feelings of happiness, satisfaction, joy, and contentment at work. Conversely, unpleasant emotional states of sadness, anger, fear, and anxiety can also be felt. Teachers can experience all these emotions in their work, which can impact job satisfaction, fulfilment, and motivation. Wellbeing is holistic, including

Fig. 1.3 Structure of transforming teaching: wellbeing and professional practice

spiritual elements not only associated with religion but also connectedness and a sense of belonging, particularly within a school community. These dimensions of wellbeing and their impact on professional practice are explored in each chapter of this book.

Viac and Fraser (2020) have considered the working conditions of teachers that shape their wellbeing and express that job quality is multidimensional and defined by three dimensions: earnings, labour market security, and quality of the working environment. Types of working conditions associated with teachers' wellbeing discussed in this book encompass not only physical contexts but workload, roles undertaken, classroom composition, students' challenging behaviours, and teacher performance. These aspects are most often influenced by differences in educational contexts, culture, and policies, and these vary in each country. As teachers and schools across the globe continue to struggle with school-wide priorities in 2020/2021, the world was impacted by a global pandemic. COVID-19 is redefining all parts of society and rewriting progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of

Good Health and Wellbeing (White & McCallum, 2021a). It has halted many plans for the future, and educators, politicians, and policymakers are using the global event to reconsider what is important in education, what its purpose is, and what it means for future generations. This is the context in which this book proposes that a transformation is happening. *Transforming Teaching: Wellbeing and Professional Practice* is a useful guide for educators, politicians, and policymakers as they reconceptualise teaching and reposition the importance of wellbeing and its impact on professional practice.

Figure 1.3 provides a representation of the book's structure and chapter topics.

1.3   The Book's Structure

In this chapter, we have established the significance of wellbeing to teachers' professional practice by using a contemporary wellbeing conceptual framework to situate the entire book's thoughts, ideas, theories, and practices. Overviews of the eight chapters are now presented.

In Chap. 2, Mathew White expands his earlier research to investigate the problem of teacher professional practice and strengths in wellbeing education. While there have been advances in wellbeing education, a persistent gap remains between examples of how teachers can integrate strength-based approaches to learning and teaching in professional practice, with some scholars claiming it is atheoretical. White explores these issues in the context of the development of Tay et al. (2018) conceptual framework for the positive humanities and potential application of teaching Peterson and Seligman's (2004) classification of strengths and virtues in the English classroom.

In Chap. 3, Mathew White draws on an appreciative inquiry methodology to examine the experience of preservice teachers completing professional experience during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. White conducted the research when other researchers, such as Zhao (2020), provocatively asked if the pandemic was a watershed moment.

In Chap. 4, Faye McCallum draws on theories of belonging to argue that well school children's teachers, leaders, and communities can enhance the wellbeing of all. A sense of wellbeing and belonging can influence the productivity of teachers' work and also professional practice and student outcomes. The key concept in this chapter—belonging as a measure for wellbeing—has not previously been explored in relation to teachers and their work. McCallum cites an Australian school where she measured teaching and non-teaching staff wellbeing twice.

In Chap. 5, Faye McCallum builds on her chapter in White and McCallum (2021b) to remind us that teachers are the most important in-school factor influencing student achievement, happiness, and satisfaction. However, in times of schooling disruption, teachers are often at the frontline and can provide hope and optimism for many individuals and communities. The COVID-19 pandemic is the example chosen to reinforce the important work of teachers, and she reports on a study conducted with

teachers across the world during 2020. This chapter demonstrates the strong links between learning and wellbeing.

In Chap. 6, Mathew White adopts an appreciative inquiry methodology based on the assumption that every organisation (in this case, a disadvantaged school) has something that works well. He emphasises the process adopted by the school-university partnership to design a summit to build a strategic plan at the school. White emphasises that all institutions can adopt their strengths as starting points for positive change. Notably, the chapter provides a case study in a disadvantaged context, a previously overlooked area of the application of appreciative inquiry in the wellbeing education literature.

In Chap. 7, Faye McCallum draws on three studies on teacher wellbeing that identify school leaders' important role. Teacher wellbeing is gaining traction in educational research lately but still struggles as a priority in government and school policies and practices. The three case studies report on the role of leadership for early career teachers, a second study of teachers in an independent schooling sector, and the role of leaders during the 2020/2021 global pandemic. The chapter reports that leadership is critical to advancing teacher wellbeing and teaching effectiveness.

In Chap. 8, the book's concepts are pulled together to recommend future education directions that place wellbeing at the centre. We revisit the book's conceptual framework as highlighted here in this chap. Across the eight chapters, this book examines many diverse situations and influences on wellbeing education to recommend that the future for generations of children and young people is at the mercy of quality teaching and well teachers, and therefore it is timely for educators, policymakers, and governments to prioritise the wellbeing of the profession.

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Chapter 2
Strength-Based Teaching and Positive Humanities in Schools

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Abstract The development of Peterson and Seligman's character strength classification has contributed to the development of wellbeing theory and practice in education. There are now hundreds of examples of strength-based education interventions and conceptual frameworks for positive psychology and the humanities. Nevertheless, a constant theoretical gap between education theory and practice remains in the teaching of wellbeing and professional practice. This gap challenges wellbeing educators to differentiate between strength-based teaching and the topic of strengths in a class. It is argued that this distinction has been a persistent problem in wellbeing education research and a limitation of wellbeing education theory leading to two questions: how are strengths taught in schools, and how can character strengths be analysed in the teaching of literature? This chapter theorises the possibilities for teaching character strengths in a literature class. It draws on Peterson and Seligman's character strengths classification and Tay and Pawelski's conceptual model for the positive humanities to explore teaching possibilities. The chapter then theorises the opportunities in the context of a soliloquy from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Finally, a case for integrating teacher professional practice and strengths is presented to support future research.

Keywords English curriculum and pedagogy · Professional development · Strengths · Student wellbeing · Teacher education

2.1 Introduction

Since the foundation of positive psychology and Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's (2000) challenge to researchers to investigate wellbeing at an 'individual level' focusing on positive traits or strengths, then at a 'group level' focusing on 'civic

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virtues' and 'institutions' (p. 5), there have been hundreds of wellbeing interventions in education. The creation of this field has also established what Seligman et al. (2009) characterise as positive education, an approach to teaching traditional academic skills and happiness, then further extended into a more holistic approach as wellbeing education (White, 2021). In this chapter, the term 'wellbeing education' is used in its broadest sense drawing on Huppert and So (2013) definition as 'feeling good and functioning effectively' (p. 837) and how it is applied in schools. Specifically, this chapter focuses on a subfield of wellbeing education that appears to have captured the imagination of teachers across the world by engaging with Peterson and Seligman (2004) classification of character strengths and virtues in a myriad of learning and teaching activities as a pathway to promote wellbeing in the classroom.

After 2000, wellbeing education programs have focused on developing the capabilities of student self-awareness (Hatami et al., 2016), self-regulation (Fomina et al., 2020; Larionova et al., 2020), optimism (Turner & Theilking, 2019), mental agility (Kooshki et al., 2020), resilience (Brunwasser & Gillham, 2018), strengths (Galloway et al., 2020; Lavy, 2020), and relationships (Hosan & Hoglund, 2017). Most of these wellbeing interventions have the goal to improve student flourishing, such as Burke and Minton's (2019) study of strengths in the middle years in Ireland, which sought to educate teachers to teach wellbeing activities in schools and prepare young people for higher education (Allan et al., 2019). In many of these professional development opportunities, various social–emotional and psychological theories—including active constructive responding, problem-solving, the ability to put challenges, putting problems into perspective real-time resilience, character strengths, savouring, praise, and active constructive responding and focusing upon what is working well—form the backbone of many professional development opportunities (Park et al., 2004). Brunzell et al. (2015, 2016, 2019) proposed trauma-informed strength-based teaching practices, Niemiec (2013) reflected on a decade's strengths interventions in a case study of an independent boys' school, and White and Waters (2015a, 2015b) and Allison et al. (2020) call for a systems-oriented approach to flourishing classrooms. Yet, for many teachers, there is a significant gap between taking the skills acquired in professional development of wellbeing education and teaching a curriculum.

As Linkins et al. (2015) review of positive psychology applications in education establishes, and further corroborated by Han (2019) and Waters and White (2015), character strengths have been quickly adopted by teachers seeking to support school students' wellbeing. These include a survey of character strengths, discussion of the classification of strengths, and concepts related to the curriculum, such as Bateskrakoff et al. (2017) calling for the integration of strengths into gifted and talented teacher education and programs. Niemiec and Pearce (2021) claim that 'more than 700 studies on VIA classification have been published in the last 10 years' alone (p. 1). Further, they argue there is evidence of growing interest in the rise of strength-based practitioners—or teachers who claim to integrate Peterson and Seligman (2004) classification of character strengths in professional practice (Niemiec & Pearce, 2021). Despite studies by Gillham et al. (2011) investigating strengths and their relationship with academic mastery in adolescents, Huo et al. (2021) on the application of the

classification of strengths in cross-cultural settings including China, and the development of an early childhood strengths measure by Shoshani (2019), there remains a gap in education theory bridging the professional practice of strengths interrogating the broader theoretical implications for classroom practice. For example, there have been developments in creating standalone wellbeing education courses designed to promote student flourishing (Kumar & Mohideen, 2021). These courses have focused on teaching young people skills drawn from psychological science to promote resilience and wellbeing. While there may be over 700 studies on the application of character strengths, many appear to focus primarily on pre-test and post-test interventions of character strengths outside an embedded curriculum, as established by White and Waters' (2015a, 2015b) foundational case study, rather than explicitly problematising issues related to wellbeing professional practice or the pedagogy.

Noble and McGrath's (2015, 2016) research seeks to engage the problems related to integrating wellbeing activities by recommending the positivity, relationships, outcomes, strengths, purpose, engagement, and resilience or PROSPER framework, and calls for its integration into the general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum. Whereas Waters and Loton (2019) propose an evidence-informed wellbeing framework for positive education approaches. A limitation in these earlier studies is they may be characterised as psychology *on* education, as opposed to psychology *with* education theory and professional practice.

Evaluation of strengths in learning, teaching, and education include Gable and Haidt (2005) and Kristjánsson (2012, 2013), who claim wellbeing education approaches may be interpreted as atheoretical, noting the limitations of educational psychology in its application, and call for more robust interdisciplinary research. Trask-Kerr et al. (2019a, 2019b) have sought to address elements of this gap and stimulate debate by calling for the integration of Deweyan philosophy in positive education approaches. Research has been extended by Gill et al. (2021) review of teenagers' perspectives of success and the potential impact on wellbeing education, which sometimes claims that interventions may positively impact student learning outcomes. Critics of wellbeing education, including Kristjánsson's (2013, 2020) criticism of positive education, emphasise the theoretical limitation of wellbeing theory. McGovern and Miller (2008) and McGovern (2011) have challenged this claim, arguing for a more comprehensive interrogation of the philosophical basis for strength-based learning. Kristjánsson (2013) neo-Aristotelian critique of wellbeing teaching poses questions on the role of the teacher, how wellbeing is taught in schools, and what the impact may be on students in schools.

Lomas et al. (2020) emphasise new developments in wellbeing science generally and claim that positive psychology is now entering a third wave of research developments. They assert that the first wave was the foundation of the field; the second was a critical evaluation of the tension and relationship between the positive–negative continuum; and the third is more culturally diverse and includes broader methodological approaches. Over a decade ago, Lopez and Louis (2009) noted that it 'may be useful to bring greater uniformity to strengths-based educational efforts in the future' (p. 3). Yet, it appears the research specifically considering the theoretical

problems of teaching character strengths has not kept pace with Lomas et al. (2020) assessment of the field.

This chapter has two aims exploring the theory of teacher professional practice, character strengths, and literature (see Fig. 2.1). First, to contribute to a theoretical gap in how strength can be integrated into teaching literature, broadly interpreted for this chapter as the positive humanities in wellbeing education. Second, to establish a case for future research to develop a more comprehensive pedagogy of teaching character strengths in literature. The following questions frame the chapter:

- How are strengths taught in schools?
- How can character strengths be explored in the teaching of literature?

This chapter will not address all these conceptual hurdles; instead, it focuses on one disciplinary element of wellbeing education and explores these possibilities in the context of English teaching. First, an overview of Peterson and Seligman (2004) character strengths is presented as the theoretical framework for the model proposed for the chapter. Then, there is a discussion of strength-based education, strength-based teaching, and an introduction to the positive humanities, drawing on Tay et al. (2018) research. Next, I present an exploration of teaching strengths with literature used to explore the atheoretical problems encountered by wellbeing education in a universal key learning area: literature. The chapter will explore the theoretical hurdles by addressing how character strengths may integrate into the professional practice of teaching literature. To address the second research question, I draw on the first of Hamlet's soliloquies from Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* one of the most taught texts in high school. I argue for the integration of strengths in teaching literature to encourage students to interpret a text from a wider variety of perspectives and consider the potential implications for these approaches in professional practice.

Fig. 2.1 The theory of teacher professional practice, character strengths, and literature
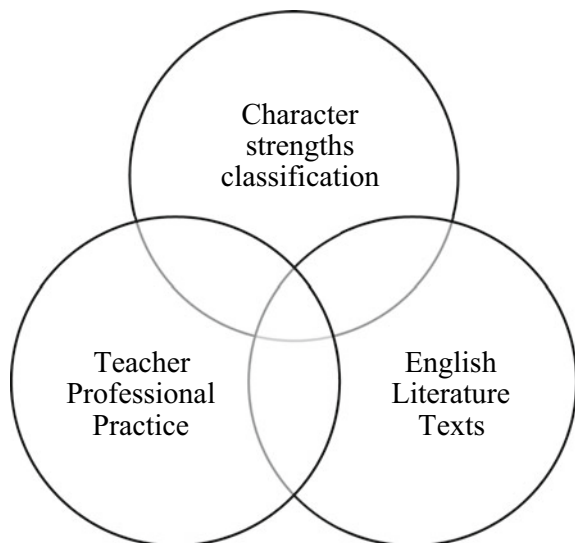
Last, I assert that integrating character strengths in teaching literature can enliven in rich and deep teacher professional practice and reader response to text as they guide students through the complexities of textual analysis. Therefore, the chapter forms a basis for much larger future research to bridge the theoretical gap between teaching strengths in the classroom and literature.

2.2   Character Strengths

There are several theories of character strengths, including Peterson and Seligman (2004). The most adopted in education settings are CliftonStrengths finder and Peterson and Seligman (2004) strengths classification. CliftonStrengths finder was first developed in 1999, whereas Peterson and Seligman (2004) Values-in-Action 24-character strength classification was proposed in 2004, as noted in Table 2.1. Clifton has been described as the 'father of strength-based education and the grandfather of positive psychology'. These strengths classifications provide psychologists and teachers alike with theoretical frameworks to discuss character. However, they have not been without criticism, as noted by Kristjánsson (2013) and Snow (2018). First, CliftonStrengths claims there are 34 strengths across four domains, including executing, influencing, relationship building, and strategic thinking. CliftonStrengths include the following themes: achiever, activator, adaptability, analytical, arranger, belief, command, communication, competition, connectedness, consistency, content, deliberative, developer, discipline, empathy, focus, futuristic, harmony, ideation, include, individualisation, input, intellect, learner, maximiser, positivity, relator, responsibility, restorative, self-assurance, significance, strategic, and woo. Meanwhile, Peterson and Seligman (2004) classification proposes six virtues with 24 strengths acting as pathways towards the virtues. These include wisdom (creativity, curiosity, judgement, love of learning, perspective), courage (bravery, honesty, perseverance, zest), *humanity* (kindness, love, social intelligence), justice (citizenship, fairness, leadership), temperance (forgiveness, humility, prudence, self-regulation), and transcendence (appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humour, spirituality). Both models have been used in schools and schooling to promote greater classroom engagement and promote learning (pp. 91–95).

2.3   Strength-Based Education

Given there are at least two models of strengths classifications, there appear to be two approaches to strength-based education. The first draws on the CliftonStrengths finder research, and the second draws on the theoretical framework of Peterson and Seligman (2004) character strengths classification. What unifies both theoretical frameworks is the attempt to classify strengths as a theoretical framework that describes what is working well for individuals and focusing on what is going right

Table 2.1 Peterson and Seligman's classification of character strengths and virtues

Strength	Description
Creativity	Original, adaptive, ingenuity, seeing, and doing things in different ways
Curiosity	Interest, novelty-seeking, exploration, openness to experience
Judgement	Critical thinking, thinking through all sides, not jumping to conclusions
Love of Learning	Mastering new skills and topics, systematically adding to knowledge
Perspective	Wisdom, providing wise counsel, taking the big picture view
Creativity	Original, adaptive, ingenuity, seeing and doing things in different ways
Curiosity	Interest, novelty-seeking, exploration, openness to experience
Judgement	Critical thinking, thinking through all sides, not jumping to conclusions
Love of Learning	Mastering new skills and topics, systematically adding to knowledge
Perspective	Wisdom, providing wise counsel, taking the big picture view
	Virtue: Courage
Bravery	Valour, not shrinking from threat or challenge, facing fears, speaking up for what is right
Honesty	Authenticity, being true to oneself, sincerity without pretence, integrity
Perseverance	Persistence, industry, finishing what one starts, overcoming obstacles
Zest	Vitality, enthusiasm for life, vigour, energy, not doing things half-heartedly
	Virtue: Humanity
Kindness	Loving and being loved, valuing close relations with others, genuine warmth
Love	Aware of the motives and feelings of oneself and others, knowing what makes others tick
Social Intelligence	Loving and being loved, valuing close relations with others, genuine warmth
	Virtue: Justice
Fairness	Adhering to principles of justice; not allowing feelings to bias decisions about others
Leadership	Organising group activities to get things done, positively influencing others

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

Strength	Description
Teamwork	Citizenship, social responsibility, loyalty, contributing to a group effort
	Virtue: Temperance
Forgiveness	Mercy, accepting others' shortcomings, giving people a second chance, letting go of hurt
Humility	Modesty, letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves
Prudence	Careful about one's choices, cautious, not taking undue risks
Self-Regulation	Self-control, disciplined, managing impulses, emotions, and vices
	Virtue: Transcendence
Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence	Awe and wonder for beauty, admiration for skill, and moral greatness
Gratitude	Thankful for the good, expressing thanks, feeling blessed
Hope	Optimism, positive future-mindedness, expecting the best, and working to achieve it
Humour	Playfulness, bringing smiles to others, light-hearted—seeing the lighter side
Spirituality	Connecting with the sacred, purpose, meaning, faith, religiousness

with others. Thus, these theoretical frameworks create the vocabulary to conceptualise these strengths within the self and others. From the outset, both the Clifton-Strengths finder and Peterson and Seligman argue that teachers need to reflect upon their own strengths first to authentically teach the concepts of strengths in the classroom. Drawing on the strength-based research of the Gallup Organization and the CliftonStrengths finder, Anderson (2004) asserts that:

> Strengths-based education involves a process of assessing, teaching, and designing experiential learning activities to help students identify their greatest talents, and to then develop and apply strengths based on those talents in the process of learning, intellectual development, and academic achievement to levels of personal excellence. (p. 1)

Lopez and Louis (2009) assert that 'strengths-based models embody a student-centred form of education with the primary goal of transforming students into confident, efficacious, lifelong learners whose work is infused with a sense of purpose' (p. 2). The centre of strength-based approaches to education is the underlying assumption that individual students can work at their very best and achieve potential regardless of culture, context, and background. The role of the teacher is to create a supportive learning environment that enables young people to progress meaningfully towards increasing their levels of confidence and promote lifelong learning

(FitzSimons, 2015). Teachers may find the appeal of strength-based education in most reasons why people join the teaching profession. As evidenced by Rashid et al. (2013) study of strengths and adolescence, and Quinlan et al. (2012) and (2019) investigation of the impact of strength-interventions in the classroom, teachers can have a significant influence on the success or failure of strength-based approaches. Given the diverse theoretical frameworks describing strengths, this has also led to different approaches to learning and teaching and professional practice for integrating strengths and education.

2.4 Strength-Based Teaching

A persistent challenge of the past decade for both positive education and wellbeing education is a theory of a strength-based approach to learning and teaching beyond a series of evidence-informed activities drawn from psychology (Coppley & Niemiec, 2021). One of the theoretical and applied challenges of the rise of strength-based teaching is differentiating between whether teachers adopt a strength-based professional practice or teach the concept of strengths or both (White, 2021). Lopez and Louis (2009) assert that this is not the case for strength-based education. They draw attention to Dewey's (1938) theoretical contributions on education's role in bringing out the best in young people and deliberately fostering the strength of youth to improve quality of life and engagement and learning. There have been a handful of notable publications drawing on Dewey's contribution, notably Trask-Kerr et al. (2019a, 2019b) input into the educational context of the positive psychology movement. But Lopez and Louis (2009) claim that strength-based education draws on five educational principles: (1) the measurement of strengths, (2) individualisation and differentiation, where teachers change their professional practice to meet the demands and interests of students, (3) promoting positive relations between young people at school, in the family, and with teachers, (4) systematic application and integration of strengths in classroom activities, and (5) intentional development of strengths through application and experimentation. Despite early forays into integrating positive psychology concepts and interventions, as Seligman et al. (2009) note, there has been a shortage of examples of the application and systematic advice on how to go about this from a professional practice perspective. Many of these concepts have found their home naturally within either humanities or physical education classes.

2.5 Positive Humanities

First coined by Pawelski and Moores (2012) and extended by Pawelski (2021) and Tay and Pawelski (2022), the positive humanities aim to provide a connection between the study of the humanities and positive psychology which Tay et al. (2018) note has 'surprisingly little scientific work … to investigate empirically whether or not the

arts and humanities have a significant impact on individual and collective wellbeing, particularly beyond merely economic outcomes' (p. 215). The humanities, broadly defined as classics, history, and literature, is an under-researcher area in the teaching of wellbeing education. Tay et al. (2018) note that 'the arts and humanities occupy a remarkable place in human life' (p. 215). In the past five years, Pawelski (2012) and Tay et al. (2018) have championed the possibilities for integrating the arts in wellbeing research more broadly and proposed a conceptual model for much-needed empirical research. Shim et al. (2019) propose an integrative conceptual framework for studies of psychology and the humanities. They have called for greater integration of humanities wellbeing research and argued for the 'positive humanities', positing that four mechanisms led to flourishing outcomes with participants' modes of participation and various activities. Tay et al. (2018) investigation proposes a conceptual framework for the role of the arts and humanities in human flourishing (Vaziri et al., 2019; Waters et al., 2021). These mechanisms include immersion in the field, embeddedness, socialisation, and reflexiveness, which may lead to human flourishing outcomes classified as neurological, psychological, physiological, psychological competencies including self-efficacy, integrated complexity and creativity, general wellbeing effects including subjective wellbeing, psychological wellbeing, and physical wellbeing, and finally positive normative outcomes including character development, ethical choices, moral compass, and civic engagement.

Tay et al. (2018) contend that 'the arts and humanities occupy a remarkable place in human life' and note that 'a major impediment to this research is the lack of a conceptual framework to situate and guide the investigation' (pp. 215, 216). More recently, Tay and Pawelski (2022) have published the *Oxford Handbook of the Positive Humanities*, drawing on the research of several interdisciplinary scholars and practitioners focusing on elements of the humanities drawn together as part of the Humanities and Human Flourishing Project (https://www.humanitiesandhumanflourishing.org/about). The Handbook extends earlier research and interrogates the academic opportunities for the humanities to promote human flourishing from the perspective of historical perspectives; the integration of the Arts and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education; Art and Music. The Handbook also explores the potential policy opportunities for the arts and humanities in public life.

The past decade of wellbeing education research has seen a growing body of research activity in the application of wellbeing education (White, 2021). However, there remains a dearth of examples of pedagogy or professional practice of wellbeing and how this may be integrated beyond a set of siloed activities in subject discipline areas. Conceptual hurdles remain on how teachers embed some of these core concepts with wellbeing skills into professional practice. This may be the case given the subject area topics traditionally taught by humanities teachers and their particular focus on character development, reflection on historical events, interpretation of texts, and examination of elements that help define human culture. As illustrated in Fig. 2.2, an issue faced by teachers is how they can combine the development of character strengths with existing professional practice theory. In research about the Strath Haven Positive Psychology Curriculum by Linkins et al. (2015), and the Penn Resiliency Program and the strength and positive psychology
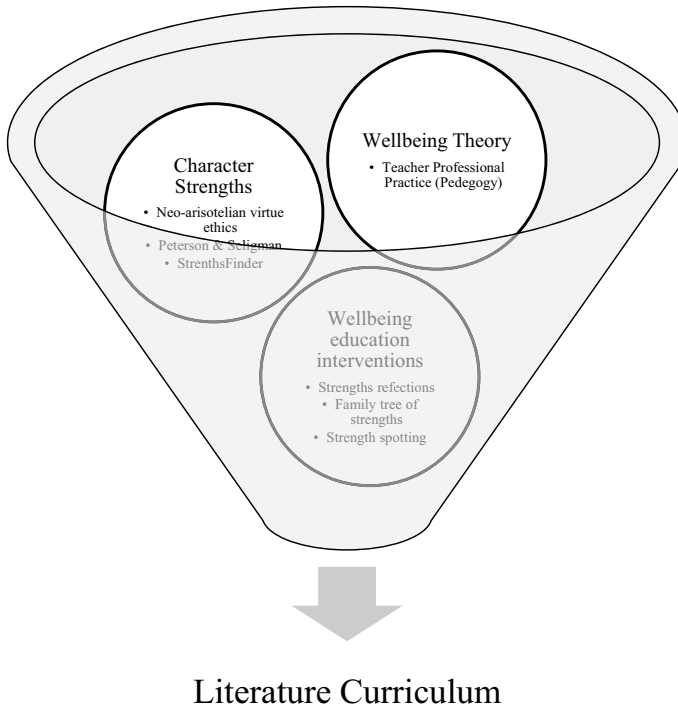
Fig. 2.2 Theoretical challenges in the teaching of the positive humanities in schools

curriculum, Brunwasser and Gillham (2018) claim that humanities teachers were particularly effective as teachers of wellbeing education and facilitators in topics related with wellbeing. This also remains an under-researched area in the field of operationalisation of professional practice for wellbeing.

Theoretically, all teachers should be teachers of wellbeing, as they care for the students in their classes and teach them the subject's discipline-specific knowledge. However, there does appear to be a disciplinary stereotype in teaching that the humanities may be more comfortable with discussing elements of wellbeing and linking these directly with discipline knowledge being explored in their courses. The topics covered in professional development for teachers on wellbeing involve developing character and understanding self and identity within an individual's culture and contextual settings and circumstances. When compared, the topics of wellbeing education intersect strongly with the humanities, particularly history and literature. For example, a typical response from literature teachers when learning about wellbeing developments and activities is that it is what they do in their classroom every day. It is essential to pause and think about the core competencies and material literature teachers investigate in their day-to-day activities with students. Many literature teachers will be asking students to reflect not only on their own character

development but that of fictional characters, whether in place or the fiction they may be investigating.

2.6   Teaching Strengths with Literature

Earlier research by Seligman et al. (2009) established the field of positive education. Waters' (2011) review of positive psychology interventions and White and Waters's (2015a) case study examine applications of strengths in schools by drawing on examples of strengths and how these may be integrated into teaching the literature curriculum. Many of these wellbeing programs have focused on social–emotional skills to encourage young people to examine the vocabulary of emotions in that specific culture. Among the early applications, interventions that focused on promoting wellbeing encouraged young people to draw upon hypothetical situations where they were encouraged to reflect on a time when they experienced adversity and how they responded to this and explore the underlying beliefs and consequences of these hypothetical scenarios (Brunwasser & Gillham, 2018). Among the more successful interventions over the last 20 years, wellbeing education programs aim to bridge the gap between the theoretical and scientifically informed interventions, drawing on positive psychology, the world of young people and hypothetical examples or scenarios, and explore these in classroom settings. Evaluations of the efficacy of wellbeing education programs have centred on teachers' ability to deliver course content material that is authentic and engages the student.

While the topic of character strengths has drawn widespread interest, how to teach from a strength-based perspective appears to be a consistent gap in the literature proposing a wellbeing education approach. There are many diverse approaches to teaching character strengths as noted by FitzSimons (2015). Since Peterson and Seligman (2004) proposed classifications, character strengths have been integrated into many curriculum areas. Recent studies have considered how early childhood educators can model strengths in their teaching (Haslip & Donaldson, 2021) and how strengths can be integrated into the curriculum to enhance disciplinary outcomes (Biel, 2020). Further, studies by Galloway et al. (2020) and Waters have considered how parents can support schools and integrate a strength-based approach to parenting. Niemic and Pearce (2021) contend that strength-based teaching practice is a 'bridge between academia's ivory tower and the practitioner or consumer on main street; it is the dialogue between science and practice' (p. 1). Another example is Coopley and Niemic's (2021) comprehensive review of how strengths have been integrated into diverse educational settings. Everyday activities employed in wellbeing education include inviting students to complete the character strengths survey and then construct reflective narratives to describe how they have engaged with using the character strengths. For example, suppose a student demonstrates that the character strengths include a love of learning, creativity, and perseverance, they may

then provide reflections that show how they believe they have operationalised the strengths in their daily activity. The purpose of such a wellbeing exercise is to help students link the abstract concept of strength to the actions they can take. Rather than being prescriptive, this approach is descriptive to help students develop greater self-awareness and social–emotional competencies as they reflect upon their undertaken activities (Galloway et al., 2020).

In the context of teaching literature, FitzSimons (2015) claims it can also be a useful diagnostic tool for teachers seeking to determine students' literacy abilities or map their learning growth over time. Earlier research published by Waters and White (2015) notes the possibilities of integrating these concepts into the teaching of literature. However, there is a notable gap in examples of how to plan and implement effective learning and teaching that integrate these concepts into teaching literature. Indeed, there are benefits of inviting students to reflect upon their strengths in the context of their personal development. But there are also potential benefits from asking students to consider the strengths demonstrated by characters within different texts and literature. A challenge for many young students in the middle and senior years of school is the ability to describe character fully and then interrogate the same strengths and limitations characters may demonstrate when faced with adversity, challenges, or opportunities in texts (FitzSimons, 2015; Quinlan et al., 2012). Teaching students reading and writing competencies are key barriers for some students. They can effectively engage with the vocabulary to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the subtlety of various texts they may be examining. This includes discussing literary conventions for interpreting the text and symbolism and understanding the complexities of character development.

2.7   Stage 1: Strengths and Personal Reflection

Below is an example of how to integrate strength into literature classes. One method of starting a class discussion on the teaching strengths in literature is to invite students to reflect upon their strengths and virtues with the classification in their own lives. For example, this could be done as a narrative exercise in which students are invited to talk about the category, seeking their input into why they felt some strengths were included in others. It also allows the teacher to discuss what our strength is as opposed to talent. The can present students with Table 2.1 and discuss Peterson and Seligman (2004) classification of strengths to highlight the values in action of these concepts. This discussion helps ground the theory of strengths before it is introduced in character development in a specific play or novel. Reflection acts as an essential exercise for students to consider their strengths; they can then be advised to consider their peers' strengths. Here we see that students are then introduced to the vocabulary of strengths. In the first instance, teachers may wish to share a diagram of the character strengths and virtues, unpack each of the strengths and encourage students to put into their own words how they would describe the various strengths.

This step in the lesson may open a subsequent conversation that examines how each virtue relates to overall strengths. Encouraging students to adopt their vocabulary and description will allow them to explore some of the critical characteristics of the strengths.

Another helpful discussion at this stage is to seek examples from students' perspectives of each strength. For instance, teachers could ask students if they can name examples of individuals they have seen in their own lives who represent each of the strengths in the novels they have already studied, films they have watched, or in their lives. This stage encourages students to reflect upon their strengths and differentiate these from their talents. From the academic perspective, teachers may set this activity as a written task to evaluate written work from students and illustrate their growth over time by considering how students develop in their description of strengths over a semester or year. Below are examples of questions teachers may use to commence classroom discussion on the topic of character strengths:

- When we talk about someone of good character, what does that mean?
- Do you think you can see character strengths?
- Can character strengths be quantified in a team?
- Think of a time when you have displayed a strength of character. What was the circumstance, the challenge, and how do you think you used character strengths to meet that challenge?
- When have you seen examples of character strengths in a film?
- What do we mean when we say someone is a 'strong character'?
- When you think of challenges in leadership, what do you think defines good character?
- In what circumstances do you think a person's character strengths are challenged?
- When do you think the character strengths of a person are on display? Can you describe an example?

Following classroom discussion of these questions, teachers are encouraged to set this as a writing exercise for students aligned with criteria and focusing on critical elements of the national curriculum. The approach allows teachers to evaluate the strengths and limitations of students writing ability and their capacity to articulate a line of argument supported by claims related to character strengths. Further, this activity is a valuable exercise at the start of the year to help teachers gauge the level of literacy of individual students to differentiate the curriculum offered throughout the year appropriately. As argued earlier, one of the goals is to integrate strengths discussion into the curriculum offered to students, so the concept is taught in the context of its curriculum. For example, this could be the discussion of character strengths in the study of history considering the various strengths and limitations of character, as demonstrated by multiple historical figures. Conversely, it could also be considered from the sciences' perspective. Examining the character strengths of scientists who have made breakthroughs in developing new scientific discoveries could yield rich importance of the character required to pursue a response to various scientific challenges.

2.8   Stage 2: Possibilities for Teaching Character Strengths and Humanities

After inviting students to reflect on their personal experience of strengths and discussing where they believe they have seen strengths in their daily life or popular culture, a common challenge is how to link strengths with texts taught in the classroom. One of the most common plays taught in secondary schools is *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare. This play investigates the tragedy of Prince Hamlet, who is charged with revenge for his father's murder. Throughout the play, we see the development of Hamlet from an intellectual prince to a thwarted avenger of his father's death. This play lends itself particularly well to discussing character strengths and the shadow side of strengths. To illustrate the possibilities of the teaching strengths in literature, I will examine three of the first of Hamlet's seven soliloquies. The first soliloquy in *Hamlet* represents the inner monologue of a character shared with the audience. Unlike the audience, the other characters are unaware of this internal monologue, which influences how the audience relates to the play's protagonist. Traditionally, when examining the development of Hamlet's characterisation through his soliloquies, some students may struggle with linking Hamlet's claims and reflections upon his struggle to achieve the revenge for his father's murder with his actions.

One of the potential benefits of integrating strength-based discussion in the presentation of Hamlet's soliloquy is that it enables students to use vocabulary to link Hamlet's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs with his struggle towards action. One of the fascinating areas for potential further development in future research is considering how the strengths vocabulary may help students develop a more sophisticated interpretation of literary texts, characterisation, and their development. In the first soliloquy, the reader sees that Hamlet has just returned from Whittenburg University for his father's funeral. Then his mother's remarriage to his uncle reflects upon the exhaustion he experiences mourning his father's death. In the first soliloquy, he contemplates the virtues of humanity and the strengths of love and social intelligence, which he then puts into the context of reflections around leadership strengths, fairness, and givenness pathways towards justice temperance.

The soliloquy emphasises Hamlet's love of learning and curiosity to articulate his thoughts, feelings, and emotional response clearly. In the scene immediately before the soliloquy, Hamlet's uncle, the newly crowned King Claudius, proclaims the mourning of his brother to be over with the marriage to his sister-in-law Gertrude. All the while, Prince Hamlet is listening and internalising the grief he is experiencing. These proclamations around his mourning and sullen attitude and behaviour chided by both the new king and a queen in front of the whole court challenge the reader and audience to consider how they would respond. This then leads to Hamlet's first soliloquy, which will focus on how Peterson and Seligman's classification of character strengths may yield a deeper interpretation of the passage's significance. As all other characters exit, Hamlet is left alone on the stage and commences his soliloquy, which is a dramatic device whereby the character flexes

internal thoughts, and only the audience can hear these. Hamlet then commences his soliloquy, saying:

O that this too too solid flesh would melt,

Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!

(Shakespeare, 1623, 1982, Act I, ii, 129–158, pp. 187–190)

Here we see the commencement of a study of mourning; moreover, it is a soliloquy that focuses on his perceived decline in his mother Gertrude's character. While it may seem paradoxical discussing strength for this soliloquy, Peterson and Seligman's classification opens a variety of vocabulary for students to examine the choice of diction, audience, purpose, tone, structure, style, and technique of Hamlet's response. We see Hamlet wishes to disappear so he can escape the world of the corrupt Elsinore. He describes the world of Elsinore as weary, stale, and unprofitable. Further, he extends this, representing the landscape of Elsinore as an unweeded garden. For the teacher of literature incorporating strengths, one of the interesting elements to reflect on is how Hamlet uses the virtue of wisdom and knowledge to unpack his emotional response to his father's death literally. For example, his curiosity, perspective, and open-mindedness to draw upon the understanding of his thoughts, feelings, and action. Moreover, his emphasis on curiosity and open-mindedness to the circumstances of his father's death may limit some of his enthusiasm for action. Further, as the soliloquy progresses, Hamlet engages with the strengths associated with the virtue of transcendence, questioning his purpose and optimism for the future. While reflecting on this, he also rejects the beauty and excellence of the court of Elsinore. He then also reflects on his role in the virtues of justice, where he questions the fairness and leadership he may one day inherit as the named heir by Claudius to the throne of Elsinore. Hamlet's reflection on the virtue of courage also raises questions for literature teachers to explore his integrity and forgiveness of others.

It is theorised that an advantage of integrating Peterson and Seligman (2004) classification of character strengths in character development is that it may enable students to access vocabulary to conceptualise and reflect on the character's emotional development. As FitzSimons (2015), Pawelski (2021), Tay et al. (2018), and Tay and Pawelski (2022) claim one advantage of having invited students to reflect on their own strengths before commencing literary analysis of this nature is that it enables students to theoretically link their thoughts and feelings to those of the character's experiences in the play. It is contended that this approach will help many students access the character's interior world as it unfolds with soliloquies within the play. For example, commonly in teaching literature, many teachers encourage students to think of the emotional arc and development of characters to understand the character's motivation and the core objective they may be seeking to achieve at a particular point in time. A challenge for many students in the senior secondary years is being able to relate on one level with the enormity of the challenge faced by characters such as Hamlet and the situation he finds himself in and having the emotional talent to empathise with the character.

2.9   Conclusions

While there are examples of strengths interventions from wellbeing education that may impact student learning and engagement, there is still a shortage of examples of the integration of strengths in professional practice. In this chapter, I have proposed a two-step strategy to establish a possible theory to integrate strengths in teaching literature. This chapter extends the earlier research by FitzSimons (2015) and White (2021), calling for the development of professional practice, a strength-based reflective practice teaching model, and theorising the implications for English teaching. The chapter acts as the rationale for a more comprehensive future publication exploring the theoretical hurdles and their applications in teaching literature.

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Chapter 3
An Essential Service? An Appreciative Study of Preservice Teachers' Reflections of Teaching During COVID-19

Mathew A. White ⓘ

Abstract The sudden impact of the government introduced health measures to control the COVID-19 pandemic is reshaping all elements of society, including initial teacher education. International research has examined the effects on teachers, teaching, and students. But, there is a gap considering the impact on preservice teachers. This qualitative study investigates the experiences of 55 South Australian preservice teachers after completing their final practicum during the first six months of 2020. The study adopted Cooperrider and Srivastava's Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Cycle and reports on stage 1 of the cycle to discover preservice teachers' views on education Beyond COVID-19. The researcher analysed the data following Braun and Clarke six-phase thematic analysis procedure. Two overarching themes emerged focusing on preservice teachers' perception of their values and strengths. The implications of the analysis extend earlier research supporting emphasis on teacher resilience and calls for more research on preservice teachers' experiences.

Keywords Curriculum and pedagogy · Professional development of educators · Teacher education · Teacher wellbeing

3.1 Introduction

As preservice teachers (PST) across South Australia prepared for the final professional experience placement for their initial teacher education (ITE) at the start of 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Australia on 25 February 2020. Fifteen days later, on 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced COVID-19 as a pandemic (Coronavirus disease [COVID-19]—World Health Organization, 2020), disrupting life and the professional experience of countless PSTs across the world. As Azorín (2020) notes, teachers may paradoxically feel caught between the blistering speed of imposed change due to the transition to online learning and inertia. Harris (2020) asserts that the shock of COVID-19 is 'upending

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the modern world'; as individual nations grapple with the ongoing waves of disruption at a systems level, the international research and classroom-level discourse appear to be split between the call for educational renewal and survival (Ellis et al., 2020).

Bailey and Schurz (2020) argue that COVID-19 is potentially creating a human resources crisis in schools requiring '… new pedagogical imperatives, teachers and teacher educators need to be learners themselves, modelling the "adaptive expertise" we would wish to develop in our student-teachers' (Mutton, 2020, p. 3). The World Bank (2020) and Sokal et al. (2020) contend that teachers' resilience and the resolve of students, teachers, schools, and educational systems are being tested. Both Blundell et al. (2020), Darling-Hammond and Hyler (2020) and Darling-Hammond and Melnick (2020) note that the pandemic has heightened awareness of the existing educational attainment and access inequalities. It has accelerated progress in ways that initially may not have been foreseen as noted by Donitsa-Schmidt and Ramot (2020) study of PST experiences in Israel during the first wave of the pandemic and Robinson and Rusznyak (2020). While there are emerging publications teachers perspectives during the first stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a shortage of research on the perspective of PSTs.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to address a gap in research on COVID-19's impact on PSTs during wave 1 of the pandemic. In South Australia childcare, early childhood education and primary and secondary schooling services were defined as essential services for essential workers. It investigates South Australian PSTs' reflections of professional experience to explore PSTs experiences during such extraordinary disruption and how they coped. The study adopts the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership's (AITSL) definition of professional experience as 'the component of an initial teacher education program in which pre-service teachers develop and demonstrate their skills in the classroom' (AITSL, 2018, p. 2). The study reports on the findings of the discovery stage of the 4-D cycle of the appreciative inquiry method. Three central research questions frame the study, how do PSTs describe the impact of COVID-19's on professional experience? How do PSTs' describe their values during this time? How do PSTs describe their strengths during this interruption?

3.2   ITE and Professional Experience

The aim of professional experience is to give PSTs the chance to 'practice the work of teaching', to 'relate the practice to knowledge and understanding they are developing in their program', and to 'demonstrate a positive impact on student learning' (AITSL, 2018, p. 2). Flores (2020) argues that teaching is recognised as a complex profession. It requires PSTs to develop discipline-specific knowledge, pedagogical skills, and pedagogical strategies to establish a supportive learning environment and enable student learning and growth. Darling-Hammond (2017) claims the most effective

strategies to improve teacher learning including recruiting high-performing partici-
pants into programs that secure competitive salaries, a systematic link between theory
and practice, and explicit induction models for new teachers focusing on skill devel-
opment. Yet, early COVID-19-related research presented by McKinsey & Co and
Azevedo et al. (2020) at the World Bank supports the claim that education itself is
experiencing a significant shock at the rapid change, and one with multigenerational
implications across health, economy, and learning.

As the waves of COVID-19 ebbed and flowed, schools and teachers were
impacted, as summarised by Azevedo et al. (2020) in their comprehensive analysis for
the World Bank highlighting the devastating impact this may have on the educational
outcomes of children. As Reimers and Schleicher (2020) establish, a first in-school
goal has been to maintain learning continuity and diminish the impact of the rapid
transition to online learning. Examples of teachers' approaches to online teaching and
learning are documented by Carrillo and Flores (2020). This has raised an impor-
tant question as PSTs observe first-hand the inequity of access to online learning
between and across schools and systems (Hall et al., 2020). Like other professions,
ITE programs were impacted across the world (Assunção Flores & Gago, 2020).
Kidd and Murray (2020) highlight the impact of the pandemic on the final teaching
practicum of PSTs across England as schools were closed. In a small-scale study,
Kidd and Murray (2020) call for rethinking and reframing the traditional practicum
to explore the role of online learning and teaching more systematically, warning that
the practicum may need to be reimagined given the likely ongoing disruption Several
ITE programs were suspended or transitioned to online learning; some accredited
programs were changed to manage the situation (Carrillo & Flores, 2020).

3.3 South Australian ITE Professional Experience and COVID-19

South Australia was successful in managing COVID-19 cases, experiencing a total
of 857 cases of COVID-19, with the majority reported during wave 1 from 20 March
to 20 April 2021 and a state wide seven-day lockdown in July 2021 due to the Delta
variant (Government of South Australia, 2021). Based on the advice of the South
Australian Chief Public Health Officer the South Australian Department for Educa-
tion concluded schools, preschools, and 'early childhood facilities were low risk
environments for COVID-19 and should remain open' during wave 1 of COVID-19
(Government of South Australia Department for Education, 2020). As the shock-
wave of COVID-19 may impact the preparation of the future teacher workforce, it is
important to consider PSTs' perspectives. This present case study examines PSTs'
perceptions of themselves, their values, their teaching, and the strengths they feel
they displayed during their final professional experience during COVID-19 in South
Australia.

3.4   Reflection

Teaching is a dynamic, complex profession and demands reflection in the achievement of positive student learning outcomes. Churchill et al. (2019) assert there is an assumption that teachers know how to reflect and appreciate the exact meaning of reflection between teachers. The benefits of reflection for teaching are reported by Lutovac and Assunção Flores (2021), who investigate the role of failure during ITE, and Roberts et al.'s (2021) study of PST experiences during the final practicum. Various scholars have created models to facilitate reflection—for example, Dewey's teacher dispositions of open-mindedness, whole-heartedness, and responsibility, and Brookfield's (2017) reflective practice cycle proposing four stages of reflection. Given the disruption of ITE during the first wave of COVID-19, the study was interested in finding out how PSTs reflected on what is life-giving during the disruption of the pandemic. The iterative nature of reflection during ITE is part of the path towards constructing, reconstructing, being, and becoming during teacher professional practice.

COVID-19 provides PSTs with an unusual opportunity for reflection as they grapple with the being and becoming of teaching by drawing their values and strengths. When life beyond COVID-19's immediate shockwave is imagined, it provokes the question of what the broader education community can learn from collective experiences. Given that educators have been required to transition to different modes of learning, rethink the way that they are teaching and re-evaluate individual school's strategies and priorities, it is possible to argue that there is a wealth of experience that has taken place which should be systematically captured for future events (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020).

3.5   Research Questions

The present study asks:

> Research Question 1: What was the experience of PSTs during this unprecedented period?
> Research Question 2: What enabled their ability to navigate their professional experience placement during the pandemic?

3.6   Methodology

3.6.1   Appreciative Inquiry

This qualitative study adopted a phenomenological approach as described by Yin (2003) investigating COVID-19's disruption within the context of professional experience during the teaching practicum. It adopted a constructivist worldview as noted by Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Creswell and Poth (2018) as participants made sense of the world by the meaning they place on their interactions, culture, and context (Crotty, 1998). The appreciative method required the researcher to identify an affirmative topic to structure the study. Recently, Cooperrider and Fry (2020) argued the case for adopting the appreciative inquiry method during the COVID-19 pandemic. They asserted that while appreciative inquiry may not appear to have synergy with the trauma-informed practices needed during a pandemic, it may serve as an approach that revealed innovation, resilience, and adaptation. As illustrated in Fig. 3.1, Cooperrider and Srivastava's (1987) the Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Cycle has four steps:

- Discover—focusing on the best of what is;
- Dream—inviting participants to imagine the future and envisage what might be;
- Design—considering what the ideal should be; and
- Destiny—asking how to empower participants.
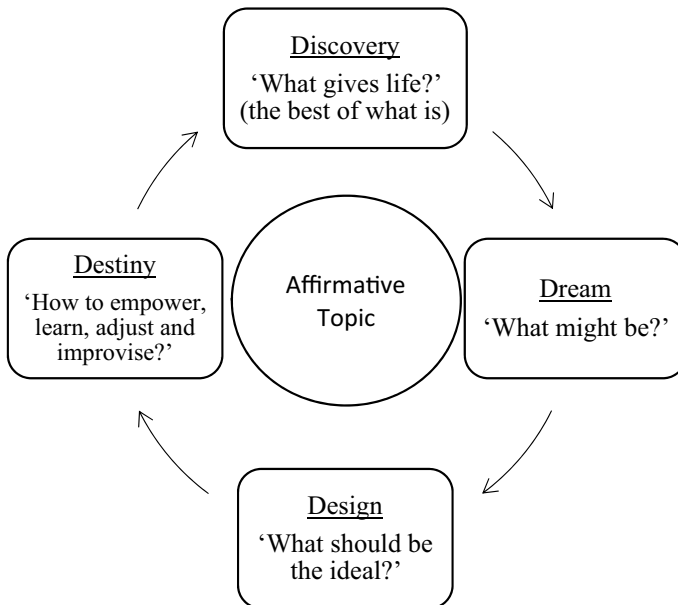
Fig. 3.1 The AI 4-D Cycle (Adapted from Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. 34)

The first step was the discover phase, which focused upon appreciating what was the best within a particular phenomenon. This was followed by the design phase, which determined what that principal ideal could be to solve the dream and discover phases and co-construct this. The last step was the destiny phase, which looked at creating a sustainable model to address the particular investigation (Cooperrider et al., 2008).

While the study adopted the entire 4-D Cycle, this article focused on the first stage and described COVID-19's impact on PSTs during their professional experience due to the richness of data. The affirmative choice topic created by the researcher framed the 4-D cycle and survey questions was 'Education Beyond COVID-19'. The research design followed the protocol described by Cooperrider et al. (2008, pp. 35–126). The survey instrument was based on earlier research by Cooperrider et al. (2008), Waters and White (2015), and White (2020). There was a total of 10 questions and two sections. Section one included categorical questions involving details pertaining to participants' teaching area during their professional experience, gender, degree(s) studied, and teaching specialisation(s). Section two included four blocks of open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were designed with a statement to the participants and then an invitation to reflect on their most recent teaching placement and respond. These questions aligned to the first three stages of the 4-D cycle as developed by Cooperrider: Discover—appreciating the best of what is.

Table 3.1 outlines the questions posed to participants. Two open ended questions were asked of the participants inviting them to reflect on the professional experience, the questions focused on inviting participants to reflect on their values during this time.

3.7   Recruitment of Participants

Purposive sampling as noted by Creswell and Creswell (2018) was adopted for this case study, in which 174 students were enrolled in their final year of a Bachelor of Teaching (double degree) and Master of Teaching specialising in teaching the middle and senior years. Participants recorded they were teaching English, History, Mathematics, Psychology, and Biology. These participants were on their last professional experience placement before graduation and were invited to take part in the case study. Seventy of these participants completed their final professional experience during the first wave of the pandemic despite federal and state government restrictions on physical distancing. Fifty-five participants volunteered and consented to take part in the anonymous study. Of these, 60% were fourth-year Bachelor of Teaching and 40% were Master of Teaching candidates at a South Australian University.

Table 3.1 Questions

4-D Cycle	Questions
Discover	*Discover Question 1:* We are experiencing an unprecedented period in education. We are interested in some of the things you value—especially, about yourself, your teaching, and your school. Reflecting on your most recent teaching placement, please respond to the following questions. What are the things you have valued the most about yourself? What are the things you have valued about the nature of your work? What are the things you have valued about the school? *Discover Question 2:* Reflecting on your most recent teaching placement, please respond to the following questions. What has been unexpected about your school's response to date? What's been the most memorable learning and teaching experience to date? What strengths were you and your colleagues showing to date? What have you been telling yourself about your learning and teaching to date?
Dream	*Dream Question 3*: Imagine yourself teaching when COVID-19 is over. We have a vaccine, and the pandemic is finished What might teaching look like? What might most in schools? What is really great about the way you work together with your team? What might the structures and/or systems support this? How might teachers and students be interacting with each other?
Design	*Design Question 4:* Imagine yourself teaching when COVID-19 is over. We have a vaccine and the pandemic is finished. Based on what you've learned during your most recent teaching placement respond to the following questions What should be the ideal learning environment? Describe any possibilities in learning, teaching, and education we haven't imagined? What smallest change will make the biggest impact on learning and teaching? Who is affected?
Destiny	N/A

3.8 Data Collection

Participants volunteered to complete the anonymous survey online via Qualtrics after their final professional experience placement. Data were collected over fifteen days between 15 July 2020 and 30 July 2020 once PSTs completed their placements. All participants volunteered and provided consent for the data to be used. Where participants mentioned names or places, data has been anonymised.

3.9 Data Analysis

All data for the study was analysed by the researcher. The researcher analysed data according to Braun and Clarke's (2006, p. 87) six-phase thematic analysis. The researcher familiarised themself with the data by reading through line by line from a randomly selected response. Then analysis focused on how the participant was

Table 3.2 Example of coded transcript

Response	Codes
What I most valued about myself was my resilience, which I wasn't aware I really had. I hadn't been in a situation where people were openly disrespectful to me and I had to come back day after day and face them, and some of the classes were really difficult to manage because of poor behaviour, often directed at me. At the start of the placement, I didn't understand the level that the students were at with their understanding, but over time I got to know the students as individuals on a personal level and could cater more to their specific needs in the way I presented things to them. This was more difficult in larger classes, but it was good to see the way that I could engage even students who didn't think much of themselves. What I valued most about the school was the way that the school cared about students and gave them opportunities to succeed	PST values PST identifies 'resilience' Teacher identity PST values Strength of openmindedness Teacher identity Building relationships PST flexibility Teacher identity PST values PST's assumptions PST values

making sense of COVID-19's impact on their professional experience. The initial coding process focused on each participants' emotions, interaction with self, the role of the teacher, and their rationalisation for actions, based on the process designed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Corbin and Strauss (2015). Initially, as illustrated in Table 3.2, this coding focused on the meanings behind the data. The process created initial codes: character, flexibility, relationships, resilience, and strengths. Initial codes paralleled participants language 'I have valued my resilience, persistence and independence', character, 'adapt things to get closer to the level of the students', flexibility, 'making a positive impact on the future generation is the most pivotal thing a person can do', relationships, 'What I most valued about myself was my resilience', resilience, and 'I think it's a privilege and quite rare for teachers to be inspired by their students', strengths. To establish intra-rater reliability data was coded over two different periods. Next, the researcher searched for two emerging themes linked to the discover questions as shown in Table 3.3. Two overarching themes emerged: values and strengths and these were chosen as the final names for the themes. Definitions developed for analysis are seen in Table 3.4 values and focused on the participant's judgement belief adapted from Frischer and Hänze (2020) and strengths focused on the participants' identification of pre-existing qualities that arise naturally, feel authentic (and) are intrinsically motivating to use adapted from Brdar and Kashdan (2010, p. 151).

3.10 Ethics

The study design, data collection process and instrument were reviewed and approved by the University of Adelaide's ethics committee (Approval Number H-2020-065).

Table 3.3 Two codes with data extracts (direct quotations)

PST's values	PST's strengths
The things I have valued the most about myself are my hard work and dedication to completing my placement and degree early. I am incredibly prideful of my achievements on placement. The things I have valued the most about the nature of my work are my ability to teach, interact, and inspire young curious-minded individuals …	… my resilience, persistence, and independence in this highly unpredictable time. During the postponed time, it was up to me to stay in control of my work and to keep calm, which has put me in good stead while on my placement as it is largely self-driven and independent while mentor teachers are writing reports and marking exams
I have valued that the pandemic did not impact my ability to connect and teach students. The dependence upon technology was exciting and widened my skill set. I think my greatest ability is understanding students and knowing how to communicate and push them to reach their potential	… resilience of myself to keep pushing forward with an extremely challenging task of keeping up to date with my teaching load, while dealing with the stress and anxiety I was feeling from such an uncertain time in my life … I never felt that I was being asked to do too much, even though I found it very overwhelming at times

Table 3.4 Definitions for two overarching themes

Theme	Definitions of selected themes
Theme 1: PSTs values	Focused on the participant's judgement belief what was important during placement (adapted from Frischer & Hänze, 2020)
Theme 2: PSTs strengths	Focused on the participants' identification of pre-existing qualities that arise naturally, feel authentic (and) are intrinsically motivating to use (adapted from Brdar & Kashdan, 2010, p. 151)

3.11   Limitations

As this is a qualitative case study, one of the limitations was the sample size and the profile of the participants. Furthermore, during the data collection process, it may have been beneficial to have conducted focus group interviews after the practicum. The researcher decided as the researcher did not want to interfere with the final practicum and the volatility of the pandemic's disruption on teaching in school.

3.12   Findings

During the coding process, it was clear that PSTs were grappling with the development of their professional identity, their role in the classroom, and their professional practice. Simultaneously, several PSTs commented on how the COVID-19 pandemic was influencing the way that they thought of, felt about, and valued the profession.

3.13 PST Values

A theme across all the responses classified focused on the flexibility of PSTs during their professional experience placement. Flexibility may be viewed as an important and desirable characteristic in teachers during the pandemic and this was clearly seen as a significant strength to possess. For example, a male Master of Teaching Mathematics and Science PST reflects:

> I valued the resilience of myself to keep pushing forward with an extremely challenging task of keeping up to date with my teaching load, whilst dealing with the stress and anxiety I was feeling from such an uncertain time in my life. I valued that teaching has no boundaries, and is able to be done across technology. [MTeach; mathematics, science; male]

As many PSTs experienced the stop–start nature of schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic, flexibility became an important skill. Another noticed the importance of flexibility in responding to feedback during their professional experience. The vital role that schools can play in creating a safe, supportive, and consistent learning environment for students during traumatic events was noted by this student. For example, a PST teaching English notes the skill of being able to respond to the evidence provided by mentors and students in their classes to improve their professional practice:

> I have valued my ability to be flexible, think on my feet and not be overly critical on myself or expect too much. I value the importance that's been placed on education throughout the pandemic. I appreciate the fact that for some students' school is a great place for to be and they wanted to continue to be there during the pandemic. [English]

A female Bachelor of Teaching and Bachelor of Arts History and Psychology PST reflected on the flexibility and consistency she needed to show in her communication and open-mindedness with colleagues. This PST noted the immediate disruption at the start of her professional experience when, as a result of the state government's restrictions in response to the pandemic, schools were preparing rapidly for online learning. In the South Australian context, teachers were confronted with preparing for online delivery. This was not necessarily needed because of the fluctuation in the number of COVID-19 cases. She highlights the need to reflect and coach herself to engage with the opportunities presented to her during her professional experience, observing:

> My school had a full week of online learning, which was not unexpected given the COVID-19 situation, but unexpected for a normal teaching placement experience. The most memorable learning and teaching experience to date was teaching my Year 8 Care Group class and integrating mindfulness into my teaching. The key strengths displayed were flexibility and consistent and positive communication between students and colleagues. [BTeach/BA, history, psychology; female]

Another PST teaching English during their final professional experience placement noted that online learning was rapidly deployed in their school. This PST found that

the challenges faced by many schools are incremental in the process of introducing online learning management systems. Here they note the flexibility required to be able to sustain the engagement of year seven students and focus upon the steps required to plan for and implement effective learning and teaching. Once again, the PST describes an interior coaching dialogue to help manage the complexity of the issue, noting:

> Of course the COVID-19 situation forced the hand of schools to transform online. What was unexpected from my perspective was how quickly everything changed back to normal. My most memorable teaching experience was teaching to [year] 7 students during the crisis. Because of this both myself and colleagues had to be flexible with our teaching structure. [English]

A male Bachelor of Teaching and Bachelor of Mathematics and Computer Science PST commented upon the internal dialogue that happens during teaching where flexibility is illustrated by the PST in checking in with their lesson plan, goals, and objectives to maintain effective learning and teaching. Additionally, this PST notes his anticipation that schools would be closed and then needing to reimagine his professional identity as an essential worker during the first wave of the pandemic. He writes:

> I expected the school to be closed to be honest, but it remained open and we used webcams to record all classes for students … The strengths we showed was our ability to still teach online and in class at the same time. [BTeach/BMathsComSci; mathematics, STEM; male]

Teaching is widely recognised as a highly relational profession. The dynamic between teacher and taught is critical in developing a safe and supportive learning environment and progressing learning outcomes. Throughout this case study, PSTs commented upon the importance of establishing these relationships. At times, a PST can have difficulty setting up relationships with students given the duration of professional experience. PST's responses to this element of the questions emphasised their flexibility. For example, a female Bachelor of Teaching and Bachelor of Arts History, Languages, and Psychology PST notes:

> I have valued my flexibility, my ability to foster positive and professional relationships with the staff and students at the school and how I sought out opportunities that bene-fitted myself as a pre-service teacher as well as the school/staff/students … I value the creative and collaborative nature of my work. [BTeach, BA; history, languages, psychology; female]

An English, geography, and history PST noted the energy that can be drawn from student and teacher interaction. During this PST's final placement, they noticed that the challenges that were presented to them inspired their willingness to focus upon the development of their professional practice. Here, the PST was able to comment upon their willingness to find out how students learn and to develop greater mastery around the content and how they teach, particularly with regard to strategies for effective learning and teaching. They comment:

The students inspired me. The adversity some of them face should not be experienced by any child. Yet they come to school each day and defy the odds placed upon them …Some only have themselves to rely on and struggle some days, but that's expected. I think it's a privilege and quite rare for teachers to be inspired by their students. [English, geography, history]

As COVID-19 disrupted all elements of university degrees and professional experience, one of the significant traits that emerged was the resilience of PSTs. While resilience has been identified as a desirable characteristic in early career teachers before the pandemic, this trait has emerged, from the perspective of the PSTs in this case study, as an essential element to developing and implementing effective learning and teaching. In many of the PST responses, individuals were surprised by the depth of resilience that they had within themselves. It was through the disruption and trauma caused by the pandemic that this characteristic emerged. For example, a female Master of Teaching PST on a music placement says:

I have valued my ability for taking initiative, being able to take everything in my stride and adapt to the changing environment and situations, as well as my ability to take risks and be kind, generous, respectful and understanding. I valued greatly the support, friendliness, caring and understanding staff and students and the beautiful environment the school was in … [MTeach; music; female]

Another female Master of Teaching student completing an English teaching placement noted the joy and excitement she experienced during her professional experience placement. Here, she commented on her resilience and ability to show independence as she focused upon developing effective learning and teaching and classroom activities for her students. This participant noted the importance of collegiality and networking with her other PSTs, who could supply commentary on the experiences she was having. She says:

I have valued my resilience, persistence and independence in this highly unpredictable time. During the postponed time, it was up to me to stay in control of my work and to keep calm, which has put me in good stead while on my placement as it is largely self-driven and independent while mentor teachers are writing reports and marking exams. I have valued the people around me and the people at school who have been extremely helpful and patient, and those other friends and PSTs who help debrief and vent about stressful issues. [MTeach; English; female]

3.14   PST Strengths

During the coding process, elements of participants' character identity and character development emerged in response to the discover questions. Throughout the participants' responses, it is evident that they are able to identify and comment upon the development of what they described as their professional identity. Here, participants were able to comment upon nuanced strengths that supported their goal to be able to

be effective teachers that have a positive impact on student learning outcomes. For example, a female Bachelor of Teaching and Bachelor of Arts PST teaching English and history writes:

> I value kindness, loyalty and empathy about myself … The things I have valued at the school have been the relationships built with colleagues and the incredible collaboration of the entire middle school office I've worked in. [BTeach/BA; English, history; female]

Biology, STEM, Earth, and environmental science PST noted their ability to remain flexible and demonstrate empathy towards the culture and context of the students in their classes. In this response, the PST is able to illustrate the complex factors that link between student experience and their character to connect with effective learning and teaching, for example, saying:

> Ability to adapt to blended delivery of content. Ability to assist students in understanding the global events from a scientific point of view, allowing students to process the vast amounts of information to become informed citizens. [Biology, STEM, Earth & environmental science]

A female Bachelor of Teaching and Bachelor of Science PST who was on a biology and chemistry placement during the pandemic noted her ability to teach in dual mode, with students present in her classroom and learning online. The PST showed her willingness to learn during this time and maintain an open-minded and positive-oriented mindset to improve the quality of her teaching. She notes her vulnerability in the development of her professional identity during this placement, writing:

> Unexpectedly, the school allowed for student teachers to persist, while being a good thing, it was difficult and challenging to continue teaching in an online environment. Most memorable learning and teaching experience to date would be using Microsoft docs for students to interact with one another while students had been at home and some were in class to effectively communicate with each other. Strengths shown by my colleagues have been staying consistent and trying to maintain positive during this time. [BTeach/BSc; biology, chemistry; female]

For some of the PSTs, the disruption of the pandemic highlighted their employability; for example, a female mathematics and biology PST on her placement revealed how she was employed soon after. She notes the reflection required to grow from mistakes and develop more effective learning and teaching experiences for her students, writing:

> The most unexpected response I achieved from the school was that the school was so happy with my performance that they were willing to hire me before registration and pay a TRT additionally to be present in the classroom until I obtained registration. My most memorable learning and teaching experience centred around my development of content specific pedagogical terms and the creation and implementation of activities within my classroom to introduce topics. [BTeach/BSc; biology, mathematics; female]

3.15   Discussion and Conclusions

This case study presents new knowledge pertaining to PSTs as it examines their experience throughout this juncture in their professional development and in the context of the unprecedented disruption of the pandemic. It offers a unique insight into the professional experience of PSTs in South Australia, which was one of the few places in the world where university teaching placements could continue during the first wave of the pandemic (Government of South Australia Department for Education, 2020). While it is too early to consider the long-term benefits of continuing with professional experience during the pandemic, there are several potential benefits pointed out by participants which may be considered when discussing a strength orientation to challenges and adversity. The advantage of an appreciative inquiry case study is that it encourages participants to consider the strengths they are experiencing and noticing in others (Cooperrider & Fry, 2020). These characteristics may not necessarily appear in other methodologies. Appreciative inquiry, as a deliberate strength-based methodology, thereby encourages participants to consider a strength orientation to challenges and adversity. In discussing the potential implications of the case study, it is possible to argue that PSTs can identify benefits in the COVID-19 disruption. Positive outcomes can be found in their professional experience. The participants note greater knowledge and understanding of the development of their character and an increased opportunity to demonstrate flexibility, enhance professional relationships, test much-needed resilience, and reflect upon the significance of their strengths in the context of preparing lessons for effective learning and teaching.

3.16   PSTs' Values

As noted in the introduction and background to this case study, there is a dearth of literature discussing the perspective of PSTs. Investigating their thoughts and feelings during the pandemic is an important step in helping ITEs develop future programs. When considering research question 1, the PSTs found the depth of their discipline knowledge put them at a significant advantage in being able to prepare quickly and flexibly in providing a diversity of classroom experiences for students. They commented upon their ability to be flexible in their planning and reflection of their teaching during the pandemic. This ability to be able to reflect upon the impact of their professional practice is a factor in the development of graduate-ready teachers. Furthermore, the pandemic and being able to continue with their professional experience during this time provided PSTs with significant and diverse learning experiences as part of their growing professional identity. An advantage readily identified by participants was that this would provide examples for PSTs to draw upon to articulate the impact of their professional practice when applying for teaching

positions in the future. All participants commented upon the depth and breadth of collegiality shown by teachers, mentors, and other PSTs during the pandemic. The pandemic revealed that PSTs felt uncertain during this period. Numerous participants commented upon the need to reassure themselves that their professional experience placement would conclude successfully and equipped them for future challenges ahead in their employment. The volatility caused by COVID-19 and the rapid changes for parents and caregivers added another layer of complexity for PSTs, who were required to empathise with students and their families (Flores, 2020).

3.17 PSTs' Strengths

When reflecting on research question 2, The PSTs in this sample had minimal exposure, if any, to the concept of strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) during the ITE. All participants were able to describe what they believed were the strengths they exhibited during their professional experience. Many participants commented upon their ability to draw upon their love of learning, creativity, and perseverance to be able to establish and maintain positive learning environments for the classes they were teaching. The results gleaned from the participants reinforce the significance of relationships and networks to support early career teachers. It underscores the potential for highly effective and graduate-ready teachers. Many participants commented upon their ability to be able to transition between face-to-face teaching, online teaching, and blended pedagogies. This suggests their flexibility and consistency in persevering in the face of the adversities they encountered during their professional experience, which may be seen as an advantage for their future careers. All the participants noted that teaching is a profoundly human experience and that, to learn effectively, it was necessary to recognise the emotions, thoughts, and feelings of the students in classes to prepare them for learning. This finding is important as it paves the way for the ongoing integration of a wellbeing framework that specifically introduces PSTs to wellbeing concepts such as resilience, character development, empathy, and other wellbeing topics. These findings support the proposition that ITE is well-positioned to integrate wellbeing more systematically into the development of professional experience to prepare PSTs to become graduate-ready.

3.18 Conclusions

A year after data collection with multiple vaccines developed, the new COVID-19 delta variant disrupts Australia with rolling border closures, lockdowns in South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria. While COVID-19 may be a once-in-a-100-year event, I argue that the experiences gained by PSTs during their

Table 3.5 Summary: Implications for teachers of wellbeing education

Implications for Wellbeing and Professional Practice
1. Universities should include discussion about the role of wellbeing, character, and resilience should be included in initial teacher education programs
2. Initial Teacher Education providers should develop evidence-informed strategies to better prepare preservice teachers to be classroom ready
3. When the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* are revised wellbeing should be included in the standards

professional experience raise unresolved issues of being and becoming a teacher. Themes related to PST values and strengths may be translated to other disasters, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, bushfires, or widespread displacement due to war and famine. Rolling school closures in South Australia and varying approaches to managing the pandemic lockdown in schools across the state added to the complexity of professional experience. The analysis of data collected during the discover stage confirms that resilience plays an integral part in the development of a PST's professional identity. This finding supports pre-pandemic research on teacher and PST resilience by Beltman (2021), Mansfield and Beltman (2019), Mansfield et al. (2020), and White (2020) on initial teacher education, and White's (2020) examination of PSTs' attitudes towards character and wellbeing. PSTs are the future pipeline of each nation's teaching workforce. We might learn from the ongoing shockwaves of COVID-19 and PSTs' experience to enhance the learning, professional experience, and progression of graduate-ready teachers during this period, which is a crucial issue to be explored in more depth (Table 3.5).

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Chapter 4
Building Wellbeing for Belonging

Faye McCallum

Abstract A sense of belonging is critical for understanding individuals' contributions to and the processes of inhabiting the workplace. Increasingly, research associated with teachers' wellbeing and teachers' work reports that ill-being has a detrimental effect on productivity, professional practice, and student outcomes. The impact of this trend influences teacher attraction, retention, and sustainability in the profession. Yet, the concept of belonging as a measure of wellbeing has not been explored in current research despite a teacher's mantra of wanting to belong to a profession, be a part of something and make a difference. Much research has been conducted on the benefits and implications of belonging for children and young people, and schools are often cited as the place where a sense of engagement, attachment, and accomplishment is achieved. This chapter draws on the concept of belonging in one case study—an Australian school that has measured employee wellbeing twice over a three-year period. At a time of increasing complexity, rapid change, globalisation, and digitalisation that is challenging schools as workplaces in new ways, this chapter will highlight the importance of belonging for teachers' wellbeing.

Keywords Belonging · Education systems · Teacher education · Teacher professional development · Teacher wellbeing · Education workplaces

4.1 Introduction

Teacher wellbeing is gaining greater momentum as an issue for educators, employers, policymakers, and communities over the last 40 years, with the most work completed in the last decade (McCallum et al., 2017). Recent global events are increasing this attention (McCallum, 2021b), as well as research on the impact of poor teacher wellbeing on student outcomes, satisfaction and happiness (Guerriero, 2017; McCallum et al., 2017; OECD, 2018; Rajendran et al., 2020; Schleicher, 2018; see Chap. 5).

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Teachers are often considered the most important in-school factor on positive outcomes from schooling yet feel under-valued in some sectors. Teacher burnout, stress, and attrition are important concerns for governments as we head towards a global teacher shortage. Edge et al. (2017) summarise the complexing issues that impact teachers' wellbeing in their workplace to include: continual changes, complex environments, a profession that receives little support and recognition, negative societal perceptions of education, poor salaries, lack of school-level resources, lack of job satisfaction, insufficient teacher preparation, limited opportunities to participate in decision-making, and unclear career pathways (p. 30).

However, during times of crisis when schools and communities experience disruption, teachers can maintain momentum, stability for many children and young people, and continue to fulfil their duties (McCallum, 2021b). For example, during the global pandemic of 2020/21, teachers experienced an increase in recognition and feelings of being valued by communities as schools provided much-needed hope and optimism (White & McCallum, 2021). Teachers generally report a love towards their profession and enter it because they want to make a difference in the lives of children and young people. They also want to be perceived as professionals who are respected within their communities. Many nations produce teachers for a knowledge economy and as an investment for the future (McCallum, 2020). But teachers deliver so much more, as their nurturing and contribution ensure children and young people leave their schooling years able to function in a literate and socially just world as global citizens (Viac & Fraser, 2020). Governments in many countries aim to address the shortfalls that affect the teaching profession and lead to ill-being. For example, in Qatar, specifically Jordan, professional recognition of teachers through certification and training is being addressed (Edge et al., 2017). In the UK, teacher training has undergone reforms, and in Australia, constant reviews of initial teacher education are conducted on the premise that a quality teaching workforce is needed to improve student learning outcomes (see Chap. 7).

Economies and communities need to retain qualified, motivated, and inspirational teachers who will continue to work through the many existing challenges and unknown ones in the future. There are very good reasons to continue to focus on the wellbeing of the teaching profession, specifically on teachers as the most important in-school factor (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Hattie, 2009; Price & McCallum, 2016; Viac & Fraser, 2020). This chapter focuses on teachers' intrinsic need to want to belong to a profession for the greater good. It explores the key concept of 'belonging' as driving people to the profession and a reason why teachers stay in the profession. Belonging is one of the strongest human motivational needs; humans have an innate psychological drive to belong. Here, belonging is viewed as an important factor in teachers' wellbeing, which will be explored through research conducted in one case study school. Reasons for building a sense of belonging in education is a powerful strategy for addressing many aspects that plague the profession. Previous studies on teacher wellbeing situate it within Bronfenbrenner (1979) ecological framework for human development to understand the layered challenges that teachers face (McCallum, 2021b; Price & McCallum, 2015; White & McCallum, 2021). In this chapter, I also draw on Wenger (1998) seminal work on identity

formation and Lave and Wenger (1991) research to situate teachers' sense of belonging in wellbeing.

4.2 Belonging

To belong is to be a part of something; it is like a membership akin to feeling 'at home'. Belonging can be defined as a unique and subjective experience that relates to a connection with others, the need for positive regard, and the desire for interpersonal connection (Allen, 2021, p. 2). It also relates to autonomy, choice, and commitment (Allen, 2021, p. 4). Block (2018) suggests that belonging is best created when we join with other people in producing something that makes a better place. Despite his work mainly focusing on building community, synergies exist for teachers who decide to join a profession. He argues that to belong is to act as a creator and co-owner of that community or group, which helps us seek a wider and deeper sense of emotional and communal ownership. With ownership comes a sense of responsibility—in relationships and what can be controlled—to find our deeper purpose in what we do. Thus, belonging necessitates and implies boundaries, and the work of Croucher (2018) discusses the importance of belonging to a nation, ethnic group, nationality, or political group. Croucher found that belonging has a significant impact on a range of wellbeing factors, including life satisfaction, general wellbeing, clinical depression, cognitive performance, academic outcomes, and physical health.

Belonging is an important aspect of psychological functioning. Allen and Bowles (2012) undertook research with adolescents in schools and found that they offer a unique opportunity for mediating belonging for school-age children. Osterman (2000) situates belonging as being part of a community group and researched students' sense of acceptance within the school community, finding that students' experiences of acceptance influenced their behaviour. However, she also found that schools adopt practices that undermine students' membership in a supportive community. Research has been conducted on the importance of belonging in school-age children and the role of school as a community (Allen & Bowles, 2012; Allen & Kern, 2018; Allen et al., 2018; Block, 2018; Libbey, 2004; see Chap. 6), but none to dates has focused on the importance of belonging for teachers. Conversely, teacher wellbeing literature identifies many factors that can undermine a teacher's membership in a supportive school community (Falecki & Mann, 2021; Fernandes et al., 2021; McCallum & Price, 2016; McCallum et al., 2017; McCallum, 2021a; Viac & Fraser, 2020).

The concept of belonging has received little interest, according to Allen et al. (2018), but the need to belong has never been more important as we strive to tackle some of the most complex social issues of our times (Allen, 2021, xiii). Libbey (2004) defines belonging as connectedness for school-age children and includes school bonding, school climate, notions of territory, school attachment, and orientation to school. She describes factors that build a sense of belonging at school to include

teacher supportiveness, teachers who are caring, adults in the school community that are interested in the students and have high expectations, positive teacher–student relationships, feeling safe at school, having good friends and extended peer groups, students engaged in the academic program, having fair and effective discipline, and students participating in extra-curricular activities (Libbey, 2004, p. 109).

The benefits of a sense of belonging to groups have positive psychological functioning across variables like self-esteem, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction. There are more positive health outcomes, happiness, optimism, and physical health. Allen and Bowles (2012) state that belonging protects against stress, loneliness, emotional distress, mental illness, and the effects of depression and highlight many benefits for the adult population (p. 110). Those that research teacher wellbeing (McCallum et al., 2017; Schleicher, 2018; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015) describe the profession as one driven by ethical values and personal motivation (Viac & Fraser, 2020, p. 25) with positive outcomes that include positive relationships with higher student achievement, motivation and a sense of self-efficacy, and positive impacts on teachers' pedagogy, job satisfaction, enthusiasm, and commitment.

Filstad et al. (2019) explored employees' interpretations of belonging at work, focusing on the material, aesthetic, and emotional aspects of the workplace. Their findings suggest a link between these aspects and social interactions at work. They surmise that belonging is about being a part of something, the process of becoming through constant mediation between material aspects and social components, the process of experiencing boundaries, and the attempt to perform, engage, and participate in a workplace. Together, they constitute the situatedness, the here and now, of experiences of belonging and the perceived interpretation of being one among equals across organisational boundaries (Filstad et al., 2019, p. 140). The quality of the working environment is an important driver in wellbeing, and factors conducive to personal accomplishment—like the nature of the work, time arrangements, relationships and opportunities for training—should all be considered (Cazes et al., 2015; Viac & Fraser, 2020). Therefore, belonging comprises material, social, and affective dimensions in the workplace and should be present for employees to feel a sense of belonging at work. It seems appropriate to prioritise and foster belonging for teachers as few studies have done this, but we do know that group life and feeling part of a community have a significant impact on our wellbeing (Block, 2018; Day, 2017; White & McCallum, 2020; see Chap. 5).

4.3   Theoretical Framework

This chapter draws on the ecological framework developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), who emphasises family as the first unit to which children belong, followed by school and community, and then a broader network of groups and systems. Accordingly, all children are at the centre of all the layers of the environment, which can significantly affect their development and psycho-social adjustment (see Fig. 5.1).

Bronfenbrenner's framework has been applied to teachers, their work, and wellbeing by Price and McCallum (2015), who argue that teachers' wellbeing is impacted by many layers, including the classroom, school, wider community, education systems, and life events. They present inhibiting factors at all layers and suggest enabling strategies that support them. The 2020/2021 global pandemic is a good example of the impact at the chronosystem level on teachers' work (see Chap. 5). White and McCallum (2021) applied Bronfenbrenner's framework to interpret whether the pandemic was an education crisis or a catalyst for change. In this chapter, I propose that teachers' sense of belonging is part of the ecological framework and impacts their wellbeing.

Communities of practice are everywhere, and we all belong to one; we can belong as core members or peripherally. A 'community of practice', the term coined by Wenger (1998), provides a sense of belonging and develops around things that matter to people. They share a sense of identity as a community. A community of practice is usually defined by three dimensions: a joint enterprise, relationships of mutual engagement, and shared resources. Communities of practice are often characterised by crossing boundaries that each individual has a responsibility to uphold. Within the community of practice, Wenger (1998) argues that identity formation and learning need to consider three modes of belonging: engagement, alignment, and imagination. We know that belonging is a relational phenomenon in which people feel valued by being part of a group or organisation, or in the case of teachers, a profession. Belonging is the foundation of social identity, whereby the degree of people's perceived belonging comprises cognitive, emotional, and reflective elements. A core component of the teaching profession is the sense of belonging, with joint goals and aims, working with others to achieve what really matters for students. It is a profession that is fluid. It can change over time, and teachers can transition to different contexts, roles, and communities, yet the end goal remains the same. Wenger's concepts and the earlier work of Lave and Wenger (1991), who believe that learners participate in communities of practitioners, and the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move towards full participation in the sociocultural practice of a community are well suited to building wellbeing for belonging (see Fig. 4.1).

4.4 Methodology

One Australian school was used as a case study in this chapter to demonstrate how belonging builds wellbeing for teachers. The school's strategic plan 2019–2022 identifies 'working together' as the pathway for student and staff social and emotional wellbeing. Since 2016, they have focused on integrating research-informed approaches to wellbeing in education. The 'character' priority of the school's strategic plan sought to nurture the personal journey of each girl and boy as one community, preparing students for tomorrow's world. Before this approach, there was no whole-school strategy for wellbeing education. A research-informed approach to wellbeing
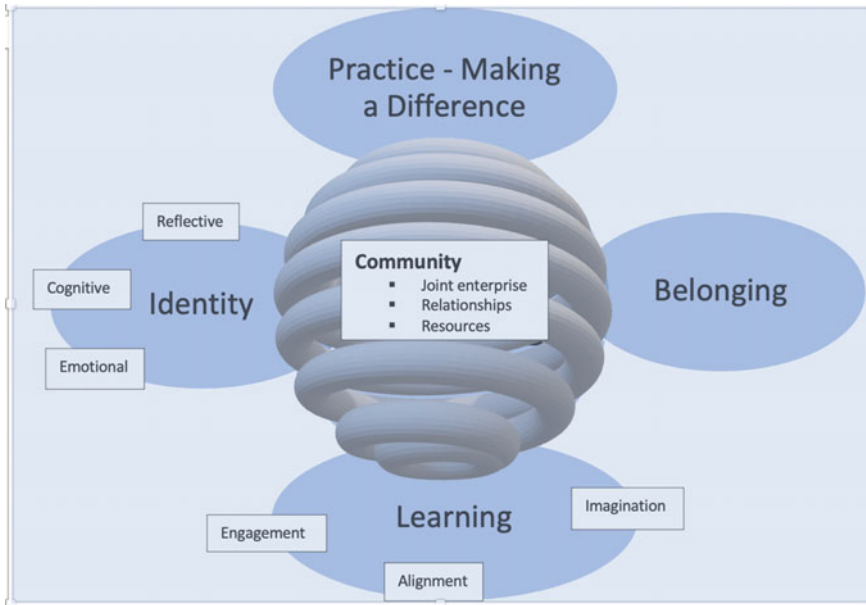
Fig. 4.1 Theoretical framework—wellbeing for belonging

education was adopted by the school, and the following process has positioned wellbeing:

1. the strategic plan 2019–2022: *Two Schools, One Community*
2. whole-school measurement of wellbeing across the girls' and boys' schools
3. investment in professional research learning for all employees that informed whole-school wellbeing education
4. established the role of Deputy Head of Secondary (Students) to lead wellbeing initiatives.

The all-boys school recently amalgamated with the sister school, led by one executive principal under a single board's governance. The school's passion was to develop and nurture students in an inclusive and diverse Christian learning environment. The school's vision, purpose, and culture cited in its strategic plan 2019–2022, along with the executive principal and senior leadership team (SLT), have committed to measuring the wellbeing of employees (and students in Years 6–12) as a first step to develop and implement a signature wellbeing program. Only employee data and analyses will be discussed in this chapter. Employee measurement was completed at two points—in 2019 and again in 2021—using an identical tool.

In 2016, the school reviewed several wellbeing frameworks, and in 2018, launched 'Hearts and Minds', based on the New Economics Foundation (2008) *Five Ways to*

Hearts and Minds

Fig. 4.2 Hearts and minds framework

Wellbeing (see Fig. 4.2). The framework was used across the school in various ways with both students and staff. They adopted this research-informed definition:

> Wellbeing is comprised of feeling good and functioning well. Feeling good is characterised by positive emotions which include happiness, contentment, enjoyment, curiosity and engagement. Functioning well is determined by attributes such as experiencing positive relationships, having some control over one's life and having a sense of purpose. (New Economics Foundation, 2008)

Ethics approval was gained by the University of Adelaide (H-2019–120). This study abides by the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, particularly the chapter 'Children and Young People'. This study adopted a 'two-way' approach in that both student and employee wellbeing were paramount to a positive learning experience. This aspect was unique to this study, which employed a mixed-methods approach to identify the current state of wellbeing with employees and students. Employees were invited to volunteer for the study via the school email; consent was implied when participants submitted the survey. If employees did not wish to participate, they closed the survey window and were automatically led out of the survey. Employees were free to withdraw from the project within a week of submitting responses without explanation or prejudice and withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied. All data were treated confidentially. No individual reports were generated, and the researchers were not able to identify individual employees; the research focused on group trends. Data were stored in password-protected folders, and only the researchers had access. The confidentiality and anonymity of individual participants were ensured using pseudonyms and/or research codes.

The wellbeing surveys collected quantitative and qualitative data and included several categorical questions (e.g., years of teaching experience) answered via multiple-choice and items related to perceptions of wellbeing via *n*-point Likert scales. Some questions required open-ended answers (e.g., 'how would you define wellbeing?'). All results were descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies) displayed via

bar plots. The distributions of numeric data, percentages, and averages are displayed via bar plots. All graphics and calculations were performed in Excel. This was a cross-sectional study in that participants completed the survey once per cycle (i.e., they are measured at a given point in time). Data was collected in a secure portal for analysis purposes. A mixed-methods approach was applied to the quantitative (i.e., ratings) and qualitative (i.e., open-ended questions) data. Tables and graphs represent the quantitative data, and a narrative approach was used to report the qualitative data. Employee data was collected once over a period of 20 days for both the 2019 and 2021 studies.

4.5   Results and Discussion

Employee data was collected for the first study from 15 July to 4 August 2019, and the second from 3 to 24 August 2021. The 2019 study received responses from 144 employees (100% completion rate); 14 responses were incomplete. In 2021, 132 employees responded (100% completion rate); 19 responses were incomplete. Thus, only complete responses were considered in the following descriptive statistics. The employees' wellbeing survey consisted of three sections: the first section had 13 questions requiring basic demographic information (see Table 4.1) related to years of teaching experience, type of current employment, main role at school, etc. Three questions in this section asked whether the employee had received any professional learning on wellbeing (Question 9); if so, how valuable was it (Question 10). If the learning was deemed valuable, the employee could elaborate in Question 11. The second section consisted of 12 items asking about the employee's wellbeing level at the time they completed the survey and responded via a six-point Likert scale—'at no time', 'some of the time', 'less than half the time', 'more than half the time', 'most of the time', and 'all of the time'. The third section consisted of nine questions: one binary-choice question, one five-point Likert rating question, and seven open-ended questions. These questions aimed to further explore employees' sense of wellbeing at the school and will be largely reported in this chapter for teachers only.

In the 2019 study, 56% of employees indicated that wellbeing was considered a school priority, which rose to 76% in 2021. In both studies, males (3.37 in 2019 and 3.61 in 2021) recorded a higher level of wellbeing than females (3.02 in 2019 and 3.50 in 2021). According to years of teaching experience, all teachers recorded higher values of wellbeing in the 2021 study compared to the 2019 study (see Table 4.2); however, experienced teachers recorded the highest level of wellbeing in 2019, and it was the early career teachers in 2021.

Wellbeing was defined positively in both studies, and definitions often showed a high sense of awareness and understanding about wellbeing, belonging, learning, and identity (terms highlighted in bold below). Examples include:

Table 4.1 Demographic data of 2019 and 2021 studies

	2019 Measurement	2021 Measurement
Gender		
Male	78% ($n = 101$)	17% ($n = 26$)
Female	21% ($n = 27$)	72% ($n = 113$)
Did not disclose	1% ($n = 2$)	11% ($n = 17$)
Employment		
Teaching only	52% ($n = 67$)	50% ($n = 76$)
Leadership	25% ($n = 32$)	27% ($n = 40$)
Non-teaching	24% ($n = 31$)	23% ($n = 35$)
Total Teaching experience		
0–5 years	17% ($n = 17$)	13% ($n = 15$)
6–15 years	30% ($n = 30$)	38% ($n = 44$)
Greater than 15 years	53% ($n = 52$)	49% ($n = 57$)
Current teaching year level		
Primary	28% ($n = 28$)	23% ($n = 27$)
Middle years	5% ($n = 5$)	6% ($n = 7$)
Senior years	8% ($n = 8$)	13% ($n = 15$)
Both middle and senior years	59% (n $= 58$)	57% ($n = 66$)
Employment period at current school		
0–5 years	53% ($n = 69$)	53% ($n = 60$)
6–15 years	35% ($n = 45$)	38% ($n = 43$)
Greater than 15 years	12% ($n = 16$)	9% ($n = 10$)
Employment type		
Full-time	80% ($n = 104$)	85% ($n = 96$)
Part-time	20% ($n = 26$)	15% ($n = 17$)
Permanent	83% ($n = 108$)	81% ($n = 91$)
Contract	17% ($n = 22$)	19% ($n = 22$)
	$n = 130$	$n = 113$

Table 4.2 Comparison of teacher wellbeing values against years of experience (Likert scale of $1 =$ low to $5 =$ high)

Years of teaching experience	2019	2021
0–5	2.93	3.54
6–15	2.93	3.28
15+	3.50	3.36

*Being confident and happy in a role and **able to work well with others** but also be confident when asking for help.*
*Well-being, wellbeing, or wellness is the condition of an individual or **group**. A high level of well-being means that in some sense the individual's or group's condition is positive.*
*Having a sense of **purpose and achievement** in what I do. My role being understood and **valued**.*
*Being **happy** to go to work. A sense of achievement and **recognition**. Not feeling pressured and stressed. Having a good home/work balance.*
*Having a positive mindset. Achieving balance (particularly work/life balance). **Feeling productive and successful at work.** Building strong and supportive relationships with colleagues.*
*Wellbeing is about feeling good and functioning well—experiencing positive emotions, **good relationships** and having a **sense of control and purpose** in life.*

Teachers' perceptions of their wellbeing were measured on a six-part Likert scale from 'at no time' to 'all of the time'. The results for both the 2019 and 2021 studies identified the same top three perceptions but at varying percentages. In the 2019 study, teachers recorded the top three perceptions to be:

1. school leadership values my work at school (22.3%)
2. I get guidance from the school leadership team without feeling pressured (20%)
3. the leadership team encourages my achievements at school (15.38%).

In the 2021 study, the same top three perceptions emerged but with different percentages:

1. school leadership values my work at school (33.8%)
2. the leadership team encourages my achievements at school (33.8%)
3. I get guidance from the school leadership team without feeling pressured (33.1%).

The increase in percentages for these three variables indicates that teachers feel more valued by the leadership in the workplace. The leadership team actively encourages staff achievement and supports staff to work through any work issues in a positive way. An interesting comparison can be made on the perception of 'the school leadership team and I work together to solve problems that I have in the workplace', which was responded to by 20% of teachers in 2019 and 33.4% in 2021. This change in levels of perception of how well teachers feel they are interacting with the school leadership team was significant enough to consider that staff feel closer connections and collegiality at the school with an increased sense of wellbeing and belonging.

The qualitative data from the question 'what work-related activities impacts your wellbeing positively?' recorded numerous responses, which were analysed according to the key themes represented in the theoretical framework (see Fig. 4.1 and Table 4.3). The key terms included belonging, purpose, identity, learning, reflection, practice, and making a difference, which are all relevant to teachers' wellbeing and sense of belonging.

Table 4.3 Work-related activities that impact teachers' wellbeing

Belonging	Purpose	Identity	Learning	Reflection	Practice	Making a Difference
Interactions with colleagues	Collaboration student learning, sense of common purpose, feeling valued	Receiving praise. Support. Achievement	Opportunities to work with my strengths. Time in the classroom and with students	Having a manager who understands work/life balance	Assisting the students to achieve their goals	Knowing your work makes a difference Community
Great colleagues who value me. Wonderful students to teach who make me laugh and work hard for me	Positive interactions with children, staff, and parents sharing humour and celebrating success openly	Feeling valued, listening to colleagues laugh, be happy, joyful	Being challenged and learning Subject-specific professional development	Staff wellbeing activities have helped me build a sense of wellbeing. Love being in Chapel—peaceful time of refection	I especially enjoy helping the boys with hands-on projects	Connecting with my team and students, making a difference in the lives of young people
Collaboration, working together to achieve a common vision	Relationships, sense of worth, recognition, being able to communicate with, and help others in a positive way	Good relationships and feeling respected by students and colleagues	Seeing the positive changes in students; seeing positive changes in the school; being supported by leadership	Empathetic conversations with supportive colleagues about positive or negative situations at work	Working as part of a team and sharing the load	Finding new opportunities for students to experience things or learn

(continued)

Table 4.3 (continued)

Belonging	Purpose	Identity	Learning	Reflection	Practice	Making a Difference
Feelings of satisfaction and appreciation by students and staff	Team meetings, project completion, working collaboratively with leadership and team building opportunities	Receiving kind emails and Thankyou notes	Teaching and learning with students, celebrating student achievement, and planning a great lesson	Operating with a degree of autonomy fitting of a professional devoted to her field	Relationships with teachers, students, parents, and non-teaching staff	Expressing ideas, offering suggestions that are received and considered with genuine interest
Enjoying the connections, I have here Nurturing relationships through daily connections with staff and students	Connecting with students about their work	Being recognised and valued for my expertise as a trained, experienced professional by the school community	Staff meetings which focus on wellbeing	Working with appreciative students and staff	Make productive progress on projects of importance to our learners	Positively feeling valued, noticed
Trust and support from leadership, wellbeing PD sessions, general positive culture among staff	Collegiality among staff. Relationships with the students. Positive feedback from Leadership	Level of trust given to teachers, catching up with teachers informally, and being recognised for efforts	Helping students when they're having a difficult time	People, gratitude, time, positivity of others, worship, and prayer	Students improving and doing well in developing skills and ideas	When you see a child grasping the information they are given. Improving reading and spelling

The case study school engaged with teachers on many levels to support their wellbeing and sense of belonging. This was acknowledged by 'emailing gratitude' and 'giving staff autonomy' to more formal staff professional development and structural changes to the school's operation. The following quote summarises a few strategies adopted by the school to promote wellbeing and belonging:

> *Provide access to EAP to all staff members. Hold wellbeing afternoons once a term instead of typical staff meetings. Bring staff together for morning teas twice a week. External presenters come to share their expertise and recommendations. A staff wellbeing committee meets twice a term to consider ways of encouraging positive interactions and enjoyment for all staff throughout the year. Full-staff social drinks on a Friday afternoon once a term. All expenses paid staff luncheon on last day of school as a way of thanking staff and bringing us all together. Senior leadership team remind staff their doors are open for chats if wellbeing is of concern. Staff are given time to dedicate to personal wellbeing.*

The teachers also shared examples of wellbeing strategies that helped promote **belonging** to the school and wider profession. For example:

> *Staff support through buddy system when you begin teaching here, Wellbeing sessions on student-free days, Generally looking out for one another.*

The school offered coaching, graduate teacher support, and wellbeing workshops. They also offered *'fun activities during the year, massages, lots of talks and chats, coaching, counselling available, always thanking staff'*. The senior leadership team was acknowledged for their open-door policy as:

> *All can be approached when needed and who work hard to connect with all staff and students, focus on wellbeing through Positive Minds Program for students, and wellbeing committee for staff who regularly plan wellbeing activities for staff to engage in.*

A greater sense of belonging to a school and its community is characterised by a shared sense of **purpose,** which was felt among the teachers at this school because '*communication to staff is positive, highlights connection and recognises work and achievement, as well as celebrates personal milestones*'. The wellbeing strategies in place for students and staff maximised this sense of purpose, as shared by one participant:

> *For students, hearts and minds underpins how we work with students in the classroom, outside of classroom. Students being well, feeling well and connected is the motive behind everything we do.*

Teacher **identity** is a key tenet of belonging to a profession, and individual and collective identity was encouraged and promoted at this school. Sometimes this occurred through shared whole-school wellbeing activities, but within these, an individual's identity was also acknowledged. For example, the school held '*wellbeing afternoons, collegial gatherings, a range of activities to support individual wellbeing "styles"*. Leadership also assisted through their '*understanding of individual needs—they take time to listen to concerns and respond in a supportive way*'. The adopted leadership style resulted in a '*trusting leadership team based on open communication and respect, modification of expectations if required for staff facing wellbeing challenges*'.

Individual personal needs were also considered because the school established an identity for the school community where staff wellbeing was prioritised:

Well-being community, time during staff development to talk about it and acknowledge it, great work life balance expectations, understanding of family first.

Life-long **learning** is integral to teachers' identity, growth, and professional practice, and impacts their wellbeing. In the profession, formal and informal learning opportunities enhanced wellbeing and at this school, '*professional development focused on wellbeing*' because there was a genuine feeling from this teacher that '*happy staff means happy work environment and being more productive*'. The wellbeing literature identified that well teachers are more satisfied, happy, effective, and productive at work. At this school, '*an extensive co-curricular program to encourage engagement in activity, creativity and social connection*' supported individual teachers and the whole school as a collective. What was important was '*knowing your colleagues, having support and access to PDs looking at a range of ways for individuals to develop good practices*'.

Teachers are reflective practitioners, and this is actively encouraged on an individual and whole-school basis in this case study. One new teacher to the school reflected on her induction and commented that '*as a new staff member the procedures/check ins/feedback have been excellent*'. **Reflection** was a useful wellbeing tool for teachers and schools can manifest this strategy in individual and collective ways to ensure that, as this participant states, there is '*staff agency, voice, time allocation, and a strong culture of care*'. Teachers reflect on their work. This has influenced professional **practice**, which is influenced by a teacher's wellbeing. This was promoted in various ways at this school, such as:

[The] day during the student free week where teachers volunteer to take a class teaching something they are passionate about, and other teachers choose which activity they will do.

Here, teachers' practice was also developed by '*encouragement of participation in wellbeing activities*', '*supporting and encouraging staff*', '*implementing a "coaching" model of staff development*', and '*being a supportive leadership team*'. All elements lead to increased wellbeing and belonging for this particular school.

Teachers commented that they joined the teaching profession to **make a difference** to the learning outcomes of children and young people, or to give back to a system that rewarded them with a bright educational future. Teachers in this study acknowledged the intensity of the role and its associated workload when asked for input into the school's wellbeing initiatives for staff:

In order to address and assist staff wellbeing and in particular teaching staff, the real reasons behind the state of teachers' tiredness is to find and address the extra work load which continues to accumulate over the years.

Yet participants were able to identify how this school enabled teacher wellbeing and belonging by having '*supportive environments, pleasant surroundings, coaches, wellness afternoons. And the hearts and minds programs*'. Other teachers also included:

- time out in the work week
- positive recognition of individual and department contribution
- support when and where needed
- regular check-ins, advice to check in if you need assistance
- term meetings to focus on wellbeing
- thank yous during staff meetings.

During 2020, the world experienced a pandemic that adversely affected 1.6 billion learners at its peak in April. Schools and learning were disrupted, and the role of teachers' work and school leadership practices was challenged (McCallum, 2021b). At the time of research at the current site, teachers were asked to reflect on their experiences during 2020 and comment on any feelings or memories that helped them manage their load during this time. This school espoused core values for their community, as stated on their website:

> *Pastoral care is woven into every aspect of school life and we see it as a partnership between students, parents and staff. We create a community where students feel safe, valued, connected, have a strong sense of belonging and know they are valued and listened to.*

At times of disruption, school strategic plans and mission statements can be hard to uphold. Yet the teachers commented on various factors related to wellbeing and belonging at this school that aligned with the theoretical framework and included:

- *Teamwork—made remote **learning** so much more manageable.*
- *It allowed me time to become more focused and refined as a leader and teacher (**identity**).*
- *The support of colleagues, the leadership team, family and friends; shared understanding of the experience, especially in lockdown; school gave us time to prepare resources and to prepare psychologically (**practice**).*
- *My boss is a kind, smart, perceptive and generally wonderful human being. He communicates very well and together we find ways to work together (**belonging**).*
- *Appreciation from staff, being able to help others, and [being] given the opportunity for a bit of fun along the way (**belonging**).*
- *The support from management. Knowing you could reach out to SLT. I have an excellent Head of Department and colleagues who I know I can reach out to for support (**practice**).*
- *Gratitude from families and students, a supportive collaborative team (**belonging**).*
- *I also valued the connections I made both professionally and personally with my team members and the teaching staff as a whole. I felt valued and respected as a result (**identity**).*
- *Knowing we are all in it together and can laugh at many situations (**belonging**).*
- *People **reflected** in a staff meeting and said I am always positive and a great team member, so I will take that and continue to be that person for our staff.*
- *The way I was able to collaborate with team members to keep school going academically and pastorally. We continued to be there in all ways for students, parents and staff (**purpose**).*

- *The ability to maintain energy and connecting to staff and students. Increased flexibility in delivery of my role and supporting others to accept change flexibly (**making a difference**).*

4.6   Practical Strategies to Enhance Belonging in Schools

Earlier in this chapter Belonging was described as a need to perform, engage, and participate (p. 55). The quote on p. 63 has captured a real sense of how Belonging can be achieved in a school setting across multiple levels and with multiple people. Individuals, groups or teams, whole schools, and the wider educational community have a responsibility to create and build a sense of Belonging in a school. This chapter has identified the importance of striving for and achieving Belonging for wellbeing. It may well be useful to conclude this chapter with some practical strategies that can be adopted and adjusted for contexts. For ease of access the strategies have been categorised according to the five dimensions of wellbeing as set out by McCallum and Price (2016, p. 8)—cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual (Table 4.4).

4.7   Conclusion

This case study has highlighted the importance of teacher wellbeing in a profession that is embedded in a community characterised by members who share a joint enterprise to make a difference, have many and varied relationships through daily interactions, and require personal and material resources to do their work. The school community is influenced by four elements: belonging, learning, identity, and practice. This case study has shown that teachers' wellbeing is optimal when they have a sense of belonging to their school, are supported by leadership, are resourced to fulfil cognitive needs, and have a collegial climate in which to function. It appears that a stronger sense of belonging to a school, not only as a workplace but as a community, results in greater positive teacher identity, commitment, job satisfaction, and productivity. This is a climate in which teachers and students achieve better academic outcomes, and teachers' professional practice is enhanced in their goal to make a difference for children and young people.

The 2020 OECD conceptual framework proposed by Viac and Fraser identifies the importance of four elements that impact wellbeing: material conditions (resources and the environment), quality standards (what teachers should know and be able to do), distribution and allocation (of workload and related administrative and resource pressures on teacher's wok), and career structure (clear and achievable pathways) (p. 20). If established and maintained, teachers can experience a quality working environment that contributes positively to their cognitive, subjective, physical and mental, and social wellbeing. School and personal characteristics influence teacher

Table 4.4 Practical strategies to enhance school belonging

	Cognitive	Emotional	Social	Physical	Spiritual
Individual	Share good practice Be productive and successful at work Understanding of new staff workloads, support and allow lesser load	Have positive mindset Happy to go to work Reflect Be tolerant of others, patient and show gratitude	Join in with school and community events Be a team player Be 'present', share, and contribute	Cooperate in shared workspace Join in	Be confident and happy at work Be satisfied
Groups	Work together in teams: planning, assessment, reflection Senior Leadership valuing work and effort Joint professional learning	Celebrate the small things Acknowledge personal moments Reflect together	Build good relationships, don't take for granted Shared roles within teams Encouragement, strive to do better, try out new ideas	Be aware of personal space Team building	Show gratitude Get to know each other Work to a sense of purpose Invite others in
Whole schools	Share staff achievement awards, rewards, incentives, acknowledgements, recognition Regular and inclusive communication strategies Shared Discussion Boards Purposeful meetings Relevant and desired professional learning	Senior Leadership support and guidance Consistent and regular performance reviews Give positive feedback Trust Pastoral care programs Buddy systems	Create connections with each other Be inclusive Work together to solve problems Incorporate fun and happy times at work Be welcoming Create common times to come together Informal gatherings Celebrate key moments	Provide, comfortable, aesthetic, functional spaces Wellbeing spaces to relax, gym, and be social Employee Assistance Program Induction	Shared sense of purpose and connection Shared vision Shared faith

Table 4.4 (continued)

	Cognitive	Emotional	Social	Physical	Spiritual
School community	Public messaging of key events or achievement Public professional development Whole school events and celebrations	Show understanding, supportive, respectful Help out—incursions, excursions Be generous	Plan and execute festivals Joint community events Acknowledge newcomers Be involved with the very young, vulnerable, the very old	Help in working bees Support the key events Governance Be physical and aware in the community 24/7 Join clubs	Faith and religious events Community activities—coming together

Table 4.5 Summary: Implications for teachers' wellbeing

Implications for Wellbeing and Professional Practice
1.Teachers' wellbeing is significantly improved when they experience a sense of belonging in the profession. Systems, employers, school leaders, and communities should consider how to advance belonging for teachers
2. Policies should be developed that address the many factors that improve wellbeing for teachers, and these are in the areas of belonging, learning, identity, and practice
3. Schools, working with their communities, can initiate strategies to advance wellbeing for belonging to improve teacher connectedness and effectiveness

wellbeing. The outcomes are better classroom practices and student wellbeing, which we know leads to student satisfaction, happiness, and achievement. In this OECD conceptual framework, subjective wellbeing encompasses three relevant elements to the concept of building wellbeing for belonging: life evaluation or reflection, affect being a person's feelings or emotional state, and eudemonic, which is a sense of meaning and purpose often described as purposefulness (Viac & Fraser, 2020, p. 24).

It appears that the current case study in this chapter has identified strong links for building wellbeing for belonging, as espoused in Fig. 4.1. Teachers experience a strong connection with their work; it motivates them to enter the profession and stay for the whole community's benefit. The feelings teachers have in society at large or in their own personal lives can also influence their emotional response to their work and their profession (Viac & Fraser, 2020, p. 25). The final comment that champions teachers' powerful sense of belonging to their vocation is summed up by Croucher (2018):

> Identity always relies upon an 'Other' and Belonging to an 'Us' necessitates the existence and recognition of a 'Them.' (p. 47)

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Chapter 5
A Case Study: Teachers at the Front Line of School Communities During Times of Crisis

Faye McCallum ⓘD

Abstract It has long been understood that teachers are the most important in-school factor influencing learner achievement, satisfaction, and happiness and are also pivotal members of the school community. Like schools, they have a key role to play when the community at large experiences stress, environmental degradation, natural disasters, economic hardship, rapid digitalisation, or breakdown. Yet, during the pandemic and other world events throughout history, teachers find themselves at the front line having to navigate all the responsibilities they were trained for in addition to maintaining calm and a sense of normalcy. This chapter will draw on international data collected during the 2020 pandemic and focus on the intertwining learning and wellbeing issues at the individual and societal levels that enable or hinder the education, learning, and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Drawing on my extensive research in teacher wellbeing, I argue that as the most critical in-school factor, teachers have a positive and productive role in maintaining and sustaining individuals and communities. This chapter will demonstrate that the links between learning and wellbeing are increasingly challenging in modern complex societies, which often juxtapose the demands for efficiency and the priorities set for educational sustainability.

Keywords Community · Education policy · Schooling disruption · Student wellbeing · Teacher education · Teacher wellbeing

5.1 Introduction

At the height of the 2020 pandemic, UNESCO (2020) claimed that over 1.6 billion school leavers were affected across 148 countries. Believed to come to an end as 2020 drew to a close, we find that in 2021 COVID-19 is not eliminated, and new strains like the Delta variant are now affecting younger people. Across the world, there are mass vaccination rollouts, protest riots against lockdowns and continued restrictions,

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and disruption to 'normal' ways of living. In the summer immediately prior to the COVID-19 outbreak in Australia, an estimated 1400 schools were impacted by the 2019–2020 bushfires. In 2021 we are also experiencing other traumatic events across the globe: the Taliban (a militant group that ran Afghanistan in the 1990s) has seized power two weeks before the United States was set to complete its troop withdrawal on 31 August 2021, after a two-decade war (https://edition.cnn.com/2021/08/16/middle east/taliban-control-afghanistan-explained-intl-hnk/index.html, accessed 26 August 2021); nine large wildfires are out-of-control in California, United States; there is flooding in Italy and New Jersey, United States, and cyclones in New Orleans, United States; and the mass abduction of school children continues to disrupt schooling in Nigeria. In other parts of the world, poverty continues to impact many individuals and societies (the latest global data tells us that 85% of the world population—some 6.5 billion people—live on less than $30 per day [Roser, 2021]). These traumatic events highlight how devastation can affect school communities; it also identifies school leaders and teachers' important role in fostering wellbeing during and in the aftermath of catastrophic events. Schools can provide regeneration and hope. For many parents, school leaders and teachers can be the lighthouse in calamitous times. Yet, despite steady growth and awareness of positive education in schools (White & Kern, 2018), trauma-aware approaches are absent. As Brunzell (2021) asserts, this has resulted in confusion for teachers, many of whom are already overburdened with their own secondary trauma responses when working in communities experiencing disruption (p. 206).

5.1.1   Education as Community

McCallum (2020) outlines the importance of the teacher's role in preparing young people for innovative, productive, and socially just futures and claims that despite technological advances and other global impacts on their work, a 'well' teacher can make a significant contribution to a nation's prosperity, peace, and human flourishing (p. 17). Teachers are at the centre of teaching and education for students and wider communities (Day, 2017; White & McCallum, 2020). A review of the literature identifies five areas of influence that provide good reasons to consider how important it is for teachers to be part of a community:

1. A well teacher contributes to fulfilling positive educational outcomes for students and school communities (Albrecht, 2018; McCallum, 2021; Viac & Fraser, 2020; White, 2021; White & McCallum, 2020).
2. Teachers are responsible for ensuring students' academic learning outcomes are met (Dix et al., 2012; Duckworth et al., 2009; Durlak et al., 2011; Howell, 2009; Seligman, 2011; Suldo et al., 2011; White & Kern, 2018).
3. Teachers teach social–emotional learning and assist students in developing positive relationships with teachers, fellow students and others (Chodkiewicz & Boyle, 2017; Klassen et al., 2012; Milatz et al., 2015; Nielsen et al., 2015; Price & McCallum, 2016; White & Kern, 2018; White & Waters, 2015).

4. Teachers prepare students for the future, to act as global citizens who can respond to pressing social, economic, and political issues (Friedman, 2005; Lambert, 2017; McCallum, 2020).
5. Teachers contribute to the holistic wellbeing of students; that is, social, emotional, spiritual, cognitive, and physical wellbeing (Allen & Kern, 2018; Allen et al., 2018; Council of Australian Governments Council, 2019; McCallum & Price, 2016; White & Kern, 2018; White & McCallum, 2020).

Additionally, it is acknowledged that students spend considerable hours in schools where learning takes place, so there are many benefits to learning and wellbeing when teachers are valued as part of the community. Specifically:

1. Learning is situated in a variety of community contexts and mediated by local practices and perspectives.
2. Learning takes place not only in school but also in multiple contexts and practices of everyday lives across the lifespan.
3. Learners need multiple sources of support from a variety of institutions to promote their personal and intellectual development.
4. Learning is facilitated when students are encouraged to use home and community resources.

Teachers can increase the academic achievement gaps and social–emotional learning needs by identifying, drawing upon and creatively using the cultural capital students bring to school from their communities. While it may be much more challenging to achieve this at times of crisis, teachers are embedded in local contexts and have a sense of place that represents the students in their classrooms. As articulated by Price and McCallum (2016), 'wellbeing is everyone's business to ensure children and young people … and the whole-school community remain well' (p. 139).

5.1.2 Teachers' Role During Times of Crisis

So, during times of crisis, teachers are well placed to maintain continuity of learning and whole of school responses as they support local communities. The maintenance of school routines, community connections, and the purpose of schooling can assist students and their families as they try to cope during the crisis, and also as they rebuild their lives and address growing concerns about youth mental health—mooted as the next wave of the pandemic (White & McCallum, 2021). The 2020/2021 pandemic is used as the main example of a crisis in this chapter. The disruption to education and teachers' work that took place during this time is summarised in Table 5.1.

These changes to teaching and learning directly and immediately affect the children, their families, and the wider community. UNESCO (2020), OECD (2020) and Pereira et al. (2021) argue that vulnerable societies are more seriously impacted. As Villet et al. (2020) explain:

Table 5.1 Teachers' responses to teaching during the pandemic

Changes to teaching and learning	Impact on teachers
Some schools remained open, some closed, and some offered hybrid teaching models	Changes to modes of teaching: online teaching with face-to-face (synchronous) and/or pre-recorded (asynchronous) and/or fully online
Changes to teaching modes created a rethink of content, which needed to be tailored	Modify the curriculum
Children absent from classrooms, increased levels of school drop-out	Missed learning or rapid catch-up lessons required
Examinations were cancelled	Alternative modes of assessment required
School events cancelled	Missed opportunities for celebrations
Children with no or limited access to technology	Re-adjust lessons according to levels of technology and access
Modes of communication were changed	Online modes of communication required to keep students and families informed
Home schooling	Support provided to parents and carers
Increased levels of stress, anxiety, and mental health	Social–emotional support strategies increased
Increased focus on hygiene and classroom routines	Mandate and monitor handwashing, masks, and social distancing
School sport cancelled	Physical activity and social interactions declined
Increased expectations from school leaders to maintain student results	Created stress and feelings of not coping
Increased use of technology	Little or no professional development
Increased stress on families who were isolated, loss of employment, family breakdown, sick, or deceased	Increased pressure on maintaining wellbeing and relationships with students under stress

> You cannot do anything with your smartphone if you do not have electricity. You cannot do anything with your smartphone if you do not have internet connectivity if you do not have network coverage. That is somehow beyond the power of the teacher or the power of the school. (p. 13)

Teachers are at the front line supporting, guiding, caring, and advising, and many find they have to put aside their own struggles to stay connected with children and families in the communities where they work. It is challenging for teachers to maintain calm and a sense of normalcy, and many find their own needs are a secondary priority. Despite the increased focus on teachers' wellbeing over the last decade (Mansfield, 2021; McCallum, 2021; McCallum et al., 2017), issues of school belonging and engagement are priorities for teachers, although McCallum and Price (2010) argue for the importance of well teachers. More recently, McCallum (2020) stresses the importance of positive relationships with students, parents, colleagues, leadership, and the school community as an affirmative influence on employees' sense of wellbeing.

Teachers already manage change and issues related to diversity and hardness, but the pandemic is an unprecedented challenge. The OECD (2020) notes that 'educators took immediate steps to develop and implement strategies to mitigate the impact of the pandemic' (p. 4). In pandemic-affected communities, it is even more important that teachers and school leaders are leading and contributing to rebuilding community wellbeing (McCallum, 2021, p. 185). Despite the social, economic, and political ebb and flow associated with disasters, schools continue to offer instruction and learning, and teachers continue to teach. This highlights the complexity of teaching, learning, engagement, and wellbeing.

5.1.3   Wellbeing in Education

Extensive Australian and international research (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Hattie, 2019; McCallum et al., 2017) identifies that teachers are the most critical in-school factor in student achievement and satisfaction. McCallum and Price (2010) believe that for children and young people to be well, teachers must also be well. Teacher quality, retention, and satisfaction are crucial elements that will sustain the profession, maintain motivation, and prepare teachers to fulfil aspirational outcomes as leaders.

Wellbeing as a general term has manifested in many forms: character education, learning, and teaching for twenty-first-century skills, social and emotional learning, wellbeing education, and positive education. While only beginning to gain the attention of governments, teacher wellbeing identifies the significance of well teachers and a healthy profession. For example, the 2018 PISA Test Report argues that in schools across 43 education systems in OECD countries, students who perceive they have greater support from their teachers score higher in reading. However, a 2021 NEiTA-ACE Teachers Report Card of 571 Australian teachers reports that 84% of teachers have considered leaving the profession, and 37% report taking little or no satisfaction from their job. Of those who plan to leave the profession, 62% cite excessive workload, 21% cite exhaustion and burnout, and 20% cite the increasing challenge of meeting students' diverse needs. Thomson (2020) reports on data collected pre-pandemic that showed 58% of teachers feel 'quite a bit' or 'a lot of stress' in their jobs, which was higher than participating OECD countries. Of those teachers reporting 'a lot of stress', perceived levels of stress are higher in Australia among female teachers (26%), those working in publicly managed schools (28%), and teachers under 30 years of age (30%). Heffernan et al. (2019) report that teachers are concerned about their health, safety, and wellbeing, which affects the length of time the respondents see themselves remaining in the profession. Workload and wellbeing factors concern teachers, and the public have the greatest impact on teacher retention and attracting future teachers to the profession. With many graduates leaving within the first five years and 26% of Australian teachers declaring their intention to leave the profession within five years of graduation (Heffernan et al., 2019; Mansfield & Beltman, 2018; McCallum & Price, 2016; OECD, 2020; Wosnitza et al., 2018), teacher quality is being challenged by factors such as the

failure to shift patterns of poor educational outcomes; wellbeing issues; emotional burnout and stress; and mental health problems. In unprecedented times, high-quality school leaders and teachers are essential to foster wellbeing in schools and assist in rebuilding phases.

Widespread attempts to define 'wellbeing' in education exist in psychology, sociology, and philosophy. It is a term commonly used in education and researched for over 40 years, resulting in various projects, initiatives, models, and strategies to improve one's wellbeing with the goal of helping other humans to flourish (see McCallum et al., 2017). Some wellbeing theories focus on emotion (hedonic wellbeing); some on eudemonic elements. Dodge et al. (2012), Huppert and So (2013), Price and McCallum (2016), and Waters and Loton (2019) recognise that while wellbeing is significant, it is challenging to define. For example, Ryff (1989) and Reyes et al. (2012) assert that psychological wellbeing consists of six domains (self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth). Reyes et al. (2012) extend their earlier work and claim that wellbeing includes high emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. Conversely, Seligman's (2011) PERMA theory advocates that wellbeing comes from five pillars (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment). Huppert and So's (2013) model defines 10 components of flourishing that oppose the main symptoms of depression and anxiety (competence, emotional stability, engagement, meaning, optimism, positive emotion, positive relationships, resilience, self-esteem, and vitality). Rusk and Waters (2013), Waters and Loton (2019), and Waters et al. (2017) derive an empirical model of a five-domain model of positive functioning (comprehension and coping, attention and awareness, emotions, goal and habits, and virtues and relationships). While this chapter acknowledges the relevance of Huppert and So's (2013) definition—'feeling good and functioning effectively'—it is McCallum and Price's (2016) definition that guides this chapter because it accounts for many interrelated variables specifically related to disruption in schooling:

> Wellbeing is diverse and fluid respecting individual, family and community beliefs, values, experiences, culture, opportunities and contexts across time and change. It encompasses intertwined individual, collective and environmental elements which continually interact across the lifespan …. Our role with wellbeing education is to provide the opportunity, access, choices, resources and capacities for individuals and communities, to aspire to their unique sense of wellbeing whilst contributing to a sense of community wellbeing. (p. 17)

5.2 The Present Study

During the 2020 global pandemic, McCallum, White, and Bentley (all from the University of Adelaide) gained ethics approval to undertake a study to explore teachers' wellbeing and their thoughts, feelings, and understandings of the skills, knowledge, values, and capabilities to plan for and implement effective teaching and learning during the crisis. Some of the findings will be presented here based on teacher reflections in three areas using the following research questions:

1. *Impact on teaching and learning:* What has been unexpected about your school's response to the pandemic? What's been the most memorable learning and teaching? What strengths were you and your colleagues showing? What have you been telling yourself about teaching and learning, and wellbeing?
2. *Changes to teachers' work:* What might teaching look like? What matters most in schools? What is great about the way you work together with your team? What structures/systems might support this? How might teachers and students be interacting with each other?
3. *Education transformation:* What should be the ideal learning environment? Describe any possibilities in learning, teaching, education, and wellbeing we haven't imagined? What smallest change will make the biggest impact on learning and teaching? Who is affected?

5.3 Theoretical Framework

In this study, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological framework is used as a theoretical framework to situate teachers' wellbeing during the pandemic. This is a highly relevant model for analysing teachers' wellbeing (McCallum, 2020; McCallum et al., 2017; Price & McCallum, 2015). Figure 5.1 shows that the individuals (students and teachers) are central to their immediate classroom environment (microsystem), which includes their relationships with other students. Connections with family, friends, and the wider community are situated in the mesosystem, and the influences of the environment—like organisations, systems, societal, environmental, and cultural contexts (the exosystem)—affect their individual and community learning and wellbeing. The macrosystem considers the influences of beliefs, values, and social factors. These levels can have both positive and challenging influences. The chronosystem, which refers to the timing of events, decisions, actions, and changes over time, makes this theoretical framework highly relevant to this study as individuals and communities struggle with challenges to their learning and wellbeing as a result of school disruption caused by the global pandemic (see Table 5.1).

5.4 Methodology

This study hypothesised that in times of unprecedented disruption, teachers and school leaders adapted and reimagined the future of education and wellbeing for learning and communities. The study adopted an appreciative inquiry (AI), a systematic, holistic, and collaborative methodology developed by Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) focusing on participants' strengths. Recent work by Cooperrider and Fry (2020) argued for the relevance of this strengths-based approach during disasters. AI investigates the positive core of an individual, group, or system. It leaves behind deficit-oriented methodologies and concentrates on what is working well (strengths)

Individual: gender, age, health, etc

Mesosystem:child and various actors within their world

Microsystem: Family, Peers, Church, Health Services, School

Exosystem; industry, social services, mass media, local politics, neighbours

Macrosystem: attitudes and ideologies of the culture
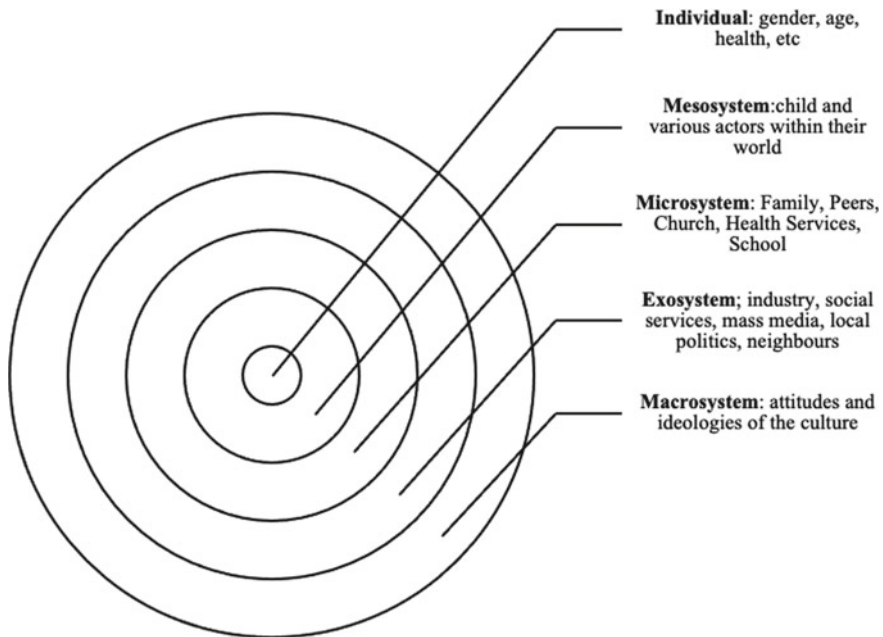
Fig. 5.1 Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological framework for human development

at an institutional, group, and personal level. AI has been applied to other educational settings to investigate wellbeing for positive change (Waters & White, 2015).

Data were collected from teachers across the world via online platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Names and places were de-identified. Raw data was only available to the researchers, stored in password-protected folders accessible only by the researchers. The researchers undertook quantitative and qualitative analyses. Ethics was approved by the University of Adelaide's Office of Research Ethics, Compliance, and Integrity (Approval No: H-2020-065).

The survey was administered on 11 May 2020 and closed on 13 August 2020, with 322 respondents after filtering, represented by 49% teachers, 48% school leaders, and 3% in a non-teaching role. Of these, 81% were employed full-time, 75% were permanently employed with 21% on contract, and 4% employed casually. Gender was represented by 71% female, 24% male, and 5% undisclosed; 48% held a Masters or equivalent qualification, 39% Bachelors, 3% Diploma, and 9% had 'other' qualifications. Total years of teaching experience included 18% (0–5 years), 28% (6–15 years), and 54% (greater than 15 years), indicating that the sample in this study were very experienced teachers; 44% worked in the senior years (Years 10–12), 34% in middle levels of schooling (Years 6–9), and 22% in the primary years (early learning to Year 5). Participants were from Australia (71%), South Africa (11%), and Canada (10%), with small samples from the UK (3%), United States (2%), and Hong Kong,

Singapore, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Vietnam, and Turkmenistan (0.3%). Of these, 67% of respondents identified that the school they worked in prioritised wellbeing.

On a six-point Likert scale, mean responses were recorded for perceptions of respondents' current wellbeing. It was highest in the 'all of the time' category for 'I am good at recognising the things I can influence and the things I can't' (4.57) and 'I play to and make the most of my strengths' (4.6). These responses indicated that teachers were individually self-managing and self-regulating their wellbeing during this crisis. It was lowest for 'I wake up feeling fresh and rested' (3.20). Respondents had the most influence over their wellbeing when 'the school leadership team values my work at school' (23.59%).

5.5   Results and Discussion

5.5.1   Impact on Teaching and Learning

Participants shared several aspects they found unexpected during the pandemic. Surprisingly, these were predominantly positive, commenting that schools and teachers were able to quickly respond to adaptations to their teaching, like online delivery. Participants commented on increased levels of collegiality, supporting each other to adjust their teaching and learn new skills quickly. Adversity was seen as an opportunity to innovate and learn:

> My colleagues and I have been very supportive of one another, there has been a lot of sharing of ideas and we've found ways to be more efficient at some aspects of our work.

The resilience of the children was mentioned, and the greatest strength was:

> Working together, to support our work, emotionally as well, and working as a team for the betterment of the students. To keep a focus on the students and be flexible in adapting to whatever situation was required.

The speed shown by teachers to respond and adapt in a crisis was unexpected:

> Our teachers have been nothing short of inspirational in moving to an online platform then back to face-to-face lessons.

The most memorable moment was:

> Seeing our students return to school and the appreciation they have developed for schooling—recently I observed they seem calmer.

> Coming back into the classroom and seeing my students and their smiles. Flexibility to adapt and change on the fly and mostly take it in our stride.

> Wellbeing and safety is the priority—as it always has been but now even more so. Not only for the students but families and staff as well.

The whole-school community experienced a strong sense of belonging as a community and cared for one another's wellbeing, with students at the core.

Teachers showed 'strengths' during the crisis that included perseverance, resilience, adaptability, hope, humour, courage, persistence, agility, unity, kindness, teamwork, understanding, appreciation, dedication, commitment, patience, empathy, and flexibility. When participants were asked to comment on teaching and learning and wellbeing, they identified that a sense of community had developed, which was seen as a positive outcome for managing through the pandemic. Teachers felt there was '*united and compassionate support from all in our community*', and during the ebbs and flows of the continuing pandemic's impact, there was some '*humour, and ability to connect to a community. Everyone is learning together*':

> The entire community is supportive of one another and has handled the new learning with aplomb. We are exhausted but energised by the efforts and tenacity of all.

The actions of members of the school community and close society helped and was seen when others were '*making wellbeing check-ins to see how families were going during this tough time and showing genuine care*'. There was an acknowledgement of the tough times, but the resilience of many individuals and communities was evident. For example:

> Our students embraced being back at school and while there have been pronounced instances of heightened stress, on balance our students have really responded to the efforts made by the school to foster community and belonging.

Efforts by the school leaders were recognised, especially when the '*principal's communication with stakeholders was clear, regular and open for feedback which buoyed community confidence*'.

5.5.2 Changes to Teachers' Work

Although many of the participants in this study reported that schools returned to 'normal' once the height of the crisis was over, they also acknowledged that '*normal classrooms actually work better than remote classrooms*'. There were optimistic suggestions related to changed teaching practices and what mattered most in schools because of living and working through the pandemic. The community was seen as happening alongside learning. There was a greater focus on the use of technology and workplace flexibility in meetings and locations:

> Greater flexibility in our work, greater use of technology to collaborate and support teachers to work from home when needed, … have parents connect with the schools flexibly through technology.

Technology did not work well in all situations with quality, access, and equity issues and a view that '*what matters most is the staff and student relationships, not the IT*'. Where it did work well, teachers reported that some online teaching would be possible

despite a view that '*face-to-face engagement cannot ever be replaced. Teaching will have more digital components and be more flexible in the future*'.

Changes to learning with a stronger focus on wellbeing were identified:

> I think there will be a big focus on connection and mental health, we're really starting to see the impact this has had on the opening up and relaxing of regulations, it seems to be showing more anxiety and uncertainty in students—its where the resilience has wobbled the most.

There was an acknowledgement of the increased need for wellness in the community and connection:

> Wellbeing and relationships matter most, everyone has contributed, has offered support, everyone has kept the students at the heart of every decision, and we've found new ways to connect.

> Relationships and connection are more important than ever, but there are ways in which we can connect that we've never used before. What matters most in schools is interpersonal connections between students, teachers and parents and the larger community.

Teachers also experienced an increased sense of collegiality and sharing during the pandemic, as all were seen to be 'pulling their weight' and hoped this would continue to ensure greater productivity and positivity:

> We'll continue to work as a team since we've been cohesive and this experience has strengthened that further. We will have a greater appreciation of each other and the power that comes from collective action—the shared humanity of our vulnerability could translate into a stronger appreciation for each other.

One experienced teacher of 40 years commented that:

> We worked really well together, the faculty leader pretty much deferred all tech training to me and people were willing to give up their own time to work with me 1:1 to master the programs and tech we needed to work with the students, I couldn't have asked to be a part of a better team.

An outcome from one teacher was a plea that:

> Teams would become more compassionate for each other and value, encourage and support each other more. Teams need to work together to try and even out the workload and do what is best for the students.

Some teachers felt the technology would help streamline some aspects of their work in the future, especially related to individualised support for students and their families, and that this '*hopefully will give more respect for the profession*'. The systems appeared to be in place to:

> Remain adaptive, which is a privilege accompanied by great responsibility to serve the community as a steward not only to honour the fine traditions of the school community but also to promote its ongoing success into the future as a place where each student can strive for personal excellence.

It was hoped that '*schools might let go of activities that are not core business*' with '*less pressure on performance, more on the bigger picture about what matters in life … wellbeing*'. Clearly, as White and McCallum (2021) argue, COVID-19 must be a catalyst for change in the teaching profession, or at least:

The new normal will implement some of the redefined ways introduced throughout the COVID time. In all honesty I don't want things to just return to how they were. I think what matters most in schools are the areas of wellbeing, relationships and learning.

5.5.3 Education Transformation

Continuing the theme of change from a life event like the pandemic enabled participants to imagine what might be possible and what true learnings had occurred. The ideal learning environment for individuals and communities was now described as:

Safe, clean, hygienic, formal structures for all children to be in. Not all children across the world have access to these structures where they can have access to hygiene and small groups with social distancing, Everyone, from staff, to students and family are affected. The community is whole.

Themes of 'community' and 'changing structures' that contributed to an increased sense of community belonging were well represented:

Greater use of online learning to enable flexible options for students, staff and families. Can the school day be shortened to optimise more and longer breaks and opportunity for all of the school community to focus on wellbeing. A priority on time for families to spend more time together, through more time without overscheduling and a re-think of homework approaches. All members of the school community, students, staff and families would benefit.

There were examples of resilient individuals and communities:

Where staff and students always feel safe, welcome, that they belong, happy, engaged, valued, care for. I think families and children have realised that learning does not solely take place at school—the home is full of learning opportunities and possibilities. I think the biggest impact on staff, students and families is continually knowing they are welcome, supported and part of a learning community. That no matter what happens, we won't give up, we will keep going. We are all affected by change—it is important to work out what is worth keeping (due to the changes) and what is worth embracing.

As Harris (2020), White and McCallum (2021), and Lotz-Sisitka et al. (2021) argued, education was ready for reconsideration because of the pandemic. Specifically:

The COVID-19 pandemic requires us to think in radically new ways about existing systems and how they have been operating. It requires us to 'build forward better', giving attention to social justice and sustainability in recovering from the pandemic, and it requires us to act more collectively, systemically, and inter- and multi-sectoral in response to the heightened sustainable development challenges revealed by the pandemic. (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2021, p. 2)

Poysa et al. (2021) similarly found that although teachers were impacted severely at the beginning of the pandemic, many individuals managed to cope as the pandemic continued.

The three areas discussed above from the data generated through the online survey of teachers and leaders in 2020/2021 at the time of the pandemic supports the view that teachers are the most critical in-school factor and thus have a positive and productive role in maintaining and sustaining individuals and communities. Additionally, during times of crisis, the links between learning and wellbeing are increasingly challenging, which juxtaposes the demands for efficiency and the priorities education systems set for educational sustainability. Yet, the participants in this study acknowledge that the challenges create resilience for and in education communities. They demonstrate hope and optimism as the world slowly recovers.

5.6 Conclusion

Schools around the world face challenges and opportunities when trying to respond to the problems brought by trauma and disruption to everyday classrooms. Teachers are at the front line of these challenges and opportunities. Price and McCallum (2016) acknowledge that globalisation, the digital world, adversity, environmental degradation, and global disasters make it imperative that teachers are well for a sustained career and to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people as they travel through schooling and transition to further study, work, or other purposeful contributions in the community. As frontline workers during the pandemic, teachers have experienced one of the most challenging jobs by not only putting themselves and their families at risk of contracting the virus but also in adapting their professional practice and keeping calm and focused. For some this was too much, as they have left the profession, but many others have experienced renewed respect from their communities and are more highly valued than ever. Teachers, as individuals, have varied levels of coping, which impacts their wellbeing (Aulen et al., 2021).

The pandemic has provided governments, policymakers, and educators with the impetus to consider different and more efficient ways of doing things. These are worthy of consideration to address some of the factors that impact teacher's ill-being. Gouëdard et al. (2020) suggest a framework that can help governments structure the implementation strategy of their evolving education responses to COVID-19. However, Poysa et al. (2021) warn that teachers as individuals coped differently during the pandemic. Some were not severely affected, and as such, should not be taken into account when reform is being considered. McCallum (2021) concludes that by its very description, a recovery should never return to the same state of affairs, so it is timely to acknowledge the value and contribution of teachers across the globe who have been at the forefront of this pandemic.

Table 5.2 Summary: Implications for teachers and communities

Implications for wellbeing and professional practice
1. Teachers are strong and positive contributors to the school community, and their role should be accepted, rewarded, and valued
2. Change is inevitable after a crisis but what matters most is everyone's wellbeing and a sense of belonging to a community
3. School leaders continue to work with community to ensure children's educational outcomes are met for that specific context

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Chapter 6
Adopting Appreciative Inquiry as a Positive Change Process in a Disadvantaged School

Mathew A. White

Abstract School leaders are increasingly adopting diverse approaches to strategic planning to lead organisational change. One such approach is appreciative inquiry, defined as a strength-based approach to change adopting the 4-D cycle of discovery, dream, design, and destiny. While there are case studies of the application of appreciative inquiry in the top quarter of distribution of socio-educational advantage, a limitation of the field is there are very few examples in disadvantaged school contexts. This chapter aims to provide a different case study of the application of the appreciative inquiry process and address this research gap. It describes how a school–university partnership facilitated a day-long strategic planning appreciative inquiry summit in a culturally diverse, low socio-economic Reception to Year 6 non-government Catholic school in South Australia. The chapter focuses on how the school–university partnership planed, collaborated, and made decision-making steps to operationalise the first three stages of the 4-D process and describes the output.

Keywords Appreciative inquiry · Educational administration · Educational leadership · Strengths

6.1 Introduction

Current school leadership strategies in Australia, as Merga et al. (2021) observe, highlight whole-school approaches to literacy learning and, as Townsend et al.'s (2020) research on the priorities of Australian and New Zealand principals emphasise, how school improvement plans have focused on improving student learning outcomes. However, as Waters et al. (2021) argue, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated school-based discussion of the importance of student wellbeing. This argument is extended further by Waters' (2021) examination of teachers' strategies to integrate evidence-informed wellbeing approaches into their professional

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practice, which has stimulated growing international recognition that schools are far more complex and require a more comprehensive strategic planning approach to strengths and positive learning and wellbeing cultures as well as improving learning outcomes. As Lipscombe et al.'s (2021) research notes, one of the challenges schools face in strategic planning is actions that demonstrate progress towards strategic objectives often rely on middle-level leadership who may be ill-equipped to operationalise (Baxter & John, 2021). Many of these innovations in strategic planning, as Keddie and Holloway (2020) contend, call for greater principal autonomy and draw on developments from organisational psychology and positive organisational scholarship. Consequently, Gurr et al. (2020) and Gurr and Drysdale (2020) argue that schools are now increasingly focusing on developing more holistic strategic plans that operationalise goals around academics, wellbeing, student life and activities, community engagement, and other broader measures beyond numeracy and literacy (Allen et al., 2018; Allison et al., 2020).

6.2 Strategic Planning in Schools

In the past, instructional (Gurr, 2019) or distributed leadership (Berkovich & Bogler, 2020; Liu et al., 2018) models have been integrated with strategic planning, focusing on academics, wellbeing, pastoral care goals, co-curricular goals, and various other elements of school life, including service-learning activities. The ongoing disruption of COVID-19 since early 2020 and the wide-scale implications for education have illustrated the importance of robust strategic planning (Reuge et al., 2021; White & McCallum, 2021). This is so schools can operationalise both learning and business continuity plans—that is, maintain the learning and business cycles of school systems—in the event of interruption of the learning or business cycle due to a myriad of external factors (White & McCallum, 2021). The pandemic's impact has emphasised the need for robust e-learning strategies and learning management systems to maintain student learning and engagement continuity (Almusharraf & Bailey, 2021). Simultaneously, the learning disruption caused by the pandemic raises issues of equity between schools and the education system. Many examples of school strategic case studies focus on a deficit orientation to strategic planning opportunities, which emphasises closing gaps and addressing institutional weakness and threats. This chapter outlines a different philosophy to change, termed appreciative inquiry (AI). As Armstrong et al. (2020) note, this approach is an 'organizational development process and approach to change management that grows out of social constructivist thought and its application to management and organisational transformation' (Cooperrider et al., 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, p. 2; Cooperrider & Fry, 2020). Therefore, AI adopts 'deliberately positive assumptions about people, organisations and relationships' through the change process of the 4-D cycle, engaging all employees in an organisation (Cooperrider et al., 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, pp. xv, 2).

There are school improvement case studies drawing on AI, notably by Calabrese (2006) and Green et al. (2020) in the school–university partnership context, Calabrese et al. (2010) in rural school contexts, Cooperrider (2018) investigating applications of AI in schools, Kozik et al. (2009) on using AI to integrate of inclusive education and Dickerson and Helm-Stevens's (2011) study examining using AI to re-culture school communities. Mackdonald (2020) and Venter (2020) explores the possibilities of AI and teachers' professional practice and the strengths and limitations of the process. Whereas, San Martin and Calabrese (2011) argue the case for the application of AI with students at risk in schools. As Clarke et al. (2006) note, these case studies provide helpful 'how to' guides; however, the degree to which the approach applies to more culturally diverse school communities is unclear as noted by Willoughby and Tosey (2007). Thus, as Waters and White (2015), White (2021) highlights, a limitation of earlier case studies and gap in the research literature is that the AI applications in many notable case studies of whole-school leadership strategies are drawn from schools with students in the top quarter of socio-educational advantage (SEA) distribution. While school governance, leadership and policymakers recognise the importance of principals' autonomy planning (Niesche et al., 2021) and strategic planning (Cheng, 2021), few case studies highlight how school–university partnerships can adopt an appreciative approach in disadvantaged communities to facilitate strategic planning. This chapter addresses this gap in the education leadership literature. The chapter presents outcomes of an AI summit following a year-long university–school partnership between the researcher and the Holy Family Catholic School, a Reception to Year 6 non-government Catholic school in South Australia with an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) of 988 and 39% of the student background coming from the SEA.

The chapter thus provides a comprehensive case study of how the case study school used an AI process to co-design a new strategic plan (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2021b). The chapter seeks to address the gap in the literature by outlining how AI is adopted in a bottom quartile SEA distribution school case study. The chapter focuses on how the AI process was implemented in the context of the school's values, vision, and mission in this setting, and argues that the research provides a helpful case study of how similar schools can apply the AI process in the bottom quarter. First, details about AI are discussed, and the demographic profile of the case study school is presented. The strengths and limitations of the AI 4-D cycle are reviewed, and the development of the university–school partnership is outlined. Next, the design of the summit and various steps in the process are considered, and the elements of the AI summit are presented (Cooperrider, 2005; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). The intention is to provide other educational institutions with a diverse student population to approach similar challenges. Finally, the summit's implications are discussed and critically examined in the context of the output generated by participants. There are school improvement case studies drawing on AI, notably by Cann et al. (2021) and Uchida et al. (2021).

6.3   Appreciative Inquiry

AI is a strength-based approach to leading change developed by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987). Central to AI's approach is that an organisation's positive core—the positive experience of the employees themselves—is an asset too quickly overlooked in the development of change management and strategic plans. Cooperrider et al. (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d) claim that systems develop in the direction inquiry and engagement focuses. As a change management process, AI concentrates its inquiry and all steps iteratively on the positive 'core strengths' of an organisation (Cooperrider et al., 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, p. 34). The following philosophical principles underpin an AI approach. These include a constructionist principle that argues participants are active change agents within their organisations. Second, the principle inquiry and change are not mutually exclusive, and the inquiry itself during the 4-D process is an intervention within the organisation. Third, the poetic principle engages the metaphor linked to the appreciative topic. Fourth, the tree principle imagines a possible future for participants working within the organisation. Lastly, the positive principle focuses on the concrete hopes, joys, aspirations, and inspirations the participants might experience (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

In addition to the philosophical assumptions of the process, as argued by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987), there are several theories around individuals and organisations (such as schools), and the relationships between and across groups within organisations for AI. This approach moves on from a deficit-oriented perspective of organisational improvement and change (Dickerson & Helm-Stevens, 2011). For example, in the improvement processes of many traditional schools, culture and climate are often discussed and measured using tools drawn from the corporate sector (Grazia & Molinari, 2021). This can be done via traditional strategic planning, organisational mapping, and leadership development and is a systematic and deliberate life-giving search for the positive within organisational development. In applying AI in this case study, both traditional change management and AI approaches have been integrated. In discussion with the school leadership, the researcher emphasised the importance of undertaking traditional change management strategies as part of due diligence (Orr, 2021).

Central to the AI approach is inviting participants to retell stories about the best of what they have experienced in the past, how they understand the strengths of the current point in time, and imagining the best possible future for their organisation (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Researchers have described AI goals as discovering the life-giving forces within an organisation, which is achieved via the 4-D cycle: discovery, dream, design, and destiny (see Fig. 6.1). These steps involve discovering what is best within an organisation currently, focusing on what might be or dreams for the future during a design phase, and then determining how to create a sustainable future in the destiny phase.

The 4-D cycle is underpinned by an affirmative topic of choice, which acts as a metaphor or anchor throughout the four steps of the AI process (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). During the discovery
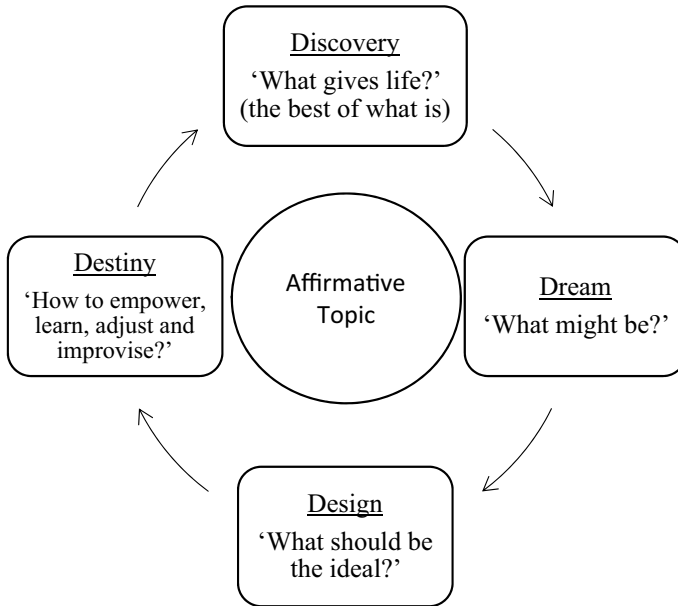
Fig. 6.1 The AI 4-D cycle (adapted from Cooperrider et al., 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, p. 34)

phase, participants engage in meaning-making and storytelling to interpret the best of what is currently happening within an organisation. This process sequentially and deliberately engages individuals in discussion. During the dream phase, participants are invited to consider what is possible in the future for their organisation. During this envisaging exercise, participants are invited to imagine what the organisation might be like in the future. During the design phase of the AI summit, individuals construct the various theoretical and architectural needs for the organisation to make their visions a reality (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). During this time, the participants may develop different strategic intents, ultimately leading to the operational strategy for an overall vision. Finally, during the destiny step, participants determine how various parts of the organisation can operationalise the vision that has been co-created during the overall process (Stavros et al., 2021).

There are several benefits to adopting AI as a strategic planning approach, as Griggs and Crain-Dorough (2021) claim. This includes the AI cycle enabling participants to create a space where individuals can be heard, stories told, curiosity developed, empathy unlocked, and compassion shared (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). It is also an approach that enables participants to envisage future directions for institutions and allows participants to actively contribute to the organisation's direction (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). Nevertheless, the process is not without its critics. Common criticisms of the oppression of the inquiry approach argue that it overlooks negative experiences, creates false-positive experiences among participants, and ignores systematic failure, thus causing frustration among participants.

6.4   The Case: Holy Family Catholic School

Holy Family Catholic School is a co-educational Reception to Year 6 non-government school. It is part of the Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) network of schools located in the northern suburbs of Adelaide's Metropolitan Archdiocese. It was initially established as a local parish school during the early 1980s, with strong links to the Vietnamese community. Today, the school has 584 students (297 boys and 287 girls). There are 32 different ethnic and cultural groups in the school, and 48% of students come from a language background other than English. The school's ICSEA is 988, placing it in the 40th percentile; therefore, the school is more educationally disadvantaged than 60% of Australian schools. A total of 38% of the student population is placed within the bottom quarter and 33% in the middle quarter of the SEA distribution. There are 39 teaching staff, 32 full-time equivalent teaching staff, 17 non-teaching staff, and 11 full-time equivalent non-teaching staff (ACARA, 2021a). The school's leadership decided to undertake a whole-school summit to engage all community stakeholders in the school's future direction.

Traditionally, many strategic planning initiatives in systems-based schooling are developed centrally and then operationalised locally. Schools are then invited to implement an approach created by their governing body with the leadership team. However, in this case study, the school leadership team wanted to adopt a more democratic approach to the strategic planning and engage in broader community consultation to involve teachers, support staff, parent groups, members of the governing school board, and representatives from CESA. The rationale for adopting AI as the method for the summit's creation was based on:

- the leadership team's prior experience of studying the AI 4-D cycle and seeing how this may align with the school's ethos
- recognising the AI 4-D cycle may give voice to the cultural diversity of the school's population
- the positively oriented approach to engaging diverse stakeholders who may not have interacted with each other before.

This was the first time the school's leadership team had intentionally invited stakeholders to participate in a strategic planning event. Therefore, a defining element of this case study was the time and adopting recommendations from Cooperrider et al. (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d) on the design and development of an AI summit. Given the task and length of time required for participants involved, there was a significant investment in human resources immediately before starting the school teaching term. This approach emphasised that each stage of the summit needed to be considered and supported by AI theory in practice to achieve the desired outcome of the leadership team.

Table 6.1 Affirmative topics chosen for Holy Family Catholic School's AI summit

Topic	Rationale
Fostering Catholic identity	Central to the school's values and purpose is the spiritual development of all children within the Catholic tradition
Improving student learning and wellbeing	Fostering a culture that values both a love of learning and wellbeing as dual goals rather than being mutually exclusive
Developing ecological conversion	A Catholic social teaching proposed by John Paul II promoting individuals' positive relations with the environment

6.4.1   Step 1: Summit Approach—A University–School Collaboration

As outlined in Table 6.1, this summit was the result of a university–school collaboration and the affirmative topics chosen for Holy Family Catholic School's AI summit was based on partnership with the leadership team to fit their culture and context. The researcher worked closely with the senior leadership team of the Holy Family Catholic School and ensured there was alignment between the process chosen, the structure of the day, the strategic direction for CESA, the needs and specific culture in the context of the school climate, and the potential overall future goals for the school that may eventuate from the summit.

6.4.2   Step 2: Co-Designing the Summit

In September 2019, the researcher visited Holy Family Catholic School and spent over two hours discussing with the school's senior leadership team and student leaders the core values they felt were vitally important to integrate into the summit. The researcher discussed the school's major values and how these were implemented in day-to-day activities to learn more about the organisation's positive core before the drafting of the summit. Here, the summit's initial structure was developed and feedback was provided to the researcher on the approach and structure for the entire day drawing on the AI summit. Attention was paid to the potential affirmative topic that was settled in a final meeting with the senior leadership team just before the summit, listening to the values described by the school's leadership team. As Cooperrider et al. (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d) emphasise, selecting the positive core and topics for AI summits is a critical step. This point of the selection process dominated most of the early planning time.

6.4.3 Step 3: The Affirmative Topic

Cooperrider et al. (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d) claim that choosing an affirmative topic is the first step of the AI cycle, and it determines the framing of the summit and intervention developed to create the strategy as Table 6.1 highlights. The selection of the topic also sets the tone of the summit, which is how participants will be invited to engage with the day and how questions are structured to stimulate discussion, debate, storytelling, and meaning-making. The purpose of selective topic choices is to commence with the organisation's life-giving values. Discussed with the researcher during Step 2, the leadership reflected on the selection of topics for the summit following the protocols outlined in Cooperrider et al. (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d). The affirmative topic choice was developed in consultation and collaboration with the senior leadership team to ensure an alignment between and across the school's Catholic values and potential future direction. In planning Steps 1–3 (as outlined in Table 6.2), it was mutually agreed that the first three steps of the 4-D cycle—discovery, dream, and design—would be covered during the summit due to time constraints. Further, the leadership team wanted to focus on discovering what was working well from stakeholders and emphasise this in the summit's structure. This influenced the number of 'discover' activities for the day. During these discussions, three affirmative topics emerged (see Table 6.1). These included fostering Catholic identity, improving student learning and wellbeing, and developing ecological conversion.

As noted in Table 6.2, during the reality checks for the design of the summit, these topics formed the backbone of the drafted inquiry questions developed in collaboration with the school's leadership team. The affirmative topics acted as a triple helix to frame the questions of each step of the cycle and underpin discussion around the positive core of the school. These topics were intentionally selected by the leadership team to align directly with CESA's strategic direction. Once the leadership team determined the affirmative topics, the following purpose, aim, and outcomes were developed:

Summit purpose: To draw the Holy Family Catholic School community together for a unique purpose and focus—unpacking the Holy Family Catholic School's Strategy 2021–2024 to educate thriving children.

Summit aim: Document and define the most precious values, honouring relationships, and making meaning of our steps and decisions at the Holy Family Catholic School.

Summit outcomes:

- Discover what makes the Holy Family Catholic School unique through stories from the students, staff, parents, parish, and CESA.
- Dream what is possible for our community.
- Design the future and work out the next steps as an institution.

Table 6.2 Summary of pre-summit planning meetings

Step	Staff present	Focus	Outcome
1	Principal and Assistant Principal	Alignment with existing school values and link with proposed summit methodology	University–school partnership proposal responding to Principal's brief and initial strategic intent
2	Researcher, Principal, and Assistant Principal	Co-design summit	Draft aim, objectives, and possible affirmative topic choice; 4-D cycle over the course of the day
3	Researcher and Leadership Team	Reality-check × 1	Summit aim, objectives, and possible affirmative topic choice; draft AI questions for the 4-D cycle
4	Researcher and Leadership Team		Confirmation of affirmative topic choice
5	Researcher and Leadership Team	Reality-check × 2	Principal's core messages, summit aim, objectives, and possible affirmative topic choice; draft AI questions for the 4-D cycle
6	Researcher, Principal, and Assistant Principal	Reality-check × 3	Principal and facilitators core messages; complete running sheet of 1-day 7-hour AI summit; all questions for the 4-D cycle finalised
7	Invited members of council, parish, invited parents, CESA, all employees, and student leaders	1-day 7-hour AI summit	120 pages of output from the 4-D cycle linked to the redevelopment of the 2021–2024 school's strategic direction

Once the summit was mapped, it was decided with the leadership team that the fourth step of the cycle would be completed internally by the school leadership team in subsequent meetings following the summit. This decision was based on the interests of time but also anticipated output from the discovery, dream, and design steps of the cycle would help frame ongoing operational discussion and agreement on measures for success. The iterative nature of the pre-summit meetings between the researcher and the leadership team resulted in questions aligning with the affirmative topic, school-identified stakeholders, and Cooperrider et al.'s (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d) theory of change.

Table 6.3 Summary: Implications for wellbeing and professional practice

Implications for wellbeing and professional practice
1. Researchers should gather more case studies of the application of appreciative inquiry in diverse schools
2. School leaders should adopt more industry-university partnerships to narrow the research-practice gap in positive approaches to education change
3. Researchers should focus on measuring the impact of an appreciative approach to examine the impact of an appreciative approach on culture change in schools
4. School-university partnerships should focus on developing diverse case studies linking strategic planning process, learning and wellbeing approaches and measure the impact

6.4.4   Step 4: The Summit

Table 6.3 emphasises the implications for school leaders and 6.4 provides a comprehensive overview of the agenda and theoretical underpinning of the Holy Family Catholic School summit, which was held on Monday, 12 October 2019. The participants comprised the principal and senior leadership team of the Holy Family Catholic School and several key stakeholders. Extra participants included CESA members, the local parish, school council members, and parent representatives. The summit's purpose, aims, and outcomes were discussed with the leadership team in advance to establish alignment with the day's activities and development of the school's strategic plan. The day commenced with the principal welcoming the school and representatives to the summit held onsite in a multipurpose hall. In the background, building works were underway for a new building throughout the day. The principal outlined the major achievements at the school over the past five years and then invited the participants to consider the future of the school. In the welcoming address to the community, the principal presented the affirmative topics of fostering Catholic identity, improving student learning and wellbeing, and developing ecological conversion and invited participants to openly share their experiences and responses to the summit questions at each stage. The researcher acted as the facilitator for the day and guided the participants throughout the discovery, dream, and design steps. In the middle of the day, the leadership team invited the researcher to deliver a short presentation on the future of education to act as a provocation piece for the dream and design stages. The phrasing of the questions at each stage were co-designed with the leadership team and tested in three 'reality-check' steps before running the summit, as encouraged by Cooperrider et al. (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d). The purpose of redrafting the questions was to ensure the desired outcome was achieved for the leadership team, given the significant investment of time allocated to the task. As part of the summit preparations, all staff were allocated tables, with roles and responsibilities organised into interdisciplinary groups. The output during the day was significant, covering more than 20 square metres of collective feedback, thoughts, and feelings from the participants. Significantly, several recurring themes emerged throughout the

day. Each activity corresponds to the first three elements of the 4-D cycle developed by Cooperrider.

6.5   The AI Process

6.5.1   Discovery

As Table 6.4 notes, the leadership team decided to focus on the discovery phase of the AI process because it was the first time the whole-school community had the opportunity to reflect on what had been achieved together in the preceding life of the old strategic plan. This approach enabled the leadership team and participants to dig deeper into events and activities and establish links at the school. Therefore, there were four rounds of discovery questions developed. The purpose of the discovery phase is to engage in appreciative questions that provide information to the school and make sense of key stakeholders' experiences. Cooperrider et al. (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d) outlined that critical to the discovery implementation is identifying the correct stakeholders to interview and consult during the summit. Here, the school focused on promoting inclusivity in consultation with stakeholders. The drafting of the summit's four discovery phases was based on the methodological advice of Cooperrider et al. (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d), which noted that appreciative questions should:

- present questions in the affirmative (i.e., positive, growth-oriented)
- commence with leading questions the engage the affirmative topics chosen
- provide a broad understanding of the focus for the day iteratively
- encourage storytelling and metaphor
- explore the possibilities of the question
- focus on the present experience of participants
- act as a catalyst for appreciative reflection
- encourage engagements with the values and aspirations of participants.

Table 6.4 also summarises the purpose of the first discovery question, which was to unearth from the perspective of stakeholders involved what the school was most proud of, what they felt made the school community and its learning and teaching unique, and the proudest achievements during the last two years. Finally, the first stage of the discovery questions invited participants to consider how the school met the local community's needs. This first stage aimed to unearth critical stories that were emblematic of the school's strengths. Participants were encouraged to retell stories involving teachers, students, and parents and focus on the core values. After storyboarding the questions, the themes that emerged from each table included the importance of community, diversity in the student and parent population, and the focus on inclusivity within the school community.

Table 6.4 Holy Family Catholic School's AI summit structure

4-D cycle	Affirmative topic and appreciative questions	Intention	Process reference
Affirmative Topic	*Fostering Catholic identity, improving student learning and wellbeing and developing ecological conversion*	To focus participant engagement around three organisational values	Cooperrider et al. (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d)
Discovery	From the perspective of students, all staff, parents, parish, and CESA: What are we most proud of as a school? What makes us unique? What is our proudest achievement in the last year or two? How does Holy Family Catholic School meet the needs of our community?	Positive core of HFCS identified and establishes organisational meaning and purpose	Cooperrider et al. (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d)
Discovery	Reflect on the past 5 years and pick two stories of success from Holy Family Catholic School and where the school is today from the perspective of students, all staff, parents, parish, and CESA. Why does it matter? Is there one motto/quote/idea/story/song that has stuck with you throughout your time at Holy Family Catholic School? What are the Holy Family Catholic School's greatest strengths?	Positive core of HFCS identified and establishes organisational meaning and purpose	Cooperrider et al. (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d)

Table 6.4 (continued)

4-D cycle	Affirmative topic and appreciative questions	Intention	Process reference
Discovery	Think of a time when there was an *extraordinary* display of *cooperation* between diverse individuals or groups at Holy Family Catholic School What made such cooperation possible (e.g., planning methods used, communication systems or process, leadership qualities, incentives for cooperation, skills, and team development techniques)? Provide examples and stories of extraordinary cooperation from the perspective of students, all staff, parents, parish, and CESA (Figure 4): Fostering Catholic identity (students, all staff, parents, parish, and CESA) Improving student learning and wellbeing identity (students, all staff, parents, parish, and CESA) Developing ecological conversion identity (students, all staff, parents, parish, and CESA) How can these lessons be applied to the next strategy?	Positive core of HFCS identified and establishes organisational meaning and purpose	Cooperrider et al. (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d)

Table 6.4 (continued)

4-D cycle	Affirmative topic and appreciative questions	Intention	Process reference
Discovery	Holy Family Catholic School builds on 'proven strengths' and has a history of being a pioneer in many areas In your opinion, what is the most important achievement that you can recall that best illustrates this spirit of 'educating thriving children'? Provide examples and stories of proven strengths from the perspective of students, all staff, parents, and CESA Fostering Catholic identity (students, all staff, parents, parish, and CESA) Improving student learning and wellbeing (students, all staff, parents, parish, and CESA) Developing ecological conversion (students, all staff, parents, parish, and CESA) In your opinion, what have been the *causes* of success (i.e., why did it happen)?	Positive core of HFCS identified and establishes organisational meaning and purpose	Cooperrider et al. (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d)

(continued)

Table 6.4 (continued)

4-D cycle	Affirmative topic and appreciative questions	Intention	Process reference
Dream	Imagine it is 2030. The school has fully implemented the new 2021–2024 Strategic Plan. What would an *ideal* Holy Family Catholic School look like for students, all staff, parents, parish, and CESA and the school more broadly? Provide examples and stories of *ideal* Holy Family Catholic School from the perspective of students, all staff, parents, and CESA: Fostering Catholic identity Improving student learning and wellbeing Developing ecological conversion How would we know if we are succeeding? What will improve? How will we measure it? How will we demonstrate our impact? Identify measurable outcomes for students, all staff, parents, the school, parish, and CESA	Establishes a results-oriented ideal vision for HFCS articulated in the Discovery phase	Cooperrider et al. (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d)

Table 6.4 (continued)

4-D cycle	Affirmative topic and appreciative questions	Intention	Process reference
Design	Refer to the Holy Family Catholic School Strategy for the next 3 years Identify existing and new short-term and mid-term initiatives focusing on the Holy Family Catholic School that could accelerate the school's strategy for the next 3 years Provide examples and stories of *ideal* Holy Family Catholic School from the perspective of students, all staff, parents, and CESA: Fostering Catholic identity Improving student learning and wellbeing Developing ecological conversion	Participants create proposition statements on the ideal organisational structure with the aim to enhance the positive core identified during the discovery step of the cycle	Cooperrider et al. (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d)

The discovery first step aimed to unearth the positive core of the school's values and establish organisational meaning and purpose from the output generated, drawing on Cooperrider et al.'s (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d) recommendations. During the first discovery phase, participants were asked the following questions focused on what employees were most proud of as a school, what they thought made the school unique, their proudest achievements, and how the school meets the community's needs. Figure 6.2 highlights the output generated from the first step of the discovery questions seeking to find out what made participants think was unique for their environments and how they meet the community needs.

As shown in Fig. 6.3, during the second discovery phase questions, participants were invited to consider the past five years of learning and teaching at the school and choose two success stories from the school community they believed symbolised its core values. Here participants were once again invited to consider the perspective of students, all staff, appearance, parish and the Catholic education system was generally (Cooperrider et al., 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d). Further, participants were invited to think of a motto, quote, or story that became emblematic of the school's years' of experience. The output from this section highlighted three dominant themes focusing on the school's mission, multicultural and diverse identity, and the importance of Catholic identity. During this phase, it was noted that a recent school song written by teachers at the school was symbolic of the many core values being expressed. Spontaneously, the participants paused the summit and sang the music to the researcher. Step 2 of the discovery phase stimulated participants to reflect on what has been achieved.

Fig. 6.2 What makes our school unique?

Fig. 6.3 What have been our successes over the past 5 years?

During this stage of the AI, summit participants recounted emblematic stories of learning they felt represented the school's values. Examples were themed around the affirmative topic choices and highlighted fostering Catholic identity, improving student learning and wellbeing, and developing ecological conversion. As each of these stages progressed, participants were asked the provocative question to reflect if they knew they were succeeding, how they would improve, and how they would measure and demonstrate the impact. Fostering Catholic identity included church group masses and meetings, class masses, cultural celebrations, Grandparents' Day, Harmony Day (highlighting cultural diversity), an annual spring fair (entertainment and food stalls), a sacramental program, and a parish community involving multiple schools. Participants highlighted a particular focus on literacy during this section of the summit, emphasising whole-school literacy initiatives, including Holy Family Write, where all students can publish their work within the school community.

The purpose of the third discovery phase was to focus on the efforts of all stakeholders in achieving the outcomes identified in earlier questions. Questions asked of the participants included inviting them to reflect on when they saw extraordinary cooperation between groups at the school and the process that made this possible. Participants were encouraged to identify examples and stories to illustrate their claims. The outcomes of this part of the discovery section were numerous. Highlights include: the development of an aquatic fish farm to educate young people on the process of ecological conversion and junior science; introduction of a 1:1 laptop program across the school, which was made accessible for all school members

Fig. 6.4 What are the Holy Family Catholic School's examples of extraordinary cooperation?

of the community; opening and developing an early learning centre; integrating character strengths from Peterson and Seligman's theory of 24-character strengths; and committing to financially supporting families experiencing stress and maintaining low fees throughout the year (Figs. 6.4 and 6.5).

Step 4 of discovery invited participants to consider what they defined as the school's proven strengths and where it has been a pioneer. Participants were asked to review stories and examples of when they thought education was taking place for children who were thriving. Unlike other questions, this section asked participants to consider the significant causes of success. The dominant themes that emerged included diversity, the role of languages, inclusivity, people's ability to grow and thrive, and mutual respect for students and teachers. These themes are illustrated in Figs. 6.6 and 6.7.

6.5.2 Dream

As Table 6.3 notes, following the discovery stage, the strategic planning summit then progressed to the dream stage of the 4-D cycle. This stage aimed to dream of a school that brings value to CESA and beyond to discover the factors that help us educate thriving children. Participants were invited to consider what was possible

Fig. 6.5 What are the Holy Family Catholic School's stories of success?

Fig. 6.6 What are the Holy Family Catholic School's strengths in the words of the staff?
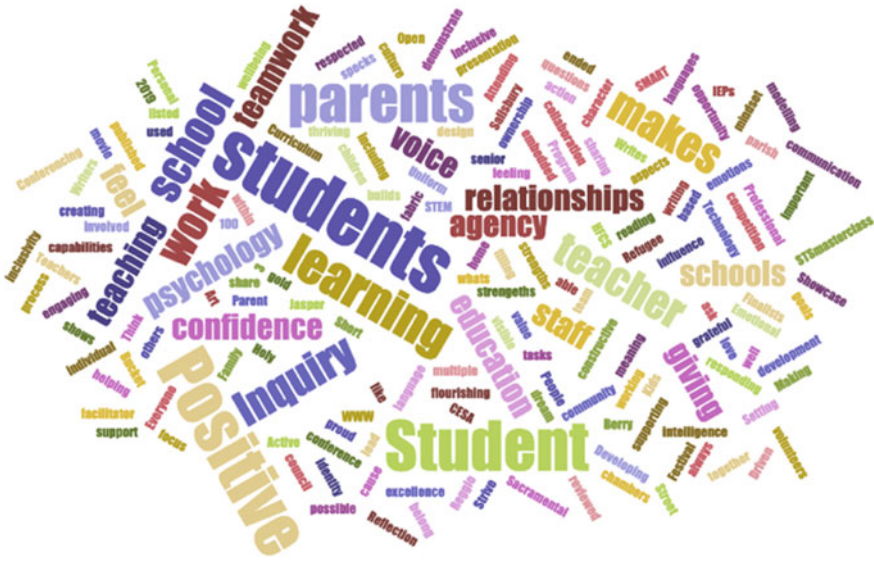
Fig. 6.7 What have been the causes of success at Holy Family Catholic School?

for the school in the future. Specifically, the steps focused on the school's ambition to educate thriving children. Participants were asked to imagine it is 2030 and the school has fully implemented the new 2021–2024 strategic plan. They were asked to consider what an ideal Holy Family Catholic School would look like for all students, staff and parents, the parish, CESA, and the school more broadly. Next, they were invited to provide examples and stories of the ideal Holy Family Catholic School from the perspectives of students, staff, parents, and CESA (Fig. 6.8).

When imagining the Holy Family Catholic School of 2030 during the dream stage, participants recorded several possible initiatives to focus on and develop. Suggestions included: establishing a new middle school (focusing on Years 6–9); building a permanent church centre; founding a First Nation pedagogy and support strategy; establishing school wetlands and an ecological platform; high-quality sports facilities; introducing learning strands (sports academy, dance, performing arts, student choice, specialist teachers, early access to interests, languages partnerships with local universities, internships, and introducing new subjects); more student agency (e.g., bands, specialised sports academy, robotics, science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics); extending aquaponics; greater focus on sustainability; virtual international students; and a wellbeing hub.

Fig. 6.8 Imagine it is 2030, what are the most exciting opportunities for Holy Family Catholic School?

6.5.3 Design

Following the discovery and dream stages of the AI process, participants were invited to reflect and consider how to plan for short-term and mid-term initiatives to advance the Holy Family Catholic School strategies. The objective of this stage was to discover the factors that help us educate thriving children. During the design phase, the participants' conversations and examples also releveled many existing projects within the school already in progress. The purpose of this stage was to encourage participants to reflect on projects they are undertaking in existing work and outputs with the emerging strategic direction of the schools. The participants identified several measures of success for the school and strategic initiatives that can be organised into learning and teaching, wellbeing, and the broader community.

Learning and teaching:

- academic excellence—literacy, numeracy, ICTs
- education of ecological activists—action-driven, environmental awareness (litter, care of belongings), leaders of sustainable practice, accountability
- flexible learning—fluid, strength-based
- improvements in grades
- learning and teaching
- students excelling in senior and tertiary education in their fields of interest
- creation of a Birth—Year 12 school and ELC—model contemporary learning and wellbeing from 1 to 12 (flow-on effect).

Wellbeing:

- citizenship—active participants, informed, responsive, and responsibility. Increased levels of student engagement/wellbeing
- wellbeing—emotional intelligence, the development of positive relationships.

Broader community:

- growth in student enrolment numbers, people, facilities, technology, attendance, belonging, and community engagement
- teaching recognition
- word of mouth.

6.6 Benefits of an AI Summit

There is a shortage of case studies outlining how AI can be adopted in disadvantaged school contexts (Filleul & Rowland, 2006; Giles & Bills, 2017). It is hoped this case study is an example of what is possible and may stimulate other schools to embrace the process. There are numerous benefits to adopting Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) AI process in leading change, notwithstanding the context as noted by Dickerson (2011). This case study highlights an AI approach's opportunities to transform education strategies for schools. As evidenced by the preparation and process adopted for the Holy Family Catholic School AI summit in this case study, it is possible for schools with limited resources to operationalise and execute a full day's investment in strategic planning adapting the process (Doveston & Keenaghan, 2006). The benefits of the AI process are found in the engagement with all school community members to capture the unique stories of success. The advantage is that during the AI process, Step 1 discovers stories that become symbolic of core values schools may seek to transform in the future. This AI aimed to connect with the three affirmative topics chosen by the senior leadership team. The outcome meant that the discovery phase provided concrete examples of how intangible value may be left out in practical examples in the school's activities, both inside the classroom and beyond. The other benefit of AI as an approach for schools like Holy Family Catholic School is that it enables staff to discuss core values and how their daily work links directly with the overall school strategy and direction.

6.7 Conclusions

This chapter has explored the possibilities of applying AI as a change process in a disadvantaged school. The chapter focused on the process and its application to meet the case study's specific cultural and contextual needs. The study emphasised the need

for further research of the benefits of adopting AI in disadvantaged communities as one strategy to link school communities with positive stories about the past, discover the present, and co-create what may be possible in the future.

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Chapter 7
School Leaders' Influence on Teacher Wellbeing: Three Case Studies

Faye McCallum

Abstract   Teacher wellbeing can be advanced through quality leadership both within the educational site and the broader macrosystem influences, which include political agendas and policy, legislative, and curriculum reforms. Teacher wellbeing is best defined by McCallum and Price (2016), who acknowledge the many diverse and fluid factors that influence whether a teacher is feeling and functioning well. They argue that teachers' wellbeing is both an individual and collective responsibility that can fluctuate across the career continuum due to mitigating circumstances. Leadership, defined here as local and national individuals and bodies, are duty-bound to be involved in the wellbeing of the teaching profession as it ultimately results in learner outcomes, academic achievement, and student satisfaction. Just as learners require dedicated curriculum and policies, explicit wellbeing initiatives for professionals are essential. This chapter draws on three studies to show how leadership can advance teacher wellbeing and teaching effectiveness.

Keywords Education policy · Professional development · School leadership · Teacher wellbeing

7.1   Introduction

Across the globe, the quality of teachers' impact on their professional practice to raise student results continues to attract much attention. In Australia, initial teacher education (ITE) is targeted, and the 2021 *Initial Teacher Education Review* (Department of Education, Skills and Employment [DESE], 2021) is another example of how governments aim to address poor student attainment scores by focusing on one stakeholder—ITE providers. It is acknowledged that ITE is a very important aspect of the teacher quality debate, but with 296,516 full-time equivalent teachers in the Australian workforce (DESE, 2020) and newly qualified graduates only making up about 16,000 of these (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021), the fostering and

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maintenance of teacher quality is a whole-of-workforce responsibility. Alfayez et al. (2021, p. 1) acknowledge that the wellbeing of teachers is directly related to their teaching quality.

Early career teacher responses to the *Staff in Australia's School Survey 2013: Main Report on the Survey 2014* (McKenzie et al., 2014) indicated that the majority expected teaching would be a lifetime career. However, teachers continue to experience transition challenges as they adjust to the workplace, attempt to accommodate school expectations and workloads, feel pressured in implementing school policy and curriculum, and feel high accountability for student learning outcomes. Thus, teacher wellbeing is increasingly affected by feelings of being overwhelmed, low self-confidence, and oscillating levels of motivation and energy (Viac & Fraser, 2020). Teachers identify enablers to their wellbeing, often citing school leadership as an integral factor in their resilience.

In this chapter, three case studies will be explored that identify the influence of school leadership on the wellbeing of teachers: (1) at the end of their preparation as early career teachers transition to employment; (2) early, mid-career, novice and expert teachers in one schooling sector; and (3) teachers working in times of crisis. The first study was undertaken across two countries—Australia and the UK—and included two ITE providers who had systematically integrated wellbeing education in their teacher preparation courses prior to preservice teachers graduating. The graduates from both institutions were invited to participate in an anonymous online survey that explored the influence of school leadership on early career teachers' wellbeing. The second study was undertaken in one schooling sector in one state in Australia. It involved an online teacher wellbeing survey using a mixed-methods approach to collect quantitative and qualitative data from 806 teachers who volunteered to participate. It investigated the perceptions of school leadership on teacher wellbeing. The third case study was undertaken in 2020 during the global pandemic, using an online survey to recruit 322 teachers and leaders across 12 countries. Participants in this study responded to the influences and impact of leadership during the disrupted schooling year in which 1.6 billion learners were affected.

7.1.1   Initial Teacher Education

The complexity of teachers' work is extensively researched and reported around the globe, and the increasing nature of the role challenges ITE providers who also grapple with significant reforms of their own. In Australia, for example, the *Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group: Issues Paper* (DESE, 2014) suggested 38 recommendations for Australian providers to include: overhauling and strengthening the national accreditation process; making more transparent the academic and non-academic selection criteria for entrants into teaching; measuring the impact of student–teacher performance during and at the end of their courses; and promoting a more integrated approach to teacher education between school systems and higher education providers. The Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership

(AITSL) sets high standards for providers, student–teachers, teachers, and leaders. Introduced in 2011 and revised again in 2015, all stakeholders must meet seven standards at 'graduate', 'proficient', 'highly accomplished', and 'lead' levels to maintain their accreditation and registration. *The Initial Teacher Education Review,* launched in April 2021 by Federal Education Minister Tudge, addressed the government's ambition to lift Australian school standards. A new target was set by the Minister, who stated:

> To return Australia to the top group of education nations globally by 2030, noting that our school standards have steadily slipped over the last two decades. The review of initial teacher education courses is the most critical element towards lifting standards, noting that the quality of teaching is the most important in-school factor influencing student achievement. The review will address two key questions: how to attract and select high-quality candidates into the teaching profession, and how to prepare them to become effective teachers. (Australian Council of Deans of Education [ACDE], 2021)

The Minister went on to claim that:

> The recommendations of this review will help ensure we attract high-quality, motivated candidates into teaching and develop them into teachers with the skills our students need. We want the finest students choosing to be teachers and we also want to make it easier for accomplished mid- and late-career individuals to transition into the profession, bringing their extensive skills and knowledge into our school classrooms. (ACDE, 2021)

Late in 2020 The *Report of the Quality ITE Review (QITER)* was released but not endorsed (Minister Tudge was asked to step-down temporarily and an acting Minister was in place). However, 17 recommendations were included in *QITER,* across three priority areas: attraction and retention, ITE program quality, and the early years of teaching. The first area of attraction and retention of teachers seeks to debunk myths about the profession, incentivise, support accelerated programs, and establish a one-year ITE programs. The second area of ITE program quality focuses on supporting graduates to be classroom ready. The third area of supporting the early years of teaching proposes to introduce nationally consistent mentoring during the transition years.

However, the Review Terms of Reference and early messaging have not considered that:

- high-quality, motivated candidates are already attracted into teaching
- ITE providers already develop preservice teachers with the skills our students need
- fine students are choosing to be teachers
- accomplished mid- and late-career individuals are transitioning into the profession, particularly during the global pandemic.

These reforms intend to ensure the profession meets world standards; prepares, employs, and retains high-quality teachers; and positively impacts the learning outcomes of school students. However, teachers report that their work is highly politicised, forever changing, and at times stressful. Recent reports indicate that 40–50% leave the profession within five years, and fewer teachers seek promotion or

view the job as a lifelong career (Den Brok et al., 2017; Hugo, 2007; Thomson, 2020; Viac & Fraser, 2020). It is critical that school systems and ITE work in partnership to prepare and sustain teachers in this important work. Teacher wellbeing has recently attracted attention in the education sector after many decades of research and programs focused on learner wellbeing. McCallum and Price (2016) have discussed extensively the factors that inhibit or enable teachers' wellbeing and identify that school leadership critically influences teacher wellbeing.

7.1.2   Teachers' Work

It is often stated that teachers are the single most important in-school factor influencing student learning outcomes and satisfaction (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Hattie, 2009, 2015; Rubie-Davies, 2014; Wyn, 2009), with obvious connections that school leadership is an important in-school factor influencing early, mid- and late-career teachers' effectiveness, overall wellbeing, and productivity.

Teaching is a highly socialised and interactive profession, yet teachers often feel their work is more complex and demanding than the community perceives. Teacher status regarding community standing is declining; however, the 2020/2021 pandemic has imploded this view, with many parents and community stakeholders now acknowledging teachers' work (McCallum, 2021b, p. 195). The demands arising from their work and increasing complexity (e.g., Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, 2003; DESE, 2014; Quality Initial Teacher Education Review, 2021; Ministerial Council for Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2003; Senate Employment Education and Training References Committee, 1998) is to be acknowledged. Yet, as teachers are considered the biggest in-school influence on student achievement, they are often blamed for students' poor performance rather than seen as an asset (Dinham, 2013).

Teachers also educate children and young people about multiple social and economic issues broader than the approved curriculum, embedding learning moments through the school curricula, as witnessed during the pandemic (see UNESCO, 2020). It appears that every time a social problem emerges, it is passed to schools for resolution. Consequently, schools are constantly battling pressures to simultaneously address the 'basics' as well as the 'extras' society seems unwilling or unable to deal with. School systems are expected to play an important educative role at times of crisis, but rarely is anything removed to balance what is imposed. This results in overcrowded and, at times, unbalanced curriculum placing pressure on teachers and resources. Some of these 'extras' include sex and sexuality, drugs, homophobia, healthy living, racism, environmental concerns, body image, bullying, bomb education, dog education, boys' education, manners, resilience, violence, crime detection, child abuse prevention, depression, and so forth. These issues are significant for a productive and healthy society, but the impact on teachers' workload and schooling can be overbearing as they struggle to maintain a focus on core business, that of lifting student performance on external measures of achievement.

The changing educational and social landscape places demands on teachers' work. Shann et al. (2014) suggest teachers need to deal with difficult students; be instructed to build a classroom culture; learn about the needs of diverse student groups; know how to plan outcomes-based lessons; be able to teach students with special needs; scaffold the required literacies to build knowledge on; engage with fellow staff members; cope with increased demands and expectations from parents; be able to collect required evidence that addresses professional standards; use new technologies to a level that engages students in the digital world; and be able to navigate their way out of confusing and challenging classroom events. Of late, recent work identifies that teachers are in the workforce at times of unprecedented change, increasing educational opportunities, and overwhelming complexity (McCallum, 2020). These demands have short- and long-term effects on teachers' work, with some choosing to leave the profession and others grappling for individual and collective responses to their wellbeing.

7.1.3 Teacher Wellbeing

Wellbeing is emerging as a worldwide priority within educational policy and practice, with a predominant focus on student wellbeing and the role of educational settings in promoting not only academic outcomes but holistic approaches for the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual, and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians (MCEETYA, 2009). As Waters (2011) asserts, 'there is no doubt that teaching for wellbeing is a key aspect of 21st-century education' (p. 76). In addition to holistic approaches to student wellbeing there is also positive education, positive psychology and flourishing (Seligman, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman et al., 2009), resilience, emotional intelligence, relational and whole of school approaches. The responsibility for improving student wellbeing commonly falls on the classroom teacher to work with caregivers, students, and relevant support personnel. Expectations of educators are increasingly advocating to 'teach both the skills of wellbeing and the skills of achievement' (Seligman et al., 2009, p. 294). Inextricably linked is evidence of how student wellbeing interacts with academic achievement (Durlak et al., 2011). A further view complicates the notion that teacher wellbeing influences student wellbeing and vice versa (McCallum & Price, 2010), with teacher wellbeing and fitness influenced by ecological factors (Price & McCallum, 2015). Given these interconnections, it is argued that at the centre of wellness, achievement, and satisfaction for school children and young people is the teacher's state of wellness (Kern et al., 2014; Mansfield, 2020; McCallum & Price, 2010, 2016; White & Kern, 2018).

Work plays an important role in most people's lives, with people in OECD countries spending around a third of their waking hours engaging in paid work (White & McCallum, 2019). Work and workplace quality is a driver of happiness for many people and influences one's wellbeing. Teaching is a unique profession in that it

attracts people with a vocation for caring and wanting to make a difference in children and young people's worlds, whether it be academic, social, emotional, physical, and/or spiritual. Teaching is one of the most rewarding careers a person can encounter, yet it has increasing workloads; high levels of accountability, measurement, and administration; new challenges in student and parent behaviours; and operates in a rapid, ever-changing digital and global sector. Like student wellbeing, teacher wellbeing is a critical determinant in achieving positive social and academic learning outcomes for all. Wellbeing is of concern locally, nationally, and globally.

Significant and growing attention is being paid to teacher wellbeing research, particularly since the 1960s (McCallum et al., 2017). Key clusters of importance with a deleterious impact on teachers are:

1. teachers' experiences of a lack of autonomy in the workplace (McCallum, 2020; OECD, 2019; Owen, 2016; Song et al., 2020)
2. the emotional demands of the teacher's role and changing aspects to their work; for example, the onset of technology, increased accountability with parents, extreme student behaviour, and the expanding curriculum (Aldrup et al., 2018; Yin et al., 2019; Zee & Koomen, 2016)
3. teachers' feelings of isolation or a lack of identity and not being valued (Day & Gu, 2010; Price & McCallum, 2015)
4. limited or irrelevant professional development to assist teachers in keeping up with changes to their work and a lack of a clear pathway for promotion (Ingersoll & May, 2012; Sahito & Vaisanen, 2019).

Teacher wellbeing is being significantly reviewed in various literature of late—see McCallum (2020, pp. 20–27; 2021a, pp. 718–720; 2021b, pp. 184–185).

7.1.4   School Leadership

Schools are in a flux of change around the world with heightened concern for student learning outcomes. As such, school leaders are increasingly being held accountable for how well teachers teach and how much students learn. MacLeod (2020) suggests that leadership is directly impacting student learning. Further, teachers' continuous professional learning must become more effective if it is to deliver necessary positive growth in student learning—the aspiration of current Australia's government 2021 *Initial Teacher Education Review* mentioned earlier. In Australia, AITSL (2015) is charged with upholding the teaching profession, and in 2011 developed the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*, which publicly outlines what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve their work. As leaders, principals must have high aspirations that inspire staff and establish an environment that enables staff to learn and improve (AITSL, 2015). Unequivocally, 'school leadership matters greatly in securing better organisational and learner outcomes' (Leithwood et al., 2019, p. 12).

A growing body of research documents the effects of leadership to include two main functions: providing direction and exercising influence, and effective leaders help the school become a professional learning community to support the performance of all key workers, including teachers and students. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) describe the importance of educational leaders in developing people through offering intellectual stimulation and providing individualised support and an appropriate model. Ultimately, effective leaders influence the whole organisation by strengthening the school culture, building collaborative processes, and managing the entire educational community. Leithwood et al. (2008) make two important claims relating to successful school leadership and teachers work: that school leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment, and working conditions; and school leadership's influence on schools and students increases when it is widely distributed. In fact, in this study, which was undertaken across England, it was found that the more lead teachers enacted leadership practices, the greater their influence on teachers' capacities, motivation, and beliefs regarding the supportiveness of teachers' working conditions. Similarly, Alfayez et al. (2021) claim that the body of empirical research on leadership in multiple dimensions is established, and the quality of leadership practices significantly determines employees' wellbeing.

Lately, educational leaders are increasingly asked to be transformational, leading change in organisations and systems at the increasing pace of economic, health, and social change requiring schools to equip students to participate in a rapidly changing workforce (Alfayez et al., 2021; MacLeod, 2020). The impact of COVID-19 was felt across the world in 2020/2021, seriously impacting educational systems globally, with 1.6 billion children and 91% of total enrolled learners in schools worldwide affected at its peak in April 2020 (UNESCO, 2020). Carefully argued by White and McCallum (2021a), COVID-19 may be a crisis the world has grappled with, but unlike earlier pandemics such as the Zika Virus, West African Ebola, AIDS, and Spanish Flu, they also ask if it is a catalyst for change. During these times, school leadership was challenged, and Harris (2020) examined whether school leaders were also in crisis, flagging an important opportunity for change in schools and school systems. Thus, it appears evident that school leaders have a responsibility to support early, mid-, and late-career teachers, and perhaps this is the greatest investment an effective leader can make for improved student learning outcomes, teachers' wellbeing, and sustained employment. It is also purported that school principals are responsible for ensuring teachers are in good psychological health so they can continue to perform at their best (Alfayez et al., 2021).

The increasing complexity of teachers' work is impacting teacher wellbeing. As early career teachers transition from university to work, their engagement with the role and their attitudes towards remaining in the profession are influenced by the nature of the work, how they manage it, and the induction and support they receive. Different issues abound for teachers who choose to stay, which can challenge their motivation, energy levels, and productivity. The literature also highlights that perhaps the greatest investment an effective leader can make for improved student learning outcomes, teachers' wellbeing, and sustained employment is sharing responsibility

with school leadership to support early career teachers as they transition to the work-place and having different strategies in place for experienced and expert teachers, especially those aspiring for promotion. In seeking to explore the influences of school leadership on teacher wellbeing, three case studies will be presented in this chapter:

- Study One: Australian and UK Early Career Teachers' experiences in Transition to the Workforce.
- Study Two: Novice and expert teachers' experiences of wellbeing in one state in Australia.
- Study Three: Teachers and leaders' experiences of wellbeing during a crisis.

7.2   Case Study 1: Comparison of Early Career Teachers As They Transition to the Workforce from University/College Courses in Australia and the UK

Two ITE providers committed to integrating wellbeing into teacher preparation programs—one Australian and one British—collaborated in seeking the perspec-tives of ITE graduates in relation to their wellbeing within their first five years since graduation. This approach was driven by similar concerns regarding initial teacher retention experienced within both geographical contexts. Entrants into teacher educa-tion courses is a significant endeavour, with 27,733 recorded in Australia in 2017 (www.aitsl.edu.au) and 34,543 new entrants in the UK in 2019/2020 (www.assets. publishing.service.gov.uk).

7.2.1   Methodology

Case Study 1 Ethics was approved by the University of South Australia (No. H-2015-31412). A comprehensive online survey was developed collaboratively between the two institutions on a range of relevant themes identified in the literature (see below), but the area of relevance to this chapter is the final dot point:

- respondents' understandings of wellbeing
- career trajectory after qualifying as a teacher
- future career aspirations
- recollections and perceptions of wellbeing education during initial teacher training
- application of wellbeing principles in the workplace
- perceptions of the impact of teacher wellbeing on student wellbeing achievement
- **factors that support or challenge teacher wellbeing.**

7.2.2 Results and Discussion

A mixed-methods approach elicited both quantitative and qualitative data from both samples in Australia and the UK. The anonymous and voluntary survey targeted past students from a Bachelor of Education or Master of Teaching program through their university's Alumni Services by email invitation. All graduates completed their initial teacher training in the last five years. The Australian graduates completed an explicit core course on wellbeing in the final year of their Bachelor of Education; for the UK graduates, wellbeing was embedded within professional experience and program content.

A total of 67 graduates responded to the survey, with 63% trained in the UK (7 males and 35 females) and 37% in Australia (4 males and 21 females). Since qualifying to teach, 85% were currently working as a teacher at the time of the survey, 10% were not currently working and 4% disclosed they had never worked as a teacher since graduating. Of those working, 49% held permanent positions, with 44% in fixed term/temporary teaching positions, and 7% in supply teaching roles. Of the participants who responded, 37% described their transition from initial teacher training to being a qualified teacher working in a school as 'rather' or 'very overwhelming', while only 22% felt well prepared.

The main strategies that supported early career teachers' transition to teaching were grouped as: (1) receiving personal or professional support; (2) mentoring; and/or (3) formal professional learning. Of these three categories sub-points that related to the value of leadership in their transition were recorded in two of the three categories: (1) receiving personal or professional support (as supportive leadership at the first school) and in (3) formal professional learning (as management structures I can go to)—these two strategies will only be discussed in this paper. However, all strategies were:

1. Personal/professional support:

   - ***supportive leadership staff at the first school I started at***
   - *supportive colleagues at school*
   - *establishing a support network within new school*
   - *supportive department*
   - *knowing someone else in the new school to help me get settled at the start of a contract at very short notice.*

2. Mentoring:

   - *being mentored by an experienced teacher*
   - *support from my mentor and other members of my department*
   - *being able to talk to other teachers for advice*
   - *having mentors in my department for support and guidance.*

3. Formal professional learning or policy structures:

- *school induction program for new staff members*
- *a slight reduction in the timetable*
- *being employed a month before term started to settle in and get to know the children*
- *early career teacher release time*
- ***the school's management structure and who to go to***.

While participants were not asked to describe the value of school leadership on their transition explicitly, the data above indicated that school leadership were identified on two occasions (highlighted in bold font). In total, 28 graduates (52% respondents) saw a sustained career in teaching beyond 10 years, 11 (20%) predicted 6–10 years, 9 (17%) predicted 3–5 years, and 5 (9%) anticipated a limited period of 1–2 years, with one graduate not wanting a career in teaching at all. For those who envisaged a sustained career, there was an acknowledgement of the demanding nature of teachers' work, and it was mentioned that support was required to maintain an optimistic approach:

> *I really enjoy working at this school and teaching young adults who like to learn in a different environment. EVERY school should be like this one! The work is overwhelming but the support, especially from the school principal and others in leadership, is great!* (Female, 2 years post-graduation, Australia)

However, others found school leadership less effective:

> *I feel constantly under threat from the senior management team who rarely praise your efforts and constantly seek to find minor issues with which to threaten you. I feel badly paid and under-appreciated. I did not expect even in this type of school to feel so disrespected by both senior staff. I have had no CPD since I started here over 3 years ago. I feel there is no one safe to discuss any queries, or get advice from. Everyone is in the same position here so you feel they discuss you behind your back to curry favour from the management team. I feel so undermined and disillusioned that I can't even consider going to an interview somewhere else for fear of being rejected, ridiculed and further excluded here. In effect I feel trapped and if it weren't for the fact that I need the job I would walk out the door in an instant.* (Female, 3 years post-graduation, UK)

The impact of leadership on early career teachers is seemingly compounded by government and national agendas of accountability and performance. This participant described how important a positive relationship was with school leaders if you were to maintain your job, and even get a pay increase:

> *The government are complicating/have complicated everything they possibly can for teachers, instead of facilitating. Workload became almost impossible to manage, performance management is now related to pay progression and judgements can often be unfair, targets and objectives for teachers are not realistically achievable, all is very subjective particularly lesson observations as observers can grade whatever they want. It's all down to the person with the highest power and authority in the school, the headteacher. If he/she likes you, it's all good, if he/she doesn't like you, it's all bad.* (Male, 5 years post-graduation, UK)

Factors that impacted the quality of early career teachers' teaching were: 31 (65%) school leadership, 40 (41%) workload, and 39 (81%) their own level of wellbeing.

Participants provided positive and negative examples of leadership that impacted their wellbeing (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2). The examples reflect many factors described in the literature relating to issues affecting teachers' cognitive, physical, and emotional wellbeing, for example autonomy, workload, relationships, support, and reporting lines. Where these were dealt with supportively, early career teachers coped with the work, and this positively impacted their wellbeing. On occasions where there was poor management or differing power relations, early career teachers experienced ill-being or left the school altogether. The mentor role was identified as a positive influence, but those in leadership positions were ultimately responsible for how well the early career teachers performed.

The significance of the examples shared here mirrors what is reported in the literature. The practice of leadership performed by school principals and senior staff in facilitating enabling factors for teachers leads to greater teacher effectiveness

Table 7.1 Positive examples of leadership impacting teacher's wellbeing

Participant details	Positive examples
Female Post-graduation 3 years Australia	*Last term I had a really difficult class, the behaviour was appalling and my mental wellbeing was affected. I went to leadership and told them I was about to not walk into class because of the impact their behaviour was having on me in a negative sense. She supported me and rectified the situation and then the class worked well and there were not many incidents*
Female Post-graduation 5 years Australia	*Leadership supporting us when majority of staff were feeling stressed—incorporating a 'fun' staff meeting & including a 'fishbowl' where positive affirmations were written about each of us to boost morale*
Female Post-graduation 4 years UK	*When I have been having issues with a difficult class in my current school and certain students in particular and my head of department and the deputy head have spoken to and removed certain students to aid me with this and have kept encouraging me to keep going*
Female Post-graduation 5 years Australia	*After physically being unwell and still teaching and attending a sports carnival the Principal booked a relief teacher for the final three days of the week and insisted, I stay home, rest and get well*
Male Post-graduation 3 years Australia	*Dealing with a challenging student and challenging parents I was supported by staff and leadership in my actions*
Female Less than a year post-graduation UK	*When the principal told me of the departmental counselling services available, the head bought coffee machines for the staff room to cheer staff up, my headteacher told me to leave at 4 p.m. on a Friday, take no work with me and enjoy the weekend*

Table 7.2 Negative examples of leadership impacting teacher's wellbeing

Participant details	Negative examples
Female Post-graduation 1 year UK	*During my first year I felt really under pressure as my head of department continued to add further responsibility to my timetable. I couldn't cope, thankfully my mentor was amazing. She recognised that my wellbeing was not a priority. She spoke to my head of department and they helped me enough to get me back on track. Of course, once I recovered, they piled the pressure on again. I left that school*
Male Post-graduation 2 years UK	*Having to quit a school due to being bullied by a senior member of staff. Having it being acknowledged by others and nothing done about it*
Female Post-graduation 4 years UK	*Once after I spent nearly an hour marking one students book pointing out where and how he had completely missed the point of a key piece of work, even after help and deadline extension. I wrote in the piece of work that it was disappointing (not just because it was wrong but because of the lack of effort and the lack of care). I was asked to apologise to the student. When I said that I wouldn't do that, the issue was escalated to the head and they pressured me into apologising in front of a witness from senior management. They didn't listen to the full history or the context. They closed ranks and punished me for daring to say no*
Male Post-graduation 2 years Australia	*When a principal sat down and talked about teacher's rights at a meeting, then two weeks later went and did something completely opposite to what he had previously said which made the entire staff not very happy once they heard about it—this had personally affected myself*
Female, Post-graduation 5 years Australia	*Last year while I was working in a team of four teachers in the Middle School setting. There were only two of us who planned all curriculum areas for the Middle School, took on extra responsibilities, 'carried' the other two teachers and covered their lack of capacity to teach. Leadership spoke about addressing the concerns but at ground level nothing changed. Confidence was also broken with Leadership and this further impacted my wellbeing. I lost trust in the Leadership team of the school*
Female Less than a year post-graduation, UK	*I feel your wellbeing is supported by teachers but not by higher leaders where it is data driven*
Female Post-graduation 3 years UK	*Head Teacher being very critical and judgemental. The pressure often comes from senior leadership in the school, such that excessive marking or particular types of feedback are required because of fears of an inspection. Doing paperwork just for this purpose has definitely affected my wellbeing, because I haven't even felt it was necessary for the education of my pupils*

and better outcomes for students (Alfayez et al., 2021; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). Strategies to improve early career teacher wellbeing recommended by participants in this study included:

- *Senior management **prioritising teacher wellbeing** when designing and implementing school policies, projects, designing curriculum and timetables* etc. (Female, qualified 3–5 years ago, UK).
- *There should be **open, anonymous forums** to allow teachers to discuss strategies for managing difficult students, difficult managers, difficult parents, different teaching approaches/resources/strategies to support and help each other without fear of having it thrown back in your face* (Female, qualified 3–5 years ago, UK).
- *The stigma around teachers not coping is alienating so I think having **open communication** within a confidential forum could enable teachers to share their feelings while feeling valued. Establishing **trust** between staff and leadership in schools is vital and cannot be underestimated* (Female, qualified over 5 years ago, Australia).
- ***Resources** such as links to mindfulness courses; opportunity and encouragement to exercise, e.g., staff yoga/other exercise classes available after school; subsidised healthy lunch options; regular workload audit* (Female, qualified 3–5 years ago, UK).
- *I think the responsibility lies with the employer. While working as an accountant my employer was fully invested in ensuring that I succeeded and received full support to do so. I believe that hard-working teachers should be rewarded to show that the employer **appreciates** the hard work. This would certainly help with my wellbeing.* (Female, qualified 1–2 years ago, UK).
- *I think a lot of the problems come from the continued pressures caused by the constant **changes at government** level which are filtered down to school leadership and then the teaching staff. In addition, the lack of funding/understanding of the demands on the teaching profession means that teachers are overstretched.* (Female, qualified 3–5 years ago, UK)
- *I was very tired at one point in my first year which made me feel very overwhelmed and emotional. I spoke to my HoD who went through my to do list with me and helped me prioritise/put some tasks to one side for a while/helped me plan for the rest of the week, which helped to create a bit of **head space** for me to relax.* (Female, qualified 3–5 years ago, UK)

7.3 Case Study 2: Novice and Expert Teachers' Experiences of Wellbeing in One State in Australia

This case study is drawn from a research project undertaken from 2017 to 2019 in one schooling sector in one state in Australia to investigate teachers' wellbeing. Ethics approval was given by the University of South Australia (H-2017-202) and the independent education sector which commissioned the research.

7.3.1 Methodology

This appreciative study involved an online teacher wellbeing 47-item survey that captured quantitative and qualitative responses using a mixed-methods approach. The survey was co-designed based on the findings from an extensive literature review on teachers' wellbeing (see McCallum et al., 2017) to ensure the unique educational context was reflected in the project aim and focus. The question set was adapted from published wellbeing scales, and drafted, reviewed, and built using SurveyMonkey. It included 770 participants and involved teachers (66%), non-teaching staff (15%), and leaders (19%).

7.3.2 Results and Discussion

Teacher participants (24% male, 75% female, 1% DND) were located across metropolitan (65%), regional (32%, and remote/rural settings (3%) in K-12 settings (4%), secondary (23%), primary (14%), and early learning centres (0.4%). Of these, 74% had a religious affiliation and 73% were in co-educational settings. School size was determined by enrolment numbers: less than 200 students (10%), 200–600 students (20%), 601–1000 students (28%), 1001–2000 students (37%), and more than 2000 students (5%). Years of teaching experience ranged from 0 to 5 years (16%), 6–10 years (25%) and 11–15 years (19%) to 16 years and above (40%).

In the 'leadership/management' model ANOVA analysis, two of the three variables showed significant effects; that is, teacher wellbeing was a priority in the school and the main role of leadership at the school. Accounts of supportive leadership and leadership's awareness of teachers' workload were reported. Participants shared examples of principals who expressed their care for teachers as professionals:

- *I feel that if there was a serious issue, I needed support with, I would be able to turn to her for guidance and support regardless of the outcome* (#266).
- *Wellbeing coordinator addresses this at meetings and is very supportive. So is our Head of Primary, where he checks up on people and staff* (#465).
- *I have a lot of control. If I'm not coping with work, I have a responsibility to discuss this with my leadership team. Also, I choose when and how I use my down time to help recover my wellbeing* (#500).

However, teachers reported self-managing their workload at busy times, which affected their wellbeing. Despite leadership's awareness of these demands, leaders responded differently towards teachers and their wellbeing:

- *In the busiest periods (when school concert, reports, programs, and organisation peak, and when home has its own pressures) I have very little control over my wellbeing as my time is not my own to control. There is nothing I hate worse at*

those intense periods than getting an email from our principal telling me how to look after my wellbeing, or that I should! (#77)

- *I have started at a new school this year and have been surprised by the number of emails from executive supporting our choice not to answer emails after hours and openly supporting staff who are working parents. These things did not happen at my previous school. In fact, emails were sent in the evening and expected to be actioned by the following morning* (#510).

The ANOVA analysis in the 'leadership/management' model indicated that when wellbeing was a school priority, it showed a significant main effect: $F(1, 574) = 174.97$, $p < 0.0001$. That is, when teachers felt that wellbeing was a priority at school, it led to higher levels of leadership influence (see Fig. 7.1). Therefore, the higher participants scored the leadership /management within their setting— that is, working together to solve problems, being valued for their work by leadership, encouraging and supporting achievements, provision of time and resources— the higher the probability of teachers feeling that wellbeing was a priority at the school.

The analysis of deviance of the logistic model indicated that leadership/management (deviance $= 160.28$, $p < 0.001$) had significant effects on teachers' feelings of wellbeing as being a priority in school (see Fig. 7.2).

Teachers responded to leadership when their wellbeing reported three positive influences: (1) supporting staff, (2) socialising, and (3) rewarding and acknowledging teachers' work. For example:

- *People are valued and backed up by the leadership team. They are thanked for their hard work and everyone is acknowledged carefully. Small events are organised. Boundaries are modelled by the Primary Leadership Team* (#42).
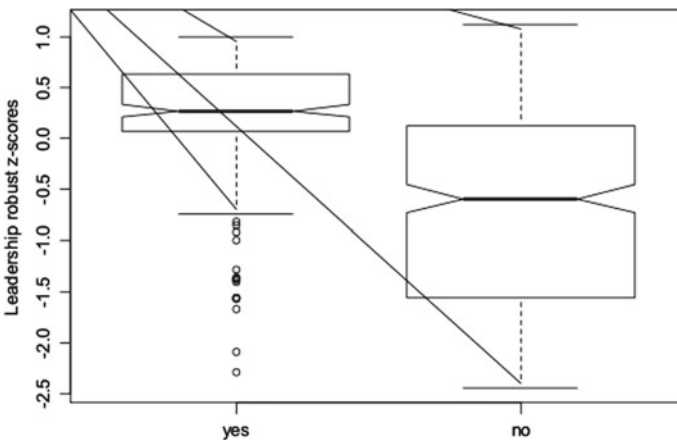

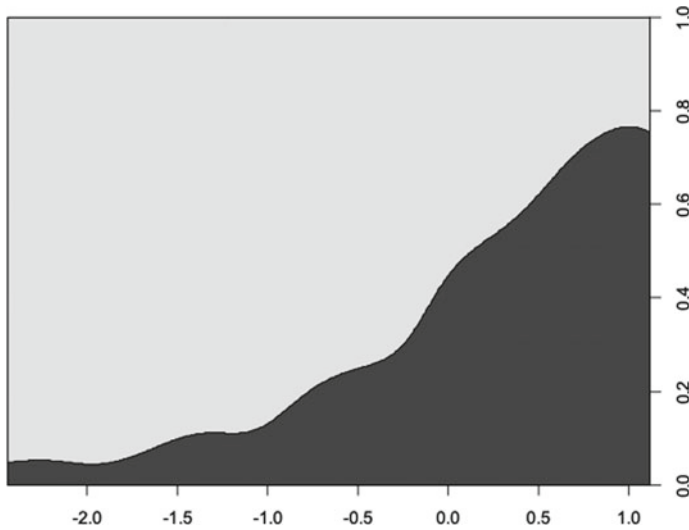**Fig. 7.1** Leadership/management when wellbeing was identified as a school priority

Fig. 7.2 Logistic regression of leadership and wellbeing as a school priority

- *Communication is supportive and positive. We are informed of how changes in the school will be managed and how decisions are made with staff wellbeing in mind (#87).*
- *School Chaplain for staff takes primary role. Councillors are also available. Leadership have also recently cut back staff meetings in order to assist time management of things like report writing—so thoughtful decisions in managing workloads (#175).*

The three determinants of leadership, wellbeing, and school priority presented mixed responses related to key points (highlighted in bold) evident in the teacher wellbeing literature that can have a deleterious impact, such as stress, lack of autonomy, workload, out of my control, and feeling under-valued (see McCallum, 2021a):

- *If things are not going well, I also have my husband. It is rare that anyone in the leadership team would recognise if I was **stressed**. I don't think they really do actually care how I am feeling—they always seem stressed themselves (#325).*
- *School leadership, workload and other external factors are **not in my control** (#598)*
- *I have a lot of **control** over my wellbeing but not as a teacher as there are too many task masters. Right now, I can get orders from as many as 7 executive and lead staff—and all ask for different things on different timelines at the same time. Any one is reasonable but the combination is hectic. The number of government bodies and the demands create a weighted blanket of demands and timelines that the feeble wellbeing meeting once a year, that says look after yourself, just does not address (#621).*

- *I have some control over my work flow, but when I am **overloaded** with coordination jobs that there is insufficient loading for, and when extra high maintenance students are in my classes, my work becomes **stressful**. I think with allocations and timetables being decided by people above me, and the demand to be on site for the full 8 h of the day whether I am teaching or not, there is a very paternalistic attitude to my work! So much of what I do is decided by others that **control** is not really what I have over my work. I merely have the control over how well I do it in the time available (#77).*
- *I feel optimistic and in control of my personal and emotional wellbeing. However, I went through a period where my contribution to school life was **not valued** by educational leaders and my functions were undermined. It had a very detrimental impact on my mental and physical health. During that time, I felt I had little control over my wellbeing and I almost left the profession (#536).*
- *I am locked into a number of things that influence my wellbeing negatively and there is not much I can do about that right now. When you make suggestions to management that **stress** is an issue, they don't want to know, and I have been doing this for over a decade (#712).*

The ANOVA analysis in the 'leadership/management' model indicated no significant effect with teaching experience: $F(3, 574) = 2.37, p = 0.06$. However, teachers with more experience (11–15 years) reported the highest levels of leadership/management support within their setting. This was characterised as leadership and teachers working together to solve problems; teachers being valued for their work by leadership; achievements were encouraged and supported; and provision was made for time and resources (see Fig. 7.3). For early career teachers and teachers with 0–10 years of experience, there were indications of reduced support from leadership and school management. Teachers commented on the changing nature of attitude towards teacher wellbeing in recent years and the importance of maintaining a positive school culture:
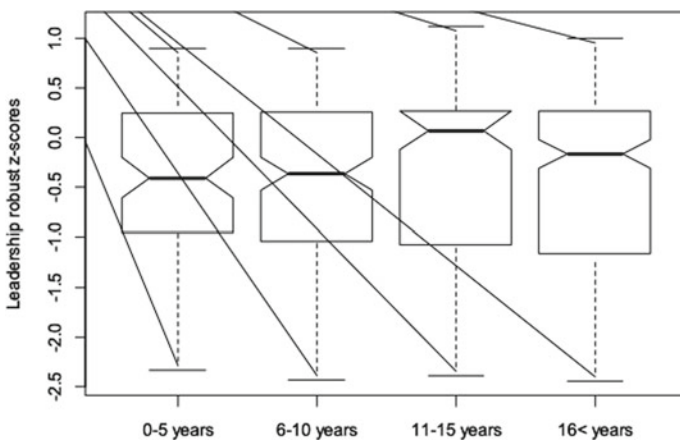

Fig. 7.3 Total years of teaching experience and influence of leadership

- *There has been a culture shift in my time at the school. It was woeful for many years. Now staff are actually cared for as people and not just used for their ability. Management at all levels are aware, thoughtful and pastoral* (#43).
- *In the past it wasn't, but I have felt a shift in the last two years. There have been a number of social events that are designed to encourage colleagues to have fun. Also, the 'tone' of the leadership team has changed. I feel like the school leaders value their staff and encourage them* (#68).

In addition to recent attitudinal shifts from leaders in awareness and support of teacher's wellbeing participants identified that practical support and investment in the workplace also helped. The present study provided examples of this:

> *In recent years the school has invested a lot of time and money conducting independent surveys surrounding staff wellbeing and on the basis of these finding have attempted to implement strategies throughout the year to assist in developing and maintaining a high level of satisfaction/wellbeing among all staff.* (#182)

Positive school environments and supportive leaders enable teachers to have a better sense of wellbeing and feel good about themselves, be less stressed, and lead to professional effectiveness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). And others (Alfayez et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2010) have advocated for vision enactment, providing learning support, management of learning programs, and setting examples through modelling as positive influences on teachers' wellbeing. Teacher wellbeing was identified as an individual and collective responsibility, summed up well by this teacher:

> *I realise I need to take responsibility for my own wellbeing, but I know that when I am not appreciated, or people are critical of me, or when parents are not happy with me, etc I quickly fall apart and my equilibrium is thrown. It is hard for me to stay happy and positive in an environment that is not happy and positive. So, I believe that we also have a responsibility to provide the best environment we can to support the wellbeing of others. In saying that, resilience is also important and we should be able to weather the storm and come through the other side without harm and possibly better for the journey.* (#542)

This study has identified that when teacher wellbeing is prioritised at school, teachers show higher levels of wellbeing, which contributes to sustained best practice. However, it must be specific, contextual, and a part of school culture. This is where school leaders can have an influence on teacher satisfaction and effectiveness. In this study, experienced teachers showed the highest levels of wellbeing; however, they continued to seek support and guidance from leaders and established school policies. Teachers reported needing greater autonomy in their work, as this directly relates to teachers' wellbeing, satisfaction, happiness, and effectiveness. There are further implications for early career teachers from this study that add to the findings of Study 1, as evidenced by this early career teacher:

> *I never used to think I was going to be one of 'those' teachers who burned out or who reached a point where I needed a career change. But it turns out I am. Years ago, I would have dismissed this whole 'teacher wellbeing thing' as a bit soft and irrelevant given that if*

you signed up to teach in a school like this, then you knew what you were getting yourself in for and that this job drives your entire life. This might have worked for me 15 years ago when I was regularly working 70 hours a week but not now. I can see so many mid-career teachers who need care. Those with young families, people who are carers or who just need some flexibility in how they spend their time. The young ones will sort themselves (although we need to not burn them out) but it's us who need care to keep going lest they end up like those snarky teachers who hide in the back and do the minimum. (#128)

7.4 Case Study 3: Teachers' and Leaders' Experiences of Wellbeing During a Crisis

The rapid development of world economies, threats to climate change, political interference, and debilitating health factors are on the increase across the globe. As detailed in Chap. 5, schools are central to the communities where these catastrophes occur and can contribute to their rebuilding and provide hope for children and their families. Often, it is teachers who play a pivotal role during this recovery phase. As I write this chapter, the world continues to struggle with the impact of the pandemic and continual school closures and community restrictions. The Taliban have seized control of Afghanistan with deleterious effects on children and young people. Australia experienced a series of catastrophic events in 2019/2020, backed up by the pandemic in 2020–2022. With an estimated 1400 schools impacted by the 2019–2020 bushfires, these events highlighted the effects of such trauma on school communities (Cahill et al., 2020). Thus, school leaders and teachers are challenged to foster wellbeing in the aftermath of catastrophic events. For many parents, school leaders and teachers can be the lighthouse in calamitous times. Unfortunately, disasters seem to be a more frequent occurrence, and there is an increased need to be resilient in times of adversity. Schools respond with programs to teach children, teachers strive to cater for all children's wellbeing needs, and leaders have a role to support teachers in this quest.

The pandemic has been a global event, shared by 148 countries (UNESCO, 2020) experiencing different levels of disruption. One common element has been the pandemic's impact on teachers' work as overwhelming, and it continues to affect teachers and learners. The rapid transition to fully online learning because of the pandemic has seen schools rapidly change to online education in the space of days and weeks. McCallum (2021b) discusses the extent of disruption to teachers' work in-depth (see pp. 186–187). Disruptions include unduly excessive workload demands; change of pedagogical practices from predominantly face-to-face teaching to online; disruption to daily routines; teaching in dual mode to children in class and others online; change in normal practices of planning and assessment; seeking out new ways to maintain relationships with children and their parents; and a rapid challenge to teach digitally, which challenged teachers' skills as there was no time for professional development to learn new ways of doing things. Teachers experienced increased anxiety, tiredness, stress, confusion, isolation, and anger, which

impacted their levels of wellbeing in social, physical, emotional, spiritual, and cognitive ways. Azevedo et al. (2020) claim that the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the most significant disruptions to education globally since the Second World War.

7.4.1   Methodology

This study was undertaken in 2020 during the global pandemic. Initially presented as a health crisis, which soon became a social and economic crisis, learners missed many hours, days, weeks, and months of tuition and teachers became frontline workers (see White & McCallum, 2021b, pp. 1–5). Ethics approval was given by the University of Adelaide (H-2020-065). Qualitative and quantitative data was collected between 11 May and 13 August 2020 from teachers who were invited to participate in an anonymous online survey. A total of 322 respondents from across the globe participated from 12 countries and included teachers (49%), school leaders (48%), and 3% in non-teaching roles. Of these, 75% were permanently employed, 71% were female, and 51% had greater than 15 years of teaching experience. This case study reports on the impact of leaders on teachers' experiences during this crisis in relation to their work.

7.4.2   Results and Discussion

Despite the disruption, teachers provided examples of workplace activities or strategies that positively impacted their wellbeing during this time. Threaded through the qualitative results were incidents of how leaders influenced teachers' wellbeing and helped them to keep going despite the adversities of the crisis. These are collated in Table 7.3 in areas of leaders' personal disposition or values; leaders providing support strategies; and school culture.

One response considered five important aspects to school leadership that assisted wellbeing at her school:

1. *positive and supportive team and leaders*
2. *good times with staff, i.e., social events or dress up days*
3. *people expressing gratitude for things you have done*
4. *staff band*
5. *professional development opportunities which align with your own teaching and personal learning goals.*

School responses to the pandemic took many leaders by surprise, and the rapid switch to alternative ways of working did not always support teachers' work and wellbeing, as evidenced by these responses:

Table 7.3 School leaders' influence on teachers during times of crisis

Leaders' personal disposition or values	*My principal **values** each and every one of his staff, is **concerned** about our wellbeing and actively tries to ensure that we are given the support we need to do our jobs to the best of our ability. He is **approachable** and actually walks the walk, isn't just about ticking boxes*
	*Management support—clear direction, **support** and guidance*
	*I'm currently working from home without a specified illness; most of our teaching staff are. Our principal fought for it, and we are all very **appreciative** and feel like our wellbeing is a priority*
Support strategies	*Creative thinking and **strategic** planning; teacher **professional learning** that is collaborative*
	*Social catch-ups, professional development in areas I care about, **mentor** catch-ups with leadership, conversations with colleagues*
	***Guidance** from leadership as well as release time, resources, training, timetable, workload, value from leadership and staff*
School culture	***Connection** with colleagues—working collaboratively. Taking notice of people around me, and the world. Finding times to **give** to each other in small ways*
	***Autonomy** in the work I do, excellent support from leadership and generally being respected*
	*Supportive leadership who **understands** your skills and knowledge in your learning area and recognises that you are a professional and allows you to make some decisions*

- *A leader who is the opposite to me and evokes anxiety in me.*
- *One who doesn't have faith in my capacity.*
- *Unanswered questions from leadership.*
- *Ideas not being received positively by leadership.*
- *Instructions from uninformed or obstinate leadership that deters me in teaching and providing my best for my students.*
- *Micro-management from leadership (lack of autonomy).*
- *Failure to be recognised.*
- *Perceived lack of trust.*
- *Over-work, pressure, unrealistic managerial expectations.*
- *Constant demands to add more to our daily workload without taking anything away.*
- *Misalignment of values with those of my managers.*
- *Teaching staff is not supported, leadership backs parents and students so people are scared to seek support and mental health is at an all-time low.*

Leaders' positive and negative experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic had varied impacts on teachers' work. Participants were asked to identify the role taken by their school leaders towards their wellbeing, which were categorised as:

- Structural—a wellbeing position on leadership, structured into meetings, and formal professional development
- Communication—we are kept informed
- Literacy—we talk about our wellbeing, it's part of our language and culture
- Assistance programs—referrals to external support packages and agencies
- Policy—embedded in whole-school strategic plans and resourced appropriately
- Cultural—an expected school value and demonstrated by collaboration, teamwork, caring staff, and positive attitudes.

Participants who responded to this study during the peak of the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 experienced different contexts and challenges, yet many shared similar scenarios. There have been heartening stories of resilience and survival, and others of shame, despair, hopelessness, and loss. White and McCallum (2021b) question whether COVID-19 has been a crisis or catalyst for change in education (see, pp. 1–7). Harris (2020) argues that the impact COVID-19 will have on educational systems is still unclear. For leaders who lived through these extraordinary times, there are learnings that can influence future ways of leading and caring for staff wellbeing. These can contribute to how teaching is conceptualised within the next decade (or two) and will create more resilient, robust, flourishing education systems and teachers to assist our children and young people.

7.5 Conclusion

A key finding from these three studies is that the wellbeing of teachers in the workplace is partially reliant on school leaders, who have a role to support and nurture teachers to achieve the aims of preparing children and young people for a robust ever-changing world. The impact of poor leadership towards teacher wellbeing has been reported here as:

- Study one—teacher's experiencing ill-being and actively leaving the school.
- Study two—teacher burn out and considering a career change.
- Study three—low staff morale, negative and stressful school culture, and increased anxiety.

There are numerous reports that identify the negative and deleterious impact that leaders can have on teacher's wellbeing. This chapter seeks to share the experiences of leaders' impact on teachers' wellbeing from various perspectives including those of early and mid-career, across schooling sectors, and in challenging times. Participants reported both positive and negative factors, summarised in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Leader's impact on teacher wellbeing

	Positive factors	Negative factors
Study One	Hands-on support with student behaviour management Whole-school approaches and commitment Back-up support to release teachers when unwell, tired, isolated, or stressed Support when parents present as challenging Flexibility to school structures and systems Accept that wellbeing is real	Ignoring pleas for help Refusal to adjust excessive workloads Being bullied by leaders No personal or professional supports No back-up for difficult students School practices not in sync with school policies or promises Lack of acknowledgement of hard work or achievements Leaders that are critical or judgemental
Study Two	Leaders' awareness of individual and collective staff wellbeing Managing a workable workload Investment in the workplace Prioritising wellbeing in all school processes, practices, and policies	Feeling stressed, overloaded Lack of care or interest from leaders External factors that teachers can't control Lack of teacher voice Feeling under-valued Lack of control over my wellbeing
Study Three	Recognition from leaders Teacher professional learning Mentors and supportive structures Socialising Guidance from leaders Teacher autonomy Having connections with colleagues including leadership Leaders that are 'present'	Uncaring, anxious leaders No or little communication Leaders with negative attitudes Micro-management Increasing demands on teachers' work Leaders that are 'absent'

Alfayez et al's. (2021) work indicated that principals' leadership practices could determine teacher wellbeing through the fulfilment of professionals in organisational cultures as a potential way forward for educational leadership development. They suggest that a learning-centred leader can fulfil teacher needs by providing an environment in which teachers feel empowered to make decisions related to the teaching and learning process and improve their skills through open, transparent, caring, formal, and informal learning. They claim that if individuals experience the satisfaction of their basic psychological needs, they experience positive wellbeing (Alfayez et al., 2021). A UK male participant in the present study summarises this clear message to school leaders when he states:

> *Looking out for a teacher's wellbeing is as important amongst colleagues as it is for a teacher to look out for a student's wellbeing.*

Jesacher-Roessler and Agostini (2021) advocate that a central role of leadership is for individual and inter-organisational learning for sustainable professional learning networks and suggest that new organisational responses are needed to meet urgent institutional requests. They highlight the notion of responsiveness as a key

Table 7.5 Summary: Implications for school leaders and teachers' wellbeing

Implications for Wellbeing and Professional Practice
1. School leaders to prioritise wellbeing frameworks (including policy, processes, strategies, initiatives, and support) for school employees
2. Schools to plan and budget for wellbeing strategies, and annually check-in to assess what is working and what is not
3. School mission statements to adopt wellbeing literacy and actively demonstrate and celebrate well communities
4. School leaders to ensure there is accessible and meaningful professional learning
5. School leaders to work collectively to create a positive school climate and sense of empowerment
6. School leaders to advocate to government for improved acknowledgement, services, and support of teachers' wellbeing
7. School leaders to prioritise wellbeing frameworks (including policy, processes, strategies, initiatives, and support) for school employees

strategy used by leaders to support teachers in their ongoing professional learning resulting from inter-organisational practices within their individual schools, such as networking. They assert that this ensures sustainable organisational leadership capabilities (Jesacher-Roessler & Agostini, 2021) and further supports teachers to stay well, productive, and energised. MacLeod (2020) also argues that the principal's leadership role in professional learning enhances student learning and is a crucial strategy in impactful teacher professional learning. Alfayez et al. (2021) found that when their basic psychological needs are met, teachers feel autonomous, positively disposed, and develop an increased self-perception of their wellbeing status. This provides an important insight with implications for school leadership.

Moving away from traditional, hierarchical leadership styles to create school environments that satisfy teachers' basic psychological needs leads to better wellbeing, resulting in better educational outcomes (Alfayez et al., 2021). Teachers should be more involved in school decision-making on learning and improving the school environment. It is fundamental that the classroom teacher is happy to be at school, demonstrates interest and care for students, and has sound wellbeing. It is affirmed that teachers are at their best when their wellbeing is catered for. Measures of whole-school wellbeing in students and staff have shown that happy, optimistic students have increased vitality. Kern et al. (2014) report that highly engaged staff employed in meaningful activity are happier at school and have increased commitment to the organisation and greater job satisfaction. On a cautionary note, while school leaders have an important role in teachers' wellbeing, it is a shared responsibility with systems that govern schools. Rather than focusing on negative aspects like reducing work-related stress and burnout, efforts should be made to create a positive school climate and sense of empowerment among teachers, which will lead to a better sense of wellbeing for all (Alfayez et al., 2021) (Table 7.5).

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Chapter 8
Priorities of the Next Decade for School Leadership and Teaching

Mathew A. White and **Faye McCallum**

Abstract This chapter explores the priorities for the next decade of school leadership and teaching research. We review the potential impact of COVID-19's disruption on the quality teacher debate, which has dominated initial teacher education and early career teacher retention research for the past few years. A conceptual framework for this book is then reviewed, considering each of the chapter's contributions. We examine the potential convergence of wellbeing science research with learning theory to create a transformation of teacher professional practice. We highlight the growing body of evidence worldwide of the challenges faced regarding wellbeing as an international priority stimulated by the pandemic. Finally, we propose potential outcomes for the next decade's research, focusing on teaching as a professional practice, integrating wellbeing education into education systems, leadership, equity and access, community issues, wellbeing for teachers, and wellbeing for students. Lastly, we suggest several priorities for the next decade of research.

Keywords Education policy · Educational leadership · Professional development of educators · Teacher education · Teacher wellbeing

8.1 Introduction

When asked about teaching, Richard Elmore from the Harvard Graduate School of Education asserted that teachers need to be more professional (City et al., 2009; Elmore, 2006). He explained further that one of the challenges teachers face when discussing teaching was that it was 'a profession without a practice' (Crow, 2008, p. 42). Additionally, a McKinsey Report (2007) argues that 'the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers' (p. 1). Elmore's observation of

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teaching resonates with the challenges of integrating wellbeing education research, school leadership, and teacher practice explored in this book. Waters and Loton (2021) emphasise that there is a 'long-standing research history and large evidence base … to schools seeking to embed mental health approaches and do so in science-informed ways' (para. 45). What might the research priorities be for the next decade in school leadership and teaching? In this book, we call for teaching research and the transformation of practice. We claim there is an opportunity for professional practice to integrate evidence-informed approaches to wellbeing and to encourage more interdisciplinary research in wellbeing education. While there have been advances in the field's understanding of student wellbeing, teacher wellbeing, leaders' wellbeing, and the influence of school culture and climate, we argue that if the next decade of education research, school leadership, and teaching overlooks the ongoing opportunity to converge evidence-informed approaches to wellbeing it may continue to compound Elmore's paradox.

If there is a silver lining to COVID-19's disruption of education, it could be to revisit this tension (Killackey et al., 2020, pp. 16–17). We ask, how can a black swan event like COVID-19 present opportunities for the next decade of school leadership and teaching? The severity of the pandemic has caught many educators unprepared on multiple fronts—the complexity of wellbeing issues in the classroom is just one (Anderson et al., 2022). The metaphor of a black swan event was popularised by Taleb (2007) in finance to describe a rare and unpredictable phenomenon. When it does occur, it has a catastrophic impact and is explained in hindsight as if it were predictable. It draws on the belief that all swans were white until black swans were discovered in Australia. It raises many questions for school leadership and teaching: Is it too much to ask schools and systems to transform and continually grow? When will we achieve 'quality teacher' status for the profession?

Education and teaching play a crucial role in transforming society, building individual autonomy, cherishing democracy, and developing a capacity to engage more broadly in an unpredictable economy. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021, May 8, para. 1) has the following information on Australians aged 15–74:

- Over two-thirds (68%) had or were studying for a non-school qualification.
- Of the people with a non-school qualification, 78% were employed in May 2021 compared with 56% of the people without one.
- Half of all young women aged 25–34 years now hold a bachelor's degree or higher compared with just over a quarter (26%) 20 years ago (May 2001).
- Of the people who had 'education' classified as their field of study, 22.5% were male, and 77.5% were female, the highest non-school qualification by sex.

The past two years have seen unparalleled disruption to teachers and educators across the globe as governments, school leaders, and teachers simultaneously focus on improving the quality of teaching and maintaining community health and safety (Darling-Hammond, 2021; Waters et al., 2021). Two years later, with successive waves of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world and the emergence of the Delta

and now Omicron variants, teachers and teaching have been impacted in ways previously unimagined. Vaccines, the best defence against the pandemic, have been developed at record speed, highlighting science education's significance. There has been discussion about COVID-19 stimulating the 'great resignation', with critics arguing it is overclaiming this generation's response. As employees become agitated with conditions in the workplace, the economy is challenged (*Omicron and the world economy, the "free banking" debate and an unlikely outcome of Stalin's gulags*, 2021).

8.2 Quality Teacher Debate

Like elsewhere in the world, in the Australian context, the last 25 years have been focused on discussions related to the need for quality teachers (Barnes, 2021; Simpson et al., 2021). The recent Terms of Reference for the Australian Federal Government's *Quality Initial Teacher Education Review* emphasise that 'Teachers and school leaders are the largest in-school influence on student outcomes' (p. 1). The Terms of Reference note the development of a national set of standards for teachers and the various initiatives flowing from these. Several reforms have been operationalised on the recommendation of the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group and their impact on initial teacher education (ITE). The aims of the recent review have been to 'ensure that graduate teachers start their teaching career with the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions to be successful teachers in any Australian school'. The review considers two parts: Part A — attracting and selecting high-quality candidates into the teaching profession and Part B — preparing ITE students to be effective teachers. These approaches have been integrated into various curriculums, school leadership challenges, school vision and mission statements, and education generally. The seemingly intractable issue of recruiting and retaining quality teachers in classrooms regardless of educational background appears to be an ongoing challenge in the Australian context and has been replicated overseas.

The policy problem of how **to attract, develop, support, and retain high-quality teachers remains an intractable issue** (Barnes & Cross, 2021). Internationally, graduating teachers are entering the workforce at a time of unprecedented change and complexity, with many graduates leaving within the first five years. As the Fourth Industrial Revolution relentlessly advances, the World Economic Forum (WEF) claims 65% of the children entering primary school today will ultimately end up working in completely new job types that don't yet exist. Increasingly, ITE programs are being challenged to show new evidence of classroom readiness and evidence of impact. The 2019 OECD *Education at a Glance* report notes that the teaching profession is ageing, with only 10% of teachers under the age of 30 and more than 35% over the age of 50. In many OECD countries, the 'share of primary and secondary school teachers among 50 to 59-year-olds is larger than the share among 25 to 34-year-olds, which raises concerns about future teacher shortages'; in addition, teachers earn less than other tertiary-educated workers.

Issues of student wellbeing are a growing concern for principals and teachers in schools (Adler, 2017; White & Kern, 2018; White & McCallum, 2019). The growth of twenty-first-century skills has raised broader issues for the implementation of education, as argued by Lavy (2019). With the rise of information technology, it is no longer relevant to be only foundationally literate; there are several social, emotional, and cognitive characteristics that are now significant. Over the past two decades, there has been exponential growth in new research and practice of twenty-first-century skills, manifested in many forms; character education, learning and teaching for twenty-first-century skills, social and emotional learning, wellbeing, and positive education (World Economic Forum, 2016). Discussion around the new skills needed for the twenty-first century has dominated education discourse since the mid-1980s in the United States, the UK, and Australia. During this time, there was a shift focused on preparing students to learn content and knowledge, including literacy and numeracy. The new competencies often associated with twenty-first-century skills share common themes, including reasoning, evidence, critical thinking, and communications (Seligman et al., 2009; Waters & Loton, 2019; White & Murray, 2015). These were later proposed by the US Secretary of Labor as the basic skills, namely reading and writing, thinking or decision-making skills, and personal qualities, including integrity and honesty. The non-profit Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21), with members from the business and education fields, identified the 7C Skills as critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity and innovation, cross-cultural understanding, communications, computing, and career self-reliance.

8.3   Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.2 illustrates the conceptual framework for Chaps. 1–7 of *Transforming Teaching: Wellbeing and Professional Practice* [adapted from (Viac & Fraser, 2020)]. Each chapter has considered influences on education, including issues related to career, community, initial teacher education leadership, policy, professional practice, standards, and teacher quality. These have been impacted by the resources allocated to teachers, the ever-increasing regulatory and compliance demands of teaching, desirable teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and global characteristics. The first chapter presented the theoretical framework for the book and reforms to initial teacher education and education in Australia. We assert that wellbeing education has reached a turning point in the profession's development. Chapter 2 theorised how teachers might integrate theories of teacher professional practice and strengths in wellbeing education, notably in the humanities. Chapter 3 investigated the experience of preservice teachers and their vision of the future of education and teaching using an appreciative inquiry methodology during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Australia. The chapter highlighted the significance of pre-service teachers' ability to discuss their strengths and articulate future possibilities for teaching during the real and existential threat posed by the pandemic.

Chapter 4 contended that thriving school children's teachers, leaders, and communities can enhance the wellbeing of all, drawing on an Australian school that has measured the teaching and non-teaching staff's wellbeing. Chapter 5 argued how teachers could provide hope and optimism for many individuals and communities. Chapter 6 addressed a gap in the wellbeing leadership literature and focused on how a disadvantaged school can use appreciative inquiry in an underprivileged school. In Chap. 7, McCallum presented three teacher wellbeing case studies that identified the vital role school leaders play in building flourishing schools.

While it may be too early to consider the ongoing learning impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the immediate learning losses are challenging policymakers worldwide and will determine the path of graduate teachers for the next decade (Schleicher, 2020). Nearly every Australian State and Territory has mandated and then policies developed for employees to have COVID-19 vaccines for teachers and school workers; yet again, there is a significant shortage of teachers on the horizon (Department for Education South Australia, 2021). In the UK, 400 mental health support teams have been established, servicing 3000 schools in England and supporting three million pupils—with an estimated cost of £79 million by 2023 (National Health Service, 2021, May 8). Allison and Maloney (2021, November 22) argue that children who have dropped out of school or disappeared during the pandemic are of significant concern.

In the United States, the surgeon general, Vivek H. Murthy, has recently published the *U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory* to protect youth's mental health from the effects of the pandemic (Office of the Surgeon General, 2021, December). Paradoxically, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly tested the resilience of teachers and of the education system and stimulated a burst of creativity and activity (Cohen et al., 2021; Hascher et al., 2021; Hascher & Waber 2021). While there is a growing teacher shortage in Australia, we argue that there may be grounds for optimism because the broader society has a better appreciation of the complexity of teachers and because we are now entering a new era in which teachers continually adapt to the specific health challenges that the pandemic poses (Allison & Maloney, 2021).

A growing body of evidence points towards the international concerns of pervasive issues of young people's mental health and, therefore, their engagement and sense of belonging at school. For example, in the United States, the surgeon general has recently published a report outlining strategies to support the wellbeing of young people in schools. Similarly, in the UK, the government has started to comprehensively support young people's mental health through a wide variety of initiatives (Paúl, 2021). In Australia, we are starting to see various states' and federal governments' responding to challenges. In New South Wales and Victoria, the two largest Australian states and those most impacted by the COVID-19 2021 pandemic shutdowns, the governments have moved to adopt final assessments for school leavers. Universities have responded in new and innovative ways to open pathways for young people into higher education (García-Peñalvo et al., 2021). Simultaneously, teachers have maintained learning continuity throughout (Baber, 2021) (Fig. 8.1).

Fig. 8.1 The conceptual framework for transforming teaching: wellbeing and professional practice [adapted from (Viac & Fraser, 2020)]

Influences on Education
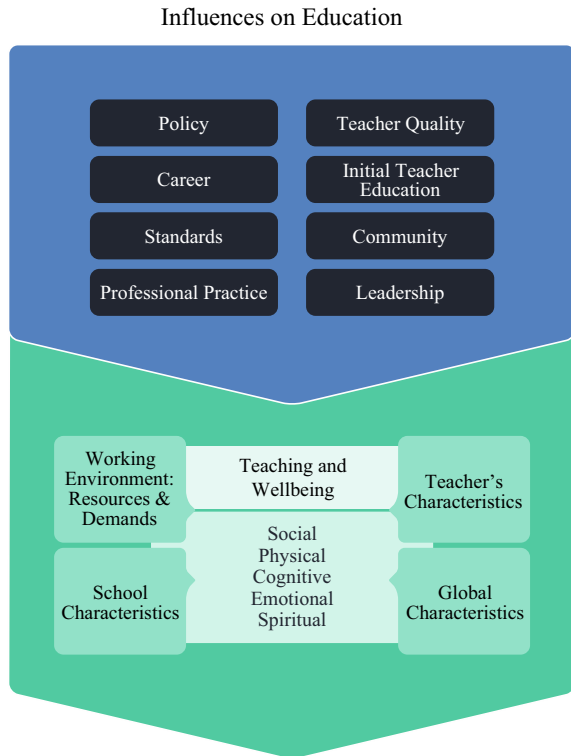
8.4 Outcomes to Transform Teaching: The Next Decade

What could be the research priorities for the next decade? The separate roads of wellbeing and teacher professional practice research have been converging for many years, but the two fields appear to have the opportunity to converge to create a more holistic research agenda that seeks to achieve a dual purpose of education: education for academic growth and flourishing (Waters & Higgins, 2022). The rationale for this case is based on a wellbeing argument (i.e., responding to growing concerns about mental ill-being and supporting schools) and also on equipping schools and teachers to enhance the wellbeing of young people who feel good and are functioning effectively to flourish socially, emotionally, and intellectually (Huppert & So, 2013). It is supported by a learning argument based on conditions for learning and uses evidence to inform teachers' professional practice to stimulate student learning growth. In chap. 1, we first argued that education was at a turning point. But we claim that because of the black swan of COVID-19, wellbeing education research, school leadership, and professional practice are on the cusp of a *critical juncture*—with the potential to transform and enrich education (Darling-Hammond et al., 2021). This chapter asserts that while the horizon ahead appears difficult, there are many

reasons for cautious optimism as teaching transforms to recognise the importance of wellbeing and professional practice.

Recent research by Waters and Loton (2021) reviewing the growth of positive education, a subfield of positive psychology closely associated with wellbeing education, notes that investigations to improve school systems and promote positive learning environments have existed for well over a century. Their review strengthens the opportunity for education researchers to collaborate closely. Many approaches have focused upon deficit orientation, the rise of social, emotional, positive psychology interventions, positive education approaches, and wellbeing education approaches.

In a large-scale quantitative review of publications across 100 years focusing upon the growth of wellbeing education, Waters and Loton claimed nine categories of emerging research areas. These categories included positive functioning, wellbeing, building strengths, agency, connection and belonging, identity and personality, school climate outcome, and demographics. Waters and Loton (2021) highlight that the launch of the positive psychology movement interventions has stimulated development in the past 20 years in three ways. These include promoting resilience and strength-based programs, evidence of the efficacy of a preventative model to wellbeing education and its benefits, and thirdly, a growing case that positive psychology interventions could be taught to students as a universal educational program.

Based on the theories and evidence presented in this book, we hypothesise that there are significant opportunities for teacher professional practice researchers to integrate studies from wellbeing more consistently. As illustrated in Fig. 8.2 *Outcomes for the next decade to Transform Teaching: Wellbeing and Professional Practice* a research plan *could* focus on wellbeing and professional practice research may address the following problems and achieve these outcomes within the next decade: developments in evidence-informed wellbeing and learning professional practice, growth of research in understanding how wellbeing can improve education systems, a more holistic approach to school leadership focusing on dual purposes of education for wellbeing and also academic growth, greater access to wellbeing innovations and education for children regardless of circumstance, re-invigoration of the role community to promote wellbeing and learning goals in schools and schooling, improved teacher wellbeing, and student wellbeing.

As illustrated by Chap. 2, there are several theoretical hurdles that wellbeing education must face to be more fully integrated into the professional practice of teachers. The next decade provides a significant opportunity to investigate these questions and merge the fields of educational psychology and learning sciences. This may present the opportunity to create a subfield of wellbeing education research specifically focusing on issues pertaining to the theory of learning. Issues of belonging and engagement have been well documented from students' perspectives (Allen et al., 2021a). Still, we also argue that there are benefits to ongoing research and discussion around what it means for teachers to belong with the teaching profession and foster positive interactions with students (Allen et al., 2021b). We call for more research on the issue of belonging, extending Allen (2021) research to profession and ensuring

Fig. 8.2 Outcomes for the next decade to Transform Teaching: Wellbeing and Professional Practice [adapted from (Viac & Fraser, 2020)]

Influences on Education
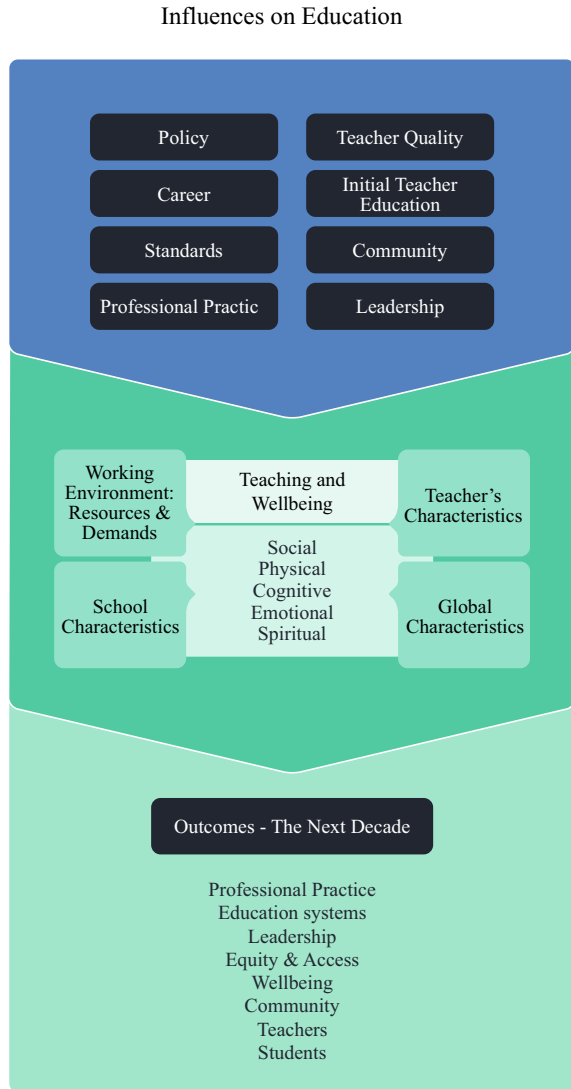
that graduate teachers are well equipped as they transition into the world of full-time work and of the stress and demands of schools and schooling. This research may also enable school leaders, systems, and employers to develop strategies to promote teachers' sense of belonging with a profession that profoundly impacts young people's progress. In Chap. 4, McCallum claims that by working together, school leaders, employers, and systems can develop strategies that can promote a greater sense of belonging with the profession. Overall, this is an area of importance for future research.

The unparalleled disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the significance of teachers as the leading in-school factor in promoting positive student learning outcomes (Brooks et al., 2021). The interrelated issues of learning and wellbeing, the increasing complexities of teachers' roles and responsibilities, and the accountability for results in the profession present a unique opportunity to research the evolution of teaching in the next decade. We argue that there is a research opportunity to document the development of teaching, extend the research on wellbeing capabilities and practices, and provide a holistic approach to education. Is it too soon to claim that teaching is transforming?

We recommend that universities consider extending evidence-informed approaches to wellbeing as an embedded part of accredited initial teacher education programs. There is an opportunity to align these specifically to the professional standards for teaching and to conduct responses beyond a single course, as well as to embrace it as a framework to inform course design and accreditation. This will enable initial teacher education providers to educate graduate teachers on the importance of culture and context and understanding wellbeing and its links with learning and teaching. Furthermore, we argue that the professional standards for teachers in the Australian context should include an awareness of evidence-informed approaches to wellbeing. The objective here is not to educate teachers to become counsellors or psychologists but to increase the level of wellbeing literacy of graduate teachers. As Amundsen et al. (2021) assert, many graduate teachers struggle with student wellbeing issues as they commence teaching. Further research is needed to understand the wellbeing and learning challenges graduate teachers experience within the first five years of employment.

Further research is needed to illustrate education's evolution, change, and progression. An ever-present challenge in professional practice is that in order to improve, evidence should be integrated into the decision-making around the pedagogical principles and practices adopted to demonstrate student academic learning growth (Waters, 2021). With the sudden changes implemented in teaching because of the pandemic and the increased digitisation and blended learning models that have been imposed upon teaching, there remains a research gap in understanding how teachers are seeking to maintain learning continuity, ease the disruption of the pandemic, and then also to evolve their professional practice.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter synthesises the research presented in Chaps. 1–7. Furthermore, it extends the original conceptual framework proposed in Chap. 1 to problematise this book's contention that wellbeing education is more fully integrated into teachers' professional practice. The aim is to promote and stimulate further research to strengthen initial teacher education wellbeing frameworks in accredited programs at the beginning of the graduate teacher pipeline to prepare them effectively for early career

mentoring within the first five years of graduation. It then aims to support graduates with tailored leadership development programs that promote wellbeing and academic goals through evidence-informed approaches. Finally, we argue that wellbeing should be integrated systematically into governance and compliance practices for school leaders and governing bodies to achieve the overall goal of promoting both wellbeing and academic growth for a more holistic approach to education. We argue that researchers may wish to address these problems:

- Prioritising wellbeing and learning as objectives for school governance, leadership, and management
- Prioritising wellbeing and learning as dual goals for education leadership and teaching
- Developing a theory of wellbeing education and learning that integrates evidence-informed approaches to wellbeing with the science of learning
- Integrating evidence-informed approaches to wellbeing in professional standards for teachers to promote student learning growth
- Integrating evidence-informed approaches to wellbeing in professional standards for teachers to promote teacher wellbeing.

It is anticipated that this chapter will provide researchers with potential topics of investigation and priorities in the next decade to converge these research areas. We hope that this will then not only benefit the students and their learning outcomes but also transform professional practice, leadership, and the profession more broadly.

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