



TEACHER WELLBEING

REPORT ON A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE



St Mary's
University College
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The Teaching Profession Project

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THIS REVIEW SEEKS TO PRESENT A SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH EVIDENCE PERTAINING TO TEACHER WELLBEING (TWB) IN A NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review seeks to present a summary of the research evidence pertaining to teacher wellbeing (TWB) in a number of international contexts. The purpose is to identify factors which contribute both positively and negatively towards teacher wellbeing as well as strategies employed individually and collectively to support it. It is intended that this review may provide thoughts for consideration for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and schooling in general as a source of information for potential wellbeing interventions. The gaps in literature identified, may also prove informative for future research. Wellbeing has become the focal point of much discourse in light of challenges experienced as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The challenges experienced by schools have been profound and are ongoing. Perhaps, now more than ever, it is time to focus on the wellbeing of the stakeholder at the heart of school climate – the teacher.

This review and synthesis include 101 articles, including original research, literature reviews and meta-analyses. A significant finding of this review is that there is a distinct lack of peer-reviewed research evidence on teacher wellbeing (TWB) in Northern Ireland (NI). Following are several recommendations for future policy and research:

- 1 Of the 101 articles included in this synthesis, only two are related to TWB in Ireland (O'Brien et al., 2020; Murphy et al., 2020), one of which included a sample of teachers from NI (Murphy et al., 2020). Thus, there is urgent need for research with teachers in the region.
- 2 Much research on TWB has been conducted at single time points. As wellbeing is a fluctuating construct and due to work-related stresses being magnified at certain points of the school year, for example pre-examinations, future research ought to assess TWB at several time points across the academic year.
- 3 Several studies have assessed the efficacy of TWB interventions. However, these assessments have largely been conducted in the immediate weeks and months post-intervention. Future research is required to assess the longer-term impact of such programmes.
- 4 Student wellbeing and TWB are inextricably linked. Therefore, further research is necessary to examine this relationship and to evaluate the impact of TWB interventions on student wellbeing and academic outcomes.
- 5 Early career teachers have been identified as being at particular risk of poor wellbeing due to increased stress experienced at transition points and their relative lack of experience in practicum. Initial teacher education should include training on emotional literacy and content related to maintaining good mental health to adequately prepare teachers for the challenges of school life.
- 6 To reflect the importance of TWB as a key area for development, school communities ought to appoint a member of staff with overall responsibility for TWB.
- 7 Opportunities ought to be provided for teachers to develop professional networks or mentoring communities. This would allow for the sharing of good practice and through relationships developed, normalise help-seeking behaviour.
- 8 It would appear that wellbeing interventions which focus on change/support for the individual may have limited impact unless accompanied by efforts to reduce or remove systemic and structural factors which negatively impact TWB.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Wellbeing, mental health and managing stress are currently of great concern for schools and policymakers, particularly given challenges experienced as a result of the coronavirus pandemic (DENI, 2021a). As a construct, wellbeing could be conceptualised as both personal and inter-relational, dependent on individuals' skills such as resilience and self-efficacy, relationships with others, as well as the values and ethos inherent in organisations (Aulen et al., 2021; Bjorkland et al., 2021; Manning et al., 2020). The possession of a positive sense of self and wellbeing is central to a teacher's capacity to meet the holistic needs of their pupils. This recognition underpins a core aim

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER CANNOT BE OVEREMPHASISED. TEACHERS HAVE A POWERFUL IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND THUS THE ABILITY TO SHAPE FUTURE LEADERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.

of the Northern Ireland (NI) curriculum which declares that it is the purpose of education 'to empower young people to develop their potential and to make informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives' (CCEA, 2007: 4).

Teachers have always been cognisant of the 'professional nature' and 'special purpose' of their role, along with the weight of responsibility that this entails (GTCNI, 2011: 44). As such, any focus on the wellbeing of pupils must be matched by a focus on that of their teachers as the teacher is the most decisive element in a child's schooling (Fox Eades,

2017). Therefore, it is essential that education systems attend to the pastoral needs of their teachers to normalise the concept of wellbeing and remove the stigma attached with asking for help (Evans, 2016).

For many decades it has been recognised that teaching, while being rewarding, is amongst the most stressful of occupations (Cook et al., 2017). Work-related stress can be said to exist where there is a differential between an individual's perception of work demands and his or her ability or resources to cope with them (Winefield et al., 2008). Findings from the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) Big Question Survey in 2019 indicated that 77% of teachers had experienced work-related stress in the last 12 months with 86% feeling that their job had impacted their overall wellbeing. Many factors contribute to teacher stress, with stress contributing to physical illness and depression, and, in the most severe cases, high levels of attrition (Chaplain, 2008; Gavish & Friedman, 2010). It also could be argued that rather than having a single cause, multiple facets of stress work in synergy to detract from overall TWB. For example, consider poor pupil behaviour. Time spent dealing with infractions is often married with strained communication with parents and the judgement of colleagues, alongside additional workload requirements.

However, increased stress does not necessarily translate to poor TWB. Jerrim et al. (2020) assert that the wellbeing of teachers is similar to that of other professionals. Additionally, teachers have been shown to use a range of resources and coping mechanisms, such as resilience, to deal with negative experiences, which are then either supported or impeded by characteristics of the organisation in which they work (Collie et al., 2020). Also, the presence of stress per se need not always be viewed through a negative lens. It may indeed be perceived as an indication of the sense of vocation experienced by teachers and their commitment to provide high-quality education (Hinz et al., 2016; Hur et al., 2016).

1.1 DEFINITION OF TEACHER WELLBEING

The literature is interspersed with vague and often competing definitions of TWB. For the purpose of this paper, that of Acton and Glasgow (2015) has been adopted. Their particular definition has been selected as it pays cognisance to intricacies such as the interplay of relationships, personal resources and structural factors:

Teacher wellbeing may be defined as an individual sense of personal professional fulfilment, satisfaction, purposefulness and happiness, constructed in a collaborative process with colleagues and students.

(Acton & Glasgow, 2015: 102)

While some research has identified particular demographics as being at “most risk” of poor TWB (Bjorkland et al., 2021; Brouskeli et al., 2018; Collie & Martin, 2017; Rajesh et al., 2020), others have contrastingly concluded that gender, age and years of experience have little impact on wellbeing outcomes (Chambers Mack et al., 2019; Katsantonis, 2020; Jones-Rincon & Howard, 2019; Wagner et al., 2016). In comparative studies TWB has also been shown to vary across cultures, with teachers in Australia having higher levels of wellbeing than those in England (Collie et al., 2020) and those in the United States (US) having higher levels than teachers in Turkey and Pakistan (Ozu et al., 2017). What is clear, however, is that all teachers will experience a degree of occupational stress at some stage in their career (Wu, 2020). Hence there is a requirement to determine a balance between teachers’ work demands and resources so as to improve not only their own wellbeing but that of their pupils.

1.2 TEACHER WELLBEING AND PUPIL WELLBEING

TWB is important of itself, but teachers also ought to model positive wellbeing to the children and young people in their care. The number of children and young people experiencing mental health difficulties in NI is 25% higher than in other UK regions (Bunting et al., 2020). This is coupled with substantial waiting lists for access to help through school counselling or the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). In an international review on teacher stress and burnout, Kyriacou (1987) highlighted one of the

reasons that teachers' wellbeing should be a global concern is due to concerns that it may affect their ability to provide quality teaching and build positive relationships with their pupils. Roffey (2012) describes teacher and pupil wellbeing as 'two sides of the same coin'. In fact, logistic regression modelling has demonstrated that teacher depression is significantly related to rates of school exclusion (Silver & Zinnser, 2020). The wellbeing of teachers should be of importance to schools and policy writers due to evidence that TWB is correlated at a statistically significant level with pupil progress and academic performance (Day, 2008; McCallum & Price, 2016). Similarly, TWB is at the core of whole-school wellbeing (Kaur & Singh, 2019). In order to promote and encourage children's wellbeing and academic progress, it may be proposed that first teachers must have strategies in place to manage and cope with the stresses of their own professional lives. Therefore, TWB is a highly pertinent area for current and future research.

1.3 CURRENT CONTEXT IN NI

The last major independent survey on TWB in NI was conducted in 2001/2. It revealed that wellbeing in NI was relatively stable but that many teachers suffered from significant levels of work-related stress (Teachers' Negotiating Committee, 2011).

Subsequent measures have included the teacher wellbeing index (Education Support, 2020), a large-scale study conducted across the United Kingdom. However, the data set collected for this survey in NI has been deemed to be of a size that is indicative only. Since 2015 the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

has incorporated a new tool aimed at evaluating the interrelation of socio-emotional wellbeing variables with academic performance, but these are specific to students only (Govorova et al., 2020). Statistics supplied by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland (DENI, 2021b) indicate that 29.7% of teachers took a period of sickness absence in the academic year 2020-21, and that 80.9% of these absences were of 20 days or more. This data may serve as a more relevant barometer of the current state of teacher health and wellbeing in NI.

The Strategy for Teacher Health and Wellbeing in Northern Ireland (Teachers' Negotiating Committee, 2011: 4) offers a vision

TO CREATE A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT FOR TEACHERS IN WHICH THEY ARE VALUED AS INDIVIDUALS, SUPPORTED IN MAINTAINING GOOD HEALTH AND TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT.

Nonetheless, it acknowledges that the success of this strategy is incumbent on will and resourcing. Employing bodies in NI have assigned dedicated officers to provide advice on a range of wellbeing matters in recent years, as well as confidential counselling support through Carecall, a free to access telephone triage service with up to six face-to-face sessions with a professional counsellor (DENI, 2021c). Moreover, 'Every School a Good School – a policy for school improvement' (DENI, 2009), includes staff wellbeing as an area to be addressed in school development plans (SDP). From an organisational perspective staff wellbeing ought to be considered a key area for development as it directly impacts on productivity and performance. However, there is currently no data or anecdotal evidence to demonstrate the extent to which schools in NI currently target TWB in their SDP. Investment in initiatives that focus on TWB are essential if we are to create healthy school climates, emotionally resilient young people and improved academic outcomes, not to forget the economic advantages of retaining trained/experienced staff and reducing expenditure related to staff absence (Roffey, 2012). Without doubt, the issue of TWB is a complex one best addressed using a holistic approach informed by sound empirical research and evidence.



2

METHODOLOGY

2.1 AIM & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to identify and discuss international research relating to TWB in order to inform practice in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and schools, and identify gaps in literature. It also serves to establish a baseline for future research as part of the *Teaching Profession Project* (TPP) at St Mary's University College Belfast. This paper seeks to clarify contributory factors to TWB and interventions that are being implemented in various educational jurisdictions to improve it. The specific research questions guiding this review of literature are as follows:

-
- 1. WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE TEACHER WELLBEING?**
 - 2. WHAT METHODS AND STRATEGIES ARE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED TO IMPROVE TEACHER WELLBEING?**

2.2 SYSTEMATIC REVIEW PROCESS

A systematic approach to literature searching was adopted in order to encompass all relevant studies and allow

for replicability at a later stage (Daigneault et al., 2014).

Methodological principles were applied in accordance with *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses* (PRISMA) requirements with research questions

specified, databases selected, relevant articles retrieved, the

quality of studies assessed and, finally, data extracted and synthesised (Brereton et al., 2007;

Moher et al. 2009). Databases selected included British Educational Index (BEI), Education

Resources Information Center (ERIC), both available on the platform EBSCOHost, and SCOPUS,

Elsevier's abstract and citation database. The following search strings were applied:

BEI

TI teachers AND TI (wellbeing or wellbeing or well being or quality of life or wellness or health)

ERIC

TI teachers AND TI (wellbeing or wellbeing or well being or quality of life or wellness or health)

SCOPUS

(TITLE (teacher) AND TITLE (wellbeing OR "wellbeing" OR "well being" OR "quality of life" OR wellness OR health)) AND PUBYEAR >2010

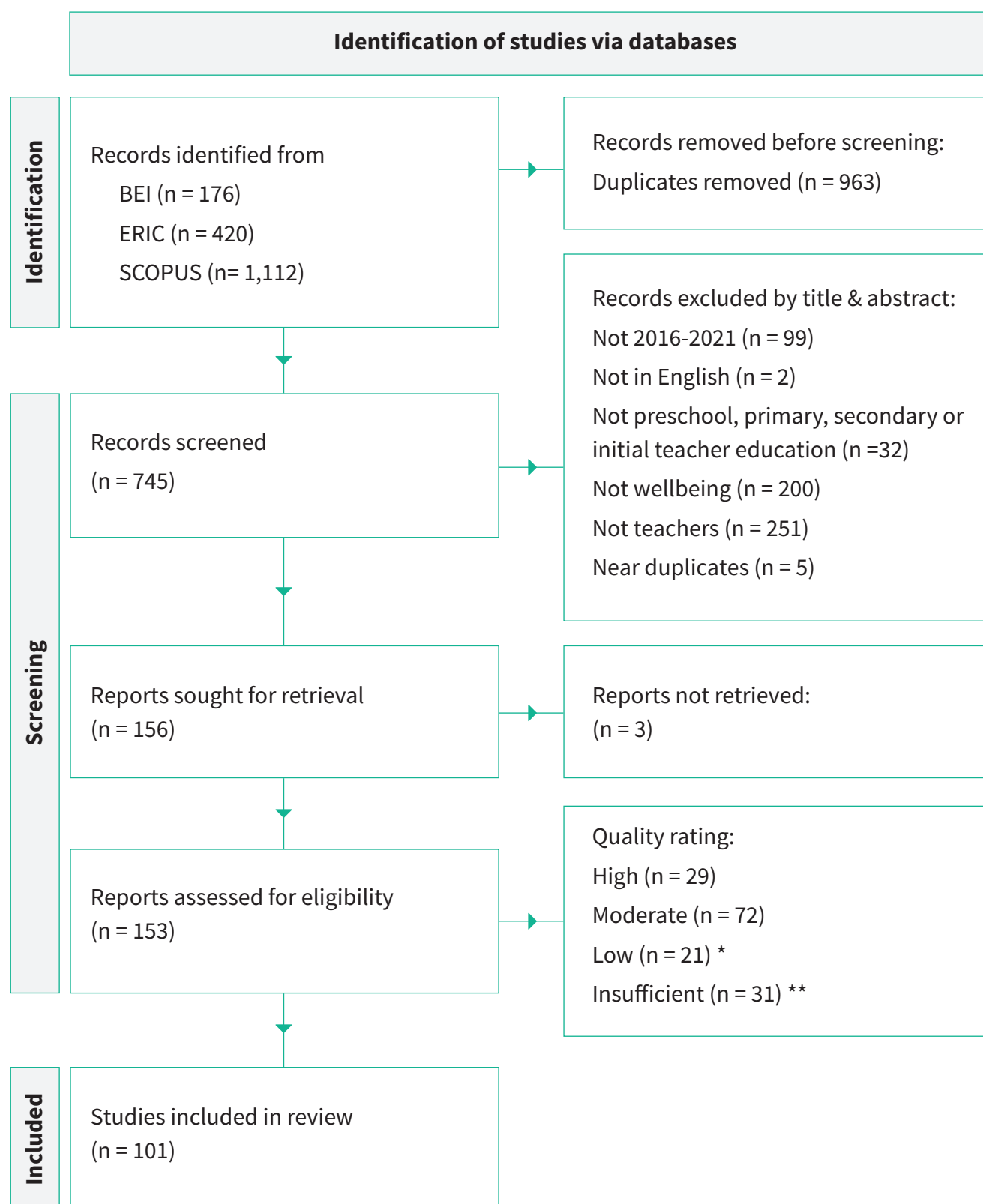
The software management tool Refworks was used to manage and organise retrieved results.

2.3 SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

Initially 1,708 articles were retrieved. This was reduced to 156 after the screening of titles and abstracts and removal of exact duplicates. Three articles were unavailable despite author requests having been made. Studies from 2011 were included in the initial search. However, upon full reading of retrieved articles, it became evident that several comprehensive systematic reviews on TWB had been recently conducted (Acton & Glasgow, 2015; Gray et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2018; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Therefore, inclusion criteria were adapted so as not to unnecessarily duplicate previous reviews. Final inclusion criteria were:

-
- > **PUBLICATION FROM 2016-2021**
 - > **PRINTED IN ENGLISH**
 - > **PRESCHOOL, PRIMARY, SECONDARY OR INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION**
 - > **TWB AS THE MAJOR COMPONENT OF THE STUDY**
 - > **PRIMARY FOCUS ON TWB NOT PUPIL WELLBEING**

Final selection of studies for synthesis involved the application of several quality criteria. Articles were rated according to their relevance to the current study and the quality of methodological information included. Those rated as low or unsatisfactory were excluded, resulting in another 52 being discounted. Therefore, the findings discussed in this paper are based on the identification of 101 articles rated as high or moderate. Figure 1 demonstrates the search process discussed.

Figure One: PRISMA chart of systematic review Teacher Wellbeing

* Low = relevant to topic, but findings not significant or insufficient detail on methodology/ analysis

** Insufficient = fails to meet inclusion criteria upon full reading

2.4 LIMITATIONS

Due to the limited time frame of this study, it was not possible to supplement systematic searching with citation tracking or the exploration of grey literature such as commentaries or PhD theses. The time frame of the study also impacted the selection of countries from which research was sought. It was not possible to adopt a fully global perspective. Nonetheless, countries included were representative of different parts of the world and also jurisdictions with strong traditions of teacher education (Bills et al., 2008). Included countries were Australia, Canada, China, England, Finland, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Norway, Scotland, the US and Wales. Studies with a multinational perspective were also included.

2.5 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Due to the heterogenous nature of the studies identified and wide range of methodological approaches employed, a statistical meta-analysis was not appropriate (Hanratty, 2018). Hence thematic analysis has been utilised. Furthermore, a narrative presentation of the findings will provide a more holistic perspective of the topic of concern. The following findings relate to an analysis and synthesis of 101 articles rated as moderate or high. Studies were coded thematically to identify existing knowledge in relation to TWB. The core themes identified will now be discussed. These include factors that contribute positively to TWB, factors that contribute negatively to TWB, interventions to improve TWB and implications for initial teacher education (ITE). Each section summarises research relevant to the particular theme including recommendations for practice and suggestions for further research.

A background image showing a group of people in a meeting or collaborative work environment. In the foreground, a person's hands are visible, holding a pencil and writing on a piece of paper. In the background, another person is holding a tablet. The image has a warm, orange-toned overlay.

THEME ONE

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO TEACHER WELLBEING

3

Stress is an inevitability of modern life. Gu et al. (2020) suggest that teachers experience a variety of stressors encompassing interpersonal, task-related and physical stressors. For teachers working in highly stressful school environments, it is essential that they develop a range of strategies to cope with stressors in order to avoid burnout (Kyriacou, 1987). These coping strategies may deal either with the cause of the stress or the feelings which arise from it (Aulen et al., 2021).

3.1 PERSONAL CARE

IN A MIXED-METHODS STUDY INVESTIGATING TEACHERS' COPING PROFILES AND THEIR RELATION TO WELLBEING, AULEN ET AL. (2021) FOUND THAT OVER HALF OF THE PARTICIPANTS USED EXERCISE, REST, RELAXATION AND HOBBIES TO COUNTERACT WORK-RELATED STRESS, AND OVER 40% INDICATED THAT THEY SET HEALTHY LIMITS FOR WORK.

An investigation of Chinese preschool teachers' exposure to stress also found lower insomnia symptoms among those who experienced more relaxation experiences outside work and concluded that leadership should value the importance of off-work recovery (Gu et al., 2020). Spirituality has also been identified as a resource to eliminate stress-related illness through practices such as prayer and meditation

(Mahipalan & Sheena, 2019). Exercise, in particular yoga, has been proffered as another tool for building resilience and generating positive mental health for both pre-service (Anderson et al., 2021; Hepburn et al., 2021) and in-service teachers (Tamilselvi & Thangarajhati, 2016; Telles et al., 2018), largely as a preventative measure. Nevertheless, a study of initial teachers in Ireland found little association between TWB and exercise (O'Brien et al., 2020) indicating that other psychological factors impact on resilience. Interestingly, Aulen et al. (2021) also discovered that the teachers with the greatest wellbeing were those who used a small number of coping strategies. Both discoveries would imply that teachers require time for reflection, to “get to know” themselves, their unique stress triggers and the techniques that work best for them personally.

3.2 REFLECTION

A Canadian pilot study in ITE which conducted a mental health awareness course with final year students examined various approaches to mental health and wellbeing and found that self-reflection was a critical element of the module (Woloshyn & Savage, 2020). Students stated that through class discussions they were able to share experiences and coping strategies and learn of new ones, which were both ‘self-affirming’ and ‘empowering’ (Woloshyn & Savage, 2020: 198). A major limitation of the study is the relatively small sample included (n=7); nonetheless, reflection and mentalising have been components of other projects included in this review (McKay & Barton, 2018; Rahm & Heise, 2019; Schwarzer et al., 2021).

Arts-based reflective practices have been deemed helpful in aiding teachers to identify personal and contextual resources to support their wellbeing (McKay & Barton, 2018). The three case studies referred to in this paper employed a range of reflective strategies including journaling, timelining and metaphor writing. Findings indicate that through reflective practice teachers were able to name challenges, identify stress triggers and share with colleagues, which enhanced collaboration. McKay and Barton (2018) also argue that using arts-based approaches enhances the quality of reflection. Similar findings have been reported by Kelly et al. (2020:11) who proposed that reflective writing offers ‘the opportunity for both therapy and celebration.’

Schwarzer et al. (2021: 6) identified that mentalising ‘the capacity to understand behaviour in terms of intentional mental states’, encompassing self-monitoring, empathy and theory of mind, has a positive impact on TWB by developing protective factors against stress. Put simply, it can buffer or aid processing of distressful events. In another study which utilised positive psychological strategies, Rahm and Heise (2019: 3) found that the exercise ‘Three Good Things’ where teachers were required to write down three things that went well each school day, and the potential causes/reasons for them, had a medium to long-term positive impact on TWB. Such personal interventions show much potential for promoting emotional intelligence and developing key wellbeing skills.

3.3 INTRAPERSONAL SKILLS

3.3.1 SENSE OF BELONGING

Human beings have a fundamental need to experience a sense of belonging (Bjorkland et al., 2021). In educational contexts, belonging contributes to professional environments more conducive to learning, collaboration and support. In a quantitative study involving initial teachers Bjorkland et al. (2021) assert that sense of belonging is the predominant contributor to wellbeing. Elaborating ‘that the more preservice teachers feel valued and that they fit in with their program, the more they feel as if they are making meaningful progress toward their goal of becoming teachers’ (8). Consequently, teachers who experience a strong sense of belonging will feel more confident in engaging in professional dialogue and decision-making in their respective institutions.

3.3.2. AUTONOMY

Having input into school-level decision-making, ensures teachers feel supported in their role and that their needs are met (Collie et al., 2020). A number of studies published in Chinese and Western contexts find that TWB is correlated highly with a teacher’s sense of autonomous control over professional work (Liu et al., 2018). Studies investigating factors that negatively contribute to TWB complement these findings, indicating that teachers with a low sense of

autonomy experience poor TWB (Ebersold et al., 2019; Skinner et al., 2021). Utilising data from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS, 2013) Collie et al. (2020) examined Australian and English teachers' experiences of personal resources and their impact on wellbeing. They uncovered a more nuanced understanding of autonomy suggesting that the cross-section of resources and varying job demands lead to differentials of TWB.

3.3.3 RESILIENCE

Resilience and perseverance are significant predictors of TWB (Kamboj & Garg, 2021). Duffield and O'Hare (2020) also suggest that resilience is a fluctuating construct which changes over time. In a substantial review of literature Gray et al. (2017: 7) propose that resilience is 'multi-dimensional' comprising self-care, relationships, self-efficacy and reflection both inside and outside school. Further, they suggest that it can be developed through collegial support and continuing professional development (CPD). In some literature, resilience is alternately labelled as 'psychological capital' (Cheng & Gan, 2020). Whatever the label attributed, it has been shown to positively impact on teachers' commitment, performance and ability to overcome difficulties and challenges at work (Cheng & Gan, 2020; Gray et al., 2017; Zeng et al., 2019). Moreover, when teachers persist in the face of adversity themselves, they create a classroom climate where students are more likely to take risks in their learning (Zeng et al., 2019). Research evidence also demonstrates that where resilience is poor or not present, this leads to a greater risk of teacher burnout (Gray et al. 2017). Additionally, it has been suggested that resilience ought to be developed at a collegial level so that teachers feel comfortable in seeking help from their peers (Duffield & O'Hare, 2020). Interestingly, research from India indicates that female teachers possess higher levels of resilience than male teachers (Kamboj & Garg, 2021). However, this finding is not consistent across the literature.

3.3.4 SELF-EFFICACY

Self-efficacy, the belief in one's own abilities, has been found to impact TWB due to its relation to beliefs, motivation and behaviours (Bandura, 1997). For example, teacher self-efficacy relates to beliefs surrounding their ability to bring about positive pupil outcomes and has a considerable impact on the educational process (Bjorkland et al., 2021). Teachers with higher levels of self-

efficacy report lower levels of stress and burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Moreover, Jeon et al. (2018) proffer that self-efficacious teachers are intrinsically motivated and more satisfied in their professional lives. Conversely, those with lower self-efficacy are less likely to adopt a proactive growth mindset in the face of challenges (von Muenchhausen, 2021).

While personal care and intrapersonal factors have a role to play in wellbeing, institutions must also attend to collective aspects and wider environmental factors (Benevene et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2018).

3.4 RELATIONSHIPS

Murphy et al. (2020: 594) strongly assert that relationships with colleagues, leadership and students are ‘the cornerstone’ of TWB. Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) ecological systems theory purports that any problematic issue should be viewed through the system of relationships which form an individual’s environment. Moreover, more recent research has suggested that components of mental health recovery are embedded in this ecological context (Kelly & Coughlan, 2019). Undoubtedly, interpersonal relationships are a significant contributory factor to overall school climate and individual wellbeing (Gray et al., 2017). Wider ‘personal relationships’ and networks of support from ‘friends and family’ have also been found to be beneficial for TWB (Duffield & O’Hare, 2020: 3). Therefore, social relations ought to be investigated as a buffer to job demands and a resource to strengthen teacher resilience.

3.4.1 COLLABORATION WITH COLLEAGUES

In an examination of the wellbeing of early career teachers (ECTs), participants overwhelmingly (95%) responded that the quality of their relationships with colleagues ‘was the single most prominent factor’ influencing their wellbeing at work (Hobson & Maxwell, 2017: 176). Kaynak (2020) concurs, indicating that collegial support enables ECTs to feel comfortable in discussing concerns or asking for help. Collaboration with and support from colleagues is similarly vital for

the wellbeing of teachers with varying levels of experience (McKay & Barton, 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018; Vaisanen et al., 2017) and across educational jurisdictions (Liu et al., 2018). Such social support forms a protective factor for teachers' psychological capital and wellbeing (Li & Zhang, 2019).

Several studies have also identified a positive correlation between TWB and the presence of professional learning communities (PLCs) in schools (Liang et al., 2020; Owen, 2016; Murphy, 2020). Features of PLCs include joint planning, co-teaching and shared assessment. Owen (2016) proposes that such endeavours increase teacher confidence and engender renewed enthusiasm for teaching through the mutual support they provide. Liang et al. (2020) also propose that they provide a platform for CPD, yet PLCs are not evident in all cultures. Thompson et al. (2020) found that while prevalent in ITE in Denmark and Finland, PLCs were not commonplace in ITE in England. The element of 'shared leadership', a core component of PLCs, also leads to a culture of teacher learning and increased autonomy (Owen, 2016: 414), which, as with many school-based initiatives, takes its tone from those "at the top".

3.4.2 THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Undoubtedly, school leaders have a duty of care towards their staff and ought to create school climates which promote TWB (Hobson & Maxwell, 2017). Moreover, a positive school climate has been found to moderate depression and anxiety at times of high stress (McLean et al., 2017). If teachers are to be effective in transferring solid emotional literacy skills to their students, then they too need to be nurtured and cared for (Rae et al., 2017). This nurturing role is particularly salient in relation to ECTs or teachers who have been placed in year levels or subject areas where they perceive they have a lack of expertise/knowledge (Du Plessis & Mac Donagh, 2021). It is vital that in such circumstances school leaders have clear understandings of the challenges faced by these teachers and realistic expectations when appraising performance (Donagh, 2021). Skinner et al. (2021) in interviews with school staff, found that some teachers reported instances of bullying from their principals, but many others described positive examples of support from their school leaders. Such support, alongside a perception of feeling valued and celebrating teachers' accomplishments, acts as a vital buffer to challenges like curricular reform or poor student behaviour, thus protecting TWB (Acton & Glasgow, 2015; Rae et al., 2017; Skinner et al.,

2021). Anderson et al. (2021: 14) also suggest that if teachers are supported by management at times of stress, it may prove a key ‘to unlock adaptability and resilience.’ Nonetheless, school leaders themselves ought to be supported in this as they may lack the relevant expertise and guidance to develop appropriate TWB strategies and interventions (Manning et al., 2020). Teachers and school leaders need to feel they are not alone in ‘carrying the burden of their emotional wellbeing’ (Weiland, 2021). Thus, input from other professionals such as educational psychologists should be considered (Rae et al., 2017).

3.4.3. STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

Relationships are at the core of wellbeing in school environments, none more so than that between teachers and their students. Many teachers describe the joy at ‘witnessing student growth’ as a meaningful source of wellbeing as it demonstrates that efforts made have been ‘worthwhile’ (Kaynak, 2020: 26). The vocational nature of the teaching profession, while being a great source of worth, can also be a cause of stress (Aldrup et al. 2018; Manning et al., 2020). Huang et al. (2020: 1) describe the relationship between teachers’ sense of empathy for their students and their own mental health as ‘complex’, stating it contains both ‘risk and protective factors’. Additionally, where teachers feel highly responsible for pupils with additional needs, there can be negative impacts on their wellbeing (Daniels et al., 2017). Nevertheless, Harding et al. (2019) propose that efforts to improve student-teacher relationships will positively impact on the wellbeing of both parties.

3.5 INCENTIVES TO ENTER AND REMAIN IN THE PROFESSION

Several studies have identified high attrition rates among teachers in both Western and non-Western countries (Benevene et al., 2018). Reasons teachers have provided for wishing to leave the profession include the desire for better working conditions, reduced workload and greater opportunity for career progression (Chambers Mack et al., 2019). To counteract this and prevent further exodus from the profession, a number of incentives have been introduced to both entice school leavers and graduates into ITE and to retain current teachers. In England, where there is a particular recruitment crisis, the government has recognised the need to make sure that teaching is sufficiently attractive to the most capable young people and promotes accelerated routes into teaching as well as bursaries and salaried routes (DfE, 2020). Research suggests that motivators for becoming or remaining an educator are varied and complex.

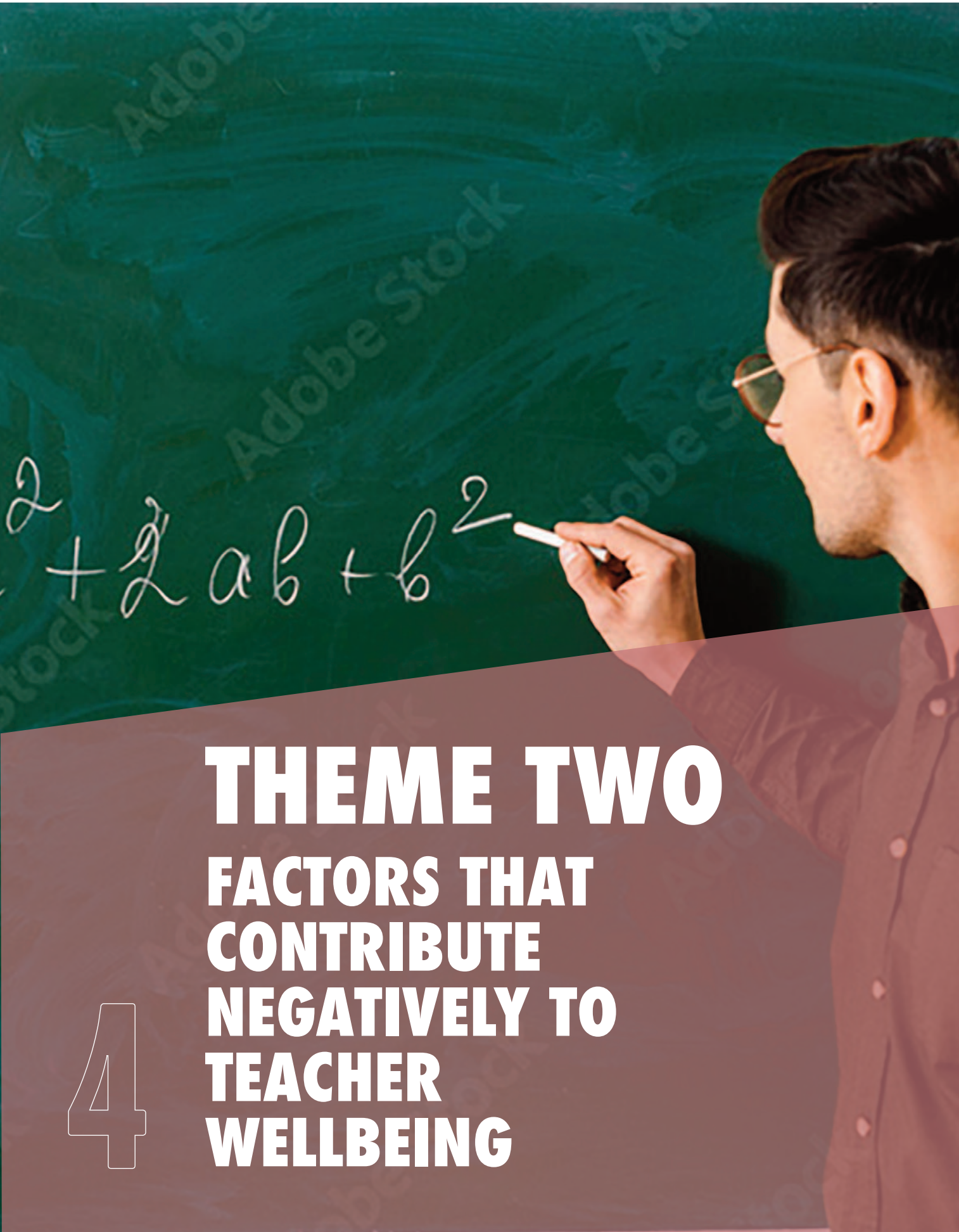
Of the 101 articles identified in this review, only four made significant reference to salary, three of which were related to the salaries of teachers in China (Liu, 2020; Song et al., 2021; Tang, 2018) and the fourth to salaries for ECTs (Hobson & Maxwell, 2017). Cheng and Gan (2020) state that there are high levels of turnover among preschool staff in China due to a perceived imbalance between pay and workload. Empirical evidence shows that satisfaction with income is positively correlated with overall job satisfaction and Song et al., (2020) propose that salaries ought to be standardised to ensure equity. In contrast Tang (2018) proposes that a sliding, rather than standard, model of remuneration is required to reflect the increased workload of teachers in rural areas due to staff shortages. Nonetheless, both make the case for increased salary for preschool teachers as a whole.

Evidence suggests that anywhere between one fifth and one half of NQTs leave the profession within the first five years (Fitchett et al., 2017; Weldon, 2018). Those unable to benefit from induction or collegial support and those who have not developed a repertoire of coping mechanisms are more likely to do so (Fitchett et al., 2017; Woloshyn & Savage, 2020). Moreover,

Hobson and Maxwell (2017) suggest that teaching is one of the few professions where new entrants are expected to manage a multitude of roles and responsibilities similar to colleagues with several years experience. They recommend that ECTs should be adequately supported and remunerated fairly, both to reflect the work they do and the level of responsibility they undertake.

Occupational burnout is most evident among teachers with poor classroom organisational skills (Braun et al., 2019). Zee and Koomen (2016) propose, too, that low self-efficacy in behaviour management is a significant trigger for departing the profession. These findings indicate that increased initial and continued teacher professional development on behaviour management strategies would aid teachers in their understandings of and abilities to manage poor behaviour, perhaps improving their interactions with students and subsequent job satisfaction (Braun et al., 2019). Programmes which enhance resilience also show positive outcomes relating to reduced intentions to leave the profession (Breaunig et al., 2018) as do those which aim to increase teacher autonomy and support positive relations among school staff (Chambers Mack et al., 2019; Dreer, 2021).

AS IMPORTANT AS ANY EFFORT TO IMPROVE TEACHER REMUNERATION IS, THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS ARE THOSE WHICH FOCUS ON ENHANCING FEATURES WHICH CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TOWARDS TWB AND ENDEAVOUR TO MINIMISE STRESSORS AND FACTORS THAT IMPACT NEGATIVELY ON IT. SUCH FACTORS WILL NOW BE DISCUSSED.



THEME TWO

**FACTORS THAT
CONTRIBUTE
NEGATIVELY TO
TEACHER
WELLBEING**

4

4.1 STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

Much discourse has indicated that pupil behaviour is worsening over time and is a major contributor to teacher stress (Dicke et al., 2017; Gray et al.; 2017). In fact, a recent paper (Burns et al., 2020: 526) sampled international research relating to teacher bullying from pupils identifying that ‘numerous international researchers have produced disturbing evidence of this phenomenon leaving many teachers feeling unsafe in their workplace’. Aggressive student behaviour has a destabilising effect on classroom safety and can lead to a state of hypervigilance and high stress which distracts from the business of teaching and learning (Kaynak, 2020). In a study focused on preschool settings, Jeon et al. (2018) found that teachers who worked in chaotic environments experienced a higher degree of depressive symptoms. Such extreme instances aside, in any classroom with persistent low-level disruptive behaviour or where teachers provide high levels of support to pupils, teachers can be more susceptible to emotional exhaustion (Collie et al., 2020; Virtanen et al., 2019). Similarly, when students lack motivation and fail to make progress, it can result in teachers feeling their efforts have been fruitless, again negatively impacting wellbeing (Kaynak, 2020).

In a somewhat vicious cycle, teachers experiencing higher levels of stress have poorer classroom management skills which in turn can instigate further stress (Gray et al., 2017; Penttinen et al. 2020).

Interestingly, Dicke et al. (2017) assert that this relationship is more complex and evidence equating poor student behaviour with negative TWB is inconsistent, perhaps indicating that some of the aforementioned resources are successful in mitigating the relationship between the two or that teachers confident in their classroom management skills may view poor student behaviour as a ‘challenge’ as opposed to a ‘hindrance’ (Dicke et al., 26). This would suggest that teachers would benefit from greater professional development opportunities in classroom management.

4.2 ACCOUNTABILITY

In a study of US elementary teachers’ perspectives on their wellbeing, Kaynak (2020: 27) found that ‘the sense of being scrutinized’ was a significant source of negative TWB. Cultures of high-stakes testing and performativity have been reported to impact on teachers’ interactions with their students by inhibiting child-centred approaches, and with colleagues, by eliciting competition (Murphy et al., 2020). High-stakes testing long has been found to increase stress on teachers and students (Kaynak, 2020; Tebben et al., 2021). However, Kaynak (2020) suggests that the stress experienced by teachers is further exacerbated due to the empathy they have for their students. This stress, too, is not just experienced by teachers of the classes involved but is also felt by those in lower levels through ‘push down pressure’ and a sense of responsibility to have pupils prepared (Roberts et al., 2019:311).

Supervision is a common feature in both initial and continuing teacher education in many jurisdictions, though definitions do vary between cultures (Rae et al., 2017). Essentially, its purpose is to improve practice, yet not all teachers view supervision with such a positive perspective, linking it to assessment of their performance (Rae et al., 2017). This is true of both formal appraisal procedures and more informal line management (Skinner et al., 2021). Indeed, one particularly poignant example from interviews with teachers who had experienced mental health difficulties, describes how a very experienced teacher (n=28 years) attempted suicide following a performance appraisal at work (Skinner et al., 2021). For supervision to be a beneficial experience, it is essential that parameters and agreed objectives are established and a relationship developed between the supervisor and the supervisee prior to the commencement of classroom observations (Rae et al., 2017).

A secondary outcome of the accountability agenda is teacher presenteeism, the tendency to attend work when ill or to work to exhaustion, which has been shown to contribute to depressive symptoms (Breaunig et al., 2018; Kidger et al., 2016). Presenteeism may manifest as underperformance or poor classroom management (Kidger et al., 2016). Harding et al. (2019) propose that ‘teacher presenteeism is on the causal pathway between teacher and student mental health.’

4.3 STRUCTURAL/ ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

4.3.1 WORKLOAD AND TIME

Analysis of quantitative surveys conducted with several hundred teachers in Norway showed that time pressures due to unmanageable workloads were the strongest predictor of poor TWB (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). The over-bureaucratic nature of paperwork including marking, assessment and data entry has been a feature of several studies (Birchinall et al., 2019; Jerrim & Sims, 2021; Minkinnen et al., 2020). Planning and preparation are also consistent features negatively associated with teacher stress (Aldrup et al., 2018; Brady & Wilson, 2021; Jerrim & Sims, 2021), often resulting in excessive hours working at home (Hoffman et al., 2020). Many academics argue that school leadership should pay particular attention to reducing workload and consider its subsequent impact on time pressures and work-life balance in any efforts to improve staff wellbeing (Li & Zhang, 2021; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018).

Surprisingly, not all additional workloads have been found to contribute negatively to TWB. Jerrim and Sims (2021) found that additional school time dedicated to the provision of CPD and staff collaboration actually results in reduced work-related stress. Where workload is deemed to be ‘meaningful’, teachers rate their mental health at a higher level (Minkinnen et al., 2020: 145). It would appear that high-volume workloads with little personal benefit or advantage for student outcomes, those which are largely associated with accountability, present the greatest threat to TWB (Brady & Wilson, 2021).

4.3.2 RESOURCING

IN A SURVEY OF 960 TEACHERS IN AUSTRALIA, GARRICK ET AL. (2017) EXPLORED TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON STRUCTURAL CHANGE THAT WOULD IMPROVE THEIR WELLBEING. SEVEN KEY AREAS WERE IDENTIFIED WITH REDUCED CLASS SIZES AND MORE FUNDING FOR RESOURCES FEATURING HIGHLY. THESE FINDINGS ARE CONSISTENT WITH RESEARCH IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

Teachers in the US also bemoan the need for material resources (Costa et al., 2021) as do those in the UK (Skinner et al., 2021) and China (Song et al., 2020). Birchinnall et al. (2019) assert, too, that aging and often unreliable technology also can be significant stressors for teachers. Under-resourcing in school settings impacts on teachers' abilities to provide high-quality teaching and learning, which in turn lowers self-efficacy. Therefore, future research should consider social inequalities which affect teacher and student wellbeing and change policies to facilitate greater equity (Costa et al., 2021). Teacher salary was a minor component of the synthesised studies, apart from those conducted in China where it was shown to contribute to higher teacher attrition rates (Song et al., 2020; Tang, 2018). However, Liu et al. (2018) proposed that the negative impact of poor remuneration could be mitigated by satisfaction in one's job.

4.3.3 LACK OF EXPERTISE

ECTs are particularly vulnerable to being assigned to classes or subject areas with which they do not have sufficient knowledge or expertise (Du Plessis & Mac Donagh, 2021). This is a particularly salient issue in both Northern Ireland and Canada where the route to permanent employment can be arduous (Katsyuruba et al. 2019). The consequences for students are obvious while teachers themselves experience lack of confidence and lower job satisfaction. Given that higher self-efficacy correlates with improved TWB, it is safe to assume that lower self-efficacy will have the opposite impact. Moreover, where there are several inexperienced teachers in a particular department or school, this can have a profound negative affect on the entire school community

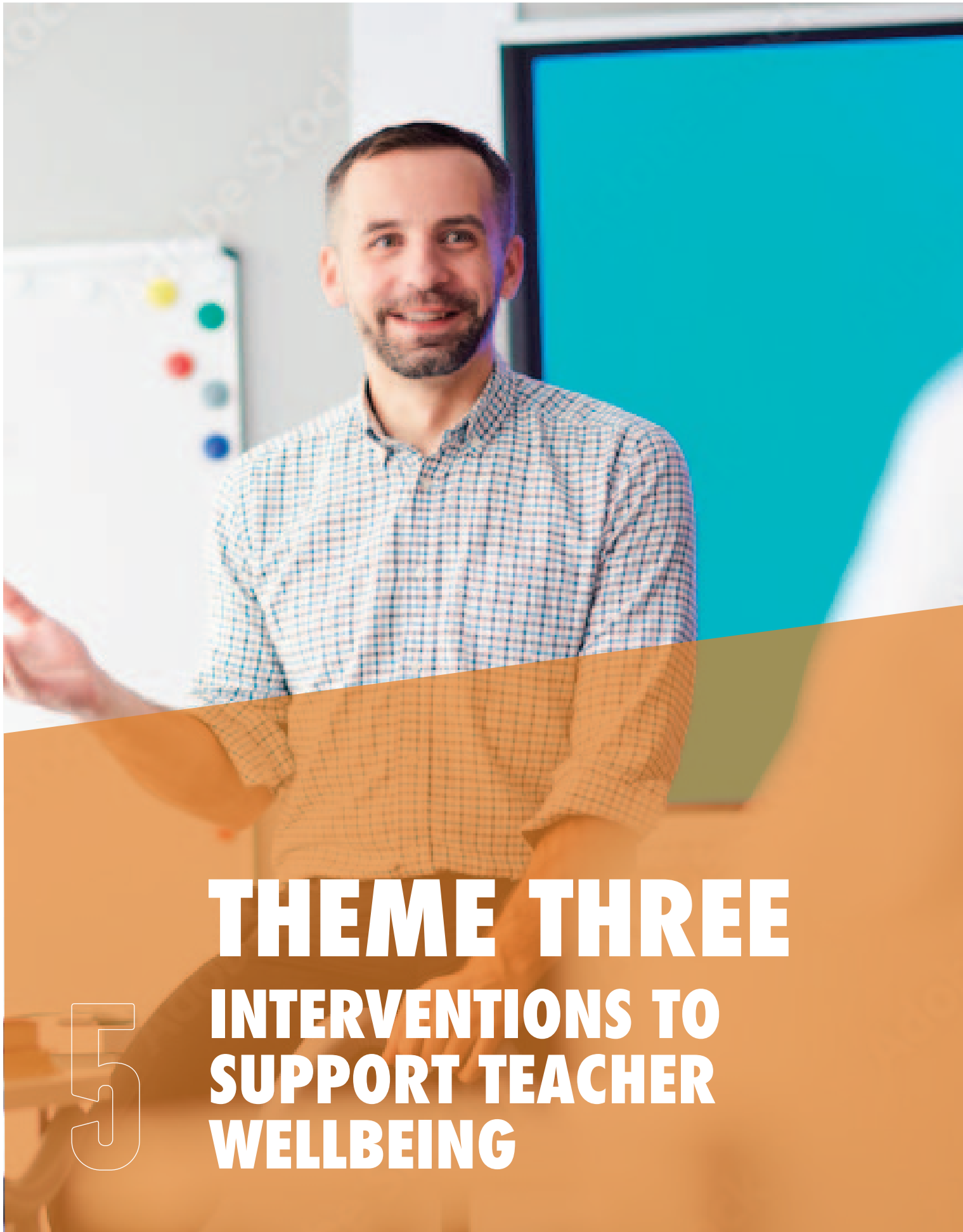
as lower self-efficacy leads to less confident, less satisfied teachers and less engaged pupils (Du Plessis and Mac Donagh, 2021).

To counteract what Du Plessis and Mac Donagh (2021: 1) describe as ‘the out-of-field phenomenon’, teachers require access to needs-based CPD, as professional development and growth show remarkably positive correlations with TWB (Collie et al, 2020; Zhang & You, 2020). However, many lament a dearth of professional development opportunities citing lack of time and resources as significant barriers (Zhang et al., 2019). A method of removing these barriers which has been identified in this review is the potential of online coaching or mentoring (Ainsa & Olivarez, 2017; Burger et al., 2021; Virtanen et al., 2019). While teachers may have been traditionally reticent to access this type of CPD, the rapid acceleration of information technology competency due to the pandemic may mean this is an avenue worthy of further exploration and development.

4.3.4 CURRICULAR CHANGE

Skinner et al. (2021) propose that education is a field of employment wherein change is ongoing and constant. In the US for example, due to decentralisation of the education system, curricular programmes vary across states and are susceptible to rapid change. Although new initiatives may stem from a desire for positive change, how they are implemented can be viewed as an undermining of teachers’ autonomy and professional identity (Skinner et al., 2021). Moreover, many are accompanied by additional workload.

It would appear that factors which influence teachers’ experiences of wellbeing exist on a continuum, ranging from positive to negative. Hobson & Maxwell (2017) also contend that it would be naïve to assume that those which positively impact TWB are a mere reversal of those which inhibit it. Therefore, interventions to promote TWB ought to include strategies which enhance wellbeing as well as some to reduce factors which negatively impact on it.



THEME THREE

INTERVENTIONS TO SUPPORT TEACHER WELLBEING

5

A common complaint about TWB initiatives is that they are reactionary and tokenistic in nature, a “solution” to a wellbeing problem (Brady & Wilson, 2021; Manning et al., 2020). Moreover, some teachers express the requirement to attend wellbeing initiatives actually causes further stress by imposing on precious time (Brady & Wilson, 2021).

Nevertheless, it would be remiss of school leaders and policy makers to have an awareness of poor TWB and do nothing to remedy the malady. In this section several general and specific TWB programmes will be discussed, shedding light on affirmative action which may reduce teachers’ stress and enhance resilience.

5.1 MINDFULNESS-BASED INTERVENTIONS (MBIS)

HWANG AND KEARNEY (2015) DESCRIBE MINDFULNESS AS A TRAINING OF THE MIND TO FOCUS ON THE HERE AND NOW. IT HAS INCREASED IN POPULARITY AND USAGE SINCE THE MID-1970S DUE TO PERCEIVED BENEFITS FOR MENTAL HEALTH (HWANG ET AL., 2017).

MBIs to support pupils are common in education. In Ireland, for example, Paws.b (Mindfulness in Schools Project), a programme targeted at 7 to 11 year olds, is being rolled out across the primary sector (Doyle, 2018). Interventions which incorporate mindful practice have also been utilised as a tool to counteract teacher attrition (Chesak et al., 2019; Hwang et al., 2017; Hwang et al., 2019). Suggestions are that teachers who are more mindful are better able to identify and regulate emotions, and practice self-care (Braun et al., 2019; Hwang et al., 2019). In a randomised-controlled trial (RCT) Beshai et al. (2016) reported significant reductions in stress for the participating teachers in comparison to a control group. An intensive MBI (CARE programme) delivered over the course of an academic year also demonstrated improved emotional regulation which was sustained over time (Jennings et al., 2019). Zarate et al. (2019) propose that the inclusion of mindfulness in daily routines, if even for the briefest period, can reduce stress, anxiety and depression. Reviews of literature (Birchinall et al., 2019; Hwang et al., 2017) have identified ‘consistently positive outcomes for stress and anxiety reduction through a range of different mindfulness-based interventions’ (Birchinall et al. 2019: 8). Meditation, too, has demonstrated similar positive outcomes with teachers lauding benefits not just for their own wellbeing but for that of their students through group practice and a sense of ‘shared journey’ (Graham & Truscott, 2020: 816).

However, reduced stress and anxiety does not necessarily equate to enhanced resilience. A pilot study of a mindfulness-based intervention involving 55 American teachers demonstrated that while resilience had increased post-intervention it was not at a statistically significant level (Chesak et al., 2019). Another point of consideration is that the benefits gained from engagement in meditation or MBIs are dependent upon long-term practice and commitment as well as the quality of the instructor (Beshai et al., 2016; Hwang et al., 2017). It must also be acknowledged that many MBI studies have a small sample size (Beshai et al., 2016), and further research is required regarding the legitimacy of practice (Hwang et al., 2017).

5.2 SPECIFIC INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

5.2.1 THE ACHIEVER RESILIENCE CURRICULUM (ARC)

Cook et al. (2017) argue that the benefit of ARC is that it draws on several theoretical perspectives to provide an integrated holistic programme to support TWB. The study involved a RCT of a wellbeing intervention designed specifically for teachers, with pre- and post-intervention data collected and the delivery of five, 2.5-hour, online sessions. The programme encompassed mindfulness, practising gratitude, identifying negative thoughts and a mentoring relationship, as well as developing good personal care habits (e.g., sleep, relaxation, good diet). Findings demonstrated a reduction in stress and increase in self-efficacy among participating teachers. Personal care and mindfulness were considered the two most effective features. Hence, interventions which focus on just these two may be sufficient in yielding similar positive outcomes.

5.2.2 CALMERSS

Another programme utilising multiple wellbeing strategies is CALMERSS. An acronym of the components of the intervention: cognitive and automatic thought, learning to relax, mindfulness, exercise, resolving conflict, strengths and positive psychology and sleep. The study was a pilot programme to determine the efficacy of using a range of approaches to enhance TWB. At the conclusion of the intervention, statistical analysis demonstrated a reduction in depressive symptoms and psychological strain. Taylor (2018: 256) asserts that ‘a multi-modal approach to enhancing wellbeing can make significant changes to participants’ lives’. Certainly, it allows teachers to select a tool of choice, increasing likelihood of some benefit. However, the purposive sampling employed, recruiting teachers with depressive symptoms, and small sample size involved (n=5) means these findings are not generalisable. Nevertheless, this programme might prove beneficial as a bespoke intervention for individual teachers identified “at risk” of poor wellbeing.

5.2.3 PERMA

A leading researcher of positive psychology, a feature of both ARC and CALMERSS, is Seligman (2012). He uses the term PERMA to define wellbeing as positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. There has been considerable application of its principles in efforts to improve wellbeing in other professions and occupations. In a qualitative study, Turner and Thielking (2020) ascertained the impact of conscious use of PERMA on teaching practice and student performance. After an explanation of PERMA strategies, such as offering social support, participants were instructed to reflect on their current use of these strategies and integrate them further each day for 15 days. Post intervention teachers reported feeling less stressed and more relaxed in the classroom. This had a knock-on effect on teachers' sense of self-efficacy and the meaning they attached to their role.

5.3 MENTORSHIP PROGRAMMES

In the school context a mentor is traditionally an older, more experienced teacher assigned to a beginning teacher (Burger et al., 2021). Mentorships can increase

professional capacity and lead to gains in confidence and motivation, which contribute to wellbeing (Briscoe, 2019). Research also reports the practice to be a positive experience for the mentor and mentee alike (Weiland, 2021). Nonetheless, experiences of mentorship differ across educational jurisdictions. In some countries mentorship is a common and regulated practice (e.g., Canada, Germany, Northern Ireland) while in others, such as the US, structured guidance upon entry into the profession is not widespread. McLean et al. (2020: 11), describe a context wherein new entrants are left to “sink or swim” without the support of more experienced colleagues. One US programme that has utilised significant levels of support to ECTs is the Career Advancement and Development of Recruits and Experienced teachers project (CADRE), which is a 14-month induction programme advocating links between schools and university (Wilcoxon et al., 2019).

IT HAS BEEN SHOWN TO HAVE AN OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE IMPACT ON TWB AND RETENTION, WITH ALMOST 100% OF PARTICIPANTS REMAINING IN EDUCATION OVER 25 YEARS. NONETHELESS, IN AREAS WHERE FORMAL MENTORSHIP MODELS ARE NOT IN PLACE, ECTs WILL STILL BENEFIT FROM LESS FORMAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES - IF SCHOOLS HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING (WEILAND, 2021).

Katsyuruba et al. (2019) identify several components of successful mentorship programmes. They suggest that mentors ought to model effective teaching practices and model communication with pupils, colleagues and parents alongside the sharing of resources but caution that mentors should have a clear understanding of their role as supportive allies and avoid judgement. To adopt an evaluative role, would negatively impact on ECT's flourishing autonomy (Burger et al., 2021). An argument could also be made for preparation and training for teachers to ensure they are familiar with the most recent research-based practice and mentoring concepts (Burger et al., 2021). Briscoe (2019) also suggests that there is no "one size fits all" proforma but rather that the nature and format of the relationship be negotiated between both key parties, proffering a virtual model as an option for ITE as it overcomes issues regarding time and travel. Forging connections between less- and more-experienced teachers serves to improve professional knowledge and enhance wellbeing and is perhaps a tool that ought to be utilised beyond ITE, or those in years immediately after entry into the profession, by any teachers experiencing a career transition as this carries amplified risk of stress and poor wellbeing (Kuhr & Singh, 2019).

The most oft-mentioned limitation of the discussed interventions has been the lack of rigorous assessment of outcomes over a prolonged period (Corbett et al., 2021). While teachers and researchers have reported many immediate benefits, it is less clear if these benefits are sustained. However, the last decade has witnessed an increase in research to evaluate the effectiveness of TWB initiatives (Cook et al., 2017). Nevertheless, further research relating to long-term outcomes is required (Corbett et al., 2021) as is research on interventions that address wellbeing at a collective level (Weiland, 2021). Reviews of literature (Liu et al., 2018) have maintained that research is scant in western contexts where relationships and professional support networks are predominantly investigated as vehicles for enhancing individual wellbeing.



THEME FOUR

IMPLICATIONS FOR INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

6

**MENTAL HEALTH IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR TO CONSIDER
IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND SHOULD INFORM
PRACTICE NOT ONLY IN THE WORKPLACE BUT PRIOR TO
COMMENCING TEACHING CAREERS
(McLEAN ET AL., 2017).**

Psychological distress experienced during practical school experience may result in some pre-service teachers entering the profession with a sense of disillusionment (Goldstein cited in Mc Lean et al., 2017). Holzberger et al. (2021) propose too that highly knowledgeable pre-service teachers exhibit a greater sense of occupational wellbeing following two years in service. In another longitudinal quantitative study, McLean et al. (2017) measured TWB in the final year of ITE and at the beginning and end of the students' first year in the classroom. While overall levels of stress and anxiety were low, they were however higher at the final time point and corroborated by the extent of professional support received in teachers' first schools. Transition points have been shown to be a crucial moment of stress and this is true also of the transition between post-primary education and the first year in ITE (Woloshyn & Savage, 2020). Thompson et al. (2020) recommend that a gradual increase of workload over the first year of ITE programmes could potentially mitigate this.

COURSE CONTENT WHICH OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO REFLECT ON DISTRESSFUL EXPERIENCES AND DISCUSS COPING STRATEGIES WITHIN A SMALL GROUP ENVIRONMENT CAN GIVE INITIAL TEACHER CANDIDATES A MORE SOPHISTICATED UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO NURTURE THEIR MENTAL HEALTH (WOLOSHYN & SAVAGE, 2020).

Given the link between teacher and student wellbeing, and clear evidence that those with poor wellbeing in ITE are more likely to exit the profession in the first five years, training on how to maintain good mental health should form an essential component of ITE (Rae et al., 2017). Moreover, through implementing similar interventions in ITE and in schools, this may maximise their impact through sustained practice and lead to a belief that a healthy sense of wellbeing is as vital an element of what “makes a good teacher” as dedication and pedagogical knowledge.

The challenge, nonetheless, is how to allocate time for wellbeing training and initiatives in already content-heavy teacher education programmes, particularly at postgraduate level (Swain, 2020). However, this has been facilitated in both Denmark and Finland (Thompson et al., 2020). Time dedicated to such endeavours may better equip preservice teachers to cope with the challenges of practicum and subsequent working life.



7 CONCLUSION

THIS REVIEW OF LITERATURE HAS PRESENTED A CLEAR VIEW OF THE CURRENT RESEARCH CONTEXT REGARDING TWB. WE WILL NOW DISCUSS GAPS IN CURRENT RESEARCH LITERATURE, AREAS OF POTENTIAL FUTURE RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE.

Gaps in literature identified in this study include studies which measure TWB at various timepoints (von der Embse & Mankin, 2021), measures of long-term impact (Corbett et al., 2021) and research which investigates the relationship between teacher and student wellbeing (Hwang et al., 2017). Most notable in terms of the Northern Ireland context is the distinct lack of literature pertaining to TWB. Of the 101 articles included in this synthesis, only two related to TWB in Ireland (O'Brien et al., 2020; Murphy et al., 2020), one of which included a sample of teachers from NI (Murphy et al., 2020). This is a clear indication of the urgent need for research in NI, as trauma stemming from our troubled past may present unique repercussions for TWB here. It is hoped that this paper provides future researchers with access to a substantial number of recommendations and strategies to improve TWB, which may serve as a starting point in the design of prospective interventions.

Having amalgamated and assessed the core suggestions from the studies included in this review, several key recommendations will now be made. It is not the authors' intentions to present a prescriptive "to do list"; rather, these recommendations are being offered as points for consideration and reflection:

- Initial teacher education should include training on emotional literacy and content related to maintaining good mental health (McLean et al., 2017; Rae et al., 2017; Thompson et al., 2020).
- In schools, a member of staff should be appointed with overall responsibility for wellbeing (Hobson & Maxwell, 2017).
- Opportunities ought to be provided for teachers to develop professional networks.

- Additional support should be provided for teachers at significant transition points (e.g., first year after ITE, return to work after illness) (Kuhr & Singh, 2019).
- Teachers should have access to solution-focused, confidential, mental health support (Rae et al., 2017).
- Teachers should have access to a repertoire of coping strategies and wellbeing interventions (Woloshyn & Savage, 2020).
- Policymakers and school leaders should consider changes to systemic and structural factors which negatively impact TWB (Kuhr & Singh, 2019).

AS WELL AS INFORMING FUTURE RESEARCH, IT IS HOPED ALSO THAT THESE RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE USEFUL TO POLICYMAKERS AND EDUCATORS WITH AN INTEREST IN PROMOTING TEACHER MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT MEASURES ARE BESPOKE TO EACH INSTITUTION, AND TEACHERS ARE CONSULTED ABOUT THE TYPE OF SUPPORT THEY DESIRE AND REQUIRE.

It is also important to be mindful that TWB cannot be substantially improved solely through the implementation of interventions, as these focus on the issue as “within person”, putting the onus on the individual, devolving the requirement for systemic change. Wellbeing initiatives ought to be coupled with national and school level efforts to remove stressors in order to reap greatest benefit (Birchinall et al., 2019; Manning et al., 2020). Through the creation of school cultures which embrace equity, belonging and respect and the engagement of teachers’ voices, supported by relationship-building and appropriate CPD, much progress can be made in improving TWB. Refreshingly, such measures are within the gift of each and every school leader. In the spirit of renewed interest in wellbeing in wider society, it is time to address TWB as a collective responsibility as it is a critical component of successful student outcomes but more importantly, contributes to the wellbeing of society as a whole.

8

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NOTES

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