

# The Well-Being of Novice State School Teachers in the Mentoring Programme in Turkey: A Narrative Inquiry

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## Abstract

*In the midst of different teacher education programmes and teachers from many varied backgrounds, it is essentially necessary to provide mentoring to teachers that have just departed on a teaching career or started working in a new institution. Providing mentors for teachers is a part of their continuing professional development (CPD), and many factors such as the availability of mentors, teaching schedules, financial issues, the well-being of trainers, and in-mentoring teachers should be taken into consideration while discussing the mentoring practices. The timing and content of mentoring seminars, schools' facilities, students' engagement of their lesson affect the well-being of teachers'. The study conducted in Turkey with six teachers who are in their first or second year in government schools. It is found that the use of mentoring programmes and teacher involvement should be given priority when planning mentoring CPD programmes. In order to sustain the well-being of teachers, the mentoring programmes should be designed by taking into consideration such as timing and content of the seminars, physical conditions of schools, usefulness and teacher involvement which guides the well-being of the novice state school teachers.*

**Keywords:** Mentoring practices, Teacher involvement, Well-being, Mentoring programme, Teacher education programmes, Novice teachers

## Background of Mentoring

As mentoring is the central concern of this study, it is crucial to define the term 'mentor' and the roles attached to it. However, it is crucially important to state that there seems to be no clear definition of the term as it is challenging to conceive and is idiosyncratic since each mentor interprets his/her own roles individually (Zantig et al., 2001). Nevertheless, some definitions coined by certain authors are frequently used in literature. One definition was made by Bey (1990) who defines mentoring as a professional practice that is emerging as a way for experienced teachers and supervising teachers to aid the prospective teachers. Similarly, Odel and Huldig (2000) state that mentors are experienced teachers whose professional assignment includes the mentoring of student-teachers. Healy & Welchert (1990) bring in another point of view through suggesting that mentoring is 'a dynamic, reciprocal relationship in a work environment between an advanced career incumbent (mentor) and an early career teacher (ECT) aimed at promoting the career development of both. In other words, both the mentor and the novice teacher benefit, improve, and expand their teaching repertoire'. One other distinct perspective is from Merriam (1983, p.162) who defines mentoring as "a powerful emotional interaction between an older and a younger person, in a relationship in which the older mentor is trusted, loving, and experienced in the guidance of the younger". Although the definition of

mentoring is not up-front, it can be concluded through the remarks of Rowley (1999) who stated that in teacher education the majority of the definitions highlight issues such as the relationships involved in mentoring, the qualities of effective mentors, roles and responsibilities of mentors, mentoring support, and benefits of teacher mentoring. The definition that may best convey the notion of mentoring is the one by Pollard (2005):

*... mentoring is a means of providing support, challenge, and extension of the learning of one person through the guidance of another, who is more skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced, particularly in relation to the context in which the learning is taking place (p.29).*

### **Mentoring in Pre-service Education in Turkey**

The state schoolteachers appointed to public schools complete a period of 1.5 years to finish their candidate teacher status in Turkey and need to join training programmes during their busy schedules. As the coach of a district in local and International Education projects in İstanbul, the researcher observed physical tiredness amongst teachers during their seminars due in part to their daily seven-hour teaching schedule

Mentoring has many forms in teacher development in Turkey. There have been many practices at different education faculties and even among faculty members regarding the practicum, indeed there have been many attempts initiated in Turkey. For instance, the Turkish Higher Education Council (HEC) started a project in cooperation with the World Bank to restructure the system of teacher education in Turkey with a strong emphasis on practicum (YÖK, 1998). As a result of this movement, HEC introduced the current ELT pre-service teacher education curriculum into faculties of education. This curriculum includes two different courses for practicum experience, namely ‘School Experience’ and ‘Teaching Practice’. The former is a first-term course in the final year of study and includes student-teachers’ observation of mentor teachers and the school environment, and the latter is a second term course and requires student-teachers to plan and teach. In order to organise the conduction of these two courses, a framework titled

as the Faculty-School Cooperation (YÖK, 1998) was published under HEC and World Bank partnership. The aim of this framework was to both provide a national standard in planning, implementing, and evaluating the courses, and ensure cooperation between practice schools and the universities for the enhanced practicum experience. To serve objectives, the framework outlined the roles and responsibilities of all individuals involved in the process along with student-teacher competencies and information on how they should be assessed, as well as the syllabi for the two courses mentioned above. However, a bulk of research in this context suggests that practicum does not function as proposed by the framework (e.g. Yavuz, 2011; Tok & Yılmaz, 2011). Research into the school experience of student-teachers showed that various problems are leading to ineffective practices. The problems range from problematic student-teacher experience in the process (Dursun & Kuzu, 2008; Alaz & Konur, 2009), the convenience of course content and tasks (Becit, Kurt & Kūlahçı, 2009), to mentoring of student-teachers (Becit, Kurt & Kabakçı, 2009). Recently, a model offered to HEC by Uludağ University is being used in Turkey, it is called the Clinical Supervision Model.

Clinical supervision was first coined by Cogan in the 1950s in the faculty of Arts and was later adapted to the field of teacher education to improve teaching practices by providing more structured and cooperative approaches to supervision of student-teachers. (Machado & Botnarescue, 2001). Gaies & Bowers (1990) define clinical supervision as a model which is based on a cyclical process of pre-observation meeting, observation of teaching and post-observation meeting. In the pre-observation meeting, the mentor meets with the teacher and plans for classroom observation. Next, the mentor observes the planned lesson systematically and records information. Finally, in the post-observation meeting, the mentor meets the student-teacher to analyse the information he/she has recorded, interpret meaning, and plan the next step. Clinical supervision allows the learning teacher to carry out a more reflective practice through analysing and understanding the meaning of teaching and its content and putting more emphasis on elements of certainty and predictability in the process of self-evaluation.

However, one weakness of clinical supervision is that the model lacks reciprocity and causes a lot of stress and pressure due to frequent supervision and ongoing probing questions. As a result, some student-teachers do not find the approach helpful and hence take a defensive stance towards the mentor (Acheson & Gall 2003). Conversely, Gürsoy et al. (2016) found out that there are statistically significant differences in participants' evaluations of their university supervisor in favour of the experimental group, suggesting the implementation of Clinical Supervision Model for teaching practice. These days, some scholars (Bozbiyık, 2017) also write about using VEO (Video Enhanced Observation) to improve teachers.

In-service teachers voluntarily can get training on how to be a CT (cooperating teacher) from MEB online system MEBBIS and be eligible to be a CT for teacher candidates and contribute the development of candidate teachers, however, in some instances, in-service teachers who will not work with practicum students may join the CT training programme.

### **Mentoring in in-service Novice Teacher Education in Public Schools**

Upon graduation from education faculties, novice teachers work in private schools under challenging conditions with elevated expectations. For example, the expectations of current educational systems, which are undergoing rapid changes to equip students with 21st Century skills, are making new demands on teachers (Guerriero, 2017).

While international literature describes mentoring as a means of in-service training, it helps both novice and veteran teachers. In Turkey, mentoring is commonly used in pre-service training programs for prospective or novice teachers. Although each novice teacher is matched with an experienced teacher from the same or similar branch (Maths-Science, Turkish-English), mentoring has been just understood as a kind of apprenticeship for prospective teachers as a part of preservice training (Kiraz & Yildirim, 2007). The inspectors are no longer involved in teacher development, so the teachers in the mentoring process need to report to the school manager and be observed in some lessons. After working one and a half years and completing 14 modules of training

with their habitual teaching load, the candidate teachers working in state schools take an official test to complete the induction process. Some prep schools of universities deliver a genuine mentoring program in which the new teachers take input sessions, observations, and feedback. Still, we can conclude teachers in-state school schools mentoring programs take the modules that are listed below:

- a) Local and International Education projects
- b) The Democracy Adventure of Turkey and the Process of 15 July
- c) Legislation of Teaching
- d) Electronic Applications used in MoNE
- e) The Basics of Education in our Culture and Civilization
- f) Educational Practices Through Inclusion and Integration
- g) Human Values and Teaching Ethics
- h) Education Systems of Developed Countries, Education Studies of International Organizations
- l) Effective Communication and Classroom Management
- m) Teaching from Past to Present
- n) Sources of Multi-culturalism in Anatolia and its Reflection in Education
- o) Disaster Education Seminar
- p) Positive Thinking Skills Course
- q) Student Recognition Techniques

Another critical consideration is state school teachers have hardly ever one to one chances for discussion on educational issues because they attend the training sessions in the late afternoon in big conference halls after a busy teaching day when they are occasionally, and understandably, fatigued.

Bayar (2014) found that the beliefs of new teachers about the necessity of a mentoring program for their personal career development strongly impact the success of the induction or mentoring program. He discovered that some novice teachers in the study held negative biases regarding mentors and mentoring. They pointed out that participation in mentoring programs was just a waste of time, alluding to themselves as more knowledgeable than their mentors. The perspective of one particular teacher is remarkably similar to the description above. He pointed out: "I took the Public Personnel Selection Exam (PPSE) to become a teacher and

got an exceedingly high score according to the results of this exam. Therefore, I believe that I have enough information for teaching and do not need anyone's help" (Participant 12). The responses of the participants show that there are some negative biases of novice teachers about mentoring and this affects teachers' satisfaction with mentoring programs. This finding is consistent with Thomas and Packer (2013), who declared that mentoring could not be successful without support from all levels of the organization. This result shows that the biases of novice teachers against mentoring is one of the severe issues in mentoring programs' implementation and affects teachers' satisfaction with mentoring programs. We can conclude that we may not be sure if state school EFL teachers learned anything in the mentoring process as there is no synergetic and individualistic mentoring manner. To find answers to issues described earlier

Research Questions To investigate the two different domains(early-career state schoolteachers' disposition to mentoring and their well-being are formulated:

- RQ1: What factors promote the well-being of the public schools ECTs' in Turkey?
- RQ2: How useful is the mentoring programme they attend in their candidate teacher status?
- RQ3: How could the mentoring programme be improved to address their needs and well-being?
- RQ4: What is their attitude to CPD programmes they attended in general, and do CPD programmes cultivate their well-being?

### **The Well-being Theory (WBT)**

With the ever-changing and conflicting professional demands, work-related stress, anxiety, burnout and increasing work-life imbalance, now more than ever, educators are in need to attend to their well-being (Kutsyuruba et al., 2019).The theory of WBT by Seligman is a well-known explanation of well-being as it includes five things people around the world are searching for. They are positive emotions, commitment, relation, meaning, and achievement (i.e. PERMA), which are rewarding (e.g. inherently motivating). The five dimensions distinguish between WBT and other multi-dimensional theories

such as Diener et al. (2010) because they cover eudemonic (i.e. experiencing a purposive life) and hedonic (i.e. living a life full of components of happiness and enjoyment, including things that are less often included in other theories of well-being such as commitment and accomplishment

Positive emotions are the good things that we feel, such as happiness, hope, and joy (Cohn and Fredrickson, 2009; Seligman 2011). Experiencing positive emotions is a primary goal of individuals around the world (Diener 2000). Furthermore, research suggests positive emotions are a key indicator of well-being which is thought to be positively related to life satisfaction, resilience, mindfulness, social rewards, work outcomes, and physical health.

A second important indicator of well-being is engagement - which is related to positively to other well-being indicators). Another primary predictor of well-being is feeling respected by others and maintaining strong, mutually beneficial relations (Ryan & Deci 2000; Seligman 2011). Positive relationships with friends trigger self-esteem and that perceptible changes in the quality of friendship is related to improved health. The newly qualified state school teachers work in compulsory service areas under hardship; therefore, strong friendships among them may result in their new jobs. Research has shown that relationships with friends are positively associated with self-esteem and that perceived increases in friendship quality are related to increases in well-being (Bagwell et al., 2005). Moreover, a study that included a sample representative of three-fourths of the world's population across 55 nations found that a good relationship was the only common predictor of happiness (Diener and Oishi 2000).

Feeling valued by others and having close, mutually satisfying relationships is another key indicator of well-being (Ryan & Deci 2000; Seligman 2011). Ryan & Deci (2000) propose close relationships represent a fundamental human need.

The fourth indicator of well-being is meaning - having a sense of purpose derived from something viewed as more extensive than oneself (Seligman 2011). People are in pursuit of meaning as it makes life worth living and gives them a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction.

Achievement (or accomplishment) is the last component of well-being and is described by Seligman (2011) as a persistent or determined drive to master or accomplish something for one's own sake. Thus, achievement as an indicator of well-being should be operationalized by examining people's desire to accomplish something rather than examining actual accomplishments. The PERMA model (Butler & Kern, 2016) provides a subjective measure of achievement that is generalizable across settings and ages and ensures that striving for achievement is a recent and continuous process. Stress and burnout are common themes for teachers in the mentoring process and researching their well-being are of ample value to understand their teaching dispositions.

### Research Design

The current study employs an interpretive narrative methodology to frame the research design. This research approach seeks to study the individual lived experience by exploring, describing and analysing its meaning (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Bentz and Shapiro (1998) explained how the lived experiences of human beings include "the whole system of interactions with others [...] in an environment that is fused with meaning and language".

**Participants:** The researcher applied a purposive sampling strategy (Creswell, 2005; Neuman and Neuman, 2006) to invite K-12 school teachers to participate in the study. The criteria specified is that they need to be in the mentoring process, not to have taken the exam to abolish their candidate teacher status. Four English teachers, one music teacher, and one guidance and counseling teacher, agreed to participate in the study. They have been teaching for two to four years in state schools and have an experience of four to ten years' experience in total. A four-year experienced English teacher in a state school still getting "candidate teacher seminars" as the participant could not join the training when he was working in the East of Turkey in a remote village.

**Data Collection:** The data was collected in May 2020 during the curfew and pandemic times. The semi-structured interviews were executed on online

platforms and recorded the participants' consent. Some participants were not in favor of recording, so only written notes were taken by the researcher. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, with all proper names and stakeholders excluded and changed to pseudonyms. Before conducting this research, ethics approval was obtained, ensuring that the study adhered to ethical guidelines.

**Data Analysis:** A thematic analysis approach was applied, a "method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data" (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The aim was to be attentive and tentative - "attentive to the data, and tentative in [the] conceptualizations of them" (Dey, 2003, p. 108). To achieve the conceptualisations, the researchers employed a close reading strategy focused on the contents before generalizing the findings. The themes were verified through constant review of transcripts and researcher's memos and by comparing, reflecting, reading, rereading, coding in an iterative cycle.

**Trustworthiness:** With the aim of preventing research bias, the findings were sent to two participants. They were invited to confirm the findings, add details, and narrate the changes in data collection.

To ensure credibility, one then needs to be careful while eliciting data from the participants by trying to access accurate responses, so the researcher re-consulted the participants during or after generation of data and asked for their confirmation of what they had reported, a process also known as member-checking (Mertens, 2010; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). To secure trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), four criteria are adopted: credibility is assured by the time devoted to data collection, the researcher had online meetings with the participants in multiple times; transferability is attained by providing a thick description of the training context; dependability and confirmability are provided by documenting the research procedures including procedures of data collection, analysis and interpretations by providing the quotations from the interviews.

**The Significance of Research:** According to the knowledge of the researcher, no studies compared the early-careers teachers' well-being and the impact of mentoring in Turkey, however, there is one study

about the impact of mentoring on the Canadian early career teachers' well-being conducted by Kutsyuruba et al., (2019). They selectively analyzed 35 survey questions from an online New Teacher Survey that examined the perceptions and experiences of 1,343 ECTs (early career teachers) teaching in publicly funded schools across Canada. Through the mixed-methods exploration, Kutsyuruba and colleagues establish a strong correlation between the mentoring experiences and well-being of Canadian ECTs. Kutsyuruba et al. argue that purposeful, strength-based approaches for mentoring could help create environments in which ECTs can flourish.

### Findings

All the teachers in the study express that joining CPD (Continuing Professional Development) events fosters their well-being and motivates them to do their profession. The same view does not apply to when it comes to "teacher mentoring conferences," where they have to join fourteen modules, and they state that they are not scheduled in convenient times.

### Timing of Mentoring Seminars and Teachers' Well-being

Therefore, the first theme stands out as the timing of the seminars.

*We take these seminars from 9.00 to 16.00 at the weekends, so we have no time to rest or plan the week, we feel exhausted and no time to rest. P1*

*After teaching 7-8 hours a day, we travel to seminar locations for an hour and we feel exhausted. P3*

*In teaching from past to present day, we just watched YouTube videos from our culture. Instead of this, the videos might be uploaded on a platform; we can watch them at home in a cozy way. P4*

It is necessary to promote a sense of well-being through constructing working conditions in which teachers can collaborate and be creative, supported, empowered, and given more time for planning and professional development (Sucher, Darling-Hammond, & Carves-Thomas, 2016). The local Directorates of National Education in different cities need to give importance to the planning and resting time of the teachers.

### Content of Mentoring Seminars and Teachers' Well-being

Another theme stated by the teachers is that the content of the seminars is not nurturing the teacher's well-being.

*As an English teacher, I only enjoyed the European Union and E-twinning projects, the rest were not engaging or useful for me. P2*

*I think the content of the seminars is more suitable for workshops or discussion, in a big conference hall of 200 young teachers, it is just a lecture to listen to when we are exhausted. Not suitable in well-being-wise. P4*

*Some modules include political-bias and the trainers often express their political stances, so often we have conflict and refusal, which are time-consuming to put up with, and they are not advancing our well-being. P1*

As may be inferred from the sayings of participants, the content of the modules should not include any political inference or imposition, which may arouse many opposing views in the participants. Thompson & Cook (2014) also put forward that educational policies and training needed to get rid of the conceiving power of politicians. Regarding the choice in the modules, Guskey (2002) suggested CPD events had better have a choice according to the interest of the participants. Hence, the one-size-fits-all approach should not be employed in mentoring seminars of in-service teachers in their candidacy period.

### Factors Promoting Well-being in Professional Life

In the interviews the participants were asked, "What factors in your professional life do you believe promote your sense of wellbeing?" and in response to that question, the following answers were reported:

*Joining the TEA program of US Embassy refreshed my vision and advanced my well-being. P2*

*All collaborative research projects with my colleagues nurtured my well-being. Last year, we went to Poland and had observations and meetings with different music teachers, and I felt invigorated. P3*

*Joining webinars in the curfew times revived me in front of my computer. P4*

The current view of CPD describes teachers as knowledge generators (Borg, 2015). Thus, joining the collaborative research projects, getting first-hand

experiences along with chances for involvement may cultivate the well-being of the teachers and the teachers' attitudes to CPD as knowledge developers.

### **Physical Conditions of the Schools as a Nurturer to the Well-being**

The school infrastructure and the physical condition of the schools are the commonly mentioned themes for the teachers. They reported:

*I wish we can stream the students in the classroom; in my high school, we try to teach the same English to 250 different students within the various language proficiency. I visited many schools in the USA last year, each teacher has their classes, and they rush from class to class, here as teachers we are in a hurry. P1*

*In my last school, we did not even have a teachers' restroom for males and females. We needed to wait during the break, and we used to travel 40 km to commute to school every day was not advancing our well-being. P4*

*We did not have the Interactive White Board (IWB) until very recently. The existence of the Internet and other teaching tools assisted me in conducting more engaging lessons. P2*

Similar to the narrations of the participants, in the past ICT use was limited to practice and drilling activities. Still, now ICT tools such as IWBs allow learners and teachers to implement technology into learning and teaching better (Yang, 2010). Similar to the narration of teachers, the physical environment of the schools and the lack of facilities hurt teachers and lead them to burnout (Güven, 2013). Lack of physical facilities is deemed a threat to the well-being of the teachers.

### **Usefulness of the Mentoring Program and Well-being**

Another question was on the usefulness of the mentoring program and its effect on the teachers' well-being and the following statements were recounted:

*I do not find the mentoring program useful; some modules need to be optional and intending to abolish our candidate teacher status, we need to get along befriend with inspectors or managers, even if we are not on the page regarding some issues. P2*

*The mentoring programs should be delivered in a workshop setting with a practical outlook, not in conference halls. We can set up teacher choirs in the workshops and practice. P3*

*There is no area-specific training in the mentoring programs, I prefer mentoring with my colleagues from the guidance and counseling department at least to share a common metalanguage. P4*

The researcher encouraged the novice teachers to reflect on the usefulness. Still, they were withdrawn and did not want to make comments on the issue; that approach was a representation of organizational silence for some participants (Alqarni, 2020). The candidate teachers perceive the mentoring stage as a period to do away with.

Besides, involvement in mentoring and candidate teacher status is a peril to well-being as novice teachers. They conveyed:

*"We need to be the member of the teacher union that our school principal supports" (P2) because the school principal is to evaluate their teaching at the end of the term.*

Towards the end of the interview, the mentoring program teachers asked "If you were the principal of your school, tell me at least three things you would like to implement to increase the level of teacher well-being?"

As a response, the participants testified:

Less teaching hours (P2, P3), Abolishing the on-duty teacher system (P4), optional English and music classes (P1, P2, P3), removing compulsory English courses for all (P1, P2), individual choice in CPD (P3, P4), inviting trainers from different nationalities and backgrounds (P1, P2, P3)

The participants needed autonomy in decision making regarding their teaching and CPD choices.

As Mann (2005) points out, "language teacher development...is wider than professional development and includes personal, moral and value dimensions". Voluntarily, teachers need to be urged to participate in training, which offers more than teaching but some spiritual training for their well-being. In a current metaphoric study of Rakıcıoğlu et al., (2019), teachers described themselves as "a candle at its ends," which is a sign of early burnout syndrome, so providing CPD timing and facilities at schools is needed, and it will cultivate their well-being.

## Teacher Involvement and Well-being

Last but not least involvement of teachers in every educational decision will foster their well-being and autonomy. They related:

*In my visit to the colorado state, I observed schools could decide on their books, materials; they prepare their syllabus and sent it to the local Ministry of Education for approval. Nothing is top-down. P1*

*I used to work at a private language school, and we used to design/collect our teaching materials towards the needs of our students, I was feeling accomplished by then. P2*

*Standard programs or syllabus for students and teachers are not beneficial, teachers should be the chief decision-maker regarding their class. P4*

All in all, the timing and content of teacher mentoring seminars, physical conditions and infrastructure of their schools and involvement are important variables in discussing the well-being of the teachers in the current study.

## Discussion

The conventional approaches of CPD are often criticized for being course-based, input-based, externally defined, deficit-oriented and short-term. (Borg, 2015, Choi & Andon, 2013). As the first theme discusses the timing of the mentoring seminars, the Ministry of Education can design the candidate teacher programs at the beginning or end of the term, in the two-week preparation time, with the teachers from the same branches in a dialogic workshop setting a setting which cultivates teacher well-being.

With the aim of democratizing the education and advancing the well-being, the trainers, school principals or inspectors need to train the candidate teachers circumventing the ideology or beliefs. In some countries, partisan explanations or remarks may not be acceptable; Turkey is one of those countries. Teachers in the east of Turkey could be trained on minority languages or dialects lieu of the same modules given to every teacher. Thriving communication will be an asset to teacher well-being. Taking the conditions of the teaching settings, a differentiation is needed in mentoring programs.

CPD programs may offer psychology support to novice teachers. To this end, modules of well-being, resilience, positive thinking or teacher efficacy

or time management courses may be delivered to teachers. The mentoring has not been implemented in COVID19 pandemic time yet. However, as a suggestion, some videos of the modules could be uploaded on EBA, such as Anatolia Culture from past to present, and the teachers in mentoring could complete the relevant exercises, and attending the modules online may be a necessity for induction teachers.

In a similar vein to current research, some researchers have concluded that INSET(In-service training) programs can demonstrate ineffectiveness, which may hamper their potential to produce intended outcomes (Atay 2008, Emery, 2012; Kennedy, 2016). In other words, some INSET activities prove to be inefficient due to certain reasons. One of the reasons might be the narrow approach in the preparation phase of training, during which teachers' views and actual needs are neglected and the training programs did not cultivate their professional well-being.

In the midst of interdisciplinary paradigm, the invited trainers should be from different countries, expertise or majors. To this end, candidate graduate teachers gain various insights into their profession and are encouraged to continue teaching. Motivation to continue teaching (Yu, 2015) is a concern worldwide for well-being as the teachers make decisions regarding their professional goals, beliefs about the attainability of these goals, identities, and possible selves in the initial years of teaching(Çetin & Eren, 2019).

In practical terms, Durr, Chang, and Carson (2014) make the important point that "most teacher education programmes primarily focus on developing a teacher's arsenal of instructional strategies and pedagogical skills, but these skills do not seem to help teachers emotionally handle the stresses of the profession". Indeed, in their extensive study of teachers' lives, Day, and Gu (2010, p. 36) argue that "teacher professional well-being is central to their ability to affect their students' learning and lives". Accordingly, teachers in the mentoring period need to be given tips to regulate their well-being and resilience. One hypothetically expedient perspective from which to study teacher well-being is through the lens of positive psychology (MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2019). Positive psychology may include



some useful guidance and approaches, such as exercises based around the PERMA model, that could advance professional well-being for teachers.

One of the common points raised by studies on the issue in teacher professional development literature is that there is a strong necessity to place teachers views and needs as well as their specific contexts and realities at the center of the INSET design and implementation (Atay, 2008; Mede & Işık, 2016).

Regarding limitations, first, the semi-structured interviews were conducted in COVID-19 pandemic via Zoom, and we needed to fit the interview within 40 minutes, maybe longer interviewing would yield more abundant data. Second, while in-depth interviewing is considered to be the main method for collecting data in phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002), there are some constraints in this regard. The research analyzed the perspectives of the participants to investigate their mentorship experiences. Nevertheless, they cannot say precisely what they do not know, it should be remembered. The needs, activities and obstacles of the study participants' professional development should, therefore, be viewed as their perceived reality. This may reflect its meaning in terms of its career development practices, in other words.

## Conclusions

Barker and Martin (2009) offer that happy teachers can give to students and teach them well. Further, it is surely ethically untenable to accept a situation in which teachers become unhappy by teaching others to be happy. Being a state school teacher is a rigorous journey and teachers are under stress to be public personnel. Novice state school teachers' well-being is under many threats. The candidate teachers took the KPSS (Kamu Personeli Seçme Sınavı [Public Personnel Selection Examination]) first and the interview next and they have been employed according to their final grades.

Moreover, when they are employed, they have to finish seminars, take another test, and have an interview one year later to finish the candidate process. ("Teacher Training Program", 2017). Another renewal in 2016 was that teachers were contractually hired and had to work in an assigned area for six years and were not entitled to change

school territory. All the factors above jeopardize their well-being. Although all these reforms have been made for well-qualified teachers, the law on teacher employment varied every year and it is becoming difficult to start working as a teacher in public schools. The first years of teaching are when teachers face many challenges and need to be supported (Salı & Keçik, 2018). Hence, as the students have guidance and counseling centres in their schools, teachers may have school-based academic and counseling mentors in their initial problems in their mentoring time. It is acclaimed that up to 40% of teachers leave the profession within their first five years (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Thus, teachers need mentoring in their candidate teacher period and their well-being is needed to be taken care of.

Another critical facet of the well-being of teachers is the importance attached to their lessons. In the High School Entrance Exam, there are only ten questions while there are twenty questions from Turkish, Maths and Science Lessons (LGS Report, 2018). The questions from English only make up 5 percent of the placement score. Subsequently, students' interest is not triggered for English lessons at state schools which in turn effects the well-being of the teachers in public schools. Thus, educational initiatives are initiated for the education and improvement of the students; novice teachers in their initial years compose their thinking systems towards their teaching. Therefore, teachers' well-being may result in student well-being and, in return a brighter future for our children.

All in all, while planning the CPD seminars for the state school teachers in their initial years, the timing and content of the seminars should be adjusted to participants, the gap in the physical facilities of the schools should be more equal as the facilities are found to be a factor effective on teacher well-being. Last but not least, the usefulness of the mentoring program for different branches and teacher involvement should be taken into consideration.

## Appendix

### Wellbeing and Mentoring Semi -Structured Interview Questions

1. What does the idea of "teacher well-being" mean to you?

2. What factors in your professional life do you believe promote your sense of well-being?
3. What factors in your professional life do you believe negatively impact your sense of well-being?
4. How would you describe your sense of well-being in this school?
5. Could you share a case/example that enhances/distracts your sense of well-being?
6. Do you feel you have a sense of empowerment? If so, explain how? (Ask for a specific example)
7. How strong is your feeling of self-efficacy as a teacher? (Teachers might be asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 5, and then they might explain).
8. Do you regularly participate in professional development activities? If yes, do you feel that these contribute to your sense of well-being? If so, how? Do you think candidate teacher seminar improved your teaching or well-being?
9. If you could change one thing in this school to support your sense of well-being, what would it be? Why do you think it is important?
10. If you were the principal of this school, tell me at least three things you would like to implement to increase the level of teacher well-being? Adopted from Elcan, N (2017)

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