



Nurturing Flourishing Educators: A Proposal for Enhancing Teacher Well-being and Character Development

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Introduction

In an era marked by unprecedented challenges, the educational landscape is increasingly influenced by the social, environmental, and technological changes of our time. Both contemporary educators and students face a complex array of issues that extend beyond traditional academic concerns, profoundly impacting personal wellbeing, ethical considerations, and community cohesion. Key among these issues are the mental health crisis (Twenge et al., 2019; Bitsko et al., 2022), the ethical and social implications of emerging technologies such as generative artificial intelligence (Luckin, 2018; Knox, 2020), environmental threats that demand urgent collective action (Stevenson et al., 2017; Monroe et al., 2019), and political polarisation, which strains trust and social cooperation (Iyengar & Krupenkin, 2018; Hess & McAvoy, 2015). Each of these issues carries profound ethical implications, shaping the attitudes and behaviours of individuals within educational settings.

The mental health epidemic, recognised by the World Health Organisation as a pressing global crisis (World Health Organisation, 2021), disproportionately affects young people and education professionals, exacerbating stress, anxiety, and burnout among teachers and students (BMC Psychology, 2023). This crisis undermines educational outcomes and disrupts the sense of personal and professional wellbeing essential for fostering a flourishing academic community. Similarly, the advent of GenAI and related technologies, while offering remarkable advancements, poses ethical dilemmas and potential threats to human agency, authenticity, and the integrity of the learning environment (Williams, 2024; MDPI, 2023; Hanson et al., 2023). The ease with which misinformation spreads and the risk of depersonalisation in educational processes challenge educators to balance innovation with ethical responsibility. Environmental challenges, from climate change to resource depletion, introduce both practical and moral imperative for education systems to instil a sense of stewardship and responsibility in students. Lastly, political polarisation, which fosters social division, underscores the need for education to play a proactive role in promoting dialogue, empathy, and the pursuit of shared virtues, counteracting the growing trends of distrust and alienation within communities.

In light of these challenges, there is an urgent need for an educational framework that emphasises character and virtue, enabling teachers and students not only to address these issues but also to contribute positively to resolving them (Kristjánsson, 2015; Lavy, 2022). Educators, tasked with shaping future generations, require training and resources to guide students in understanding and addressing the complex moral dilemmas of life,

while simultaneously promoting their wellbeing, holistic development, and a profound sense of purpose.

This imperative highlights the fundamental role of character education, which fosters virtues such as fortitude, integrity, compassion, and critical reflection, preparing individuals to confront global challenges constructively and collaboratively (Arthur et al., 2017). However, achieving this requires well-trained educators who prioritise their own wellbeing, character, and virtues, as only then can they effectively impart these qualities to their students.

If we acknowledge that student wellbeing is closely linked to that of educational staff, and that flourishing necessitates reforms in teacher training, it becomes clear that a long and challenging path lies ahead (Kristjánsson, 2023). This is further complicated by the prevalence of the human capital theory as the primary goal of education, where competence-based and technical education has dominated. Many teachers have been trained solely within this perspective (Kristjánsson, 2023; Fernández, 2022).

Teachers are often expected to acquire tools or knowledge to apply directly to their students, which may be valid in the realm of didactics. However, in the case of character education, this process must begin with the teacher themselves: they must internalise, believe in, and live out the virtues they seek to instill. Only an educator who has worked on their own moral and ethical development can become an authentic role model for their students.

Therefore, a primary objective in education must be to ensure the comprehensive training of teachers, not only to support the academic development of their students but also to foster their moral and emotional growth. This proposal is based on these principles, advocating for an integrated approach that combines the wellbeing and flourishing of teachers with the development of their character. This is presented as the cornerstone of effective character education and a key response to the urgent needs of contemporary society.

This focus on the flourishing of educators stems from the recognition that teachers are not merely transmitters of knowledge but essential role models whose moral integrity and wellbeing are fundamental to creating an educational environment where everyone can thrive (Duckworth et al., 2009; Lavy, 2022). This article argues that by prioritising both the wellbeing and the character development of educators, it is possible to build the foundations of a truly transformative educational system, capable of preparing both students and teachers to meaningfully address the challenges of their time and contribute to the common good.

The Wellbeing of Teachers: A Key Element in Flourishing Educational Environments

Teacher wellbeing is a key element in creating an educational environment where both educators and students can thrive. Numerous studies have demonstrated that teachers' wellbeing directly influences their professional effectiveness, resilience, and ability to model positive behaviours essential for fostering a virtuous classroom environment (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Day & Gu, 2014). Moreover, ensuring the wellbeing of educators is a fundamental requirement for effective character education and the cultivation of virtues in students (OECD, 2022; Collie et al., 2012; Kristjánsson, 2023).

In recent years, the focus on educators' wellbeing has evolved beyond the prevention of stress and burnout, towards the promotion of positive states that enhance engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction. Teachers with higher levels of wellbeing not only maintain constructive and supportive relationships with their students but also contribute significantly to their socio-emotional and academic development (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Collie et al., 2012). Furthermore, when educators find satisfaction and a sense of purpose in their work, they are better equipped to create inclusive and enriching environments that promote both character formation and academic success (Seligman, 2012; Turner, 2023).

Teachers' emotional and professional wellbeing also deeply affects classroom dynamics and the development of moral communities within schools. The PERMA model (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment) highlights how practices based on positive psychology can foster flourishing in the workplace (Seligman, 2012). Teachers who excel in these areas tend to demonstrate resilience, optimism, and empathy—qualities essential for modelling virtues and guiding students towards meaningful learning (Brady & Wilson, 2021).

Conversely, when teachers experience high levels of wellbeing, they positively impact classroom climates, fostering student engagement, moral development, and collaborative learning. Positive teacher-student relationships are associated with improved behaviour, higher academic achievement, and stronger socio-emotional development in students (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). A well-supported and resilient educator who embodies virtues such as patience, integrity, and compassion becomes a tangible role model for their students, facilitating learning not only in academic terms but also in ethical and emotional dimensions (Fernández-Espinosa et al., 2023).

However, teachers face numerous challenges, particularly in navigating the moral and psychological complexities inherent to their profession. Many report feeling unprepared to address ethical dilemmas, emotional demands, and issues linked to the character development and wellbeing of their students (Fowers, 2021; Kristjánsson, 2023). A significant number of teachers also note a lack of moral language and a cohesive professional identity, which hinders their ability to effectively address these challenges, generating stress and uncertainty in their roles (Kristjánsson, 2015; Kristjánsson, 2023).

The dual expectation that teachers deliver academic content while fostering the moral and emotional development of their students adds pressure to their role. This responsibility, combined with demanding academic standards, contributes to feelings of overload and

burnout, affecting both their wellbeing and professional efficacy (Brady & Wilson, 2021). The “New Agenda for Flourishing” emphasises that few teachers receive the training or support necessary to meet these complex demands, underscoring the urgency of reforms that prioritise their moral development and the cultivation of their own character (Kristjánsson, 2023).

Teacher wellbeing not only has individual benefits but also directly influences the quality of education that students receive. Teachers who flourish are better able to create positive and enriching environments that promote academic success and character development (Battistich, 2005; Jeynes, 2019). Additionally, educators who experience high levels of wellbeing excel in managing classroom dynamics and building meaningful relationships with their students—both essential aspects of effective character education (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Fernández & López, 2023).

Investing in teachers’ development and wellbeing is fundamental to building an education system centred on virtues. Schools that prioritise the wellbeing of their educators are more likely to observe positive outcomes in student development, as thriving teachers are better positioned to foster virtue growth and academic success (Kristjánsson, 2023). This approach highlights the need for comprehensive support systems that address teachers’ needs, creating a thriving school environment where educators and students can flourish academically, socially, and ethically.

Challenges in Character Development for Educators

Educators face a range of significant challenges in fostering character development in their students, many of which stem from the inherent moral complexities of teaching (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002), the lack of adequate support systems (Spilt et al., 2011), and the absence of a shared moral language or cohesive professional identity (OECD, 2021). Overcoming these challenges is essential for creating a virtue-based educational environment that supports the flourishing of both educators and students.

Teaching often involves navigating complex ethical dilemmas, requiring educators to make decisions that impact not only the academic outcomes of their students but also their moral and character development. However, many teachers feel ill-prepared to face such situations due to limited training in ethical and moral reasoning. Kristjánsson (2023) emphasises that character education must engage teachers in profound moral reflection, challenging the misconception that it merely involves enforcing good behaviour. Despite this, a gap in educator preparation persists, leaving them vulnerable to stress and decision fatigue, which undermines their wellbeing and effectiveness as character role models.

Moreover, educators frequently lack the necessary support to promote their own wellbeing and personal development. Administrative demands, classroom management, and insufficient emotional and professional support contribute to burnout and reduce their ability to create positive learning environments (Collie et al., 2012). This situation is exacerbated by the scarcity of professional development opportunities focused on moral

and character growth. According to Spilt et al. (2011), educators need supportive relationships and effective coping strategies to manage the emotional demands of the profession.

Another critical challenge is the absence of a shared moral vocabulary and a clear professional identity within teaching. Many educators struggle to articulate concepts related to character and virtue, limiting their ability to model these values effectively. This lack of clarity can lead to inconsistencies in how values are communicated in the classroom and makes it difficult for educators to fully embrace their role as moral exemplars. Without a coherent ethical framework, educators are more susceptible to ethical ambiguities in their interactions with students (Kristjánsson, 2015; Kristjánsson, 2023).

To address these challenges, prioritising the wellbeing and character development of educators is essential. Teachers who thrive emotionally and professionally are more likely to create a positive, inclusive, and ethical learning environment where students can develop their character. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) highlight that teacher-student relationships rooted in empathy, patience, and warmth are fundamental to establishing a classroom climate conducive to character development.

Investing in the wellbeing and holistic training of educators is crucial for building a sustainable model of character education in schools. This not only benefits teachers but also strengthens their ability to confront moral dilemmas and effectively model virtuous behaviours, thereby fostering a cohesive educational environment grounded in virtues. As Higgins asserts, “restoring the flourishing of the teacher to its central place is the first step in building a virtue ethics of teaching” (2011, p. 10, cited in Kristjánsson, 2013).

Before guiding students in exploring who they want to be and how to flourish, teachers need to reflect on and answer these same questions for themselves, both personally and professionally, as the two levels are inevitably interconnected (Kristjánsson, 2023). Therefore, it is imperative to design comprehensive training programmes that address this area, equipping educators with the necessary tools for their ethical and personal development, aligning with their role as character educators in the school environment.

Proposal: An Integrated Approach to Teacher Wellbeing and Character Development for Flourishing

Fostering a positive and sustainable educational environment requires adopting an integrated approach that evaluates and promotes both the wellbeing and leadership of teachers. This proposal introduces an assessment system based on cross-referenced scales, designed to provide insights from the perspectives of teachers and school leaders. The system is structured around four key dimensions: institutional climate, personal development, professional development, and leadership. Together, these dimensions aim to address the essential factors for teacher and school community flourishing.

Dimension 1: Institutional Climate

The institutional climate assesses the quality of the educational environment in terms of its ability to support teacher wellbeing and foster positive workplace relationships. A supportive climate is linked to higher levels of motivation, satisfaction, and commitment among teachers, which are fundamental for creating a virtuous environment.

Leadership plays a central role in building a climate where teachers feel valued and engaged (Granville et al., 2024). Educators who perceive support from their leaders exhibit higher levels of commitment and a greater capacity to positively influence student outcomes (Xu & Pang, 2024).

Examples of elements within this dimension:

I feel happy at my workplace.

The leadership team is accessible to teachers.

Dimension 2: Personal Development

Personal development focuses on providing teachers with opportunities for self-exploration, growth, and resilience—key aspects of their self-efficacy and wellbeing. This approach strengthens educators' sense of purpose, enhancing their ability to grow in virtues themselves and model these for their students (Viac & Fraser, 2020).

Teachers who engage in meaningful personal growth activities are better equipped to manage stress and are more likely to remain in the teaching profession. Schools that prioritise teachers' personal development contribute to a healthier school environment, reducing rates of burnout and staff turnover (Collie et al., 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Furthermore, research shows that an appropriate balance of workload and utilisation of teachers' talents significantly contributes to job satisfaction and performance (Jerrim & Sims, 2021; Franco et al., 2021). Schools that prioritise personal development not only reduce burnout but also promote a more collaborative and healthy environment.

Examples of elements within this dimension:

The school provides concrete opportunities for my personal development.

The school offers opportunities to discover and apply my talents.

Dimension 3: Professional Development

Professional development enables educators to stay updated in their knowledge and adopt a mindset of continuous learning, which is crucial in today's evolving educational

landscape. Teachers who participate in professional development programmes not only refine their pedagogical skills but also assume leadership roles, enhancing both academic growth and the character development of their students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

An excellent teacher should not only demonstrate competence in their subject area but also embody virtues such as integrity, compassion, and good judgment (Arthur et al., 2005; Carr, 2007). To educate in virtues, teachers must first develop their own character, as their role as ethical models is crucial in inspiring students (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2019; Kristjánsson, 2023). Therefore, professional development should also include adequate training in this domain.

Examples of elements within this dimension:

The school provides specific opportunities for my professional development.

I receive training on how to educate students in virtues as part of my role as a teacher.

Dimension 4: Leadership

The leadership dimension evaluates teachers' sense of purpose, belonging, and influence within the school. Effective leadership involves guiding students through moral and ethical challenges, fostering a shared sense of purpose within the classroom and school community, and helping them flourish (Fernández & López, 2023).

Empowering teachers through participatory leadership promotes a unified mission in character education (Granville-Chapman et al., 2024). Leaders who focus on staff flourishing—through training, trust, and recognition—enhance teacher wellbeing and create an environment that inspires students to develop their own character (Granville-Chapman, 2021).

A flourishing school community requires collaboration, shared authority, and responsibilities that enable the mission of living well and flourishing to be achieved (Curren, 2023). This is only possible when teachers' needs, opinions, and judgments are respected, and when they are supported in their personal growth to become educators who lead others towards flourishing (Kristjánsson, 2023).

Examples of elements within this dimension:

The leadership team consults me on decisions related to my area of expertise; I feel that the work I do has a clear sense of purpose; My leaders encourage me to frequently use my talents.

Proposed Add-On: Teacher Training and Accompaniment Program on Character Education (Appendix 1)

Building on the insights gained from the assessment system, this proposal also includes a dedicated program to train teachers in character education. The focus of this program is not on equipping teachers to apply character education to their students but rather on fostering their own personal character development. By prioritizing the personal transformation of teachers, the program seeks to create authentic role models who can naturally and effectively foster a culture of virtue and character within their school communities.

Method

Participants

Sample was composed of 92 teachers and 6 directors from the CETis public Professional Training school in Mexico. Regarding teachers, 50 (54,3%) were women and 42 (45,7%) were men. 2 (2,2%) teachers were between 25 and 30 years old, 19 (20,7%) were between 31 and 40 years old, 25 (27,2%) were between 41 and 50 years old, 32 (34,8%) were between 51 and 60 years old and 14 (15,2%) were 61 years old or more. 4 (4,3%) teachers had been working in education between 0 and 5 years, 14 (15,2%) between 6 and 10 years, 17 (18,5%) between 11 and 15 years, 11 (12%) between 16 and 20 years, and 46 (50%) 21 years or more. Regarding time in the current position, 29 (31,5%) had between 0 and 5 years working in their current position, 13 (14,1%) had between 6 and 10 years, 9 (9,8%) between 11 and 15 years, 11 (12%) between 16 and 20 years, and 30 (32,6%) 21 years or more. Regarding directors, 3 (50%) were women and 3 (50%) were men. 1 (16,7%) was between 31 and 40 years old, 2 (33,3%) were between 41 and 50 years old and 3 (50%) were between 51 and 60 years old. Regarding the time working in education, 1 (16,7%) has been working between 6 and 10 years, 2 (33,3%) between 11 and 15 years, 1 (16,7%) between 16 and 20 years, and 2 (33,3%) 21 years or more. Regarding the time in the current position, all directors have been in their current position between 0 and 5 years.

Procedure

The study presents a non-experimental design with a non-probabilistic convenience sampling. As for the procedure, first, the study was evaluated by an ethics committee, which gave its approval for the research. Second, different statements related to teachers' well-being were created to evaluate the degree of agreement that teachers and directors had with each agreement.

Instruments

A questionnaire with 12 items was administered, in which the degree of agreement from 1 to 6 with different statements relating to teachers' well-being was asked both teachers and directors.

The study employed two sets of scales to evaluate teachers' wellbeing which was related to: institutional climate, professional development, personal development, and leadership within schools. The scales were designed to capture responses from two distinct groups: teachers and school principals. The items in the scales were developed to align closely with key themes related to workplace satisfaction, collaboration, development opportunities, and leadership practices.

Both scales used a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 6, where higher scores indicate a more favorable perception of the respective statement. For teachers, statements were phrased to reflect their experiences and perceptions and for principals, similar statements were rephrased to assess their self-perceived effectiveness and the wellbeing they provide to their teachers.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were carried out and mean and standard deviation were calculated.

Results

Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 show means and standard deviations.

Table 1: Statements related to Institutional Climate

	Teachers		Directors		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
I consider myself happy in my work.	4.43	1.679	5.67	.516	I consider myself happy in my work.
The leadership team is accessible to the teachers.	3.50	1.843	5.83	.408	As a director, I am accessible to my teachers.
The leadership team is aware of the difficulties/needs that teachers have in the school.	3.36	1.819	5.33	.816	I am aware of the difficulties/needs my teachers have in the school.
Teachers maintain relationships of mutual trust and respect.	3.71	1.648	4.33	.816	Teachers maintain relationships of mutual trust and respect among themselves.
There is a collaborative environment between the leadership team and the teachers	2.97	1.713	5.17	.753	There is a collaborative environment between the leadership team and the teachers
I feel valued in my school.	3.47	1.800	5.33	.816	I recognize and praise teachers for their work.

The results in Table 1 highlight a gap in perceptions between teachers and directors regarding institutional climate. Directors consistently report higher levels of satisfaction and positive interaction within the school environment compared to teachers.

Directors report a much higher mean score ($M = 5.67$, $SD = 0.516$) than teachers ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.679$), suggesting directors feel more fulfilled in their roles.

Teachers rated the accessibility of the leadership team and their understanding of teachers' difficulties lower (means of 3.50 and 3.36, respectively) compared to directors' self-assessments (5.83 and 5.33). This disconnect may indicate a lack of communication or perceived empathy from the leadership team.

The largest discrepancy appears in perceptions of collaboration between leadership and teachers ($M = 2.97$ for teachers, $M = 5.17$ for directors). This highlights a potential challenge in fostering mutual respect and cooperation.

Teachers feel less valued ($M = 3.47$) compared to the directors' self-perception of recognizing teachers' efforts ($M = 5.33$). Similarly, trust among teachers is rated moderately ($M = 3.71$), indicating room for improvement in team dynamics.

Table 2: Statements related to Professional Development.

	Teachers		Directors		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
The school provides me with specific opportunities for my professional development.	3.55	1.673	5.17	.753	I provide my teachers with specific opportunities for their professional development.
I receive training on how to educate students in values/virtues in my role as a teacher.	2.88	1.696	4.50	1.517	I provide my teachers with training on how to educate students in values/virtues.

In Table 2, professional development opportunities are another area where perceptions differ.

Directors strongly believe they provide sufficient opportunities for professional growth ($M = 5.17$, $SD = 0.753$), while teachers perceive these opportunities as limited ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.673$). This may indicate a misalignment in communication or the implementation of these opportunities.

Teachers report low exposure to training in this area ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 1.696$), while directors rate their efforts significantly higher ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.517$). This discrepancy suggests a gap in delivery or awareness of such training programs.

Table 3: Statements related to Personal Development.

	Teachers		Directors		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
The school provides me with specific opportunities for my personal development.	3.39	1.741	5.17	.753	I provide my teachers with specific opportunities to develop personally
The school provides me with opportunities to discover and practice my talents	3.29	1.732	5.00	1.095	We provide opportunities for teachers to discover and practice their talents.

Table 3 highlights differences in personal development opportunities.

Teachers feel that opportunities for personal development are scarce ($M = 3.39$), while directors rate their efforts to provide these opportunities much higher ($M = 5.17$). This discrepancy underscores a need to reevaluate how personal development initiatives are communicated and implemented.

Teachers rate opportunities for exploring their talents lower ($M = 3.29$) compared to directors ($M = 5.00$). This indicates that while leadership believes they are fostering an environment conducive to personal growth, teachers may not perceive it as effective.

Table 4: Statements related to Leadership.

	Teachers		Directors		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
The leadership team consults my opinion regarding decisions related to my area of expertise.	2.80	1.743	5.00	.894	I incorporate teachers' ideas into my decisions when appropriate.
The leadership team offers their help to resolve difficulties and needs that we, the teachers, present.	2.97	1.725	5.50	.837	We, the leadership team, offer help to resolve the difficulties and needs presented by the staff.
I believe that the work I do has a clear sense of purpose.	4.38	1.696	5.17	.753	As a leadership team, we provide a clear sense of purpose to the work teachers do every day.
I consider myself a key player in the realization of the Educational Project.	4.23	1.846	5.33	.516	As a leadership team, we communicate the active role that each teacher has in the realization of the Educational Project.

Table 4 reveals a gap in how leadership is perceived.

- Teachers feel that their input is rarely sought ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.743$), whereas directors rate themselves as incorporating teacher ideas frequently ($M = 5.00$, SD

= 0.894). This could point to a lack of visible efforts to include teachers in decision-making processes.

- Directors view themselves as supportive (mean = 5.50), but teachers perceive much less help (M = 2.97). This difference suggests a disconnect between the directors' intentions and teachers' experiences.
- Teachers generally feel their work has purpose (M = 4.38) and that they play a key role (M = 4.23), but directors rate their efforts in fostering these sentiments even higher (M = 5.17 and M = 5.33 respectively). This disparity suggests that directors may overestimate their effectiveness in conveying purpose and engaging teachers.

Discussion

Much attention has been paid to students' well-being, often putting aside the well-being and development of teachers and school leaders. As teachers play a central role in educational practice, there is a growing recognition of the need to consider their perspectives and necessities. Addressing these needs not only improves teachers' experiences but also positively impacts students' education and well-being. Studies such as those by Carroll et al. (2021) have shown that changes in teachers' levels of distress and burnout directly affect facets of students' well-being. Similarly, Maricuțoiu et al. (2023) found that teachers' eudaimonic subjective well-being has moderate associations with students' well-being and engagement, emphasizing the need for systemic approaches that prioritize teacher flourishing.

The present study explored the perspectives of teachers and directors regarding various aspects of institutional climate, professional development, personal development, and leadership in a public Professional Training school in Mexico. The results reveal notable differences in perceptions between teachers and directors, with the most pronounced gaps observed in institutional climate and leadership dimensions. For example, areas such as collaboration, consultation in decision-making, and support in problem-solving highlight significant discrepancies. These findings point to critical areas for improvement and underscore the necessity of fostering stronger communication between directors and teachers to better align perspectives and meet teachers' needs.

While the study identifies structural and procedural improvements, it also highlights a deeper, underlying requirement: the need for character education among both teachers and the directive team. Addressing teachers' well-being and fostering an environment of mutual respect and collaboration requires not just external changes but also internal growth in virtues such as empathy, fairness, resilience, and integrity. Without developing their own character, neither teachers nor leaders can fully address the challenges that hinder collaboration, trust, and engagement.

Character education must begin with the directive team, as their leadership sets the tone for the entire school. Leaders who embody virtues such as humility, justice, and prudence create environments where teachers feel supported, valued, and empowered. As research

indicates, leaders who prioritize their own growth in character are better equipped to address moral and ethical challenges, foster positive relationships, and guide their teams effectively (Kim & Lee, 2024; Tuffield, 2021). These qualities are essential for bridging the perception gaps identified in this study and for building a thriving institutional climate.

For teachers, character development is equally crucial. Teachers serve as role models for students, and their ability to educate in virtues is intrinsically linked to their own moral growth. As suggested by Lemoine et al. (2023), teachers who receive training in character education are better equipped to instill virtues in students and maintain positive classroom environments. Furthermore, developing their own character enhances teachers' resilience and well-being, allowing them to navigate the pressures of their roles more effectively.

Recommendations

To address the discrepancies highlighted in this study and foster well-being among both teachers and leaders, several key recommendations emerge:

- Schools must implement programs that encourage both teachers and leaders to engage in character development for themselves. In appendix 1 is the proposal for the training program.
- Strengthen mechanisms for communication between teachers and the directive team to ensure that teachers' voices are heard and their needs are understood. This includes incorporating teachers into decision-making processes and creating platforms for open dialogue.
- Leadership training programs should focus on building character and emphasizing participatory and empathetic leadership styles. This will help reduce the perception gaps identified in areas such as collaboration and support.
- Both teachers and leaders should receive targeted training on how to educate students in virtues. This will not only enhance student outcomes but also support teachers in aligning their practices with the school's mission.

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the pivotal role of teacher and leader well-being in fostering a thriving educational environment. Structural changes alone cannot achieve lasting transformation; the key lies in integrating character education for both educators and leaders. The development of virtues serves as the foundation for building trust, collaboration, and a shared sense of purpose within school communities. By prioritizing the moral and personal growth of teachers and leadership teams, schools can cultivate environments where both educators and students are empowered to flourish.

An integrated framework that combines teacher well-being and character development is essential for creating positive and sustainable educational ecosystems. This approach not only identifies areas for improvement but also provides targeted training to enable

educators to grow in character and foster flourishing school communities. As de Ruyter (2004) asserts, the most distinctive feature of education for flourishing is helping students understand what promotes human flourishing. To achieve this, teachers must first reflect on and cultivate their own understanding of flourishing, both professionally and personally.

Restoring the flourishing of teachers to its central place in education, as Higgins (2011) notes, is the first step in building a virtue ethics of teaching. Before teachers can guide students in exploring the question of what kind of people they want to become, educators themselves must be equipped with the tools to pose and answer these questions for their own lives. The interconnectedness of personal and professional flourishing underscores the need for teacher training that bridges these dimensions.

Moreover, if we accept that student well-being is deeply influenced by the well-being of staff, then advancing the flourishing agenda requires significant reform in teacher training. This is especially crucial in light of the dominance of human capital theory as the prevailing paradigm in education. Breaking away from this narrow framework represents a radical shift, demanding concerted efforts to reorient educators toward virtue-based education. While the degree of teacher preparedness may vary across contexts, the path forward is clear: fostering flourishing communities begins with investing in the character, well-being, and moral growth of teachers.

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Appendix 1: Training program

These are the key components of the training program include:

1. Foundational course on personal character development:

- A series of interactive workshops designed to help teachers reflect on and develop key virtues in their personal and professional lives.
- Sessions will include topics such as self-awareness, resilience, empathy, integrity, and purpose.

2. Practical application and reflection:

- Teachers will engage in real-life applications of character-based principles within their personal and professional contexts.
- Guided reflections will help them connect their experiences with the virtues and principles explored in the course.

3. Close accompaniment and mentorship:

- Teachers will receive ongoing support through one-on-one mentorship or group coaching sessions (beginning with the ambassadors of character).
- Mentors will provide tailored guidance, helping teachers navigate challenges and sustain their commitment to character development.

4. Follow-up and evaluation:

- Periodic check-ins will ensure that teachers are integrating what they learn into their lives effectively.
- Feedback from both teachers and mentors will be collected to evaluate the impact of the program and identify areas for improvement.

Expected Outcomes:

- Enhanced teacher wellbeing, characterized by greater personal satisfaction, emotional resilience, and a sense of purpose.
- Stronger, virtue-based leadership within the school community, contributing to a more positive institutional climate.
- A ripple effect of character education, as teachers embody the virtues they cultivate and inspire others within their communities.

Itinerary

First Stop: Where Are We?

(Initial Diagnosis)

General Objective:

To establish the schools' starting point through diagnostic tools and to introduce the management team and teachers to the principles of character education.

Actions:

1. Diagnostic Surveys:

To assess the current school culture, we will conduct three surveys targeting:

- a. The management team.
- b. Teachers.
- c. Key staff such as deans of discipline, training instructors, and guidance counselors.

Our diagnostic tool, based on a 360° evaluation of school culture, examines the following dimensions:

Character caught: The extent to which character is visible within the school community, reflected in formative relationships and a clear ethos, supported by an intentionally designed, holistic plan addressing all aspects of school life (360° approach).

Character Taught: The integration of character education within the classroom, including the curriculum, teaching and learning strategies, activities, and resources.

Character Sought: The presence of intentionally developed curricular and extracurricular experiences that enable teachers and students to embody virtues and actively serve their community.

Teacher Well-being and Leadership: The degree to which teachers feel valued by both the management team and families, are provided with opportunities for professional and personal growth, and benefit from quality human relationships within the school.

2. Introductory Sessions on Virtue Education and School Culture:

These sessions will provide foundational knowledge for the management team and teachers, emphasizing their roles in character education.

For the Management Team:

Session Title: "Fundamentals of Character Education" (2 hours)

- Introduces the significance of character education and the pivotal role of leadership in this process.
- Covers basic concepts of virtue, character types, and key principles of character education.
- Includes dynamics and trigger questions to engage participants.

- Highlights the importance of "making space" for transformation and identifying potential "character ambassadors" within the school.

For Teachers:

Session Title: "Fundamentals of Character Education" (2 hours)

- Explains the importance of character education for students.
- Introduces general concepts of virtues, values, and character formation, along with practical strategies for integrating them into the classroom.
- Introduces the concept of "character ambassadors," a group of teachers who will actively contribute to the transformation process.

3. Delivery of the Diagnostic Report:

A meeting will be scheduled one month after the surveys are conducted to present the diagnostic report to the management team.

Second Stop: Where Do We Want to Go?

(Setting Targets)

Overall Objective:

To collaborate with the school's management team and "character ambassadors" to set clear objectives and define actionable strategies for achieving them.

Actions:

1. Review of the Diagnostic Report:

Hold a meeting with the management team to review the diagnostic report and its general conclusions.*

2. Formation of a "Character Ambassadors" Team:

Assemble a group of teachers representing each school stage, along with selected members of the management team.

3. Strategic Planning Meeting:

Facilitate a session with the management team and "character ambassadors" to identify focus objectives and outline a clear action plan, integrating CEV's training offerings.

**Note: The management team will disseminate relevant information to teaching staff, parents, and non-teaching staff at their discretion.*

Third Stop: Small Steps, Big Horizons

(Training and Accompaniment)

General Objective:

To implement the action plan by combining the school's initiatives with CEV's guidance and training offerings.

Actions:

1. Regular Meetings with the CEV Team:

Develop a schedule for periodic meetings with "character ambassadors" throughout the year, focusing on:

a. **Core Trainings:** Delivered by the CEV, covering foundational aspects of character education.

b. **Workshops and Guidance:** The CEV team will guide ambassadors in creating and implementing simple, practical character-building initiatives based on the 360° model (See, Think, Act, Well-being, and Teacher Leadership).

These initiatives will be ambassador-driven, leveraging their knowledge of the institution's unique context and fostering ownership of the transformation process.

2. Collaboration Between Ambassadors and Management:

Ambassadors will maintain regular communication with the management team to propose, refine, and finalize their ideas and projects for implementation.

Fourth Step: Enjoying the View and Setting New Challenges

(Re-evaluation)

General Objective:

To evaluate and celebrate achievements while setting new objectives for continuous growth, recognizing that character education is an ongoing journey.

Actions:

1. Conduct a re-evaluation through updated surveys.
2. Organize an on-site visit by the CEV team, including interviews with key stakeholders.
3. Deliver a final report summarizing findings and progress.
4. Host a meeting with the management team and "character ambassadors" to celebrate successes, set new goals, and plan further training.

CEV Training Offer

Introduction to Virtues and Values Training:

Aimed at both the management team and teachers, this introductory training lays the foundation for understanding virtues, values, and character education principles.

Core Training Modules:

These modules are essential for building a culture of character education and are primarily aimed at the management team and "character ambassadors."

1. Character Caught: Keys to Character Education from Leadership:

- Explore practices to foster a culture and ethos that shape student character through leadership and management strategies.
- Discuss steps for personal transformation and institutional change to create a school of character.
- Cover different types of virtues, foundational strategies, and practical initiatives tailored to the school's needs.

2. Character Sought: Inside and Outside the Classroom:

- Examine how schools (mainly in the UK) implement character education.
- Delve into "virtue literacy" and engage in exercises to integrate character education within school activities.

3. Small Steps, Big Horizons: A Catalyst Workshop:

- Participate in a guided, hands-on workshop designed to generate creative solutions and actionable steps for character education initiatives.

4. Challenges and Opportunities for Character Formation at the Leadership Level:

- An exclusive workshop for the management team, focusing on strategic opportunities and potential challenges in fostering character education.