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"The Positive EFL Classroom: How Positive Education can enhance student wellbeing and academic performance in Austrian EFL classrooms"

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1. Introduction

Because of the increasing numbers of mental health problems and alarmingly low levels of wellbeing among children and young adults, there has been an urgent call for more positive and holistic approaches in educational contexts. One such approach is the concept of Positive Education (PE), which can be described as a pedagogic practice that applies the evidence-based research and scientific principles of positive psychology (PP) to educational settings, with the aim to promote students' wellbeing, character development, and academic flourishing (White & Waters 2014). Although positive educational approaches have been around for centuries, the modern PP-based concept of PE was brought to life in 2008 by Martin Seligman, who is also widely considered the father of general PP. Since then, PE has increasingly gained momentum, particularly in anglophone countries like Australia, the United Kingdom, or the United States. In Austria, and the German-speaking world in general, PE is still in its infancy and little is known about its potentials, principles, and practices. This is what the present thesis seeks to change by pursuing three interrelated aims. Firstly, this thesis aims to provide evidence that wellbeing can be taught and that PE interventions (PEIs) have been successful at increasing students' wellbeing and academic performance. Secondly, it aims to explore in how far the needs of Austrian students and the educational aims stated in the Austrian curriculum are compatible with the concept of PE. Thirdly, it aims to suggest concrete and practical ways in which EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers in Austria can incorporate the principles of PE into their lessons to help their students flourish.

This thesis will be divided into five chapters. The first chapter will define and briefly elaborate on three foundational concepts of PE, namely that of 'wellbeing', 'positive psychology', and 'character strengths'. The second chapter will focus more directly on the concept, principles, and development of PE and discuss three key reasons for its need. Chapter three will review studies that examined the effects of PEIs on student wellbeing and academic performance. The fourth chapter will be dedicated to the status quo in Austrian schools in terms of three aspects linked to PE: mental health, the curriculum, and existing PE initiatives and educational programs. Finally, the last chapter will bring all generated insights together by giving concrete and practical suggestions on how the principles of PE can be realized in Austrian EFL classrooms in a way that is both compatible with the curriculum and tailored to the health- and wellbeing-related needs of Austrian students. The thesis will conclude by pointing to limitations of this paper and the general field of PE and by suggesting areas of future research.

2. Foundations of Positive Education

2.1. The theories of wellbeing

One of the central concepts underlying the PE-, and more generally the entire PP movement, is that of 'wellbeing'. Historically, two opposing philosophical approaches to wellbeing have emerged: eudaimonic approaches, on the one hand, and hedonic approaches, on the other (Ryan & Deci 2001). Firstly, eudaimonic approaches date back to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, who declared that "happiness is the meaning and purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence" (*Quotes.net*). 'Happiness' for Aristotle, however, did not refer to pleasure, but was rather concerned with the pursuit of meaning and the cultivation of virtuous practices. In other words, eudaimonic approaches to wellbeing do not advocate a pleasurable life that is full of positive emotions and joyful happiness, but rather a meaningful life with a clear, bigger-than-self purpose. Conversely, hedonic approaches hold that wellbeing is synonymous with pleasure and subjective happiness. Hedonists argue that the goal of life is to maximize positive feelings and minimize suffering and pain (Ryan & Deci 2001). Those two different levels of wellbeing – pleasure and meaning – have also been termed psychological (eudaimonic) wellbeing and subjective (hedonic) wellbeing (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick 2014). Combining those two concepts, Huppert and Johnson defined wellbeing as "the combination of feeling good and doing well" (2010: 264).

A theory that is taking this two-component notion of wellbeing a step further is Seligman's authentic happiness theory (2002b), which essentially claims that happiness is a combination of meaning, engagement, and pleasure. While meaning and pleasure have already been captured by eudaimonic and hedonic notions of wellbeing, engagement constitutes an additional element, which is synonymous with what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has termed 'flow'. Experiencing flow can be described as feeling absorbed in an activity, loosing track of time and place, or being "in the zone" (Csikszentmihalyi 1997).

Finally, the most recent and groundbreaking shift in the understanding of wellbeing occurred in 2011, when Seligman published his fundamental work *Flourish. A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Wellbeing*. There, he presents a revised version of his authentic happiness theory, which he calls 'wellbeing theory'. Wellbeing theory differs from authentic happiness theory mainly in two aspects: Firstly, it contains two more contributing elements, namely 'relationships' and 'accomplishment'. Secondly, 'happiness' is no longer the center piece of the theory, but has been subsumed under the element of 'positive emotions' (Seligman 2011). This new, more comprehensive 5-component wellbeing theory, which has

become known as Seligman's PERMA model, constitutes the wellbeing framework for this thesis. In the following chapter, the elements of the PERMA model and their connection to human flourishing will be outlined.

2.1.1. Seligman's PERMA model

Seligman (2011) conceptualizes wellbeing as an abstract concept that is operationalized by five elements, namely positive emotions (P), engagement (E), positive relationships (R), meaning (M), and accomplishment (A). According to Seligman (2011), each of these elements contributes to wellbeing, is independently measurable, and is pursued for its own sake. Seligman (2011) defines the "gold standard" of wellbeing as 'flourishing', which can be achieved, if all PERMA elements are maximized. Hence, the aim of wellbeing theory, and, according to Seligman, of PP in general, "is to increase the amount of flourishing in [one's] own life and on the planet" by increasing the amount of PERMA (2011: 26).

Positive emotions

Positive emotions refer to pleasant feelings like love, joy, gratitude, hope, serenity, comfort, ecstasy, contentment, pride, pleasure, interest, admiration, satisfaction, or rapture. Although Seligman (2011) argues that the experience of positive emotions is an aim in itself, numerous studies have confirmed that positive emotions also have an instrumental value. For instance, a meta-analysis by Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener (2005) revealed that happiness and success mutually influence each other, in the sense that success does not only make people happier, but that, vice versa, happiness leads to success. According to their findings, happy individuals experience more success at work, have longer lasting friendships, more satisfying marriages, higher incomes, and a better health status than their less happy peers. Furthermore, research conducted by Barbara Fredrickson and colleagues has shown that positive emotions increase psychological and physical health, facilitate optimal performance and successful relationships, enhance resilience and coping skills, and even reduce the harmful effects of negative emotions on the cardiovascular system (Fredrickson 1998; Fredrickson 2001; Fredrickson & Joiner 2002; Fredrickson & Levenson 1998; Fredrickson et al. 2000).

Engagement

Engagement, as Seligman (2011) understands it, is synonymous with 'flow', which was first described by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1975a, 1975b). Flow has been defined as a subjective state characterized by loss of reflective self-consciousness, absorption in an activity, temporal distortion, and intense concentration, or simply an "optimal state of experience"

(Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi 1992: 3). Flow is an active, autotelic, and intrinsically motivating state that typically occurs during activities that are characterized by an optimal balance between challenge and skill (Bakker et al. 2011). Although flow is not tied to a specific outcome, it has been associated with peak performance in a variety of sports, including soccer, tennis, diving, rock climbing, gymnastics, swimming, golf, and cross-country running (Bakker et al. 2011; Jackson & Roberts 1992; Jackson et al. 2001; Kowal & Fortier 1999).

Positive relationships

The third element of Seligman's PERMA model is that of 'relationships'. However, since relationships exist on a quality spectrum ranging from toxic and corrosive to enriching and energizing (Dutton & Ragins 2007), it should be emphasized that Seligman considers only positive relationships as contributors to wellbeing.

A sense of relatedness has long been regarded as a basic human need that, when not met, can lead to serious psychological and physiological disorders, and even increased mortality (Steptoe et al. 2013). In their self-determination theory, for instance, Deci and Ryan (2008) argue that humans have three core psychological needs that are essential to wellbeing: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Similarly, Baumeister and Leary formulate their belongingness hypothesis as follows: "[H]uman beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships" (1995: 497). Their research shows that the presence of relationships is positively associated with happiness, wellbeing, life satisfaction, and physical health, while their absence is connected to unhappiness, negative affect, depression, anxiety, jealousy, loneliness, and suicide.

More recently, Jane Dutton and colleagues have explored the nature and value of so-called 'high-quality connections', which can range from a positive 5-minute conversation with a co-worker to a long-term relationship with a friend or family member (Dutton & Heaphy 2003). Engaging in high-quality connections reduces systolic blood pressure and releases oxytocin (often referred to as the "cuddle-hormone") into the interlocutors' bodies. This results in an increase in positive emotions, and makes the interlocutors feel more alive, known, and loved (Dutton & Heaphy 2003). High-quality connections can, for instance, be facilitated by a practice called 'active-constructive responding' (Gable et al. 2004), which will be explored in a later chapter.

Meaning

Seligman et al. define meaning as "knowing what your highest strengths are, and then using them to belong to and serve something you believe is larger than the self" (2009: 296). In other

words, a meaningful life has a purpose beyond that of the individual, be it in the form of abstract values, a religious group, a political party, or one's family (Seligman 2011). Research has shown that individuals who are able to name a larger-than-self purpose, experience higher levels of wellbeing than those with no clear, or only a self-centered purpose (Bundick 2009). Additionally, Peterson, Park, and Seligman (2005) found that people pursuing a meaningful, as opposed to a pleasurable life, report higher levels of overall life satisfaction than their pleasure-seeking counterparts. This is particularly interesting, since the pursuit of meaning is often connected to negative emotions like frustration or distress, which shows that positive emotions – while certainly important for happiness – are often overestimated as contributors to wellbeing.

Accomplishment

Setting and achieving one's goals is an undeniably vital part of wellbeing. While for some, accomplishment is a means to increased positive emotions like pride or satisfaction, others view accomplishment as an end in itself (Seligman 2011). In terms of the link between accomplishment and satisfaction, it seems that not all goals equally promote wellbeing (Ryan & Deci 2000). Reviewing numerous studies on goal attainment, Ryan and Deci (2000) conclude that only those goals that satisfy all three core psychological needs (i.e. the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness) have lasting effects on one's wellbeing. In other words, only goals that have been set autonomously, that one feels competent in, and that are somehow related to other people, increase happiness in the long run. Furthermore, research has found that the pursuit of intrinsic aspirations (e.g., personal growth or affiliation) is much more predictive of wellbeing than that of extrinsic aspirations (e.g., material goods, wealth, or fame) (Kasser & Ryan 1993, 1996; Ryan et al. 1999; Sheldon & Kasser 1998). Finally, studies have found that the link between accomplishment and wellbeing is bidirectional, in the sense that experiencing success has a positive effect on wellbeing, while wellbeing, in turn, is positively associated with success in a variety of domains like work, academia, and relationships (Lyubomirsky, King & Diener 2005). A similar reciprocal relationship is assumed between accomplishment and self-esteem, both of which have been linked to happiness (Baumeister et al. 2003; Ben-Shahar 2011).

2.2. The concept of Positive Psychology (PP)

The term 'positive psychology' was introduced in 1954 by the humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow, and later taken up again by Martin Seligman in the 1990s. PP is a subdiscipline of psychology which studies "the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions" (Gable & Haidt 2005:

104). PP has also been defined as "the scientific study of virtue, meaning, resilience, and wellbeing, as well as evidence-based applications to improve the life of individuals and society in the totality of life" (Wong 2011: 72). What both definitions have in common, is the acknowledgement of the three pillars of PP, namely those of (1) positive subjective experiences, (2) positive individual characteristics, and (3) positive institutions and communities (Seligman 2002b). The following two subchapters will outline the development and cornerstones of PP, thereby differentiating it from related disciplines such as humanistic psychology and debunking common misconceptions.

2.2.1. The development of PP

Although Martin Seligman is commonly recognized as the father of PP, the idea that happiness is an end in itself, the pursuit of which is a lifelong goal, has been around for centuries, even millennia. The first known great thinker who articulated this belief was Aristotle, who lived from 384-322 BC and whose ideas continue to shape people's understanding of the world. In Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle famously proposed that "happiness is the meaning and purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence" (*Quotes.net*). More than 2000 years later, William James, who is widely regarded as the founder of modern, scientific psychology, wrote: "If we were to ask the question: 'What is human life's chief concern?' one of the answers we should receive would be: 'It is happiness.' How to gain, how to keep, how to recover happiness, is in fact for most men at all times the secret motive of all they do" (James 1958). Finally, on the other side of the globe and in an entirely different cultural setting, the Dalai Lama stated: "I believe the very purpose of our life is to seek happiness. Whether one believes in religion or not, […] we are all seeking something better in life. So, I think, the very motion of our life is towards happiness" (Dalai Lama & Cutler 2009). In short, it can be said that the concept of happiness as an end in itself has been around since the earliest beginnings of philosophy and has continued to attract people in various different ages and cultures.

More recently, this idea was advocated by the humanistic psychology movement (Froh 2004). Positive psychologists have borrowed many of their foundational concepts and research interests from humanistic psychologists like Abraham Maslow or Carl Rogers, who are often considered the "grandparents" of PP. Maslow (1954) even coined the term 'Positive Psychology' in his fundamental work *Motivation and Psychology*. Humanistic psychology is often referred to as the "third force" of psychology, which developed in reaction to behaviorism and psychoanalysis (Maslow 1968). Humanistic psychologists rejected the idea that people were primarily the product of their environment or unconscious forces and instead proposed

that human beings possess dignity, freedom, and values (Waterman 2013). According to the humanistic paradigm, people strive for self-expression, personal growth, and a meaningful life, which they aim to achieve by actively participating in their environment, exercising their freedom, and taking responsibility for their actions (Misiak & Sexton 1966). Although it offered some promising new ideas, humanistic psychology was not able to fully establish itself as a recognized psychological discipline and eventually morphed into various new age and self-help movements (Ben-Shahar 2011). An explanation for this unfortunate development could be that humanistic psychology relied mainly on qualitative research methods and was thus not able to produce statistically relevant data to support its theories and concepts (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000). This is also the main distinguishing feature of modern PP: Although both humanistic psychology and PP are interested in similar topics and psychological phenomena (e.g., empathy, values, kindness, or optimism), only PP is grounded in evidence-based research and scientific rigor (Waterman 2013).

The year 1998 is often regarded as the year of birth of modern PP, when Martin Seligman was elected president of the American Psychological Association. In his often-cited presidential address, Seligman (1998) called attention to the three missions of psychology, two of which had so far largely been neglected. The three missions were (1) to heal people with mental illness, (2) to build human strengths and make people's lives more fulfilling, and (3) to help people live up to their potential by identifying and nurturing high talent. Seligman noted that while psychology had done an excellent job in understanding and curing mental illness, the second and third mission had mostly been left unexamined. In other words, psychology knew a lot about how to make miserable people less miserable, but little about how to increase people's wellbeing beyond neutral. This rather negative lens of psychology was also reflected in psychological research, as a study by Myers and Diener (1997) revealed. They reviewed published psychological journal articles between 1967 and 1995 and coded the abstracts according to their research topic. They found that the ratio between articles dealing with positive psychological phenomena (e.g., joy or life satisfaction) and articles investigating negative phenomena (e.g., anger or depression) was 1:21.

A possible explanation for the traditionally negative focus of psychology could be the so-called 'negativity bias' that is believed to be inherent in the human species (Rozin & Royzman 2001). The negativity bias has an evolutionary root and can be traced back to the earliest stages of human development, when identifying and minimizing threats was crucial for people's survival (Baumeister et al. 2001). It is assumed that those primeval men and women who were permanently looking for signs of imminent danger eventually survived and passed their brains

onto the next generation (Rozin & Royzman 2001). However, while a negative focus may have been life-saving in times of sabre-tooth tigers and constant food insecurities, it does not really serve 21st century men and women any longer. On the contrary, it tends to narrow people's attention and often leads to an unintentional blindness for the positive aspects of life (Baumeister et al. 2001). For instance, a fascinating study by Baumeister et al. (2001) showed that humans are much more sensitive to negative than to positive information and process it in much greater depth (e.g., negative feedback). They also found that people are much more likely to view negatively evaluated acts by others as indicators of their personality than positively evaluated ones. Finally, their study discovered that negative stereotypes are formed much faster and are harder to overcome than positive ones.

For those reasons, PP calls for broadening the focus of psychological research to include more positive aspects of life (Gable & Haidt 2005). In Seligman's and Csikszentmihalyi's words, "the aim of positive psychology is to begin to catalyze a change in the focus of psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities" (2000: 5). In order to achieve this goal, PP took up hitherto neglected or understudied research areas, which broadly fall into three categories: Positive subjective experiences, positive individual characteristics, and positive institutions and communities (Seligman 2002b). Positive subjective experiences include issues such as laughter, savoring, awe, or exposure to green spaces. Studies concerned with positive individual characteristics are interested in human strengths and virtues such as love, forgiveness, courage, humor, or creativity. Finally, research into positive institutions and communities investigates positive deviance in organizations and aims to identify the practices, attitudes, and factors that help them flourish (Roberts 2006).

In terms of the goals and future directions of PP, one can say that it aims to increase the amount of flourishing in the world by studying the factors that foster resilience, build strengths, and lead to optimal performance (Gable & Haidt 2005). However, the ultimate long-term goal of PP – as surprising at it may sound – is to cease to exist (Gable & Haidt 2005). This is because PP will become obsolete, if it is successful in balancing out the negative-positive ratio of psychological research (Gable & Haidt 2005). In other words, the eventual aim of PP is to synthesize traditional, mainstream psychology with the science and generated insights of PP to create a discipline that is "just as concerned with building strength as with repairing damage" (Seligman 2004).

2.2.2. Three common misconceptions

There are three widely held misconceptions about PP: Firstly, that PP is a non-scientific self-help movement; secondly, that PP is a happiology; and thirdly, that PP ignores the negative. As for the first misconception, it can be said that it is an ongoing mission of PP to defy the self-help label that many have attached to it (Snyder & Lopez 2009). In fact, many researchers who identify themselves as positive psychologists harshly criticize the ever-growing self-help movement for not backing up their claims with scientific evidence and for spreading half-truths that are ineffective at best, and harmful at worst (Wiseman 2009). PP has received this unfavorable reputation due to some undeniable similarities between PP literature and typical self-help books: Both are deeply invested in enhancing people's wellbeing and performance, want to uncover unused potential, and usually address the power of optimistic thinking. Yet, although PP and the self-help movement may share similar research interests and aims, their strategies to pursue them differ greatly (Snyder & Lopez 2009). While most self-help books are at best based on anecdotal evidence of some self-help gurus, PP is grounded in evidence-based research and scientific rigor. PP follows the same research principles as "mainstream" psychology and studies psychological phenomena in randomized, placebo-controlled studies. It should also be mentioned that – in contrast to the self-help industry – PP publishes in renowned, scientific journals such as the *Psychological Bulletin*, and has published many handbooks and edited volumes, for instance, the *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (Snyder & Lopez 2009). Finally, a growing number of universities all around the world offer courses and degrees in PP. In short, although both PP and the self-help movement want to help people flourish, only PP draws on scientific evidence to support its claims and suggestions.

Secondly, while it is true that PP is *also* a happiology (i.e. the study of happiness) it is a misconception that PP only studies the 'what' and 'how' of happiness (Hart & Sasso 2011). PP studies the factors that allow humans and organizations to flourish and live a meaningful life. Although happy feelings like 'joy' or 'pleasure' are certainly one aspect of flourishing, PP goes far beyond feel-good emotions to uncover flourishing in all its diverse shapes and forms. For instance, PP also studies psychological phenomena like resilience, post-traumatic growth, and optimism, all of which are much more than a smiley face. Furthermore, if PP was only a happiology, it would miss out on some crucial aspects of what makes life worth living, such as engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, to name but a few (Seligman 2011). Finally, PP is not only a happiology, because it fully acknowledges that negative emotions are an integral part of a fulfilling life, and that distress, pain, and suffering are inevitable parts of being human (Seligman 2011).

The third and probably most widely held misconception about PP is that it advocates a Pollyannaish view of the world and chooses to ignore everything that is negative (Hart & Sasso 2011). This conception is unjustified for two main reasons: Firstly, because PP does not neglect negative psychological phenomena, but simply takes a look at the other side of the coin. In that way, it seeks to gain a more complete understanding of the human psyche "that recognizes human strengths as clearly as it does human frailties and that specifies how the two are linked" (Gable & Haidt 2005: 109). In other words, PP was never meant to replace mainstream psychology, but rather to complement it. For instance, PP studies a phenomenon called post-traumatic growth, which can occur after the same traumata that can also cause post-traumatic stress disorder (Calhoun & Tedeschi 2006). While traditional psychology focuses on ways to reduce post-traumatic stress disorder (deficit-oriented approach), PP studies the resilience factors that lead to post-traumatic growth and aims to instill them in the general population (resource-oriented approach). This example clearly illustrates that the agendas of both traditional psychology (cure illness) and PP (promote wellbeing) are legitimate and indispensable for general societal health (Gable & Haidt 2005).

The second reason why it is a misconception that PP neglects the negative is that PP can present an antidote to various mental illnesses, thereby possibly curing the very thing they are alleged to ignore. It is theorized that by increasing their wellbeing, people are able to build up a "psychological immune system", which enhances their resilience (Ben-Shahar 2011). Research has also shown that character strengths like courage, optimism, hope, or self-control (which are fostered by many PEIs) can "act as buffers against mental illness" (Seligman 2002b: 5; Taylor et al. 2000). Finally, several studies have confirmed that PP interventions can be an effective treatment for people with diagnosed depression. Some popular intervention strategies that have been successfully used to reduce symptoms of depression are fostering coping skills and resiliency (Santos et al. 2013), increasing positive emotions (Seligman, Rashid & Parks 2006; Wood et al. 2008), creating a meaningful life (Gander, Proyer & Ruch 2016; Ho, Yeung & Kwok 2014), and strengthening patients' social support networks (McWhirter, Nelson & Waldo 2014; Sin, Della Porta & Lyubomirsky 2011).

2.3. Character strengths and virtues

The development of students' character strengths lies at the heart of PE. Although there are a couple of recognized strengths models (e.g., the Clifton StrengthsFinder® 2.0 developed by the Gallup Organization (Buckingham & Clifton 2001) or the Strengths Profile developed by the Center of Applied Positive Psychology (Linley 2008)), the strengths model typically used in

PE contexts is the Values-in-Action (VIA) Inventory, which was developed by Peterson and Seligman in 2004. The VIA approach is based on Peterson and Seligman's ground-breaking work *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook* and *Classification*, which can be regarded as a positive counterbalance to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. While the latter is used in traditional psychology as a diagnostic tool for psychopathological states such as depression or anxiety disorder, the former embraces the spirit of PP, as it classifies 24 universal character strengths (e.g., curiosity, kindness, or hope) that are hierarchically related to one of six abstract core virtues (wisdom, courage, humanity, transcendence, justice, temperance), which have been found to be valued and endorsed both historically and cross-culturally (Dahlsgaard, Peterson & Seligman 2005; Shimai et al. 2006). For an illustration of the VIA character strengths and virtues, see figure 1 (Positive Psychology Program 2016).

Figure 1 VIA character strengths and virtues

Within the VIA framework, strengths are defined as "personality traits that characterise the positive and socially valued functioning of the individual" (McGrath 2017: 1). While every human being is conceptualized as possessing all 24 character strengths, not all of them are equally developed, so that every person has a range of 'signature strengths' that characterize their personality. Since character strengths are conceptualized as malleable, instead of fixed, PE aims to help students identify, utilize, and develop their strengths to increase their wellbeing, performance, and life satisfaction (Biswas-Diener, Kashdan & Lyubchik 2016).

It goes without saying that all 24 character strengths are crucial for human flourishing; yet, there are at least four of them that are especially important for educational contexts, since they have been shown to have particularly favourable effects on students' learning, wellbeing, and academic success: Curiosity, hope, perseverance, and self-regulation. Fortunately, each of them

is conceptualized as malleable and can thus be fostered through appropriate practice and learning environments. In the following, a definition and summary of the key findings for each of the four mentioned character strengths will be presented, along with suggestions for fostering these strengths in students.

2.3.1. Curiosity

The concept of curiosity is related to the concepts of "interest, novelty-seeking, and openness to experience", and can be defined as "one's intrinsic desire for experience and knowledge" Peterson & Seligman 2004: 125). Like all character strengths, curiosity is experienced by all human beings, however, to varying extents, durations, and intensities. Individuals high in curiosity ask a lot of questions, are eager to explore foreign objects, events, or other phenomena, and do not shy away from challenging long-held beliefs. Furthermore, they are not afraid to admit a lack of knowledge in certain areas, are easily fascinated by all different kinds of subjects, and tend to consider themselves as lifelong learners (Peterson & Seligman 2004).

Several studies have revealed that curiosity predicts both academic performance and wellbeing. For instance, in terms of wellbeing, Peterson et al. (2007) found that curiosity, along with love, zest, and hope, highly correlates with people's levels of engagement, happiness, and life satisfaction. Similar results were obtained by Park, Peterson and Seligman (2004), who showed that among all VIA character strengths, curiosity, hope, zest, gratitude, and love were strongest associated with wellbeing. Concerning academic performance, an intriguing, longitudinal study was conducted by Yost (1967), in which he observed the predictive force of curiosity for academic success. He discovered that levels of curiosity in fourth-grade students predicted their academic success two years later, so that individuals high in curiosity would outperform their less curious peers. Curiosity has even been declared one of the three main pillars of academic success, besides intelligence and effort (Von Stumm, Hell, and Chamorro-Premuzic 2011).

Even though most people would agree that it is easier to learn something one is interested in, little was known about the science behind this phenomenon until 2014. To investigate if and why this was truly the case, researchers at the University of California conducted a series of fascinating studies in which they observed the impact of curiosity on neural functions (Gruber, Gelman & Ranganath 2014). According to their findings, curiosity facilitates learning, because it triggers an anticipatory activity in people's nucleus accumbens, hippocampus and midbrain. In other words, it prepares parts of the brain for learning and thus increases memory and retention. Additionally, they showed that curiosity stimulates the pleasure- and reward centers of the brain and thus makes learning an intrinsically rewarding experience.

In his book *Why don't students like school*, cognitive scientist Daniel Willingham (2009) suggests that teachers can increase their students' curiosity by encouraging them to ask questions ("There are no dumb questions"), and by making topics and exercises personally relevant to them. Moreover, teachers can spark students' curiosity about a topic by getting them involved with meaningful questions, instead of immediately providing them with answers (Willingham 2009).

2.3.2. Hope

The concept of hope is closely related to those of optimism and future-mindedness and has been defined as "the process of thinking about one's goals, along with the motivation to move toward those goals (agency) and the ways to achieve those goals (pathways)" (Snyder 1995: 355). Hopeful people tend to have high expectations for the future, trust in their ability to affect future events, have a great sense of self-efficacy and agency, and work hard toward their goals (Peterson & Seligman 2004).

Many studies have produced promising findings concerning the connection between hope and academic success and/or wellbeing. Ciarrochi, Heaven, and Davies (2007), for instance, conducted a longitudinal study to observe the impact of hope, self-esteem, and attributional styles on academic success and wellbeing among 784 high-school students. Their results showed that hope was the best predictor of students' academic performance and wellbeing. In particular, high levels of hope were strongly associated with better future high school grades and higher future levels of positive emotions. Other studies have shown that a sense of hope is positively correlated with children's levels of self-esteem, perceived competence, mental health, and life satisfaction (Waters 2011). In terms of physical and psychological health, Park and Peterson (2009a) demonstrated that hope can act as an effective buffer against the harmful effects of chronic distress and trauma, thereby possibly facilitating post-traumatic growth. Giltay et al. (2004) even concluded that people high in optimism and hope have a significantly lower risk of dying from a heart attack than pessimists, even when adjusted for various risk factors like smoking, chronic diseases, alcohol consumption, or cholesterol level. Finally, in terms of academic performance, hope was found to be a strong predictor of academic success and grade-point average in middle school- and college students, even when controlled for IQ (Gilman, Dooley & Florell 2006; Park & Peterson 2009a; Park & Peterson 2009b; Waters 2011). In addition to that, highly hopeful students display better problem-solving abilities (Chang 1998), have lower high-school drop-out rates (Worrell & Hale 2001), and are more likely to graduate from college (Snyder et al. 2002). For these reasons, Toner et al. have argued

that "the explicit teaching of [hope] should be considered a pivotal element in any intervention aimed at enhancing happiness and life satisfaction in youth" (2012: 641).

Some examples of evidence-based strategies that teachers can employ to foster their students' sense of hope are (1) breaking down long-term goals into easier achievable short-term goals, (2) encouraging students to view obstacles as opportunities for growth instead of evidence of failure, (3) discussing inspiring, but realistic success stories in class, whereby the protagonist has to face setbacks and challenges before eventually reaching their goals, and (4) encouraging students to formulate approach-goals instead of avoidance-goals (Snyder et al. 1997, 2000, 2005).

2.3.3. Perseverance

The character strength of perseverance is a non-cognitive trait that is conceptually similar to those of diligence, conscientiousness, hardiness, and industriousness (Peterson & Seligman 2004). Individuals high in perseverance do not give up easily, sustain their effort over long periods of time, and tend to finish whatever they start. They stay focused on the task at hand, always keep their aims in mind, do not get distracted easily, and experience a sense of satisfaction when they complete a task (Peterson & Seligman 2004). More importantly, persevering people continue to work hard toward their goals even in the face of failure or setbacks, and do not throw in the towel when things get tough. Numerous studies have shown that the character strengths of perseverance, conceptualized as persistence and hard work, can account for significant amounts of variance in students' academic performance and grade-point average above and beyond IQ (e.g., O'Connor & Paunonen, 2007; Park & Peterson 2009a; Park & Peterson 2009b; Poropat, 2009; Trapmann et al. 2007; Waters 2011).

In terms of a conceptual overlap between perseverance and similar strengths, one construct that is worth mentioning is that of 'grit'. It was coined by Angela Duckworth and has been defined as "perseverance and passion for long-term goals" (Duckworth et al. 2007: 1087). Grit consists of two elements: perseverance of effort, on the one hand, and consistency of interest, on the other (Duckworth et al. 2007). Many studies have suggested that grit is a key predictor of long-term success, independent of talent or intelligence (Duckworth et al. 2007). Although the concept of grit has received considerable positive attention, more recent research has indicated that only the 'perseverance of effort' facet is a strong predictor of performance; not, however, the 'consistency of interest' facet (Credé, Tynan & Harms 2016; Datu, Valdez, and King 2016). Once again, these results highlight the relevance of perseverance to academic success.

Teachers can increase their students' levels of perseverance by encouraging them to set goals that are in line with their values and interests (Duckworth 2016), and that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely – in short, S.M.A.R.T. (Conzemius & O'Neill 2006). Besides, perseverance can be enhanced by teaching students to interpret failures as learning opportunities and fostering students' growth-mindsets (Dweck 2017). Finally, surrounding oneself with people or role-models that have demonstrated perseverance in challenging times can also have a contagious effect on one's own perseverance (Peterson & Seligman 2004).

2.3.4. Self-regulation

Self-regulation is often used interchangeably with 'self-control' and can be defined as an individual's ability to regulate their feelings, behaviors and actions (Baumeister & Vohs 2007). People high in self-regulation are very disciplined and capable of managing their appetites, desires, and emotions (Peterson & Seligman 2004). Self-regulation is often metaphorically compared to a muscle that can grow stronger if regularly trained, but will also get fatigued after extensive use (Muraven & Baumeister 2000). It is hypothesized that self-control is a limited resource which is accessed every time a conscious, self-regulatory process is taking place (Baumeister & Vohs 2007; Muraven & Baumeister 2000). Although the self-control energy store automatically recharges itself over time (e.g., during sleep), it can become depleted after many self-control efforts, such as making decisions, resisting temptations, regulating emotions, or keeping oneself motivated at work (Muraven & Baumeister 2000).

Self-regulation is strongly correlated with a range of desirable outcomes, such as academic success, mental and physical health, interpersonal success, and workplace performance (Baumeister, Heatherton & Tice 1994; Boals, Van Dellen & Banks 2011; Duckworth & Gross 2014; Duckworth & Seligman 2005; Mischel, Shoda & Peake 1988; Tangney, Baumeister & Boone 2004; Wolfe & Johnson 1995). Furthermore, in the famous 'Stanford marshmallow experiments', Walter Mischel and colleagues could show that pre-schoolers' levels of self-control predicted their grade-point averages, health, resilience, organizational and interpersonal skills, and risk behaviors more than 10 years later (Mischel & Ayduk 2004; Mischel, Ebbesen & Raskoff-Zeiss 1972; Mischel, Shoda & Rodriguez 1989).

Teachers can improve their students' levels of self-regulation by teaching them emotion regulation skills and techniques, so that students can learn to control their emotions, instead of being controlled by them. Teachers can also encourage students to tackle more challenging

tasks at the beginning of the day, while saving less exhausting ones for the evening, when self-control resources are already relatively depleted (Baumeister & Vohs 2016).

3. The concept of Positive Education (PE)

The concept of PE can be described as a pedagogic practice that applies the evidence-based research and scientific principles of PP to educational settings, with the aim to promote students' wellbeing, character development, and academic flourishing (Seligman et al. 2009; White & Waters 2014). PE has also been defined as "an umbrella term used to describe empirically validated interventions and programs from positive psychology that have an impact on student well-being" (White & Murray 2015: 65).

PE can be understood as a reaction to current approaches to education, which predominantly focus on students' intellectual, academic, and cognitive qualities (Slemp et al. 2017). PE, in contrast, is a more holistic approach, as it incorporates "education for both traditional skills and for happiness" (Seligman et al. 2009: 293). From a PE perspective, the "DNA of education" is thus conceptualized as a "double helix with intertwined strands of equal importance", namely academic skills, on the one hand, and character and wellbeing, on the other (IPEN). Those two strands are interdependent and mutually influence each other, in the sense that academic accomplishment enhances wellbeing through increased meaning, engagement, and sense of competence, while wellbeing facilitates excellent performance and academic achievement (IPEN). In addition, PE is a resource-oriented approach (instead of a deficit-oriented one), since it focuses on fostering the existing strengths in humans and organizations, rather than fixing their weaknesses (White & Murray 2015). Closely linked to this aspect of PE is its proactive orientation, which distinguishes it from traditional reactive wellbeing interventions (Slemp 2017b). While proactive approaches aim at preventing negative states or events before they occur (e.g., depression, addiction, anti-social behavior), reactive approaches are elimination-focused and respond to negative states and events after they have occurred (e.g., anti-bullying programs or quit-smoking campaigns). Hence, by teaching wellbeing and improving students' character strengths, PE aims to make students more resilient and thus prevent future psychological problems (Chaves & Tamés 2017).

To summarize, it can be said that PE is a proactive, resource-oriented, and holistic approach to education that draws on evidence-based PP research to help all students develop their full potential and flourish both intellectually and psychologically (Oades et al. 2011).

3.1. Why PE is needed

Seligman et al. (2009) state three key reasons for embracing PE and making wellbeing a central concern of the curriculum: Firstly, it presents an antidote to depression and other mental illnesses; secondly, it has the potential to raise people's overall life satisfaction; and thirdly, it is likely to promote learning and make people more creative.

To begin with, PE can potentially counter the current flow of psychological problems among young people and prevent future mental health issues (White & Murray 2015). Several international studies have reported concerning findings about alarmingly low levels of wellbeing (Adlat et al. 2001; Cooke et al. 2006), the prevalence of depression (Lewinsohn et al. 1993), and other mental health issues among children and young adults (Seligman et al. 2009). Young people increasingly suffer from dangerous levels of psychological distress (Casey & Liang 2014; Larcombe et al. 2014), which has been linked to increased alcohol and drug consumption (Okoro et al. 2014; Tice, Bratslavsky & Baumeister 2001), poorer general health (Vaez & Laflamme 2002), and lower academic performance (Stallman 2008). PE aims to fight depression rates among young people by equipping them with the skills and tools needed to develop resilience and increase their mental and physical wellbeing. For instance, several core components of PE, such as positive emotions, engagement, and meaning have been found to significantly decrease symptoms of depression (Seligman et al. 2009).

Secondly, the teaching of wellbeing skills has the potential to increase people's overall life satisfaction (Seligman et al. 2009). Several studies have found that while standards of living have continuously improved over the past 50 years (e.g., through better education, higher purchasing power, more safety), life satisfaction has not (Diener et al. 1999). This can be explained by a phenomenon often referred to as 'hedonic adaption' or 'hedonic treadmill', first discovered by Brickman and colleagues in the 1970s. In their study entitled "Lottery Winners and Accident Victims: Is Happiness Relative?" they examined the impact of extremely positive and negative life events on people's levels of happiness (Brickman, Coates & Janoff-Bulman 1978). Relatively unsurprisingly, they found that shortly after the respective events, happiness levels of lottery winners skyrocketed, while those of paraplegics plummeted. However, after a couple of months, an astonishing phenomenon was observed: The happiness levels of both groups eventually went back to their initial base level, so that the differences in happiness between the lottery winners and accident victims vanished. Brickman, Coates, and Janoff-Bulman (1978) concluded that even extreme, external circumstances have very little to no long-term effects on people's levels of wellbeing and that the process of hedonic adaption is

responsible for this phenomenon. Therefore, hedonic adaption can be defined as "the psychological process by which people become accustomed to a positive or negative stimulus, such that the emotional effects of that stimulus are attenuated over time" (Lyubomirsky 2011: 201). The hedonic treadmill effect has since been replicated numerous times (e.g., Frederick & Loewenstein 1999; Fujita & Diener 2005) and has led researchers to conclude that happiness and wellbeing are predominantly influenced by people's subjective interpretations of the world, rather than their wealth, objective health status, or material possessions (Ben-Shahar 2011; Lyubomirsky 2008; Lyubomirsky 2011). The realization that external factors (e.g., money, environment, or the weather) can account for some (approximately 15%), but by far not all variance in life satisfaction (Diener et al. 1999) justifies the teaching of wellbeing skills, if the aim is to make people more satisfied and happy with their lives. This assumption has been verified by dozens of studies that investigated the effects of PP practices on people's wellbeing and life satisfaction (e.g., Peterson, Park & Seligman 2005; Seligman et al. 2005; Waters 2011).

Finally, educators should also make students' wellbeing a central concern, since it has been shown to have favorable effects on students' learning outcomes and academic performance (Seligman et al. 2009). For instance, positive affect leads to more creative thinking (Estrada, Isen & Young 1994), more holistic thinking (Isen, Niedenthal & Cantor 1992), and a broader attention (Rowe, Hirsh & Anderson 2007), while negative emotions have been linked to a narrow focus of attention (Bolte, Goschke & Kuhl 2003) and increased analytical thinking (Kuhl 2000). While the latter is also of benefit in certain situations, there is definitely a lack of divergent or creative thinking in current school settings, which has given rise to concerns about a "creativity crisis" in the today's youth (Ness 2015). Other studies have found that happy young people will eventually earn more than their less happy peers (Diener et al. 2002), and that emotional wellbeing increases educational performance and development (Waters 2011). Finally, happy students tend to have higher grade-point averages, fewer absences, higher levels of conscientiousness, and a greater desire to continue their education (Oishi, Diener & Lucas 2007). In short, if teachers and educational policy makers want students to not only be well, but also to perform well, the skills of happiness need to become an integral part of the curriculum.

3.2. The development of PE

The development of the contemporary PP-based concept of PE can best be understood as evolving out of a more general paradigm shift toward positive scholarship in a variety of disciplines, including psychology, organization science, and medicine (Roberts 2006). Intrigued by the promising findings of general PP, scholars in a wide range of fields started to

apply the science of PP to their research areas, to see whether they could yield similarly positive results. One area that seemed particularly suitable for the concepts of PP was the educational context, and it was Seligman himself who took the opportunity in 2008 to transform an entire school according to the principles of PP (Seligman et al. 2009). This was the moment when the modern concept of PE was born.

However, just like the development of PP can be traced back to humanistic psychological approaches, PE – in its wider notion – was certainly around long before 2008. For instance, the concept of character education was already advocated more than 2000 years ago by the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle in his fundamental work 'Nicomachean Ethics' (2000) (Ladikos 2010). There, he claims that human beings can only be educated to virtue, if they cultivate a virtuous character and thereby develop 'phronesis', which can be translated as 'practical wisdom'. A person characterized by phronesis – a phronimus – is somebody with a virtuous character, who can intuitively distinguish virtue from vice and performs virtuous acts without conscious effort (Aristotle 2000). Recently, Aristotle's ancient concept of moral character education has received renewed attention and has experienced a form of revitalization in modern educational contexts (e.g., Kristjansson 2015).

Another prominent advocate of the importance of character education was Wilhelm von Humboldt, who lived from 1767-1853 and is widely considered one of the founding fathers of modern education. His educational model is grounded in the ideas of the Enlightenment, which emphasized the importance of rationality, autonomy, and reason for human progress. For Humboldt, the purpose of education was not only to provide students with scientific knowledge and professional skills, but also to develop their character and raise them to become autonomous and responsible citizens. In Humboldt's words, "[t]here are undeniably certain kinds of knowledge that must be of a general nature and, more importantly, a certain cultivation of the mind and character that nobody can afford to be without" (Von Humboldt 1964: 218).

In the following, two more recent examples of "lived" PE will be discussed. The first one tells the inspiring story of Marva Collins, an educational activist and high school teacher in mid-twentieth century Chicago, who adopted a PE-approach, decades before Martin Seligman's pioneering PP research. The second one describes the transformation of the commonly referenced "birthplace" of modern PE: Geelong Grammar School in Victoria, Australia.

3.2.1. Marva Collins

Marva Collins was born and raised in Monroeville, Alabama, in the heart of the still heavily segregated American South, as the daughter of a Native-American mother and African-

American father. Despite her ethnic background and gender, she managed to graduate from Clark College in 1957 with a degree in secretarial sciences. She worked as a secretary for several years, before eventually moving to Illinois to take a position as substitute teacher in the public-school system of inner-city Chicago. At that time, Chicago was still characterized by crime, drugs, and hopelessness, which was why schools often saw it as their main purpose to keep students in school as long as possible to prevent them from joining street gangs too early in their lives. Marva Collins had different ambitions. Soon after she had started working, dramatic effects on her students' performance could be observed. Students who had been declared "unteachable" showed remarkable improvements in their academic achievement and test scores. Instead of merely preventing them from ending up on the street, Marva Collins transformed her students' lives and gave them hope and aspirations for their future. After almost 14 years of working as a public-school teacher, she eventually quit her job, since she was frustrated and annoyed by her fellow colleagues' attitudes toward teaching (Collins & Tamarkin 1982).

In 1975, she took $5,000 of her retirement fund and used it to establish her own low-cost private school – Westside Preparatory School – with the help of her husband. The school was located on the second floor of Marva Collins's home and started with only four elementary school children, one of them being her own daughter. Her students were primarily African-American, public-school dropouts who had been considered "hopeless cases" by their parents or former teachers. However, once again, Marva Collins's way of teaching and educating had a dramatic effect on her students' academic development. The majority of them graduated from high school and even went on to college to become lawyers, doctors, and teachers (Collins & Tamarkin 1982).

It did not take very long until a journalist got wind of Marva Collins and her school and published a newspaper article outlining her success story and teaching methods. From then onward, Collins attracted increased public attention and even appeared on the CBS television program *60 minutes* in 1979. In November 1980, she received a job offer from Ronald Reagan, then president of the United States, for the position of secretary of education. She politely turned it down, not wanting to give up her students and teaching profession. Approximately eight years later, George W. H. Bush repeated Reagan's offer, but Marva Collins declined once again. More and more students enrolled in Westside Preparatory School so that Collins moved the school out of her house and into its own building. In 1981, her success story was captured in a TV movie entitled *The Marva Collins Story*. At that time, around 200 students attended her school and 800 more were on the waiting list. All around the United States, schools and colleges were

founded that carried Marva Collins's name and taught according to her teaching philosophy. During her lifetime, she received many awards for her tireless commitment and dedication, such as the National Humanities Medal in 2004. On June 24, 2015, Marva Collins passed away at age 78, leaving behind a legacy of positive learning and teaching that continues to inspire generations of teachers and educators.

Marva Collins's way of teaching can be viewed as a forerunner to modern PE, since both are grounded in positivity and operate on a similar set of basic principles (Ben-Shahar 2011). To begin with, Collins strongly believed that every child was capable of learning, no matter how disadvantaged they were. She saw and appreciated the potential in all her students, focused on their strengths and talents, and encouraged them to do the same. She treated all students with love and respect, had a profound passion and enthusiasm for the teaching profession, as well as a genuine interest in her students. Marva Collins was kind, but she also had very high expectations. She was demanding and tough, but always respectful and granted her students a lot of individual attention. She aimed to instill self-confidence in her students by praising them for their efforts and ensuring them that they would always be worthy of love and belonging, no matter what they did. Her classroom provided an environment of trust and support that allowed students to take risks, fail, and try again. Marva Collins taught them that success and failure are inextricably connected and that they will only succeed, if they allow and tolerate mistakes. She read many stories about heroes and heroines to them and thereby provided them with inspirational role models to look up to. No matter what material or topic they engaged in, Marva Collins always challenged her students to be critical, ask many questions, and practice independent thinking. By encouraging them to stop blaming others and take full responsibility for their own lives and actions, she raised her students to become responsible adults with a sense of self-efficacy, competence, and autonomy (Collins & Tamarkin 1982).

To conclude, it can be said that although the tremendous impact of Marva Collins's positive way of teaching relies mainly on anecdotal evidence, her story is still deeply inspiring. Decades before Seligman's concept of PE would be coined, she applied some core principles of PE to the most marginalized and disadvantaged children of Chicago, thereby enabling them to flourish both personally and academically. The next chapter will deal with the "official" birthplace of PE in an entirely different socio-economic setting, but with a similarly fascinating story and promising results.

3.2.2. Geelong Grammar School

Despite its long history, the contemporary, PP-based concept of PE is a relatively recent phenomenon that is increasingly gaining momentum, especially in anglophone countries like Australia, the United Kingdom, or the United States. A commonly referenced "birthplace" of modern PE is Geelong Grammar School, which is situated around 60 km south-west of Melbourne. Founded in 1855, it is one of the oldest and largest co-educational boarding schools in Australia. The school is located across four campuses and has around 200 faculty members and 1500 students.

The cooperation between Geelong Grammar School and Seligman started in January 2005 when Seligman was on a speaking tour in Australia and received a phone call from a member of the school council. At that time, Geelong Grammar School was holding a fundraiser for a wellbeing center and Seligman was asked to help raise money for the campaign by convincing potential sponsors that wellbeing can be taught. They had already collected 14 million dollars and needed another 2 million for the wellbeing project. A couple of hours later Seligman held a speech at the campus in front of 50 alumni and managed to raise the remaining money. One week after Seligman had returned to his home in Philadelphia, he received another call from Stephen Meek, the headmaster. He asked Seligman if he was willing to meet up again to discuss the possibility of teaching wellbeing to the entire school, thereby transforming it into a positive institution. It did not take long until the head of curriculum, the dean of student, and the principle of the main campus arrived in Philadelphia to meet Seligman and his colleague Karen Reivich. They posed the following question to Seligman and Reivich: "What would you do […] to imbue an entire school with positive psychology if you had carte blanche and unlimited resources?" (Seligman 2011: 87). Their responses included a 2-week intensive PP training program for the entire Geelong Grammar School faculty, wellbeing courses across all grade levels, leading PP experts living at the campus to educate students and faculty members about their specialties, and several top educators supporting the faculty in correcting their trajectory along the way. At the end of the conversation, Seligman added: "And if Geelong Grammar can afford all that, I'm coming on sabbatical with my family to live at the school and direct the project. Try and stop me!" (Seligman 2011: 88). This was exactly how it happened.

In January 2008, Seligman and his family, as well as 15 PP trainers from the University of Pennsylvania arrived in Geelong for a 9-day PP course, in which the entire faculty of the school was educated about the science of PP. They learned how to apply the principles of PP first to their own, and then to their students' lives. After the initial training, Seligman and some of his

colleagues remained on campus to assist the faculty in implementing PP into the school and classroom step by step. Guided by Seligman's PERMA framework (2011), PP was systematically incorporated both implicitly and explicitly into all areas of the school and the curriculum.

Figure 2 shows the PE-model of Geelong Grammar School, which consists of four concentric circles that can be understood as a road map for bringing PE to life. The outer circle stands for the four dimensions in which PP is incorporated into the school: All teaching staff have to ***learn*** about the pillars of PP, before they explicitly ***teach*** PP content to their students, implicitly ***embed*** PP principles into their lessons, and act as a positive role model by ***living*** PP. For instance, students across all grade levels had weekly PP classes where they explored concepts like strengths, resilience, gratitude, or the PERMA elements. As part of 'embedding PP', teachers, for instance, encouraged students to look for strengths in literary characters or changed speaking prompts from "Give a speech on a time you were embarrassed" to "Give a speech about when you were of value to others" (Seligman et al. 2009: 305). The next circle represents the five PERMA elements of wellbeing plus a sixth component, namely positive health. By creating an educational environment in which students and staff can use their ***character strengths*** (third circle) for individual and collective goals, individuals and communities will be able to ***flourish***, which is the ultimate aim and innermost circle of this PE model.

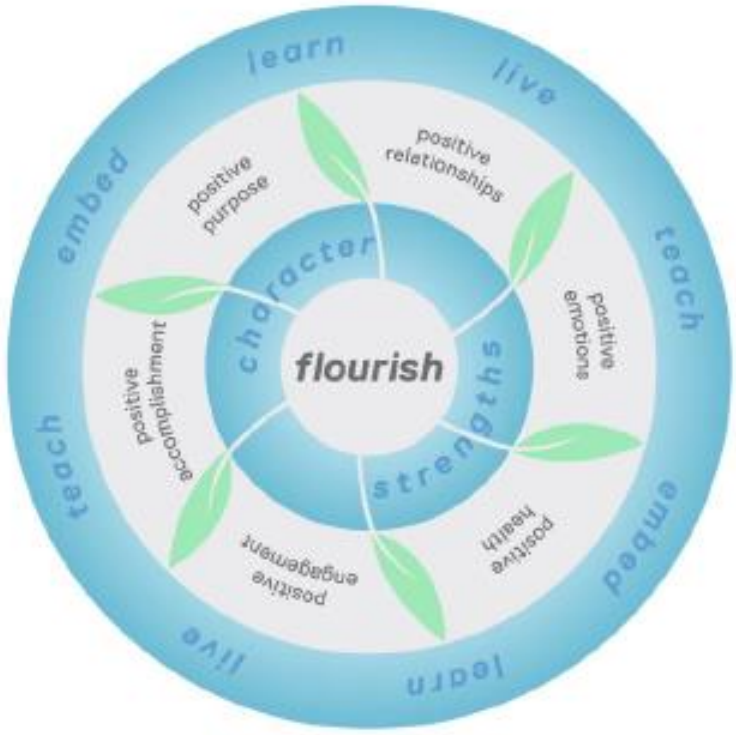

Figure 2 The Geelong Grammar School model for PE (image taken from Geelong Grammar School)

The positive transformation of Geelong Grammar School has sparked a growing, world-wide interest in the potentials of applied PP in educational contexts (White & Murray 2015). Apart from other schools that emulated Geelong Grammar School and adopted a PE approach or underwent a PP intervention (e.g., St Peters College in Adelaide or Lerchenfelder Secondary

School in Hamburg), several PE training courses, institutes and associations have been established (e.g., the Positive Education School Association (PESA) or the International Positive Education Network (IPEN)). They all aim at promoting PE on a global scale and transform the current education system into one that educates children and young adults to life satisfaction, allows them to flourish, achieve excellence, and develop to their full potential. It is this goal that this thesis aims to contribute to by suggesting concrete and practical ways in which EFL teachers in Austria can use the evidence-based and scientifically validated principles of PP to increase their students' wellbeing and performance, without having to lower academic expectations or trade off language proficiency against life satisfaction.

4. The effects of PE on student flourishing

Advocates of PE have very high hopes for the potential of applied PP in educational contexts. Vella-Brodrick, for instance, believes that PE approaches can "transform schools into places where assets such as empathy, optimism, creativity, self-efficacy and resilience are identified, appreciated and cultivated" (2011: 12). With similarly high expectations, Cefai and Cavioni state that that PE could potentially "[lead] to the formation of academically, socially and emotionally literate young people who have the skills, abilities and emotional resilience necessary to thrive in a challenging world" (2015: 54). In other words, supporters of PE believe that adopting a PP-informed approach will allow schools to foster both students' wellbeing, as well as their academic skills, without having to trade off the one for the other (Seligman et al. 2009). However, before schools or even individual teachers are likely to adopt a PE approach in their classrooms, they need to know whether these great promises can be backed up by evidence-based research (Waters 2011). Therefore, the following chapter will review studies confirming the effects of PE on student flourishing, both in terms of student wellbeing (4.1.) and academic success (4.2.).

In this context, PE functions as "an umbrella term used to describe empirically validated interventions and programs from positive psychology that have an impact on student well-being" (White & Murray 2015: 65). To avoid confusion between PE as a general teaching approach and PE as a collective term for school-based PP interventions, the term PE intervention (PEI) will be used to refer to PP-informed programs, exercises, and activities that have been applied in educational contexts (Waters 2011). This very broad definition of PEIs includes all proactive, strengths-focused, and resource-oriented interventions intended to increase students' quality of life by fostering one or several aspects of their wellbeing. This

definition includes brief mindset interventions, whole-school PE transformations, as well as curriculum-based meditation programs, character strengths building workshops, and social and emotional learning initiatives. It does not include deficit-oriented or elimination-focused interventions, such as anti-bullying programs or reactive health interventions. The reviewed PEIs have been implemented across many different school types and school systems, and with students of various age levels (primary to tertiary education), ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, and nationalities. Despite those diversities, the one, complex question pervading all reviewed studies is: Do PEIs have a long-term effect on students' wellbeing and performance, and if yes, why and how?

4.1. Effects on elements of wellbeing

The following chapter will present an overview of school-based PEIs that have been shown to foster one or several elements of student wellbeing. According to their main intervention focus, the PEIs have been grouped into five categories, namely (1) resilience and mental health, (2) positive emotions, (3) flow, (4) sense of belonging and positive relationships, and (5) character strengths.

PEIs targeting resilience and mental health

One of the most studied and best-known PEIs is the Penn Resiliency Program for Children and Adolescents, which was developed at the University of Pennsylvania (Seligman et al. 2009). The program is an 18-lesson program that aims at increasing students' resilience by incorporating practices from cognitive behavioral therapy into the curriculum. The program teaches cognitive reframing, relaxation strategies, realistic thinking, decision-making skills, adaptive coping skills, optimism, and assertiveness (Seligman et al. 2009). It has been successfully implemented in schools all over the world, including the United States, China, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Portugal (Waters 2011). Up to this date, dozens of studies have confirmed the positive effects of the resiliency curriculum on students' wellbeing. For instance, in a meta-analysis of 17 studies, Brunwasser, Gillham, and Kim (2009) showed that the program reduces and prevents symptoms of depression and anxiety, reduces hopelessness, increases optimism, and might even reduce behavioral problems. It was found to be effective for children and adolescents across multiple age groups (8-15 years), and ethnical and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the results of their study suggest that the program benefits students in the long term, since the reported positive effects could still be observed 2 years and 31 months after the implementation of the program.

Another PEI aimed at boosting students' social and emotional resilience is the Australia-based 'You Can Do It' program. The effectiveness of this PEI was evaluated in a study by Bernard and Walton (2011) where the wellbeing of 349 year-5 students who had undergone the program was compared to that of 208 year-5 students who had not. Both groups filled out a self-report wellbeing questionnaire in grades 5 and 6. The results revealed that only students in the intervention group showed significant improvements in student morale, student distress, stimulating learning, school connectedness, student motivation, learning confidence, and connectedness to peers over the one-year period.

Finally, Shoshani and Steinmetz (2014) conducted a study on a large sample (n=1038) of middle school students in Israel to determine the effects of a 1-year intervention program aimed at improving students' mental health. The results of the 2-year longitudinal study showed that, relative to controls (n=501), students who had been assigned to the intervention group (n=537) reported significant increases in self-esteem, self-efficacy, and optimism. Furthermore, while students participating in the program experienced fewer symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress after the intervention, the opposite was true for students in the control group. Shoshani and Steinmetz concluded that these results "point to the crucial need to make education for well-being an integral part of the school curriculum" (2014: 1).

PEIs targeting positive emotions

According to the broaden-and-build theory by Barbara Fredrickson (2001), positive emotions can alter people's perceptions and behavioral patterns. In particular, she argued that positive emotions *broaden* people's attention, while their attention narrows during the experience of negative emotions. Furthermore, the theory holds that positive emotions motivate people to *build* resources for the future (e.g., resilience or social capital), while negative emotions lead them to protect their immediate survival by disengaging and shielding themselves from potential dangers. In the context of the language classroom, this theory suggests that negative emotions like language anxiety or frustration might lead students to behave in self-protective ways, such as avoiding to participate in lessons, while positive emotions might contribute to a relaxed learning atmosphere, where learners are not afraid to make mistakes and can thus improve their language skills (Fredrickson 2005; Gregersen, MacIntyre & Meza 2016).

A study by Gregersen, MacIntyre, and Meza (2016) built on Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory and investigated the effects of six PP exercises aimed at increasing the participants' happiness. The participants were aged between 20 and 23, were second language learners of English, and were enrolled in an academic English conversation program at a US university.

Over a period of 12 weeks, the learners took part in all six exercises that had been tailored to their individual interests and needs. The PP exercises were incorporated into their weekly English conversation trainings and featured listening to music, laughter, physical exercise, interactions with animals, expressing gratitude, and engaging in altruistic behaviors, all of which have been shown to boost positive emotions (Gregersen, MacIntyre & Meza 2016). The participants were asked to reflect on their experiences in a journal and to indicate their current mood on a 10-point scale before, during, and after the PP exercises. Their emotions were also measured before and after conversation classes that did not feature a PP exercise. An analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data revealed that all exercises had resulted in significant gains of positive emotions (over and above the gains observed during normal conversation classes), helped participants build stronger interpersonal connections with their conversation partners, made them more relaxed and confident when speaking English, and increased their optimism, hope, and resilience. Although some students had the feeling that the PP exercises did not contribute to their language progress, all students passed the final examination of the academic English conversation class and reported higher levels of language competence.

Other PEIs have targeted a specific positive emotion, such as hope, gratitude, or serenity. Firstly, in terms of hope, a randomized, controlled study was conducted by Green, Anthony, and Rynsaardt (2007), which aimed at increasing hope and cognitive hardiness in female high school students. The participants were randomly allocated to either a coaching intervention group (n=28) or a waiting-list control group (n=28). In the course of two school terms, students in the intervention group underwent 10 one-on-one coaching sessions with a trained coach. The results of the study showed that both students' hope and hardiness could be significantly improved through the intervention. Moreover, a reduction in symptoms of depression and anxiety of students in the intervention group could be observed. Similarly promising results were obtained in a study by Marques, Lopez and Pais-Ribeiro (2011), who investigated the effects of a 5-week hope-based intervention program on 10-12-year-old middle school students. Relative to controls (n=31), the intervention group (n=31) showed significant improvements in levels of hope, life satisfaction, and self-worth, which could still be observed at the 6-month and 16-month follow ups. The intervention had no effects on students' academic achievement.

Secondly, in terms of gratitude, two promising studies were conducted by Froh and colleagues. The first one was a 'counting blessings' intervention conducted by Froh, Sefick, and Emmons (2008) on a sample of 221 11-13-year old students. The students were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: (1) a gratitude condition, whereby students kept a gratitude journal for two weeks in which they noted up to five things they were grateful for every day, (2) a hassles

condition, whereby students also kept a daily journal but wrote down things that annoyed them, and (3) a no-intervention control condition. All students completed a pretest, immediate posttest, and 3-week follow up to measure their levels of psychological, physical, and social wellbeing. The results of the study showed that only students in the gratitude condition reported higher levels of gratitude, optimism, and life satisfaction, and lower levels of negative emotions at the immediate posttest and 3-week follow up. Notably, the study also found that keeping a gratitude journal is strongly correlated with students' satisfaction with school. Another controlled, and randomized gratitude intervention study was conducted by Froh et al. (2009) (n=89). Instead of keeping a gratitude journal, the invention group was asked to write and personally deliver a gratitude letter to an important friend or family member. An analysis of the results revealed that, although all students in the gratitude group reported gains in their levels of gratitude and positive affect at immediate posttest and 2-month follow up, the improvements were most notable for students who had been low in positive affect at pretest measures.

Finally, concerning the positive emotion of serenity, several studies have been carried out in relation to mindfulness meditation interventions, since meditation is one technique known to promote serenity (Waters 2011). Huppert and Johnson (2010), for instance, evaluated the impact of a 4-week mindfulness training on the wellbeing of year-10 students in two all-boys schools (n=173). The participating students were split up into a mindfulness group and control group and completed an online questionnaire before and after the intervention. Although the researchers could not report a significant difference in the groups' levels of mindful awareness, resilience, and psychological wellbeing, they found a significant positive correlation between the amount of mindfulness practice and wellbeing for students in the mindfulness group. A similar study was conducted by Broderick and Metz (2009) in an all-girls school in Pennsylvania. 120 students of a mean age of 17.4 years participated in a pilot trial of the mindfulness curriculum 'Learning to BREATHE', which primarily aims at fostering self-regulation in adolescents through six mindfulness meditation lessons. A pretest-posttest comparison revealed that, compared to the control group (n=30), students in the mindfulness group (n=90) reported increased levels of calmness, relaxation, emotion regulation, and self-acceptance, and decreased levels of negative affect, tiredness, and physical complaints.

PEIs targeting flow

Concerning 'flow' in Csikszentmihalyi's, or 'engagement' in Seligman's terms, several studies have investigated the conditions under which flow is most likely to be experienced in classroom settings. For instance, a quantitative study by Czimmermann and Piniel (2016) analyzed the

flow experiences of 85 learners of English at an Hungarian university (mean age=19.8). The researchers measured students' levels of general classroom flow, task-specific flow, and anti-flow experiences (boredom, apathy, anxiety) in relation to a variety of tasks that differed in difficulty, design, and social format. According to their results, flow is most likely to be experienced when there is an optimal balance between learners' skills and task difficulty, when the task is motivating, and when students' have a feeling of task-control. Furthermore, Czimmermann and Piniel (2016) found that more creative tasks tend to increase the likelihood of flow experiences, and that anti-flow was most commonly experienced by students who were either bored or felt overwhelmed by the difficulty of the task. The task mode (individual, pair, or group work) had no effect on the experience of flow or anti-flow.

Similar results were obtained by Shernoff et al., who undertook a study on a sample of 526 US high school students, in which they examined the factors facilitating student engagement, which they defined as "the culmination of concentration, interest, and enjoyment" (2014: 158). The results of their longitudinal study revealed that engagement was most likely to occur when students experienced high levels of perceived control, when there was an optimal challenge-skill balance, and when students described the undertaken task as personally relevant. Students were disengaged when the task was either too challenging or too easy for their skills, and when they perceived the task as meaningless. This might explain why students were significantly less engaged during lectures or exams, as compared to individual- or group work (Shernoff et al. 2014).

The findings of both studies are consistent with Egbert's (2003) task-specific flow theory, in which she outlines four core components of task specific flow: an appropriate balance between challenge and skill, uninterrupted focused attention, interest and intrinsic motivation, and high levels of perceived control. In addition, Egbert (2003) emphasizes the importance of clear goals, sufficient time, and immediate feedback for the occurrence of task-specific flow. Apart from flow-fostering task characteristics, Egbert's (2003) hypothesis about a flow-language learning relationship is also highly relevant, especially for language teachers. She suggests that, while appropriately designed language activities can facilitate flow, flow can also enhance students' language skills. This can be explained by the fact that flow has been linked to increased motivation and focused attention on a task, which, in turn, are likely to result in improved learning (Egbert 2003). Therefore, teachers who wish to increase the number of flow experiences among their students should keep those prerequisites for flow in mind and design activities that are personally meaningful and interesting to students, and are neither too easy nor too difficult for them (Czimmermann & Piniel 2016; Shernoff et al. 2014).

PEIs targeting students' sense of belonging and their relationships

School belonging has been defined as "the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment" (Goodenow and Grady 1993: 80). In a meta-analysis, Allen et al. (2016) identified 10 factors that significantly impact students' sense of school belonging: academic motivation, emotional stability, personal characteristics, parent support, peer support, teacher support, gender, race and ethnicity, extracurricular activities, and school safety. Out of these 10 themes, teacher support and positive personal characteristics were correlated most strongly with levels of school belonging (Allen et al. 2016).

Students' sense of belonging in school has been shown to be a strong predictor of their happiness and wellbeing (Jose, Ryan & Pryor 2012; Law, Cuskelly & Carroll 2013; Nutbrown & Clough 2009), life satisfaction (O'Connor et al. 2010), academic success (Pittman & Richmond 2007; Sari 2012), academic motivation (Gillen-O'Neel & Fuligni 2013), positive attitudes toward learning (Roeser, Midgley & Urdan 1996), and social competence (Demanet & Van Houtte 2012; Lonczak et al. 2002). Besides, Haidt (2006) and Seligman (2002a) demonstrated the mutual influence of perceived social support and wellbeing, while McGrath and Noble (2010) found that positive student-teacher relationships are strongly associated with increased wellbeing, social behavior, and learning outcomes. For those reasons, several school-based PEIs have focused on increasing the quality of students' relationships and their overall sense of belonging in school.

Shankland & Rosset (2017), for instance, reviewed four brief PEIs that have been shown to promote positive relationships in educational contexts. Firstly, cooperative learning groups, where students first acquire knowledge in small groups and then teach it to their peers, have been shown to increase prosocial behavior and lead to a positive classroom climate (Johnson & Johnson 1987). Secondly, the implementation of active-constructive responding exercises into lessons has the potential to vastly improve students' psychological wellbeing and the quality of their relationships (Gable et al. 2004; Gottman 1994). Thirdly, the 'supportive sticky notes' activity asks students to write something nice about an assigned classmate on a Post-it note and secretly put it on that person's desk or locker. Lastly, the performance of secret acts of kindness has been shown to increase wellbeing (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon & Schkade 2005), enhance peer relationships (Shankland & Rosset 2017), and limit the negative effects of bullying (Clark & Marinak 2012). Shankland and Rosset (2017) suggest that a kindness practice within the classroom might take the form of the teacher randomly assigning each student one of their peers

to whom they should be particularly kind within a designated period of time (e.g., 1 week or 1 month). This activity is likely to foster students' positive self-concepts and help them be more appreciative of their peers (Shankland & Rosset 2017).

Other research examining the results of belonging-focused PEIs was conducted by Walton and Cohen (2007, 2011). In 2007, they undertook two experiments to determine how students' sense of belonging affected their motivation and academic achievement (Walton & Cohen 2007). They also paid special attention to the mediating impact of race. While the first experiment increased students' worries about their belonging, the second experiment mitigated their belonging uncertainty. The results showed that both belonging interventions significantly affected the sense of belonging and potential of black students, not, however, that of white students (Walton & Cohen 2007). Four years later, Walton and Cohen (2011) conducted a similar study on 92 college freshmen aimed at boosting their sense of belonging. In a brief mindset intervention, the researchers passed on a message from more advanced students telling the participants that worries about belonging are experienced by all freshmen, regardless of race or ethnicity. The message also communicated that research had shown that these uncertainties would dissolve over time (see, e.g., Wilson & Linville 1985), and that the freshmen would feel more at home soon. The results of this brief intervention were startling. Relative to controls (who had also received a message from seniors that was, however, unrelated to belonging), students in the intervention group did not only report significant gains in their sense of belonging, but also significant increases in their grade-point averages, and improvements in their self-reported health and wellbeing. Encouragingly, these positive effects could still be observed at the end of their studies. However, consistent with the results of the researchers' former experiments, these positive effects were only measurable among African-American students, not among white students. In fact, the achievement gap between white and minority students could be reduced by 52% as a consequence of the intervention (Walton & Cohen 2011).

In short, Walton and Cohen's studies illustrate the importance of students' sense of belonging, not only for their health and wellbeing, but also for their academic success. Belonging interventions seem to offer the greatest benefits to negatively stereotyped, stigmatized, or historically marginalized students and thus have the potential to mitigate inequalities in educational facilities (Dweck, Walton & Cohen 2011).

PEIs targeting character strengths

One of the best-known school-based character strengths interventions is the Strath Haven Positive Psychology Curriculum, which was designed to help students identify, develop, and

use their character strengths. Furthermore, it teaches them wellbeing skills related to positive emotions, meaning, and resilience. The curriculum builds on Peterson and Seligman's (2004) VIA framework and consists of 20 to 25 80-minute lessons that are delivered over the course of two semesters. Using a pretest-posttest design, Seligman et al. (2009) examined the effects of the program on 347 year-9 students in a controlled study. They found that the Strath Haven curriculum increased students' engagement and enjoyment at school, as well as their social skills. Teachers also reported an increase in strengths like curiosity, love of learning, or creativity, all of which are crucial for academic achievement (Peterson & Seligman 2004). No measurable effects on students' levels of anxiety or depression could be observed.

A similar program for primary school children, which also builds on the VIA framework, was designed and evaluated by Madden, Green, and Grant (2010). Their randomized and controlled pilot study examined the effects of the strengths coaching program on the levels of hope and engagement in year-5 students (n=38). The program encompasses 8 coaching sessions, which were integrated in an existing personal development and health program. Exercises included identifying new ways to use one's strengths, formulating and pursuing meaningful goals, and describing oneself at one's best in a 'Letter from the future'. The results of the study showed that the program was successful at enhancing students' levels of hope and engagement.

A third study evaluating a strengths intervention was conducted by Proctor et al. (2011). The curriculum-based program called 'Strengths Gym' aims at supporting students in fostering their signature strengths, recognizing strengths in others, and acquiring new strengths. The quasi-experimental study used a pretest-posttest design to determine the effects of the program on students' life satisfaction, positive and negative emotions, and self-esteem. Of the 319 middle school students participating in the study (mean age=12.98), 218 were assigned to the intervention group, while 101 adolescents made up the control group. An analysis of the pretest and posttest results revealed that students in the intervention group reported significant improvements in their levels of life satisfaction and positive affect, while students in the control group did not.

Finally, Austin (2006) examined the effects of a 6-week strengths program based on the Gallup Strengths Framework (see Buckingham & Clifton 2001). 572 high school students were randomly assigned to either a strengths intervention group (n=255) or a control group (n=272). Students in the intervention group identified their top five strengths and kept strengths diaries throughout the 6 weeks. Students in the control group completed a traditional 6-week health education course. According to the results, only students in the intervention group reported a

significant increase in academic expectancy, self-empowerment, efficacy, extrinsic motivation, and self-perceptions of ability.

To conclude this chapter, it can be said that the results of the reviewed studies have shown that PEIs have been successful in fostering students' resilience and mental health, increasing their positive emotions and flow experiences, enhancing their sense of belonging, and developing their character strengths. This shows that wellbeing skills can and should be explicitly taught in schools and ought to become a vital part of the general school curriculum. The next chapter will underscore this demand, as it will show that PEIs do not only positively impact elements of wellbeing, but also aspects of academic performance.

4.2. Effects on aspects of performance

Although the wellbeing-enhancing effects of school-based PEIs should be reason enough to adopt a PE approach, research has shown that PEIs do not only make students happier, but additionally improve their academic performance (Adler 2017). It should, however, be emphasized that PEIs are first and foremost wellbeing interventions that do not directly target academic performance, but only impact it indirectly through improvements in wellbeing. The positive correlation between academic performance and wellbeing might be the result of changes in attention, engagement, and motivation triggered by an increase in positive emotions, flow experiences, or character strengths (Waters 2011). For instance, several studies reviewed in the previous chapter have reported enhancing effects on academic performance as a by-product of improved wellbeing, such as the belonging-study by Walton and Cohen (2011), or the character strengths study by Austin (2006). While those studies have predominantly focused on examining the impact of PEIs on elements of wellbeing, other studies have investigated the performance-enhancing effects of PEIs more directly. Just like in the previous section, the reviewed studies have been grouped into five categories according to their primary intervention focus, namely (1) growth mindset interventions, (2) relevance interventions, (3) self-regulation interventions, (4) social and emotional learning interventions, and (5) general wellbeing interventions.

Growth mindset interventions

A lot of research has been conducted on so-called 'growth mindset interventions', which are one type of PEIs that have repeatedly been shown to have long lasting effects on both students' academic success and wellbeing (Blackwell, Trzesniewski & Dweck 2007; Kern et al. 2014). They are based on Carol Dweck's (2012) distinction between fixed mindsets and growth mindsets. Having a fixed mindset is synonymous with "[b]elieving that your qualities are carved

in stone", while a growth mindset "is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts" (Dweck 2012: 14-16). Those 'qualities' can refer to one's intelligence, skills, personality, moral character, strengths, or similar characteristics. Typically, people have different mindsets for different qualities, so that somebody might have a fixed mindset for intelligence ("I am smart/stupid, and nothing can be changed about that"), but a growth mindset for music skills ("I am not yet able to play Beethoven's piano sonata, but if I put enough effort into it, I can do it") (Dweck 2012).

Research has shown that people's implicit theories about the malleability of their qualities have a tremendous impact on their behavior, achievement, and motivation (Blackwell, Trzesniewski & Dweck 2007; Dweck 2006; Dweck, Chiu & Hong 1995). This is because somebody who believes that they can become smarter, will invest more time and effort in learning, will be less devastated by setbacks and failures, and will eventually achieve higher performance. In contrast, a person with a fixed intelligence mindset will believe that studying is pointless, will thus not invest the necessary time and effort in learning, and will interpret their failures as further evidence for their stupidity. Even worse, people who think of themselves as 'intelligent' and believe that their high achievements or good grades are the result of their fixed qualities rather than their efforts, will avoid challenges and be devastated by setbacks. That is because any kind of failure will threaten their inherent smartness and thus lead to an identity crisis (Dweck 2012).

Encouragingly, research has found that mindsets can be changed from fixed to growth and that those changes have lasting positive effects on people's motivation and achievement. For instance, a controlled study by Blackwell, Trzesniewski, and Dweck (2007) investigated the impact of a growth mindset intervention on seventh graders (n=91). Students in the experimental group (n=43) received an intervention that taught them about brain plasticity and study skills, while students in the control group (n=48) received an alternative workshop dealing with memory and techniques to improve it. The results of the study showed that the intervention had resulted in significant improvements in classroom motivation, effort, and academic achievement. In a similar study by Aronson, Fried, and Good (2002), college students were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: (1) a growth mindset intervention group, where students were taught about the malleability of the brain, (2) a control group featuring a multiple intelligence intervention, and (3) a no-treatment control group. According to the results, only students in the first group reported significant improvements in academic achievement and grade-point average, which were particularly remarkably for African-American students, as compared to white students. Finally, in a field experiment targeting female, minority, and low-

income students, Good, Aronson, and Inzlicht (2003) found that year-7 students undergoing a growth mindset intervention attained significantly higher math and reading standardized test scores than their peers in the control groups.

Other studies have investigated the influence of teacher behavior on the development of students' mindsets. They found that the type of feedback given by teachers has a tremendous impact on the formation of fixed versus growth mindsets (Dweck 2012). For instance, the way that teachers praise students' achievements can vastly impact the development of a fixed or growth mindset (Dweck 2007). While praising students for their intelligence ("Good job, you are very smart") is associated with the development of a fixed mindset, praising effort ("Good job, you put a lot of work into this") is associated with the development of a growth mindset (Dweck 2007). In short, research into growth mindsets has shown that mindsets vastly impact resilience and performance and can be changed by appropriate interventions and environments. These realizations have fundamental implications for parents, teachers, and anybody involved in raising and educating children and adolescents (Yeager & Dweck 2012).

Relevance interventions

Apart from students' beliefs about their abilities, PEIs also target other non-cognitive factors that have been shown to positively predict academic performance and success. A study by Hulleman and Harackiewcz (2009) investigated the impact of the perceived relevance of learning content on students' interest and performance in a high school science class. They designed a relevance intervention aimed at increasing the perceived meaningfulness of academic learning content by linking it to the students' lives. The 262 high school students participating in the study were randomly assigned to either a relevance condition (n=136) or a control condition (n=126). Students in the relevance condition wrote essays about the connection of science topics to their own lives, while students in the control condition were asked to write summaries of the learning content. A pretest-posttest comparison showed that students in the relevance intervention group who had low success expectations at the beginning of the course reported significant improvements in scientific interest and course grades. Similar results were obtained by Jang (2008) and Vansteenkiste et al. (2004), who found that connecting academic content to a larger societal purpose (e.g., making the world a better place by becoming a better teacher or citizen) led students to persist longer on tasks, process learning content more deeply, and eventually perform better in exams.

Self-regulation interventions

Another type of PEIs are self-regulation interventions, which aim at "[h]elping students to set goals, identify obstacles, and learn self-control strategies" (Dweck, Walton & Cohen 2011: 15). One such intervention, which targeted goal-setting and goal-striving skills, was designed and performed by Duckworth et al. (2011). Their 30-minute intervention combined a technique called 'mental contrasting' with 'implementation intentions' and was conducted on a sample of 66 high school students preparing for a high-stakes exam. Students were randomly allocated to either a treatment condition or a placebo control condition. Students in the treatment condition were asked to write down their future goal (passing the exam), identify possible obstacles, and come up with strategies to overcome them. The results showed that the intervention had a positive effect on students' self-discipline during the exam preparation period, since students in the intervention group completed over 60% more practice questions than their peers in the control group.

Another PEI that focused on goal-setting skills was designed and evaluated by Morisano et al. (2010). The intervention targeted struggling undergraduate students and consisted of a single-session, low-cost, online goal-setting program. The results of their randomized, controlled study showed that, relative to controls, students in the intervention group had significantly higher grade-point averages, were more likely to maintain a full study load, and reported lower levels of negative affect one semester after the intervention. According to the researchers, these results "[indicate] that personal goal setting deserves greater attention as an effective technique for improving academic success" (Morisano et al. 2010: 260).

Finally, Brigman and Webb (2007) evaluated the effectiveness of the 'Student Success Skills' intervention, which focuses on three sets of skills that have repeatedly been identified as crucial for academic success and wellbeing: cognitive and meta-cognitive skills, social skills, and self-management skills (Hattie, Biggs & Purdie 1996; Masten & Coatsworth 1998; Wang, Haertel & Walberg 1994). The intervention consisted of several large group and small group sessions that covered topics like goal setting and goal monitoring, stress regulation (e.g., breathing techniques), interpersonal and teamwork skills, memory, anger management, and coping. Furthermore, students were asked to track their weakly health and wellbeing progress in areas like nutrition, fun, exercise, social support, rest, energy, and mood. The results of a series of four studies including 36 schools and 1,123 students showed that the 'Student Success Skills' intervention had consistently and significantly improved students' math and reading performance on a standardized, state administered achievement test. Encouragingly, these gains

in academic performance could also be observed in a two-year follow-up study, which suggests that the intervention had positively impacted students in a long-lasting and sustainable way (Brigman & Webb 2007).

Social and emotional learning interventions

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is defined as "the process through which children and adults develop the skills, attitudes, and values necessary to acquire social and emotional competence" (Elias et al. 1997: 2). Social and emotional competence, in turn, is "the ability to understand, manage, and express the social and emotional aspects of one's life in ways that enable the successful management of life tasks" (Elias et al. 1997: 2). Examples of elements of social and emotional competence are self-awareness, impulse control, perspective taking, empathy, and the ability to cooperate (Elias et al. 1997). SEL and PE intersect in many ways; however, PE is usually considered to be a broader concept of which SEL is a crucial part of (Slemp et al. 2017). Therefore, SEL interventions can be considered another type of PEIs.

An impressive meta-analysis of SEL programs was conducted by Durlak et al. (2011), in which they combined the results of 213 studies involving more than 270,000 students from a broad range of age groups (kindergarten to high school). The results of their analysis showed that students undergoing SEL interventions did not only report significant improvements in their social and emotional skills, but additionally scored 11 percentile-points higher on achievement tests than students in the control groups (Durlak et al. 2011). These results, once again, show that wellbeing and achievement can and should go together.

General wellbeing interventions

Finally, three fascinating, large-scale studies that investigated the impact of PE on students' academic success were performed by Alejandro Adler (2016). In all three studies, secondary school students in the treatment group received a curriculum-based 15-month PEI that focused on 10 non-academic wellbeing skills: mindfulness, empathy, self-awareness, coping with emotions, communication, interpersonal relationships, creative thinking, critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving. Students in the control group underwent a control curriculum for the same period of time. After the 15-month intervention, students in both groups completed a standardized exam assessing their math, science, and reading skills. Furthermore, Adler collected data about students' baseline and posttest wellbeing levels.

Adler's first, groundbreaking study was conducted in Bhutan, which is the first country in the world to adopt a nationwide PE approach (Adler 2017). 8,385 Bhutanese students from 18 secondary schools were randomly assigned to either an intervention group (n=11 schools) or a

control group (n=7 schools). The second study was carried out in Mexico and involved 70 secondary schools with a total of 68,762 students. On an even larger scale, the third study was undertaken in Peru. Of the 694 schools participating in the study (n=694,153 students), 347 were assigned to a treatment group and 347 to a control group. Hence, in total, Adler (2016) drew from a sample of 771,300 Bhutanese, Mexican, and Peruvian secondary school students.

In terms of wellbeing, the results of all three studies showed that students in the treatment groups reported significant gains in their levels of wellbeing, while controls did not. A 12-month follow up in Bhutan revealed that the improvements in wellbeing were long lasting. However, the PEI did not only boost students' wellbeing, but also significantly impacted their performance on the standardized exams: In all three studies, students in the treatment groups significantly outperformed their peers in the control groups. The following three main factors underlying the improvements in wellbeing and performance emerged from the data: perseverance, engagement, and quality of relationships. To conclude, it can be said that the results of Adler's studies are highly promising, since they show that "positive education – building both well-being skills and academic skills hand-in-hand – is feasible and desirable" (2016: 55).

4.3. Core insights, strengths, and limitations

To conclude this section about the effects of PEIs on students' wellbeing and academic performance, it can be said that the reviewed studies have generated several crucial and promising insights: Firstly, and most importantly, they have shown that wellbeing can be taught and learned. Secondly, they have found that PEIs can significantly improve all PERMA elements of wellbeing, as well as students' academic performance. This can most likely be explained by the mediating effects of non-cognitive factors like perseverance, self-regulation, or motivation. Thirdly, several studies have confirmed that wellbeing is positively correlated with academic performance, which supports the idea that wellbeing and academic success do not mutually exclude, but rather depend on each other. Lastly, it has also been found that disadvantaged or stigmatized students tend to benefit the most from PEIs, both in terms of wellbeing and academic performance.

As for the strengths of the PEIs, it can be stated that the vast majority of studies reviewed in this chapter displayed high levels of scientific rigor and had a robust design that included reliable research methods, control groups, randomization, pretests, posttests, and follow ups. Moreover, similar findings could be produced across different age groups, genders, ethnicities, and school systems, which supports the validity of generated results (Waters 2011). Finally, the

studies used relatively large sample sizes, with up to 270,034 students in the meta-analysis of Durlak et al. (2011), 68,762 students in Adler's (2016) studies, and 1,123 students in the 'Student Success Skills' intervention (Brigman & Webb 2007).

Concerning limitations, Slemp et al. (2017) note that there is still a lack of accurate, efficient, and comprehensive wellbeing measurement tools that allow researchers to determine the exact effects of their PEIs. Often, instruments used to measure student wellbeing rely solely on students' self-reports, which might decrease the validity of results. In addition, many studies only measure one or two aspects of wellbeing, such as positive emotions or positive relationships, but exclude other elements like meaning or flow. Another limitation of some studies is that they only take immediate posttest measures and lack follow ups, which leaves open the question of how long the observed positive effects of PEIs last. However, even if one- or two-year follow ups are undertaken, hardly any study has tracked the impact of PEIs beyond students' school career to investigate the long-term effects of such interventions on students' future success and career paths. Finally, although some studies have focused on the effects of PEIs on disadvantaged or stigmatized students, the majority of studies was conducted in relatively advantaged schools with above-average financial and other resources. Likewise, the effects of PEIs have predominantly been studied in Western schools and cultures, which calls the generalizations of results to non-Western cultures into question. In order to counter this rather selective approach, more research is needed to determine the effectiveness of PEIs in non-Western cultures, as well as in less privileged schools.

To conclude, it should be emphasized that the most important insight to retain from this section is that research has proven that wellbeing skills can be taught and learned and that they do not only enhance students' happiness, life satisfaction, and sense of belonging, but additionally boost their academic performance. In other words, the acquisition of wellbeing skills has both an intrinsic, as well as an instrumental value (Adler 2017). For those reasons, wellbeing skills should become an integral part of every educational curriculum and should be taught alongside traditional academic content.

5. The status quo: Exploring PE in Austria

The present chapter will analyze the status quo in Austrian schools in relation to three issues linked to PE: mental health, the curriculum, and existing PE initiatives and educational programs. The first subchapter will explore the psychological wellbeing of secondary school students in Austria, by drawing, for instance, on the results of the official Austrian health report

for children and adolescents. The second subchapter will present a curriculum analysis, with the aim to justify the implementation of PE in Austrian secondary schools on the basis of educational aims stated in the curriculum. The third subchapter will focus on existing PE-related initiatives in Austria, such as the pilot project 'Schulfach Glück Österreich', initiated in 2009.

5.1. Mental health in Austrian schools

When discussing the need for PE, one of the three main reasons outlined in chapter 3.1. was the fact that PE can act as an antidote to depression and other mental health issues in children and adolescents (White & Murray 2015). In that respect, it was pointed out that several international studies have reported concerning findings about alarmingly low levels of wellbeing (Adlat et al. 2001), a rising prevalence of depression (Lewinsohn et al. 1993), and dangerous levels of psychological distress among children and young adults (Casey & Liang 2014). To investigate whether secondary school students in Austria are also affected by low levels of mental health and wellbeing, the following section will summarize the findings of some of the latest health-related studies conducted on school-aged children in Austria.

The first report to be investigated is the wellbeing questionnaire of the PISA study. PISA stands for Program for International Student Assessment and is a worldwide study carried out by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with the aim to measure and compare 15-year-olds' academic performance on a global scale. Hence, the PISA study evaluates the effectiveness of educational systems all over the world and provides data that may be used to improve educational policies. It was first conducted in 2000 and has since been performed every three years. In 2012, PISA did not only measure students' problem solving and cognition skills in a variety of subjects, but additionally collected data about students' overall wellbeing for the first time.

The OECD defines wellbeing as "the quality of life of students as 15-years-old individuals" (2017: 8). Wellbeing is conceptualized as a construct comprising psychological, physical, cognitive, and social factors, such as life satisfaction, the absence of emotional distress, eating habits, physical activity, the ability to apply gained knowledge, parental support, and relationships with peers and family. In addition, the OECD understands wellbeing as a "dynamic state" which develops over time (2017: 8). If humans fail to develop the capacities for wellbeing as children and young adults, so they argue, they are unlikely to flourish as adults. In the following, the results of the 2015 PISA study for wellbeing will be summarized (see OECD 2017), with the aim to approach the question of wellbeing in Austrian secondary school students.

To begin with, the 2015 PISA study found that the mean value for life satisfaction among 15-year-olds in Austria was 7.52 on a scale from 0 to 10. Austria scored slightly above the OECD average of 7.31 and ranks on place 9 out of 44 surveyed countries (including China, Peru, Qatar, Tunisia, the Unites States, and France). In terms of gender, it can be said that 15-year-old Austrian boys are significantly more satisfied with their lives than their female peers; on average, boys rated their life satisfaction 7.95, while the mean for girls was 7.09. Although the average life satisfaction score of Austrian 15-year-olds may seem fairly positive, it is shocking that almost a quarter of all surveyed Austrian students (24.5%) reported feeling unsatisfied (0-4) or only moderately satisfied (5-6) with their lives. This shows that there is still much work to be done to raise students' overall life satisfaction.

Generally speaking, the 2015 PISA study identified two major threats to students' wellbeing: school-related anxiety, and social isolation or bullying (OECD 2017). Levels of school-related anxiety, as well as feelings of social isolation were strongly and negatively correlated with science scores and life satisfaction. In other words, students who feel anxious and lonely also perform worse on academic tasks and are less satisfied with their lives. As for school-related anxiety, the PISA study asked students to indicate their level of agreement (strongly disagree – disagree – agree – strongly agree) with the statements presented in Table 1. The numbers next to the statements indicate the percentage of Austrian male and female students who 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the respective statements.

Table 1 School-related anxiety

	Statements related to school-related anxiety	% all	% male	% female
1	I often worry that it will be difficult for me taking a test.	64.5	59.0	70.0
2	I worry that I will get poor grades at school.	63.3	57.2	69.3
3	Even if I am well prepared for a test I feel very anxious.	50.7	43.2	58.5
4	I get very tense when I study.	19.3	17.5	21.2
5	I get nervous when I don't know how to solve a task at school.	43.3	39.2	47.4

With the exception of statement 4, all other school-related anxiety statements find worrisome levels of agreement among 15-year-old students, especially among girls. The responses to statement 5 are particularly alarming, since schools should provide a safe environment with a climate of trust and mutual respect, which encourages students to go beyond their comfort zone, fail, and try again. If students are afraid to make mistakes or admit a lack of knowledge in front

of their teachers or classmates, they will stop asking questions, avoid challenging tasks, and will thus unwillingly prevent themselves from making positive learning experiences.

In terms of social isolation – the second major threat to students' wellbeing – the PISA study investigated students' experiences with bullying and their sense of belonging or lack thereof. Table 2 presents Austrian students' levels of agreement with six statements related to their sense of belonging. The numbers next to the statements indicate the percentage of Austrian male and female students who 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the respective statements. While a high percentage for statements 1-3 indicates a strong sense of belonging, a high percentage for statements 4-6 indicates a poor sense of belonging.

Table 2 Sense of belonging

	Statements related to students' sense of belonging	% all	% male	% female
1	I make friends easily at school.	77.9	77.5	78.3
2	I feel like I belong at school.	76.0	74.4	77.6
3	Other students seem to like me.	83.8	82.6	84.9
4	I feel like an outsider (or left out of things) at school.	13.9	14.5	13.3
5	I feel awkward and out of place in my school.	17.2	18.5	16.0
6	I feel lonely at school.	15.4	16.3	14.5

In general, Austrian students seem to enjoy a relatively high sense of belonging in school. Interestingly, while female students report higher levels of school-related anxiety (see table 1), they also report slightly higher levels of belonging than their male peers. A possible explanation for this phenomenon might be that the human body reacts to stress partly by releasing a neurotransmitter and hormone called oxytocin, which is often referred to as the "cuddle hormone". Oxytocin promotes attachment, improves social skills, and makes people seek out social contact (Bartz et al. 2011), which in turn could result in a higher sense of belonging among those who experience more stress and thus produce more oxytocin.

Although the vast majority of students reported relatively high levels of belonging, a comparison of students' responses to those statements in 2003, 2012, and 2015 draws a slightly different picture. Table 3 presents the development of students' sense of belonging in relation to the same six statements listed in Table 2. The three numbers next to the statements indicate the percentage of Austrian 15-year-olds who 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statements in 2003, 2012, and 2015 respectively. While a high percentage for statements 1-3 indicates a

strong sense of belonging, a high percentage for statements 4-6 indicates a poor sense of belonging.

Table 3 Students' sense of belonging in 2003, 2012, and 2015

	Statements related to students' sense of belonging	% 2003	% 2012	% 2015
1	I make friends easily at school.	90.1	90.1	77.9
2	I feel like I belong at school.	88.7	86.0	76.0
3	Other students seem to like me.	78.2	93.7	83.8
4	I feel like an outsider (or left out of things) at school.	6.0	7.2	13.9
5	I feel awkward and out of place in my school.	8.7	8.7	17.2
6	I feel lonely at school.	7.4	5.8	15.4

As can be derived from Table 3, 15-year-old students' sense of belonging at school has continuously decreased from 2003 to 2015. 15-year-olds felt lonelier, more awkward and out of place, and more like an outsider in 2015, than 15-year-olds three or twelve years before. Furthermore, 15-year-olds in 2015 found it significantly harder to make friends at school and thought that they were less liked by their peers. This trend is particularly concerning, since – paradoxically – possibilities for communication through various social media platforms have simultaneously increased. This would suggest that increased online presence and interaction (no matter how social it may seem) is not positively affecting students' sense of belonging, but, in fact, makes them feel even more lonely.

Connected to students' sense of belonging are their experiences with bullying, which present another major threat to their overall wellbeing (OECD 2017). The 2015 PISA study asked students about their exposure to bullying (e.g., feeling excluded, being the subject of nasty rumors, being made fun of, being threatened, being physically abused) and found that a shocking 50.1% of Austrian 15-year-olds had been bullied at least once within the previous year. This means that Austria lies slightly above this OECD average (48.6%). These findings are alarming and present an urgent call for more school-based interventions to improve the quality of peer relationships in schools. Since the 2015 PISA study found that students with a strong sense of belonging are not only more satisfied with their lives, but also perform better academically (OECD 2017), such measures are all the more desirable.

Besides risk factors, the OECD (2017) also identified several factors that positively contributed to 15-year-old students' wellbeing. Among the strongest predictors of wellbeing were

supportive teachers, positive peer relationships, a disciplined learning environment, and caring parents. With the exception of the last variable, schools have the potential to foster all listed predictive factors and thereby create supportive learning environments that encourage students to build high quality connections with their peers, while still providing enough disciplinary boundaries to guide students on their individual learning and developmental paths.

Apart from the 2017 OECD report, the official Austrian Health Report for Children and Adolescents issued by the Austrian Ministry of Health (BMGF 2016) also offers valuable insights into secondary school students' wellbeing. Summarizing their findings, the ministry states that children and adolescents generally represent the healthiest population group in Austria. Their overall health has improved continuously since records began, which can at least partly be explained by a drastic reduction in infant- and child mortality rates, as well as by the enhanced control and treatment of communicable diseases. However, within the last couple of years, several studies have produced alarming findings that indicate a slowing down or even potential reversal of this positive trend. This is especially true for mental disorders like anxiety disorders or depression, chronological illnesses like diabetes or cancer, and behavioral- and developmental problems such as ADHD (BMGF 2016: III).

While all illnesses can present a dangerous threat to students' wellbeing, psychological disorders, in particular, constitute a major inhibiting factor. According to the ministry of health, 5.4% of Austrian 7-17-year-olds show symptoms of depression, 10% report symptoms of pathological anxiety, and yet another 7.6% report behavioral disorders (BMGF 2016). Figure 3 shows the number of child and adolescent inpatients (per 100,000) who were diagnosed with 'mental- or behavioral disorder' between 2000 and 2014 (BMGF 2016: 42).

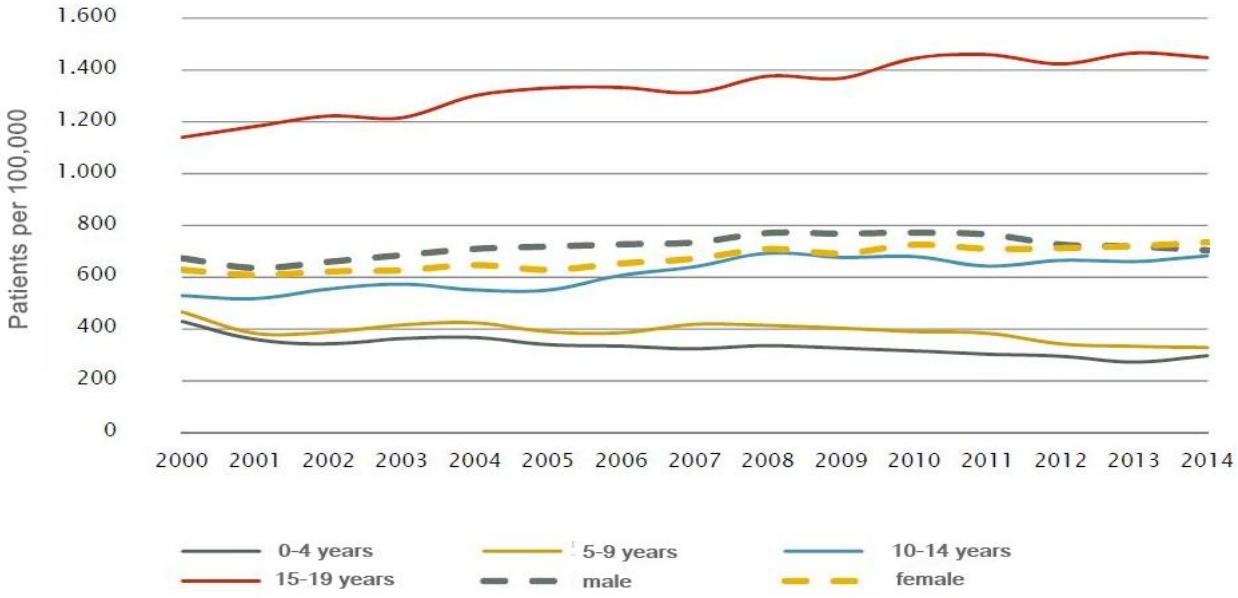

Figure 3 Diagnosed mental- or behavioral disorders among children and adolescents between 2000-2014

As can be seen in figure 3, 15-19-year-olds have by far the highest prevalence of mental and behavioral disorders among Austrian children and adolescents, followed by 10-14-year-olds. Unfortunately, the number of diagnoses among both age groups has slightly but steadily increased from the year 2000 onward: While there were around 1,150/100,000 diagnosed 15-19-year-olds in 2000, the number has risen to around 1,450/100,000 in 2014. This trend is alarming, especially, since children in Austria enter secondary school at age 10, when the prevalence rates begin to increase markedly.

Another mental health-related aspect documented in the Austrian Health Report for Children and Adolescents are suicide statistics. Although suicides are not necessarily the result of mental illness, they can indicate psychological problems or at least extremely low levels of wellbeing among the committers. Figure 4 shows the number of suicides (per 100,000) committed by 15-19-year-olds between 1980 and 2014 (BMGF 2016: 46).

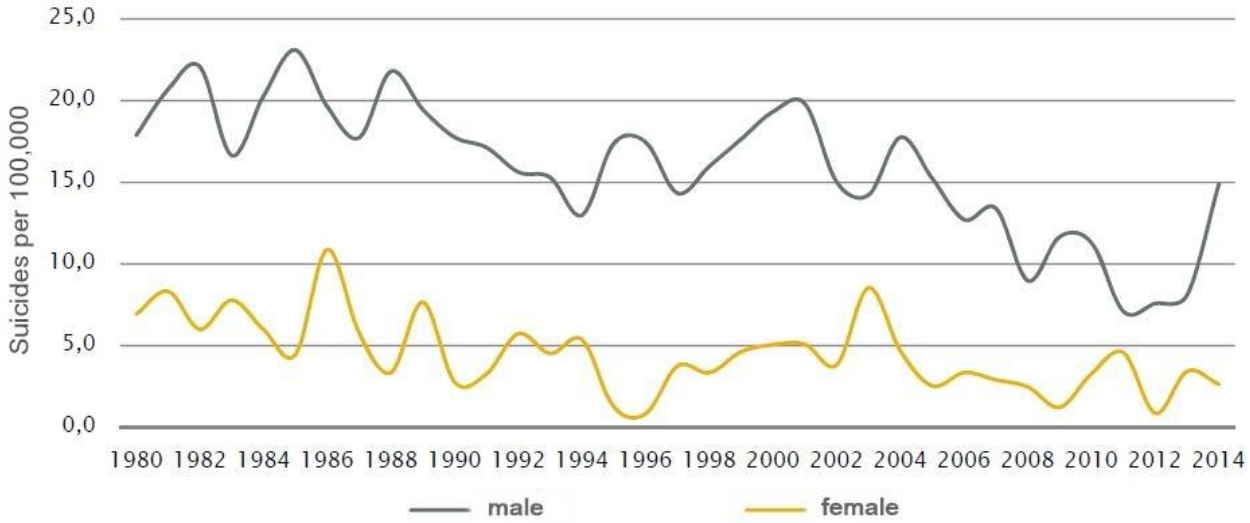

Figure 4 Suicides among adolescents between 1980-2014

The graph shows that suicides occur roughly twice as frequently among male than female adolescents. Besides, figure 4 reveals that although suicides have continuously decreased over the past 35 years, numbers rose again between 2013 and 2014, at least for males. This is another worrying trend that needs to be carefully observed in the next couple of years.

The Austrian Health Report for Children and Adolescents draws heavily on the results of the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study, which is a cross-national study that was established in 1986 and has since been conducted every four years in 48 countries and regions all across Europe and North America (WHO 2016). The HBSC study aims to inform health policy makers by providing them with insights into young people's wellbeing and health behaviors, as well as the social factors affecting those conditions. In Austria, the HBSC study

is commissioned by the ministry of health and is handed out to students aged 11, 13, 15, and 17. The most recent HBSC study was conducted in 2014, the results of which will be summarized below.

Among other factors, the 2014 HBSC study investigated Austrian students' self-reported health and life satisfaction (WHO 2016). Students were asked to indicate their current health status on a four-point scale (excellent – good – rather good – bad), and their life satisfaction on an eleven-point scale (0= worst possible life; 10= best possible life). According to the results, around 40% of Austrian 11-15-year-old students reported being in 'excellent' health, with a negative correlation between age and reported health (49% of 11-year-olds, 41% of 13-year-olds, and 33% of 15-year-olds). The same age-related trend could be observed for life satisfaction, whereby 61% of all 11-year-old students reported high levels of life satisfaction, as opposed to only 29% of 15-year-olds. In all age groups, boys reported higher levels of health and life satisfaction than girls, with the gender gap increasing with age. In short, younger and male students tend to have higher levels of self-reported health and life satisfaction than older and female students.

In terms of students' health- and risk behavior, the 2014 HBSC study found that Austrian 13-17-year-olds show relatively low levels of health competence (WHO 2016). Around 16% of the surveyed students reported smoking daily or occasionally, and 43% of 17-year-olds consume alcohol at least once a week (53% of boys and 33% of girls). In comparison to 47 other European and North American countries, Austria unfortunately ranks top in terms of smoking, and in the uppermost third for alcohol consumption. In addition, around 6% of students aged 15 or above reported consuming cannabis within the 30 days prior to taking the HBSC survey, and approximately 30% of students were involved in at least one violent fight within the previous year. The study also found that only 17.4% of all surveyed Austrian students met the WHO recommendation for physical activity (60 minutes per day). In terms of bullying, 35% admitted that they had actively participated in bullying behavior within the past few months, and 32.5% reported having been a victim of bullying within that time frame. Finally, when asked about their physical and psychological complaints, Austrian students indicated that they most commonly suffered from irritability, bad mood, and insomnia (WHO 2016), all of which are crucial indicators for wellbeing, or rather the lack thereof.

The last wellbeing evaluation to be investigated was conducted by Bradshaw, Hoelscher, and Richardson (2006), who examined the wellbeing of young people in 25 EU member states. In a meta-analysis, they compared children's wellbeing on 8 wellbeing clusters comprising 23

domains and 51 indicators. Table 4 lists all 8 wellbeing clusters plus sample domains, along with the top performing countries for each cluster and the rank occupied by Austria.

Table 4 Wellbeing clusters and ranks

	Wellbeing clusters (examples of included domains)	**Top performing countries**	**Rank of Austria/countries included in the ranking**
1	**Material situation** (relative child income poverty, deprivation, employment of parents)	Cyprus, Sweden, Finland	7/25
2	**Housing and environment** (overcrowding, quality of local environment, housing problems)	United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden	6/25
3	**Health** (health at birth, immunization)	Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark	21/25
4	**Subjective wellbeing** (self-defined health, personal wellbeing, wellbeing at school)	Netherlands, Austria, Spain	2/24
5	**Education** (educational attainment and outcomes)	Belgium, Sweden, Denmark	17/20
6	**Children's relationships** (family structure, relationships with parents and with peers)	Malta, Portugal, Slovenia	16/23
7	**Civic participation** (participation in civic activities, political interest)	Cyprus, Greece, Hungary	No data available
8	**Risk and safety** (child mortality, risk behavior, experiences of violence)	Spain, Cyprus, Sweden	19/25

Although it is encouraging that Austria ranks second in the 'subjective wellbeing' domain, one should not overlook clusters like 'health', 'education', or 'children's relationships', in which Austria performed shockingly poorly. The quality of people's relationships, in particular, constitutes a vital element of wellbeing whose importance cannot be overstated. All clusters taken together, Austria ranks twelfth among the 25 EU member states included in the analysis. According to this final list, the top three ranks for overall child wellbeing in the EU are occupied by the Netherlands, Sweden, and Denmark (Bradshaw, Hoelscher & Richardson 2006).

Returning to the initial question of Austrian secondary school students' wellbeing, it can be said that a review of several health-related studies has shown that young people in Austria, too, are affected by increasing levels of anxiety, chronic stress, mental disorders, and social isolation, all of which are potentially detrimental to their wellbeing. Therefore, schools and governments must take immediate action to ensure that wellbeing becomes a central concern of educational policies.

To conclude, all studies discussed in this chapter have their potentials and limitations when it comes to providing insights into young people's wellbeing in Austria. For instance, the PISA study, while using a large and cross-national sample, collects data only of 15-year-old students, which limits the generalizability of generated results to other age groups. Furthermore, the PISA wellbeing study relies only on students' self-reports, which might limit the validity of the data. The HBSC study and the official Austrian Health Report for Children and Adolescents, on the other hand, use a lot of objective data, but present a rather restrictive view of health that is largely focused on physical health. Both provide little information about students' sense of belonging, the quality of their relationships, their emotional realities, or other crucial indicators of students' overall wellbeing. Among the presented wellbeing studies, the most holistic and comprehensive understanding of wellbeing was probably conveyed by Bradshaw, Hoelscher, and Richardson (2006), who conceptualized wellbeing as a multi-dimensional construct comprising eight wellbeing clusters, 23 domains, and 51 indicators. However, the informative value of their study is also limited, since it provides mainly cross-sectional data, which allows comparisons between countries, but does not provide insights into the longitudinal development of children's wellbeing.

A limitation that all three reviewed studies have in common is that they completely neglect two crucial elements of wellbeing, namely flow or engagement, and life meaningfulness. They constitute two of the five PERMA elements (Seligman 2011) and have continuously been validated as strong predictors of wellbeing. Moreover, all studies pursue a quite deficit-oriented approach to health, where the reduction of physical or mental disorders is viewed as the best way to improve students' health. PP, in contrast, believes that the identification and promotion of strengths and positive health factors like high-quality relationships, flow experiences, or positive emotions is key to lasting improvements in people's health and wellbeing (White & Murray 2015).

Given those limitations, it seems necessary to develop and use a more comprehensive wellbeing measurement tool in Austrian schools, in order to gain a more complete understanding of

students' wellbeing. This tool should measure both objective and subjective elements of wellbeing, such as the number of peer or family relationships, students' sense of belonging, their life satisfaction, and the degree to which they experience academic achievement. A comprehensive wellbeing measurement tool must tap into all five elements of PERMA, while not neglecting objective health factors. To enable the observation of longitudinal developments, measurements should take place at least every three years and across several age levels. Only if wellbeing is systematically monitored among young people and data are gained about the facilitating and inhibiting factors for student flourishing, will schools and governments be able to take specific and effective measures to improve student wellbeing on a large scale. If children are to be raised to become flourishing and well-functioning citizens, the measurement of wellbeing must become a non-negotiable priority. As the saying goes, only what gets measured, gets managed.

5.2. Curriculum analysis

The following chapter will outline the ways in which the curriculum for general secondary education (BMBWF 2017) justifies and supports the implementation of PE into Austrian schools and EFL classrooms. Through a curriculum analysis[1], six educational aims have been identified that could be realized by incorporating elements of PE into Austrian schools and classrooms: (1) providing health education, (2) identifying students' strengths and helping them develop their full potential, (3) teaching and cultivating values and virtues, (4) fostering students' self-competency, (5) fostering students' interpersonal and social competencies, and (6) helping students create a meaningful life.

Firstly, in terms of health education, the curriculum states that schools are responsible for supporting students in developing a health-conscious lifestyle, whereby 'health' is conceptualized in a holistic way. The curriculum suggests that this can be achieved by discussing health-related topics in class and thereby raising students' awareness of their responsibility to take care of their own bodies and wellbeing (BMBWF 2017). PE can support these aims, since its primary goal is to increase students' mental, physical, and social wellbeing. By fostering students' self-efficacy and educating them about health and wellbeing (e.g., the PERMA elements), PE has the potential to provide students with practical knowledge and

[1] The following parts of the general curriculum for secondary education ("Lehrplan der Allgemeinbildenden Höheren Schulen" (BMBWF 2017)) were analyzed: general educational aim ("Allgemeines Bildungsziel"), general didactic principles ("Allgemeine didaktische Grundsätze"), modern foreign language (first, second) („Lebende Fremdsprache (Erste, Zweite)").

wellbeing skills that will help them endorse a health-conscious lifestyle far beyond their graduation.

A second aim stated in the curriculum that is in line with two core principles of PE is related to students' unique strengths and potentials. According to the curriculum, schools are responsible for identifying, fostering, and making students aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, it is stated that schools must aim for the best possible development of students' individual learning potential (BMBWF 2017). The identification and cultivation of students' strengths lies at the heart of PE, because advocates of PE are convinced that this will allow students to flourish and develop to their full potential. Since PE is a resource-oriented approach, it believes that fostering students' existing strengths will be more effective and fruitful than attempting to fix their weaknesses (White & Murray 2015). Although the curriculum states that schools should raise students' consciousness about both their strengths and their weaknesses, PE would re-conceptualize 'weaknesses' as 'areas of further growth', in order to foster students' growth mindset and emphasize the dynamic nature of knowledge and skill.

Thirdly, the curriculum states that – apart from conveying knowledge and developing students' competencies – a third core responsibility of schools is to teach and communicate values (BMBWF 2017). According to the curriculum, having a common set of core values is of particularly great importance in the light of constant societal change in areas such as culture, science, demography, technology, environment, and law. As examples of values that should guide students' actions and behaviors, humanity, solidarity, tolerance, peace, justice, gender equality, and environmental awareness are listed (BMBWF 2017). The teaching of values and virtues constitutes a central part of PE, since the development of students' character strengths is inextricably linked to the development and cultivation of virtues. This can be explained by the fact that the 24 character strengths of the VIA strengths inventory are conceptualized as being hierarchically linked to one of six abstract core virtues (wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, transcendence). Since those virtues are valued and endorsed cross-culturally (Dahlsgaard, Peterson & Seligman 2005), the VIA strengths and virtues can shift students' focus from differences between cultures to the connecting elements. Therefore, class discussions about their meaning and importance can be a powerful tool for fostering students' open-mindedness, cosmopolitanism, and respect for other cultures. This can create a deep sense of connection among students with diverse cultural backgrounds, increase their sense of a shared humanity, and create a climate of trust, dialog, and mutual respect.

A fourth aim stated in the curriculum that is directly in line with the purpose of PE concerns the development of students' self-competence (BMBWF 2017). Self-competence has been defined as "the ability to act in a morally self-determined humane way, including the assertion of a positive self-image and the development of moral judgement" (Le Deist & Winterton 2005: 38). Crucial elements of self-competence are the ability for self-perception and assessment, self-confidence, autonomy, capacity and resilience, and the ability to critically reflect one's own and other people's behavior (BMBWF 2017). Hence, the concept of self-competence relates to students' levels of self-efficacy and self-esteem, their inner strengths, and their coping skills. Students with a high sense of self-competence typically experience more hope and optimism, are more resilient, and have a higher tolerance for failure than their less self-competent peers (Peterson & Seligman 2004). Consequently, they seek out more challenges, show higher levels of perseverance and grit, and bounce back from adversities more quickly (Peterson & Seligman 2004). PE can help students develop more self-competence, since it aims at fostering students' self-efficacy, their sense of duty and responsibility, and their growth-mindset. Besides, a number of character strengths targeted by PE programs are strongly connected to the concept of self-competence, such as hope, perseverance, or self-regulation (Peterson & Seligman 2004).

Apart from self-competence, schools also need to foster students' social- or interpersonal competence (BMBWF 2017). Social competence has been defined as "the willingness and ability to experience and shape relationships, to identify and understand benefits and tensions, and to interact with others in a rational and conscientious way, including the development of social responsibility and solidarity" (Le Deist & Winterton 2005: 38). According to the curriculum, crucial elements of social competence include empathy, cooperativeness, openness, the capacity for teamwork, and the ability to deal with conflicts (BMBWF 2017). PE has the potential to develop students' social competence, since it places a huge emphasis on building positive relationships, fostering high quality connections, and enabling constructive discourse. For instance, many PE programs teach a communication technique called 'active-constructive responding', which is one of the four ways of responding described by Gable et al. (2004). The amount of active-constructive responses in relationships has been found to be a strong predictor of the duration and perceived quality of relationships (Gable et al. 2004; Gottman 1994) and should thus be considered a key element of interpersonal skills.

Finally, the curriculum states that schools are responsible for supporting students in exploring the purpose of their existence and guiding them on their way to create a meaningful life. This aim can be achieved by explicitly addressing ethical and moral values in class and offering

students the opportunity to explore and cultivate their spirituality (BMBWF 2017). In PP, meaning constitutes one of the five core pillars of wellbeing and is defined as "knowing what your highest strengths are, and then using them to belong to and serve something you believe is larger than the self" (Seligman et al. 2009: 296). Since PE aims at increasing students' wellbeing, PE is also highly invested in fostering students' sense of meaning, for instance, by identifying their strengths and encouraging them to use them for a greater good. Many PE exercises ask students to be explicit about their individual purpose of life and to check whether their goals and actions are aligned with their values. Therefore, PE supports students on their quest for meaning and can help them identify ways in which they can use their strengths to cultivate a purposeful life.

To conclude, a curriculum analysis has shown that the incorporation of PE principles and exercises into Austrian secondary schools and EFL classroom is justified on a number of grounds, which have been outlined above. PE can support multiple educational aims stated in the curriculum, for instance, those related to health education, values education, and the development of students' self- and social competencies.

5.3. Existing PE initiatives in Austria

In contrast to anglophone countries like Australia – which has already established an institute for PE and the Positive Education School Association (PESA) – Austria, and German-speaking countries in general, still lag far behind when it comes to PE initiatives. Apart from schools offering alternative education (e.g., Montessori, Waldorf, or Rudolf-Steiner schools) – which could be interpreted as a form of positive- or character education – there has only been one notable PP-related school initiative in Austria since modern PP was born around the turn of the millennium. This initiative is called 'Schulfach Glück', a term that can be translated as 'subject happiness', or rather 'subject eudaimonia'.

The project 'Schulfach Glück' is based on the idea that happiness and wellbeing can be taught, which is also a key tenet of PP. The initiative was launched in 2007 by Ernst Fritz-Schubert in the Willy-Hellpach school in Heidelberg, Germany. It was intended as an addition to traditional educational systems and aimed to offer a resource- and solution-oriented approach to develop students' and teachers' personalities and strengths, build resilience and self-confidence, teach valuable life skills, and raise students' and teachers' life satisfaction (Fritz-Schubert 2008).

In Austria, the initiative 'Schulfach Glück' was first introduced as a pilot project in six schools across Styria, including two primary schools, a general secondary school (BRG), and a technical college (HTL), in the fall of 2009. The project was initiated by an organization called 'Die

Sinnstifter', who view it as their mission to increase the happiness and meaningfulness of people and organizations. In the Styrian schools participating in the pilot project, happiness was taught once a week across all age levels. While 'Glück' constituted an obligatory subject in Heidelberg, the Styrian schools introduced it as an elective subject which encompassed 36 hours in total. Those were divided into four modules: The first one (12 hours) dealt with students' psychosocial health and topics such as self-worth, empathy, communication, or conflict resolution. The second module (10 hours) was dedicated to the importance of movement and physical exercise. The third (6 hours) was concerned with the connection between nutrition, health, and happiness. Finally, the fourth module (8 hours) focused on the body as a means of expression, for example, through theater pedagogy.

So far, the initiative 'Schulfach Glück' has been successfully realized in more than 100 schools across Austria and Germany. Schools can implement the project autonomously, either in the form of an elective subject, optional subject, project week, or project day. Since 2014, 'Die Sinnstifter' also offer training courses for teachers, educators, and coaches, in which they learn about the didactic principles, basic conceptual ideas, exercises, and methods of teaching 'Glück'.

Unfortunately, hardly any studies have been conducted on the effects of the project 'Schulfach Glück' on students' wellbeing. One small-scale study was conducted by Rupp and Knörzer (2010), who investigated the effects of the subject 'Glück' on the wellbeing of 17-19-year old students attending a technical college. Analyzing students' responses to a standardized 94-item questionnaire, they found slight improvements in some wellbeing domains and no improvements in others. However, since the number of participants was relatively small (n=58), the validity of results may be limited. A similar study was undertaken by Bertrams (2011) in two technical colleges in Heidelberg. 106 students participated in the study and filled out a questionnaire about their wellbeing at the beginning and end of the school year 2010/2011. Compared to the control group, those students enrolled in the subject 'Glück' showed significant improvements in several wellbeing domains, such as positive emotions, dealing with adversities, and optimism. To this date, no such studies have been conducted in Austrian schools.

To conclude, it has to be said that much more research is needed to determine if and in which ways the innovative project 'Schulfach Glück' positively impacts the wellbeing of students and teachers. However, promising results from studies conducted in anglophone countries like the

United States or Australia (see chapter 4) point to the effectiveness of wellbeing interventions in educational contexts and thus encourage their further development.

Before moving on to concrete suggestions for creating a positive EFL classroom, two organizations offering PP training courses in Austria should be pointed out, with the aim to present opportunities for teachers and educators wishing to educate themselves about the science and practices of PP. The German-speaking umbrella organization for PP (DACH-PP), for instance, offers certified PP training courses on four levels: Certified Professional of PP, Certified Consultant of PP, Certified Trainer of PP, and Certified Master Trainer of PP. Levels 1-3 build upon each other, have no other pre-requirements and each encompass around 15-18 training days. Level 4 is only available to those with an existing degree in social sciences. Furthermore, DACH-PP offers three practice-oriented qualifications, namely the Certified PP Coach (30 days), the Certified Positive Business Expert (30 days), and the Certified Positive Education Expert (15 days). More information about the training courses can be found on the DACH-PP website (https://www.dach-pp.eu/).

Another opportunity for learning more about PP is offered by the Austrian Positive Psychology Association (APPA). Since 2015, the association has organized an annual PP conference, where experts and those interested in PP come together to discuss the newest findings of cutting-edge PP research. In 2018, the conference is taking place from August 24-25 in Graz, offering lectures and workshops in several areas of applied PP, where attendants can acquire new tools and knowledge for their coaching or therapeutic practices, as well as for their personal growth and professional development (APPA).

The only university in the German-speaking area offering a university degree in PP is the University of Zurich. The Certificate of Advanced Studies in PP takes two semesters to complete and currently costs CHF 7800. Other Master Programs in Applied PP in Europe are offered in England (University of East London, Buckinghamshire New University, Anglia Ruskin University), Denmark (University of Aarhus), and the Netherlands (University of Twente). Non-academic PP courses in the German-speaking area are offered by the Institute for Positive Psychology and Mental-Coaching (IPPM) in Graz, the Inntal Institute near Munich, and the German society for PP (DGPP) in Berlin.

6. The positive EFL classroom

So far, the concept and principles of PE have been outlined (including foundational concepts like wellbeing, PP, and character strengths), the effectiveness of diverse PEIs has been reviewed, and the status quo in Austrian schools has been analyzed. The final chapter will bring all generated insights together by giving concrete and practical suggestions on how the principles of PE can be realized in Austrian EFL classrooms in a way that is both compatible with the curriculum and tailored to the health- and wellbeing-related needs of Austrian students.

Inspired by the PE-model of Geelong Grammar School, the suggestions have been divided into two categories, namely 'Explicitly teaching PP' (7.1.) and 'Implicitly embedding PP' (7.2.). According to this PE-model, 'learning', 'teaching', 'embedding', and 'living' PP are the four ways in which PE is brought to life. Although the dimensions of 'learning' and 'living' PP have not been explicitly dealt with in this thesis, it goes without saying that acquiring knowledge in PP is a prerequisite for teaching or embedding PP in classrooms. Furthermore, PP will only become a way of 'living' for students and teachers, if they are repeatedly exposed to PP content and encouraged to apply PP practices both in- and outside the classroom. To ensure this continuous exposure, the following exercises for 'teaching' and 'embedding' PP can be a powerful tool.

The PP exercises and practices included in this chapter have been chosen according to six guidelines, which will briefly be outlined below[2].

- Firstly, they can be carried out by individual EFL teachers and do not require any special training in PP. That is because the success of PEIs is likely to be enhanced if they are implemented by teachers, instead of external PP experts or coaches (Waters 2011). Waters (2011) suspects that an underlying factor responsible for this effect might be the existing relationship between teachers and students.
- Secondly, all exercises can be incorporated into EFL lessons without high administrative burdens. This is not only convenient for teachers, but also scientifically sound, since "the infusion of teaching positive psychology skills […] into the already established school subjects" (as opposed to introducing an additional PP subject) has produced promising results in the past (Waters 2011: 84).
- Thirdly, to increase their practicality, the selected exercises do not require extensive effort, time, or special materials.

[2] Since the selected exercises have been taken from a broad range of different sources, the source(s) for each respective exercise will be referenced separately.

- Fourthly, all exercises are compatible with the educational aims stated in the general curriculum for secondary education (BMBWF 2017) that have been identified in chapter 5.2. as being in line with the principles of PE (e.g., providing health education, identifying students' strengths, teaching and cultivating values and virtues, and fostering students' self- and interpersonal competencies).
- Fifthly, the selected practices and exercises are not restricted to a specific school type or grade, but can mostly be used across a broad range of age levels and school systems.
- Finally, all exercises are in line with the general principles of PE, and are thus strengths-focused, resource-oriented, and proactive in their approach.

6.1. Explicitly teaching PP

6.1.1. Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)

The methodological framework needed for explicitly teaching PP content in Austrian EFL classrooms is CLIL, which stands for content and language integrated learning. CLIL can be defined as an approach to teaching, whereby a non-native language (e.g., English) functions as the medium of instruction in content subjects (e.g., biology or psychology) (Dalton-Puffer 2007). A CLIL approach can, however, also be used in foreign language classrooms to teach either linguistic or language-unrelated content, such as topics related to anglophone cultures, natural sciences, or PP. In both cases, the aim of CLIL is for students to gain knowledge about a particular subject content, while simultaneously improving their language skills. In CLIL, there is no implied preference for either language or content, which distinguishes CLIL from similar concepts like 'English-Medium Instruction' (EMI), where the focus is clearly on content. To this date, dozens of studies have confirmed the benefits of CLIL for the acquisition of both content knowledge and language skills (e.g., Heras & Lasagabaster 2015; Jexenflicker & Dalton-Puffer 2010; Lasagabaster 2008; Ruiz de Zarobe, 2008, 2010; Van de Craen, Ceuleers & Mondt 2007; Xanthou 2011). It should, however, be noted that the findings for content-related outcomes are less conclusive than those for language skills (Dalton-Puffer 2011).

For teachers who wish to use a CLIL approach for explicitly teaching PP in their EFL classes, a few key concepts of CLIL will be presented in the following. To begin with, Meyer (2010) elaborates on four core elements of CLIL: input, tasks, output, and scaffolding. Firstly, in terms of **input**, Meyer (2010) notes that it should be rich, challenging, meaningful, and authentic. CLIL input should be connected to students' interests and pre-knowledge, so that they can connect new ideas with existing ones. Additionally, CLIL input should be multi-modal so that

students with different learning preferences can benefit from it. Multi-modal input is also beneficial because it is likely to engage students in higher-order thinking skills, since it requires them to transfer knowledge from one mode to another. Secondly, regarding **tasks**, Meyer (2010) notes that they should require learners to communicate with each other and to employ higher-order thinking skills like evaluating or analyzing. Thirdly, concerning **output**, attention should be paid to fluency, accuracy, and complexity, with a focus on fluency and overall comprehensibility (Meyer 2010). Finally, **scaffolding** plays a key role in every CLIL lesson. It reduces students' cognitive and linguistic load and should take place in the form of input scaffolding before the task, supportive scaffolding during the task, and output scaffolding after the task (e.g., by discussing/translating difficult technical vocabulary or by providing useful output phrases) (Meyer 2010). Further information about CLIL and helpful guides for planning CLIL lessons are, for instance, provided by Coyle (2008), Meyer (2010), or Montalto et al. (2016).

To conclude, CLIL allows EFL teachers to teach non-linguistic content (e.g., PP topics) while simultaneously fostering students' language skills. Therefore, neither students' content knowledge nor their language competence has to suffer. What follows is a list of PP topics that are particularly suitable for EFL lessons in secondary schools. The first two topics will be elaborated on in greater detail in chapters 6.1.1.1. and 6.1.1.2.

- Character strengths and virtues (for details, see chapter 6.1.1.1.)
- The four styles of responding (for details, see chapter 6.1.1.2.)
- The PERMA model of wellbeing (Helgesen 2016; Seligman 2011)
- The 6 pillars of self-esteem (Branden 1994)
- Growth mindset vs. fixed mindset (Dweck 2012)
- The connections between sleep, movement, nutrition, health, and happiness
- Emotional resilience and how to build it (APA 2018)
- Grit (Duckworth 2016)
- The upside of stress (McGonigal 2015)
- Hardiness: The courage to grow from stress (Maddi 2006)
- Goal-setting theories (Conzemius & O'Neill 2006; Miller & Frisch 2009)
- Perfectionism vs. "optimalism" (Ben-Shahar 2009)
- The ABC theory of emotion (Ellis 1962)
- Willpower and self-control (Baumeister & Tierney 2011)
- Compassion and self-compassion (Neff 2003)

- Gratitude and its impact on health and wellbeing
- Mindfulness and meditation and their impact on health and wellbeing
- Optimism and the concept of 'learned optimism' (Seligman 1991)
- The theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner 1983, 2006)

6.1.1.1. Character strengths and virtues

The VIA character strengths and virtues have already been outlined in chapter 2.3. (see Peterson & Seligman 2004). What follows is a list of exercises and brief interventions related to the concept of character strengths, which are some of many ways to explicitly teach it in EFL classrooms.

Discovering one's strengths via the VIA online survey

A great way to start a discussion about character strengths in class is to ask students to take the free VIA character strengths survey and bring their results to class. The survey can be found on the homepage of the VIA Institute on Character (https://www.viacharacter.org/www). The survey is a psychometrically valid, free, online, self-report questionnaire that reveals one's top 5 signature strengths (Seligman & Peterson 2004). It takes around 15 minutes to complete and is available in more than 30 different languages. Furthermore, there is a version for adults (consisting of 120 items) and for adolescents aged between 10-17 (consisting of 96 items). After completing the questionnaire, students receive a list of their 24 character strengths in rank order, along with descriptions of each strength. Students can print out this list or note down their top 5 signature strengths and bring the notes to class.

Me at my very best

The 'me at my very best' exercise is suggested by Seligman et al. (2009) as a pre-task for taking the VIA strengths survey. Park and Peterson (2009) note that the exercise can also function as a getting-to-know icebreaker activity, for example, when a teacher takes over a new class and wants to learn more about his or her students. In either case, the exercise asks students to tell or write down a story about a time when they were at their best, not in terms of academic or athletic success, but rather at their best "as a moral being" (Park & Peterson 2009a: 7). If the exercise is used as a pre-task for the VIA strengths survey, students should write down their story, and – after having received their VIA survey results – try to identify examples of their strengths in the narrative (Seligman et al. 2009).

Practicing strengths with the AID model

The AID model for strengths practice was proposed by Biswas-Diener, Kashdan, and Lyubchik (2016). 'AID' is an acronym for three interconnected stages of a sustainable strengths practice that promises to increase people's wellbeing and performance in the long term. The AID model is a valuable concept for teachers who wish to increase their students' awareness and use of their strengths. AID stands for 'attitude', 'identification', and 'development'.

Firstly, concerning students' **attitudes** toward strengths, teachers should make students aware of the malleability of strengths and emphasize that strengths are "capacities for excellence rather than personality traits" (Biswas-Diener, Kashdan & Lyubchik 2016: 38). This step is crucial, because research has shown that the way people view their personality and qualities (as developable or fixed) has a tremendous impact on their wellbeing and future development (Dweck 2012).

Secondly, as for the **identification** of strengths, the VIA online survey offers a valuable and free tool to discover students' strengths in a scientifically grounded way (Peterson & Seligman 2004). Teachers should, however, emphasize that the VIA framework conceptualizes people as possessing all 24 character strengths, not just their top 5 signature strengths. Therefore, strengths at the bottom of the list might currently be less developed, but can grow stronger with appropriate training and effort (Peterson & Seligman 2004). More open-ended methods to identify students' strengths are so-called 'strengths spotting exercises', for instance, those proposed by Shankland and Rosset (2017). One of their suggested exercises is called 'strengths 360°', where students ask five people (e.g., peers, teachers, or relatives) to identify one of their strengths, either entirely freely or from a given list of strengths. A similar exercise is called 'secret strengths spotting', whereby each student is assigned a partner whom they should secretly observe for a designated period, noting down strengths they identify. After this period, students get to know their secret strengths spotters and share their notes with each other (Shankland & Rosset 2017). Both strengths spotting exercises can be helpful for students who have difficulties or feel uncomfortable describing their own strengths.

The last step of the AID model is the **development** of strengths. Although there is some evidence that the mere identification of strengths increases people's happiness (Seligman et al. 2005), it is the development and cultivation of strengths that transforms students' self-image, wellbeing, and their sense of meaning in the long term (Biswas-Diener, Kashdan & Lyubchik 2016). In terms of strengths development exercises, the VIA homepage (www.viacharacter.org/www/) is a valuable source. For each of the 24 VIA strengths, the

website suggests exercises to boost the respective strength. Students could, for example, pick one or two strengths that they wish to develop further in the upcoming month, use the suggested exercises, and track their progress in a strengths journal. Another 'cultivating strengths' activity asks students to choose one of their signature strengths and try to use it in novel ways every day for one week (Shankland & Rosset 2017). The following questions could also be used to encourage students to reflect on their strengths use and development:

- How often do you use [insert strength]? How could you use it more often?
- How could you use [insert strength] in new ways?
- Which strengths would you like to develop further? How could you use them more often in the future?
- Are there any strengths that you particularly admire in other people? What exactly is it that you admire? How could you develop these strengths in yourself?
- Can strengths be used in undesirable ways (e.g., the strength of 'humor')? How could you prevent an inappropriate use of strengths?

All in all, the AID model offers a useful guideline for teaching strengths in the classroom. The 'attitude' component fosters students' growth mindset, the 'identification' component aims at developing students' "strengths-colored glasses" (Clifton, Anderson, & Schreiner 2006: 73), and the 'development' component ensures the continuous use of students' strengths.

6.1.1.2. The four styles of responding

The four styles of responding described by Gable et al. (2004) are a crucial PE topic, since they can tremendously and lastingly impact the quality of students' relationships, their sense of belonging, and their overall wellbeing. In particular, one of the four styles, namely active constructive responding, has been shown to be a strong predictor of relationship wellbeing (Gable et al. 2004; Passmore & Oades 2014).

The four styles of responding can best be observed when somebody shares a positive event (e.g., "I've been selected for the school musical"). They exist on two dimensions: the active-passive dimension, on the one hand, and the constructive-destructive dimension, on the other. Active responses show an interest in what has been said, while passive responses ignore it. Constructive responses offer support, while destructive responses do not (Gable et al. 2004). The four styles of responding can be visualized in the following two-by-two matrix:

	Constructive	Destructive
Active	**Active-constructive responding** Enthusiastic support, asking questions "Congrats, that's amazing news! Which role did you get? When do the rehearsals start?"	**Active-destructive responding** Pointing out the negative "Are you sure you can fit that into your schedule? Your grades will probably suffer."
Passive	**Passive-constructive responding** Understated support "Aha, great."	**Passive-destructive responding** Ignoring the event, focusing on oneself "That reminds me of the ABBA musical I saw last week. It was great."

The concept of active-constructive responding is similar to Park and Peterson's concept of 'appreciative listening', which they describe as "listen[ing] carefully to what is said and then [responding] in a way that builds on what has been conveyed as opposed to disagreeing with it, dismissing it, or ignoring it out of discomfort" (2009a: 7).

Teaching active-constructive responding in class

One way to teach active-constructive responding in class is by outlining and distinguishing the four styles of responding described by Gable et al. (2004), either by drawing a two-by-two table on the board or by handing out worksheets. To exemplify the four styles of responding, students watch a video that displays all responding styles and try to match the respective scenes with the four styles. Youtube offers several suitable videos for this purpose[3]. Another option is to watch the video straight away and ask students to identify differences in the four ways the actors responded to a positive event. They might also be asked which style of responding they like best and why. Subsequently, teachers can provide labels for all four styles and outline the benefits associated with active-constructive responding.

To consolidate the newly acquired knowledge and practice active-constructive responding, students can be given one or all of the following exercises:

- Write down some examples of good news people commonly share with you. Choose one of those news items and come up with a response for each style of responding discussed earlier (active-constructive, active-destructive, passive-constructive, passive-destructive). Compare your answers with those of your partner.

[3] See, for example, "Active constructive responding" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRORihbXMnA)

- Get together with a partner. Decide who is the ‘sharer of good news’ and who is the ‘responder’. The sharer starts the conversation by talking about real or made-up good news and the responder tries to react in an active-constructive way. When the responder is finished, the sharer gives constructive feedback to the responder and tells him/her how their response made them feel and what could be improved about it. After the feedback round, switch roles and repeat the process.
- Active listening is a crucial part of active-constructive responding. Think back to a time when you were sharing something with somebody and had the feeling that they were not really paying attention. What might be differences between passively *hearing* and actively *listening* to somebody’s news? For instance, how might differences between hearing and listening manifest themselves in body language, eye contact, feedback, etc.?

6.2. Implicitly embedding PP

6.2.1. PP and the structure of the lesson

6.2.1.1. Positive classroom rituals and routines

Classroom rituals are repeated, predictable, and prearranged activities which students learn to expect as part of their daily classroom routine (Jensen 2009). According to Jensen (2009), effective classroom rituals engage everyone, are simple and easy, and produce positive emotional states. They provide a safe and structured learning environment for students in which they know what to expect. Classroom rituals and routines have been shown to improve both students’ behavior and their academic performance (Cheney 1989; Vallecorsa, de Bettencourt, & Zigmond 2000). Especially when used at the beginning of lessons, positive classroom rituals start lessons on a cheerful note and have the potential to create a relaxed learning atmosphere. What follows is a list of suggestions for positive classroom rituals.

The WWW (what went well) starter activity

The WWW exercise has been adapted from Seligman et al. (2009) and combines a range of wellbeing-fostering elements, namely physical movement, positive relationships, and positive emotions. It is best used at the beginning of lessons when students appear tired or exhausted. Students are asked to stand up, walk around the classroom, and get together with a classmate they do not usually connect with that often. Then, they are asked to share a WWW event of the past day or weekend with each other (e.g., “The best thing that happened on the weekend/yesterday was that I visited my grandma/won the football match/went to the cinema/finished an assignment for school”). This activity will not only energize students and

put them into a positive mental state, but will additionally foster the relationships between less well-known classmates. If students appear overly energized and active, the WWW activity can also be carried out individually, for instance, by asking students to write down a WWW event on a strip of paper, fold it, and quietly put it into a classroom blessings jar (see chapter 6.2.6.).

The mindfulness bell

Shankland and Rosset (2017) describe the 'mindfulness bell' ritual, where the ringing of a bell is a signal for students to be quiet and pay attention to the present moment. The mindfulness bell can also be used to foster students' focused attention. For this purpose, students are asked to be completely quiet and listen to the sound of the bell as long as possible (Shankland & Rosset 2017). Kabat-Zinn (2013) found that the mindfulness bell – if established as a classroom ritual – is an effective tool to calm down noisy classrooms.

Brief mindfulness meditations

Mindfulness meditations are useful interventions at the beginning of lessons, especially when students seem emotionally exhausted, overly active, or unfocused. Only a few minutes of meditation can help students to calm down, focus on the task at hand, and allow them to perform at their best (Oades et al. 2011). Concrete examples for mindfulness meditations can be found in the following section.

6.2.1.2. Mindfulness and meditation

Meditation has been defined as "a process of paying attention, often to a particular object designated as the focus of concentration" (Campion & Rocco 2009: 47). According to Zylowska et al. (2008), there are three stages of meditation: Firstly, focusing on an "attentional anchor", such as a person, an object, or one's breath. Secondly, nonjudgmentally noticing distracting thoughts or external disruptions. Thirdly, directing one's attention back to the attentional anchor. Meditation has been shown to improve physical and mental health, enhance compassion, positive affect, creativity, and self-regulation, and reduce stress and symptoms of anxiety (Cowger & Torrance 1982; Davidson et al. 2003; Grossman et al. 2004; Waters 2011). Besides, meditation was found to foster the positive emotion of serenity, which facilitates the generation of insight and is associated with a broader attention, reduced levels of stress, increased levels of compassion, and an integration of thoughts and emotions (Keegan 2009; Levine 2009; Thygeson et al. 2010). Apart from 'loving kindness meditation', 'transcendental meditation', and 'ACEM meditation', another popular meditation technique in educational contexts is 'mindfulness meditation' (Waters et al. 2015). It is characterized by a mindful

attitude toward internal distractions (e.g., thoughts and emotions) that come up during meditating (Waters 2011). During mindfulness meditation, it is crucial to acknowledge (instead of fight) incoming thoughts, observe them with non-judgmental curiosity, and eventually watch them subside. It is believed that by observing distracting thoughts non-judgmentally, people can gain valuable insights into their psychological and emotional realities (Kabat-Zinn 1994).

Since some students might be unfamiliar with meditation and thus skeptical about the practice, meditation exercises should always be voluntary. Teachers might, for instance, introduce meditation exercises by saying, "I don't force anyone to participate, but I strongly encourage you to, even if it makes you feel slightly uncomfortable. I know it is something completely new for some of you and will stretch you beyond your comfort zone, but it is a very rewarding practice, once you get used to it. Even if you don't want to participate today, maybe you want to give it a try next time. However, if you choose not to take part, I ask you to be quiet and not disturb the others who are partaking. Thank you".

The internet offers endless resources for free meditation instructions, both in the form of audio files or print-out guides. There are also an increasing number of mindfulness meditation apps, for instance, the Smiling Mind app or the Headspace app. What follows is a small selection of popular and evidence-based mindfulness meditation practices, which have all been reviewed by Shankland and Rosset (2017).

Body Scan

The body scan practice is a form of mindfulness meditation that asks students to scan different areas of their body. Starting from their feet all the way up to their head, students selectively focus their attention on the respective body parts (Shankland & Rosset 2017). Burnett (2013) has developed an 8-minute body scan exercise called the FOFBOC, which is an acronym for "Feet on floor. Bum on chair". The FOFBOC body scan, as well as many other body scan practices can be downloaded for free online, for example, on the Being Mindful website (http://www.beingmindful.ie/).

Mindful Breathing

Mindful breathing practices are meditation exercises whereby the anchor of attention is one's own breath. Students are asked to pay focused attention to their breath and the many ways in which it manifests itself in the body (e.g., air flowing through the nose and throat, the belly/chest/back rising and lowering). One mindful breathing exercise developed by Burnett (2013) is called "7/11". Students are asked to inhale for a count of 7 and exhale for a count of 11. Variations of this exercise include the 4-7-8 breathing technique (exhaling through the

mouth for a count of 8, inhaling through the nose for a count of 4, holding the breath for a count of 7, repeat) or the box breathing technique (inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts, exhale for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts, repeat), both of which have been shown to increase calmness, elevate one's mood, and reduce stress and anxiety (Davis & Hayes 2011; Feldman, Greeson & Senville 2010).

Caring Mindfulness

The 'caring mindfulness' practice was coined by Ricard (2015) and is a form of mindfulness meditation that aims to develop students' capacities for compassion, empathy, and altruism. It is similar to 'loving kindness meditation', since it starts with the individual and gradually expands the meditation focus to other human beings. The following caring mindfulness practice was reviewed by Shankland and Rosset (2017) and is based on a compassion program by Ozawa-de and Dodson-Lavelle (2011). First, students are asked to focus on their own lives and their aspirations to be happy. Then, they are encouraged to expand their attention to their friends, classmates, and children all over the world and wish them happiness and freedom from any kind of suffering. Finally, students are encouraged to engage in behaviors that will increase the happiness and wellbeing of their classmates. As with all other forms of meditation discussed so far, instructions for caring mindfulness meditations or loving kindness meditations can be found online, for instance, in the form of Youtube videos.

6.2.1.3. Music

Research has shown that music has beneficial effects on students' academic performance and behavior. Some studies have, for instance, reported significant positive effects of background music on student's reading and mathematics performance (Hall 1952; Hallam & Price 1998). Other studies have investigated the effects of music on the behavior and performance of children with emotional or behavioral problems. They have shown that background music decreases the frequency of disruptive and aggressive behavior, and increases students' cooperativeness, concentration, and calmness (Savan 1999; Scott 1970; Hall 1952; Hallam & Price 1998). Finally, Fonseca-Mora and Machancoses (2016) examined the use of melody and rhythm in language classes and argued that certain elements of music have the potential to facilitate the teaching and learning of languages. They also discovered that music has beneficial effects on students' memory, mood, attention, concentration, and effort. The findings led to the conlusion that language learning "can be facilitated by the use of musical elements that promote the development of motivation, verbal memory and language skills" (369). Some suggestions

for ways to incorporate music into the classroom to enhance students' mood, learning, and wellbeing are:

- Playing background music during group work activities
- Playing classical background music during reading comprehensions
- Putting on motivational music at the beginning of lessons, e.g., during the completion of administrative tasks
- Creating listening comprehension gap activities with song lyrics
- Learning new vocabulary with song lyrics
- Playing language games similar to 'Simon says' (only for first graders)
- Starting new topics with content-related songs
- Singing an English song when students need a "brain-break"

6.2.1.4. Partner and group work

Teachers have a responsibility to facilitate the development of peer relationships and create a positive classroom atmosphere that is characterized by mutual respect and appreciation. They can, for instance, create many opportunities for partner and group work, since such social formats can potentially lead to high quality connections among classmates. In order to improve the relationships between less well-known peers, improve cohesion among all classmates, and counteract the formation of "outsiders", teachers can also encourage students to get together with classmates who they usually do not interact with that much. A further possibility to infuse PP into group work activities are so called 'strength-based teams'.

Strength-based teams

If students work on a project in smaller groups, teachers might consider forming those groups on the basis of students' strengths. The concept of 'strengths-based teams' was first described by Rath & Conchie (2009) and was originally used in organizational and leadership contexts. Such teams can, however, also be of great value in PE-embracing classrooms. Strength-based team formation in the classroom is suitable for upper secondary students and might take the following form:

1. The teacher writes 'executer', 'influencer', 'relationship builder', and 'strategic thinker' on four separate sheets of paper. Below those four domains of leadership, a definition and sample strengths for the respective leadership domain are added (the listed strengths are based on the Gallup strengths framework (see Buckingham & Clifton 2001))

Strategic Thinker: *responsible for knowing where to go* analytical, context, futuristic, ideation, input, intellection, learner, strategic	**Executer:** *responsible for getting somewhere* achiever, arranger, belief, consistency, deliberative, discipline, focus, responsibility, restorative
Influencer: *responsible for getting there with others* activator, command, communication, competition, maximizer, self-assurance, significance, woo	**Relationship Builder:** *responsible for keeping others on your team* adaptability, developer, connectedness, empathy, harmony, includer, individualization, positivity, relator

2. The teacher pins the four sheets of paper in the four corners of the classroom.
3. The teacher asks students to walk around the room, read the definitions, and get an idea of the four leadership domains.
4. Once they have familiarized themselves with them, students should remain in the corner that most represents their leadership strengths.
5. If the number of students standing in each corner is relatively balanced, the teacher can put together teams of four so that – ideally – each team ends up with one strategic thinker, executer, influencer, and relationship builder. If the number is imbalanced, the teacher can ask some students to change to the second leadership domain they most identify with.

6.2.2. PP and receptive skills

Both reading and listening comprehensions lend themselves perfectly to embedding PP content. For instance, age-appropriate texts about PP topics such as resilience, health behaviors, or the benefits of positive emotions can be transformed into reading comprehensions by adding open comprehension questions, multiple choice items, or follow-up tasks. In a similar fashion, audio or video recordings about PP topics can easily be transformed into listening comprehensions. Furthermore, Helgesen (2016) suggests that meditation exercises (e.g., loving kindness meditations) can also function as listening comprehensions, since they require students to understand what is being said and direct their attention and thoughts accordingly.

6.2.3. PP and productive skills

6.2.3.1. Journaling

A writing format that is particularly suitable for PP topics is journaling. It has been defined as "a multi-faceted, flexible, dynamic, process that leads the writer through evolving insights based on conversations with self, others, or imagined others" (Zyromski 2007: 11). Dozens of studies have confirmed that journaling offers multiple cognitive and emotional benefits, increases wellbeing, and is an effective and powerful therapeutic and educational tool (e.g., Dart et al. 1998; Garmon 1998; McCrindle & Christensen 1995; Miller 1997; Zacharias 1991; Zyromski 2007). Journaling also supports the personalization of learning, since students can choose a format and design that suits their needs and (aesthetic) preferences. Students might even decide to keep electronic journals, since research suggests that online journaling offers the same learning and therapeutic benefits as paper and pencil journaling (Longhurst & Sandage 2004).

In terms of assessing journals, teachers should only focus on the completion of journal entries and refrain from grading texts and correcting errors. Some journal entries might be more suitable for assessing and even reading than others. Teachers might even choose not to collect students' journals at all, but only read and assess students' reflections about journaling and the observed effects.

The following journal exercises are repeatedly mentioned in PP literature and have been extensively used and studied in PEIs. Students can either keep a separate journal for each of the described areas (e.g., a gratitude journal and a goal-setting journal) or use the same journal for various exercises.

Gratitude journal

The expression of gratitude has been positively associated with physical health (Hill, Allemand & Roberts 2013), goal attainment (Emmons & Crumpler 2000), wellbeing, and satisfaction with school (Froh, Sefick & Emmons 2008), and negatively associated with psychological distress (Wong et al. 2017) and burnout (Lanham et al. 2012). Moreover, the explicit expression of gratitude toward others can be expected to have positive effects on one's relationships and prosocial behavior (Bartlett & DeSteno 2006). Examples of gratitude journal exercises are:

- Every day for one week, write down up to five things that you are grateful for. At the end of the week, reflect on the following questions: Did you notice any changes in

how you interacted with the world and others? Which ones? How did it feel to write down things you are grateful for? Was it easy/hard or did it get easier with time?

- Write down five ways in which you can show your gratitude toward others. Try to implement those ideas in the next couple of days. How did this exercise make you feel? How did it make others feel?
- Write a letter to a person you are grateful to. Describe why you are grateful in as much detail as possible. How did their actions impact your life in a positive way?
- Which aspects of yourself are you grateful for? Think about your strengths, talents, appearance, or personality.
- Has there been any difficult situation in the past that you are grateful for now, because it made you stronger or improved your relationships with others? Describe this difficult situation and the benefits resulting from it.
- Which things do you take for granted, but would terribly miss if they were not there anymore? How could you appreciate them more often?
- Think about a person who you have had difficulties getting along with. Is there any aspect about them that you are grateful for?
- Simply saying "thank you" is a way of expressing gratitude. Try to genuinely say "thank you" more often in the next three days and reflect on how it makes you and the people around you feel.

Blessings journal

Blessings journals have been used in various PEIs, for example, in Geelong Grammar School – a prime example for PE "in action". Seligman et al. (2009: 301) refer to it as the 'three good things' exercise, whereby students are asked to write down three good things that happened on a particular day for a week. In addition, students should (1) reflect why this good thing happened, (2) how they themselves influenced it with their own actions, (3) what it means to them, and (4) how they could have more of it in the future. Seligman et al. (2009) emphasize that "good things" can be as small as correctly answering a question in school or as big as getting the main role in the school musical. The difference between gratitude and blessings journals is that entries in the gratitude journal concern situations that usually go unnoticed and are taken for granted (e.g., "I am grateful for being free of pain. I am grateful for the support of my parents"), while entries in the blessings journal refer to specific good moments that happened during the day (e.g., "I finished my homework essay. I saw a hilarious movie.").

Kindness journal

In his work *Flourish,* Seligman writes that "doing a kindness produces the single most reliable momentary increase in well-being of any exercise we have tested" (2011: 20). Kindness is also positively correlated with increased positive affect, relationship satisfaction, life satisfaction, and perceived meaningfulness of life (Alden & Trew 2013; Kerr, O'Donovan & Pepping 2015). Consequently, encouraging students to perform acts of kindness more often will not only make the classroom a more supportive and positive environment, but will additionally boost students' own wellbeing. This can be done in the form of a kindness journal, where students note down acts of kindness performed and received every day for a week and reflect how it affected themselves and the people around them. A kindness journal might be combined with a class-wide kindness challenge, whereby students consciously try to perform at least three small acts of kindness per day for a week. It can be helpful to provide a list of possible non-monetary acts of kindness that do not require excessive amounts of time or effort (the internet is full of such lists).

Goal-setting and monitoring journal

Self-regulation and goal-setting skills are vital for academic success (Baumeister & Vohs 2016). They can be fostered by asking students to keep a goal-setting and monitoring journal where they note down and track their daily, weekly, or long-term goals. The following goal-setting journal exercise draws heavily on research by Duckworth et al. (2011), Oettingen et al. (2009), and Wiseman (2009). The exercises combine six evidence-based strategies for attaining one's goals, namely (1) breaking up long-term goals into sub-goals, (2) focusing on the positive outcomes associated with the goal, (3) visualizing the process of attaining a goal, (4) formulating plans for how to overcome likely obstacles, (5) rewarding oneself for attaining goals, and (6) telling friends and family about one's goals (Wiseman 2009).

<u>Goal-setting journal task</u>

1. Write down one of your overall learning goals for this semester.
2. Close your eyes and spend a few minutes imagining that you have reached your goal. How do you feel?
3. Now, imagine yourself in the process of achieving your goal. Which actions do you take?
4. Write down the top three benefits of achieving this goal. How would your life and the life of those around you be better, if you achieved this goal?

5. Write down the top three barriers and problems you will have to face when attempting to achieve this goal.
6. Write down how you will overcome those challenges.
7. Now, break down your overall goal into a maximum of 5 sub-goals. Each goal should be s.m.a.r.t. (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely). Complete the following sentences for each sub-goal:
    - My first/second/third/fourth/fifth sub-goal is to …
    - I believe that I can achieve this goal because …
    - To achieve this sub-goal, I will …
    - This will be achieved by the following date:
    - My reward for achieving this will be …
8. Now, tell your friends and family about your goal. Maybe you even want to start a blog about the pursuit of your goal.

6.2.3.2. Informal letters

Informal letters are another writing format that is particularly suitable for PE purposes. Two types of informal letters commonly included in PEIs will be outlined below, namely gratitude letters and letters of self-compassion.

Gratitude letters

The positive effects of the 'gratitude visit' exercise have already been outlined in chapter 4.1. (see Froh et al. 2009). This activity can also function as a writing assignment in the EFL classroom. A gratitude visit worksheet might contain the following instructions:

1. Think back to a time when somebody did something for you for which you are really grateful. For instance, is there a friend/relative/teacher/coach who was extremely kind to you, but whom you never properly thanked?
2. Write a letter to one of the people you thought of, where you express how grateful you are for what they did. You should focus on the way in which their actions affected your life in a positive way. Try to be as specific as possible.
3. Ask this person if they have time to meet you, but don't tell them about the letter.
4. When you meet each other, take out the letter and read it out aloud.
5. After the meeting, write a reflection outlining how you felt about this exercise. Which emotions came up when writing or delivering the letter? How did the letter make the other person feel? Can you image doing this exercise again with another person?

Letters of self-compassion

The practice of writing self-compassionate letters has been shown to increase people's happiness and reduce symptoms of depression (Shapira & Mongrain 2010). Therefore, letters of self-compassion are a useful writing assignment for PE-embracing EFL classes, since they do not only familiarize students with the requirements of an informal letter, but additionally boost their wellbeing. Below, there is a writing prompt for a letter of self-compassion that has been developed by the Positive Psychology Program (2018) and is based on Kristen Neff's work on self-compassion.

1. Chose an aspect of yourself that you dislike or often criticize (e.g., one related to your abilities, appearance, or personality).
2. Describe how this perceived inadequacy makes you feel. What thoughts, images, emotions, or stories come up when you think about it?
3. Next, imagine someone who is unconditionally loving, accepting, and supportive. This friend sees your strengths and opportunities for growth, including your negative aspects.
4. Now write a letter to yourself from the perspective of this kind friend. What does he or she say to you? How does this friend encourage and support you in taking steps to change?
5. After fully drafting the letter, put it aside for fifteen minutes. Then return to the letter and reread it. Let the words sink in. Feel the encouragement, support, compassion, and acceptance.
6. Review the letter whenever you are feeling down about this aspect and remember that accepting yourself as you are right now is a necessary step for change. Do you think you could make a habit of treating yourself like your best friend?

6.2.3.3. Positive speaking prompts

PE is most effective when it is woven into every aspect of a lesson and school (Waters 2011). This ensures that students experience positive emotional states on a regular basis and makes it more likely for positive classroom practices to become positive habits and ways of thinking, behaving, and living. Discussing how schools can embed PP into existing subjects, Seligman et al. (2009: 305) note that simply changing speaking prompts from "Give a speech on a time you were embarrassed or made a fool out of yourself" to "Give a speech about when you were of value to others" can have far-reaching positive effects. Teachers at Geelong Grammar School, for instance, reported that students "spoke more enthusiastically and fluently" and that

"listening students did not fidget as much during the speeches" (Seligman et al. 2009: 305). In upper secondary Austrian EFL classrooms, more complex positive speaking prompts can be used for practicing individual long turns for the standardized final exam.

Ideas for positive speaking prompts:

- Give a speech about an occasion when you were of value to others.
- Tell a story about a moment when you were at your best.
- What was the best thing that happened in the past week?
- Tell a story about a person you admire. What do you admire about them?
- Give a short speech about somebody or something you are grateful for.
- If you had unlimited resources, how would you make the world a better place?
- Tell a story about an act of kindness that you performed or observed.
- Give a short speech about one of your role models and his/her strengths.
- Pick out one of the VIA strengths and tell a story about a situation when you or one of your friends used this strength in a positive way.

6.2.3.4. Literature response tasks

FitzSimons states that **"**English literature is one curriculum area that naturally lends itself to the task of integrating positive psychology" (2015: 147). That is because literary texts are full of stories of strengths and virtues, such as courage, wisdom, love, kindness, forgiveness, humor, or hope. Below, there are some examples of positive portfolio and response tasks that can substitute dull summary or character description tasks in response to books, movies, or theater plays. Another useful resource for positive movies and songs is the VIA website (www.viacharacter.org/www), which lists movies and songs related to a particular strength. One suggestion is the movie "Batman Begins" and the song "My Way" by Frank Sinatra for the character strength of bravery.

Sample portfolio and response tasks for books, movies, and plays:

- Choose one character and analyze their strengths profile by using the VIA character strengths list. What are their signature strengths? Which strengths could they still develop? How do the strengths manifest themselves in the characters' behavior? Which strengths do you admire most about this character?
- Choose a character and try to compare his/her strengths to your own. Where are similarities and differences? If you share some strengths, describe the ways in which

you and the character cultivate and use them. Do you use them in different or similar ways?

- Which characters displayed the character strength of [insert character strength]. Describe the different ways in which the characters used it. How developed is this character strength in yourself? How could you use it more often?
- Of the six virtues of the VIA strengths framework (wisdom, courage, humanity, transcendence, justice, temperance), which one was most prominent in the book/movie/play? Give reasons for your choice.
- Choose one character that went through a positive transformation in the course of the book/movie/play. Describe this transformation in detail and pay special attention to how the characters' strengths facilitated it. Do you remember a time when you went through a positive transformation? In which ways was it similar/different to that of the character?
- Choose a character and describe how he/she dealt with setbacks, obstacles, and challenges in the course of the book/movie/play. Which strategies did the character employ to tackle these challenges and overcome obstacles? In what ways did the character grow from the challenges?

6.2.4. PP and grammar

PP can even be woven into grammar exercises, as Helgesen (2016) successfully demonstrates. In fact, almost all exercises suggested so far involve at least some grammatical elements, not to mention the vocabulary required to complete the tasks. For instance, the WWW journal exercise requires students to use past and present tenses to write about the nature and cause of good events that happened that day ("Dinner was good tonight, because my mum is a great cook. I got an A on the exam, because I had studied really hard"). Another example are gratitude exercises, which require students to use the gerund to form sentences such as "I am grateful for spending time with my best friend/having a wonderful family/being healthy". As a starting point for more PP-imbued grammar exercises, Helgesen's (2016) book chapter is a recommendable resource, showing how all elements of the PERMA model can be fostered through language exercises. In the following, three of his suggested exercises will be presented as examples of a successful combination of PP with core language teaching.

Being kind through reported speech

Being kind to others is one of the most reliable methods for increasing happiness (Lyubomirsky 2005). One example of an act of kindness is giving a genuine compliment. The following exercise was developed by Helgesen (2016) and combines the mood-boosting effects of giving and receiving compliments with the practice of indirect speech.

The teacher asks students to brainstorm compliments on the board or alternatively hands out a worksheet with sample compliments. In groups of six, students are then asked to write a genuine compliment for every other group member on a slip of paper (e.g., "You've got a beautiful smile" "That's a great dress" "You are generous, because you shared your M&Ms with me yesterday"). With their compliment slips, students return to their seats, copy the compliments onto a sheet of paper, and use indirect speech to report on the compliments.

Compliment	**Indirect/reported speech**
"You've got a beautiful smile"	She said that I had got a beautiful smile.
"That's a great dress"	He told me that that was a great dress.
"You are generous, because you shared your M&Ms with me yesterday"	She wrote that I was generous, because I had shared my M&Ms with her the day before.

Using modal auxiliaries for taking care of one's health and body

Health and wellbeing are closely related, which is why the following exercise is designed to help students reflect on their health habits, while simultaneously practicing auxiliary verbs (see Helgesen 2016: 310). In small groups, students come up with health-related rules using 'should/shouldn't', 'must/mustn't', 'have to/don't have to', and 'can/can't' ("I must do some exercise. I should eat many vegetables. I shouldn't eat fast food"). After all groups have shared their rules with each other, each student draws a two-by-two table (see below) on a sheet of paper and writes the rules in the appropriate field.

	I like these	I don't like these
I do a lot of these already	"I should eat much fruit"	"I should drink a lot of water"
I want to do more of these	"I want to be able to do a push-up, but I can't do it yet"	"I must do some stretching, but it is so boring"

Sentence completion

Sentence completion as a tool for clinical psychological practice was developed by Nathanial Branden (1994). It is used to facilitate personal growth and gain a clearer understanding of oneself. Typically, psychologists offer one or several sentence stems for which patients generate between six and ten endings. In language teaching, sentence completion or gap-filling tasks have long been used to foster and evaluate students' language and grammatical competence. The following exercises aim at combining the positive psychological aspects of sentence completion with core language teaching to help students flourish both academically and psychologically.

Sentence completion exercise 1: positive emotion sentences

This exercise by Helgesen (2016: 311-312) is designed to help learners grasp the concepts of various positive emotions. The sentence stems elicit past tense forms from students, since they are asked to describe past experiences and stories.

- ***Joy***. I was really happy and joyful when…
- ***Gratitude***. I am thankful for…
- ***Serenity.*** I felt peaceful when…
- ***Interest***. Sometimes I'm so interested in something, I don't even notice the time passing. I was very interested, alert and focused when…
- ***Hope.*** Even when things are difficult, I felt they would get better. For example, …
- ***Pride***. I felt proud about something I did when…
- ***Amusement.*** It was so much fun when …
- ***Inspiration.*** Sometimes I see people doing wonderful things for other people. For example, …
- ***Awe.*** Some things are so wonderful, I can hardly believe them. For example, when…
- ***Love***. Love can be romantic love, family love, or caring about friends. I really knew I was loved when…

Sentence completion exercise 2: Conditional sentences/linking words

The following sentence stems do not only encourage students to think about various aspects of their wellbeing, but also test students' understanding of conditional sentences and linking words.

- If I am 5 percent more forgiving today …
- If I hadn't been born with a negativity bias, …

- If my abilities weren't fixed but could change over time, …
- Since my success in school relies mainly on effort, …
- To make sure that I drink enough during the day, …
- If I notice how people are affected by the quality of my listening, …
- Although exercising is exhausting, …
- If I treated myself as I would treat my best friends, …
- If I bring more awareness to my life today, …
- Even though we all have our flaws, …
- If I take more responsibility for my choices and actions today, …
- If I boost my energy level by 5 percent today, …
- If I brought 5 percent more awareness to my important relationships, …
- If I am 5 percent more self-accepting today…
- In order to get my 7-9 hours of sleep every night, …

6.2.5. PP and assessment

6.2.5.1. The role of high expectations: The Pygmalion and Galatea effects

A core building block of Marva Collins's way of teaching was having high expectations of her students. The importance of teachers' high expectations has also been repeatedly demonstrated in scientific studies, the most famous of which was conducted by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968). They found that teachers' expectations about their students' development actually predicted their students' development and thus led to a self-fulfilling prophecy. This effect has been called the 'Pygmalion effect' and has since been replicated across various different settings (e.g., in the workplace), cultural contexts, and age groups (Boser, Wilhelm & Hanna 2014; Tauber 1998). The Rosenthal-Jacobson study is particularly intriguing, since the participating teachers' expectations were based on misinformation about their students' intelligence. In this study, Rosenthal and Jacobson measured the IQ of elementary school children and – independently of results – randomly selected around 20% of students who were declared to be "intellectual bloomers". The actual IQ test results were not disclosed to the elementary school teachers; they were mainly informed about who was an alleged "intellectual bloomer" and could thus be expected to outperform their peers in the upcoming school year. After 8 months, the researchers returned to the elementary school to see how the students were doing. They repeated the IQ test and discovered startling results. Although the "intellectual

bloomers" had been randomly assigned, it was exactly them who showed the most significant gains in their IQ (Rosenthal & Jacobson 1968).

The Pygmalion effect is most likely the result of changes in teacher behavior. They might pose more challenging questions to "bloomers", be more patient with them, or more attentive to their learning potential and progress. Interestingly, the Pygmalion effect also works the other way around, in the sense that students who were told that their teacher was exceptionally talented, invested more time into studying for the respective course and eventually outperformed students in the control group (Feldman & Theiss 1982).

The Pygmalion effect is closely tied to the 'Galatea effect', which "occurs when high self-expectations lead to high performance" (McNatt & Judge 2004: 550). Therefore, the Galatea effect is another self-fulfilling prophecy, whereby a person's high expectations about their own abilities lead them to behave in ways that positively impact subsequent performance. This means that teachers who are explicit about their high expectations toward their students, as well as their strong beliefs in their students' abilities ("I have high expectations and I strongly believe that every one of you has the potential to meet them") might be able to make use of both the Pygmalion and the Galatea effects for their own and their students' benefit. When teachers believe in the potential and abilities of their students, the latter are more likely to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy, which is necessary for the Galatea effect to occur (McNatt & Judge 2004).

To sum up, it can be stated that research has shown that teachers' high or low expectations of their students affect their own behavior and eventually students' academic performance. It seems that teachers' biases lead them to identify the potential of some, but not of other students. If teachers managed to use the power of expectations deliberately and chose to look for the potential in every student, they might be able to facilitate their students' success. As Harvard professor Tal Ben-Shahar put it in one of his lectures: "Appreciate the good, and the good will appreciate" (2011).

6.2.5.2. How to praise and criticize: Developing students' growth mindsets

The distinction between growth mindsets and fixed mindsets, as well as the benefits associated with the former have already been outlined in chapter 4.2. Research has shown that the way teachers and parents praise and criticize children has a major impact on which mindset will be developed. Firstly, in terms of praising, the main guideline is to praise effort, not intelligence or talent (Dweck 2012). Table 5 presents sample statements that tend to foster either growth or fixed mindsets.

Table 5 Growth mindset and fixed mindset statements

Growth mindset statements	Fixed mindset statements
• "Good job, you put a lot of effort into this." • "Well done, studying has paid off." • "Your arguments are very convincing, your essay is coherent, and you developed all bullet points."	• "Good job, you are really smart" • "You are a great writer." • "You are clearly a language person." • "You are really talented at languages."

However, Dweck (2015) warns against praising effort independent of learning or results. To give an example, if a student uses the same, unhelpful strategy over and over again, still praising them for their effort might be counterproductive, since students will not change their strategies and thus prevent themselves from improving. Table 6 presents sample statements for praising effort the wrong and right way (Dweck 2015).

Table 6 Praising effort

Praising effort, the right way	Praising effort, the wrong way
• "I see that you put a lot of effort into this. However, your current strategy does not seem to work. What can you try next?" • "The point isn't to get it all right away. The point is to increase your understanding step by step. What can you try next?"	• "Not everybody is good at languages. Just do your best" • "Don't worry, you'll get it if you keep trying." • "Great effort. You tried your best."

Secondly, in term of criticizing and providing feedback, it is vital to focus on behavior, never on the students themselves. This is not only crucial for the development of a growth mindset, but also for the development of students' self-esteem (Branden 1994). Besides, teachers should emphasize that failure is a necessary part of success and that every incident of failure presents an opportunity to grow. This goes hand in hand with the cultivation of a positive culture of error in the classroom, where students feel safe to make mistakes, grow from their mistakes, and eventually "fail their way to success". Sample statements that tend to foster either growth or fixed mindsets are presented in table 7 (Dweck 2015).

Table 7 Growth mindset and fixed mindset statements

Growth mindset statements	Fixed mindset statements
• "Making mistakes is unavoidable. The challenge is to use them as information for what needs to be improved." • "What are your areas of further growth?" • "That feeling of languages being hard is the feeling of your brain growing." • "When you learn new vocabulary and grammatical structures, it makes your language brain grow." • "Learn to fail or fail to learn." • "If you catch yourself saying, 'I'm not a language person', just add 'yet' to the end of the sentence"	• "You are not a language person." • "You are a bad writer." • "You are stupid." • "Here is a list of the weaknesses of your text" • "That's okay, maybe languages aren't your strength" • "You should avoid failure at all cost." • "You must not make any mistakes." • "You cheated. You are a bad person." • "You failed this test. I am very disappointed in you."

6.2.5.3. Strength-based assessment

The concept of strength-based assessment has been practiced for centuries, but has been re-discovered in recent years (Climie & Henley 2016). It is defined as "a paradigm which is guided by the notion that all students, regardless of their current state or functioning, have inherent strengths and skills that may be drawn upon to allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the student" (Climie & Henley 2016: 110). It is based on a few basic premises: Firstly, every child has unique strengths and skills. Secondly, every child can learn to use and cultivate those strengths, once it has acquired the necessary tools and is appropriately instructed and guided. Thirdly, when children's unique strengths and skills are appreciated, they will use them more often and develop them even further (Terjesen et al. 2004).

Although strength-based assessment is typically used by psychologists in psycho-educational settings, it can also become a paradigm in the classroom and guide teachers' assessment and evaluation of students' skills and competences. It tends to be formative in nature (instead of summative), emphasize the individual (instead of encouraging comparisons), and focus on the development of a student (instead of their competence in relation to a normative scale). It does not necessarily require excessive amounts of time, but can be as simple as circling "good" phases, grammatical structures, or vocabulary with a green pen in an essay. Another way to

give strength-based feedback is to provide students with a list of 'strengths' and 'areas of further growth' for all kinds of assignments or group projects. To make strength-based assessment even less time-consuming, teachers can compile a list of students' common strengths and growth areas, so they do not have phrase them anew each time.

6.2.6. PP and the classroom environment

Due to their inherent negativity bias, human beings are evolutionarily conditioned to look out for the negative (Rozin & Royzman 2001). It seems that people are more susceptible to negative than positive events, and their brains react much more strongly to negative stimuli than to positive ones (Baumeister et al. 2001). One strategy to counteract the negative bias is to increase the number of positive stimuli in the environment (Rubin 2009). In the context of an EFL classroom, this might take the form of **positive posters**, which offer daily positive stimuli to both students and teachers and aim at making the positive more visible in the classroom. Moreover, writing down positive events on posters as opposed to merely talking about them has the benefit of processing them on a deeper level (Wiseman 2009). Here are some ideas for positive posters:

- **Character strengths poster**: shows the signature strengths of all students (Which signature strengths are most common among classmates? Who shares their highest strengths?)
- **Strength of the week poster**: students choose one of the VIA strengths per week, which the whole class aims to cultivate collectively
- **What Went Well (WWW) poster**: invites students to write down good things/events
- **Gratitude poster**: invites students to write down things/people that they are grateful for
- **Kindness poster**: lists acts of kindness that can be performed by students
- **Inspiring quotes poster**: students share inspiring, positive quotes
- **Happiness poster**: lists things that make students happy (either from personal experience or scientifically validated practices)

Another way to make the positive more visible is through **positivity jars**, which are empty glass jars that function as a container for folded paper strips containing some positive content. Students can add positive paper strips to the jar and the more positivity is added, the fuller the jar becomes. Teachers can turn filling the jar into a game and promise some kind of reward to the class, if a jar is filled. Here are two ideas for positivity jars:

- **Kindness jar:** when students perform an act of kindness, they write it on a strip of paper, fold it up, and put it into the jar
- **Blessings jar:** students write down one or several good things that happened the day before/at the weekend, fold up the strip of paper, and put it into the jar

7. Limitations and future research

Hopefully, the present thesis has been successful at illustrating the need for and potentials of PE and has managed to provide EFL teachers with evidence-based ideas for how to incorporate PP into their EFL classes. However, this thesis also has its obvious limitations, some of which will be pointed out in the following.

One of them is that it has only addressed the bottom-up side of positive educational change, which refers to the ways in which individual teachers implicitly and explicitly ebbed PP into their classrooms. However, while small-scale PE projects at grassroot level are an indispensable part of sustainable change, so are large-scale top-down policy measures, such as the anchoring of PP in the curriculum or in teacher training courses. Waters (2011), for instance, found that PEIs were most successful when they were implemented into existing subjects by practicing teachers (bottom-up) and at the same time supported by a larger educational system (top-down). She concluded that "positive psychology needs to be woven into the 'DNA' of the wider school culture" so that PE "becomes the general way of life at the school" (85). If PP is only incorporated by individual teachers at a classroom level (as it has been suggested in this thesis), teachers might face more resistance from students and other teaching staff members. Therefore, in the long run, whole-school approaches to PE will most likely yield better and more sustainable results than individual classroom projects. More research is needed to develop feasible PE frameworks that allow officials in charge to implement PE in a top-down manner.

Another limitation of this thesis is that it has exclusively focused on student wellbeing and has largely ignored teacher and staff wellbeing. However, since PEIs were found to be most effective when PP was modelled and lived in the entire school, these dimensions should not be disregarded. Furthermore, teachers are most likely to incorporate PP into their classrooms and the wider school culture, when they have experienced its benefits in their own lives. Consequently, PP training courses should be established for all teachers and staff, in which they learn how to apply the principles of PP first to their own, and then to their students' lives. In this context, they might be introduced to PP concepts such as 'job crafting' (see, e.g., Slemp 2017a), which is a technique used to increase meaningfulness and satisfaction at work.

Although this thesis has not explicitly addressed teacher and staff wellbeing, it should be emphasized that all PP exercises, techniques, and practices suggested for the positive EFL classroom are equally suitable and recommendable for teachers themselves (e.g., keeping a gratitude journal, doing meditations, or practicing active-constructive responding).

A third limitation of this thesis is that it has not specifically discussed the challenges teachers might face when they start to implement PP into their EFL classes. Chodkiewicz and Boyle, for instance, mention "limited resources, an overcrowded curriculum, accessibility of information, teacher factors and quality training" as key constraints impacting the effectiveness of PEIs (2017: 60). More school-based research is required to gain a better understanding of the obstacles typically encountered by teachers and educators who attempt to take a PE approach in schools. Only then can researchers develop appropriate strategies to overcome those barriers and thus make PEIs more successful.

In terms of the future of PE in Austria, this thesis has pointed to a lack of available data about both the social and emotional wellbeing of students, as well as the effectiveness of existing PEIs like the project 'Schulfach Glück'. Much more research is needed to determine the effects of such PEIs on students' wellbeing and academic performance. Additionally, in order to be able to tailor PEIs to the specific needs and capacities of Austrian students and schools, comprehensive wellbeing measurements must be systematically implemented across various age levels and school types and should become a central concern of educational policies.

Finally, there are limitations concerning the field of PE as a whole. Although some scholars claim that PE combines the science of PP with "best practice guidelines from education" (Slemp et al. 2017: 101), PE is still largely situated in the realm of PP. With very few exceptions (e.g., Gabryś-Barker & Gałajda 2016; MacIntyre, Gregersen & Mercer 2016), PE literature typically suggests ways in which PP can be incorporated into the classroom, but fails to address how the suggested exercises or practices are connected to pedagogic and didactic principles. It would be desirable for the field of PE to live up to its name and become more explicit about the link between PP and education. Especially for language teaching, it will be interesting to see in which ways PP can be incorporated to enhance students' language skills. Future PE research should therefore not only draw on PP, but also on the findings of educational sciences for general education, and on linguistics for language education.

8. Conclusion

This thesis has outlined the concept of PE in relation to underlying concepts such as PP, wellbeing, and character strengths, and has reviewed the effects of PEIs on student wellbeing and academic performance. Furthermore, after analyzing the status quo in Austrian schools in terms of the curriculum, students' health, and existing PE initiatives, it suggested ways in which EFL teachers in Austria can embed PP into their classrooms, both explicitly and implicitly. Finally, limitations of this thesis and the wider field of PE as well as areas for future research have been explored.

I would like to conclude by citing Seligman's famous vision for PP, which I deeply hope to have contributed to by writing this thesis. Subsequently, I will formulate my own vision more specifically concerning the future of PE in Austria. In concluding his fundamental work *Flourish*, Seligman outlined his long-term vision for PP, which he called 'PERMA51': "By the year 2051, 51 percent of the people of the world will be flourishing" (2011: 240). Being aware that realizing this vision will be "hugely challenging", Seligman emphasizes the key role played by teachers. He writes: "[PERMA 51] will be aided by positive education, in which teachers embed the principles of well-being into what they teach" (240). It is this vision, that the present thesis aimed to contribute to, by suggesting concrete and practical ways in which EFL teachers in Austria can use PP to enhance their students' wellbeing. Finally, following Seligman's model, I would now like to express my own vision for a flourishing future:

By the year 2080, 80% of students and teachers in Austria will be flourishing. They are flourishing because wellbeing skills have become an integral part of the school curriculum and are taught across all school types and age groups. PP is not only taught as a content subject, but is also woven into every aspect of the school culture so that PE has become a general way of life. Strength-based assessment has become the norm in schools, just like meditation and mindfulness exercises. As a result, the prevalence of depression, anxiety, and other psychological disorders among students has been drastically reduced. PP training has also been integrated into teacher education so that all aspiring teachers learn how to apply the principles and concepts of PP first to their own and then to their students' lives. Furthermore, Austria has established an institute for PE that has a say in educational policies and systematically monitors student wellbeing through comprehensive and nationwide wellbeing questionnaires and surveys. The government uses the results of those surveys to take appropriate measures with the aim to raise overall wellbeing. Finally, the success of schools and educational systems is no longer measured merely by students' academic achievement, but also by their levels of

wellbeing. For this purpose, a ‘happy school index’ has been established which evaluates how successful schools are at promoting flourishing among students and staff.

The promising findings generated by PEI studies have convinced me that PE has the potential to revolutionize teaching, and thereby transform schools into places that recognize and appreciate the unique strengths of every student. Moreover, the rapidly growing research interest in PP and PE, as well as the numerous PP training courses and university degrees currently appearing across the globe leave me hopeful that positive educational practices are on the rise and that teachers and educational policy makers all over the world are beginning to realize both the internal and external value of increased student wellbeing. Although there is still a long way to go with many obstacles to face until this vision can be realized, I wish to encourage teachers and educators to dare to jump onto the bandwagon of PE now and thereby become a part of a promising and innovative educational movement.

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10. Appendix

10.1. Abstract in English

The concept of positive education (PE) can be described as a pedagogic practice that applies the evidence-based research and scientific principles of positive psychology (PP) to educational settings, with the aim to promote students' wellbeing, character development, and academic flourishing (White & Murray 2015). The present thesis seeks to explore in how far Austrian EFL classrooms and the wider Austrian school context are compatible with the concept of PE. Moreover, it aims to suggest concrete and practical ways in which EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers in Austria can incorporate the principles of PE into their lessons to help their students flourish both personally and academically.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter defines and briefly elaborates on three foundational concepts of PE, namely that of 'wellbeing', 'positive psychology', and 'character strengths'. The second chapter focuses more directly on the concept, principles, and development of PE and discusses three key reasons for its need. Chapter three reviews studies that examined the effects of PEIs on student wellbeing and academic performance. The fourth chapter is dedicated to the status quo in Austrian schools in terms of three aspects linked to PE: mental health, the curriculum, and existing PE initiatives and educational programs. Finally, the last chapter brings all generated insights together by giving concrete and practical suggestions on how the principles of PE can be realized in Austrian EFL classrooms in a way that is both compatible with the curriculum and tailored to the health- and wellbeing-related needs of Austrian students. The thesis concludes by pointing to limitations of this paper and the general field of PE and by suggesting areas of future research.

10.2. Abstract in German

Das Konzept der ‚Positiven Bildung' („positive education") kann als pädagogische Praxis beschrieben werden, welche die Erkenntnisse der Positiven Psychologie auf Bildungskontexte anwendet, mit dem Ziel, das Wohlbefinden der Schülerinnen und Schüler zu erhöhen, ihren Charakter zu entwickeln und ihr akademisches Potential zu entfalten. Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit geht der Frage nach, inwiefern österreichische Schulen im Allgemeinen, und österreichische Englischklassen im Speziellen mit dem Konzept der Positiven Bildung vereinbar sind. Nachdem diese Frage positiv beantwortet wurde, werden konkrete Vorschläge für die Einbindung Positiv-Psychologischer Übungen und Praktiken in den Englischunterricht gegeben. Diese sollen Schülerinnen und Schülern dabei helfen, erhöhtes Wohlbefinden zu erlangen und dadurch ihre Leistungen zu verbessern.

Die Diplomarbeit ist in fünf Abschnitte unterteilt. Das erste Kapitel definiert drei grundlegende Ideen der Positiven Bildung: Die Konzepte des Wohlbefindens („wellbeing"), der positiven Psychologie, und der Charakterstärken („character strengths"). Das zweite Kapitel beschäftigt sich näher mit der Entwicklung und den Eckpfeilern der Positiven Bildung, wobei besonders die Gründe der Notwendigkeit für positive Bildungszugänge herausgearbeitet werden. Das dritte Kapitel bietet einen Überblick über die wissenschaftlich dokumentierten Effekte von Positiv-Psychologischen Interventionen in Bildungskontexten („positive education interventions"), sowohl in Hinblick auf das Wohlbefinden, als auch auf die akademischen Leistungen der Schülerinnen und Schüler. Der Schwerpunkt des vierten Kapitels liegt auf dem Status quo der Positiven Bildung in Österreich. In diesem Zusammenhang werden das mentale Wohlbefinden von Schülerinnen und Schülern, die Bildungsziele des österreichischen Lehrplans, und existierende Initiativen im Bereich der Positiven Bildung genauer unter die Lupe genommen. Im letzten Kapitel finden sich konkrete, und praxisorientierte Tipps für Englischlehrerinnen- und Lehrer, die sie bei der Einbindung von Positiv-Psychologischen Übungen in den Englischunterricht unterstützen sollen.

10.3. Curriculum Vitae

Sonja Johanna Käferböck
Curriculum Vitae

Personal Details

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Education

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2013-2016	University of Vienna: Lehramtsudium Unterrichtsfach Psychologie und Philosophie Unterrichtsfach Englisch
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