Introducing Well-being to the Translation Classroom: Insights from the trenches of COVID-19

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Abstract

The abrupt and profound changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic caused a variety of social and personal situations that negatively affected the wellbeing of teachers and students in higher education thus producing serious emotional strain. Barr (2014) shows that satisfactory student performance can be obtained in an online class accompanied by psychosocial support tools such as: enrichment and remediation tutorials, academic advising, guidance and counseling programs, fitness and wellness resources, spiritual formation activities and faculty-student consultation. This paper aims at testing the effectiveness and the perception of well-being and participative activities in the translation classroom. It presents the findings of a pilot intervention implemented with 42 translation students. The intervention is based on the PERMA theory of well-being and tests 9 well-being and participative techniques. The methodology combines pre- and post-intervention questionnaires and the analysis combines quantitative and qualitative methods. The findings suggest that although there are no significant quantitative differences, students' perceptions are positive. Suggestions are discussed together with possible implications for the future.

Key words: psychosocial support, well-being, teaching methods, higher education, translation education

1. Introduction

The outbreak of COVID-19 has caused unprecedented disruptions of people's lives and daily routines. Such abrupt and profound changes have brought about a variety of social and personal situations and have produced serious emotional strain on all, including teachers and students. According to an IPSOS survey of the general population carried out in the last week of March 2020 in Great Britain (IPSOS, 2020), there have been widespread concerns about the effects of social isolation and social distancing on well-being with increased stress, anxiety, depression and negative feelings, as well as concerns about the practical aspects of life, including employment and financial difficulties. The survey also showed that people expressed concern about the exacerbation of pre-existing mental health issues and the effect of COVID-19 on the mental health of family members, particularly children.

Higher education students have always experienced stress and anxiety especially with reference to their studying results, living/financial conditions and the uncertainty of their professional future (Mofatteh 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has only broadened the scope of disturbing conditions. In addition, there has also been a highly recognized lack of balance in higher education, i.e. absence of assistance in the process of developing purpose and meaning of life

to help students learn who they really are and how to become better human beings (Lewis 2006).

The purpose of this paper is to test the effectiveness and perception of well-being and participative activities in the translation classroom. It presents the findings of a pilot intervention implemented with a group of translation students. First, we present the basic definitions, followed by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the psychological well-being of students. Second, we discuss the application of well-being techniques in higher education during COVID-19 and in general, as well as why well-being is important for the translation profession. Then, we present the PERMA theory of well-being on which the intervention is based. We go on to present the intervention and the methodology, followed by the main findings and recommendations. Finally, we discuss the results and make suggestions for the future.

2. Basic definitions

Whereas various organisations and disciplines have various definitions of the terms *mental health*, *(psychological) well-being* and *wellness,* as they are closely linked and overlap (IASC 2007: 1), in this paper we use them interchangeably to refer to the state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being, "in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (WHO 2018). The term "psychosocial" refers to the "dynamic relationship between the psychological and social dimension of a person, where the one influences the other. The psychological dimension includes the internal, emotional and thought processes of a person – his or her feelings and reactions. The social dimension includes relationships, family and community networks, social values and cultural practices" (IFRC 2009: 184). The term "*psychosocial support*" refers to the "actions that address the psychosocial needs of individuals and of communities, taking into consideration psychological, social and cultural aspects of well-being" (ibid.).

3. The impact of COVID-19 on students

During this relatively short period of time since the outbreak of COVID-19 numerous research projects have been conducted throughout the world on the impact of COVID-19 on various populations, including students. Almost all, without exception, reveal that COVID-19 has had a serious negative impact on their psychological well-being. So much so, that Cardenas et al. call it the 'parallel pandemic' (2020).

3.1 Causes of psychological distress during COVID-19

The causes of psychological distress relate to the nature of the pandemic and preventive measures, in general, and to the nature of online teaching and learning, in particular. Risk factors that are due to the pandemic are: replacement of in-person schooling with online education, loss of social interaction with friends and peers (Cardenas et al. 2020: 2187), excessive lack of information, information overload or incorrect information by the mass

media, fear of infection (particularly if they know someone who is infected or quarantined) and stigma, witnessing death and suffering in the media or in the family and friends, personal experiences of infection, bereavement without the possibility to assist close ones, the impossibility to retualise the loss with a funeral (Chi et al. 2020: 2), monotonous lifestyle (Sundarasen et al. 2020:2), lack of independence and personal space at home (Wang 2021: 946), uncertainty about the future due to COVID-19. Some students may also experience domestic violence or abuse as a result of prolonged periods of being confined to the same space (Cardenas et al. 2020: 2187).

In addition to this, the enormous lifestyle changes for students include cessation of extra-curricular activities and virtual graduation. Final year students may experience additional stress about future employment prospects as a result of the reduction in labour market opportunities (UNESCO 2021). There is also evidence that when children are confined to their homes for prolonged periods of time, they are physically less active, have much longer screen time, irregular sleep patterns, and less favourable diets, resulting in weight gain and a loss of cardiorespiratory fitness (Wang 2021: 946).

The prolonged period of closure is likely to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and inequalities among students, particularly affecting those from poor households and fragile families (Mbunge et al. 2020, Naidoo & Cartwright 2020: 6). Online learning requires internet access and technical equipment (computers, laptops, and the like) at home, which may add to the existing financial burden of low-income families. Therefore, students who do not have the adequate technical conditions and equipment or internet access may be deprived of learning opportunities and may suffer educational under-achievement (Cardenas et al. 2020: 2187). Cao et al. (2020: 4) have also shown that students living in rural areas experience more anxiety than their urban counterparts, which points to the place of residence as a risk factor.

Causes of psychological distress related to online teaching and learning include: loss of the social aspects of university life (Laher et al. 2021: 3), limited class interaction (Chaturvedi et al. 2021: 6), lack of digital skills (Naidoo & Cartwright 2020: 4), ICT infrastructure (poor internet connection or mobile phone use) (Muldong et al. 2021: e334), lack of training in how to use online platforms (Williams et al. 2021: 1-2), long schooling day (6-8 hours a day), work overload and undefined work schedules (Olawale et al. 2021:185), lack of access, training and unavailability of online resources (Olawale et al. 2021:180), complications of assessment and evaluation, restricted international mobility (UNESCO 2021), uncertainty about the completion of the semester, uncertainty and delays in opening universities, the need to juggle household chores and take care of family members while attending online classes (Sundarasen et al. 2020: 8), using the face-to-face curriculum in the online classroom, challenges associated with time management (Olawale et al. 2021: 180), blurred boundaries between study and family, deterioration of work-life balance (ILO 2020: 18).

In addition to all factors presented above, for students, the developmental period they are in and student life are risk factors themselves (El-Monshed et al. 2021: 1). As they move from adolescence to adulthood and are required to make important life decisions, university students

often face multifaceted pressures from a new social environment and leaving home to study away (Laher et al. 2021: 2), academic workload, economic difficulties and interpersonal relationships (Chi et al. 2020: 2). Previous studies have shown that university students are a demographic group which is characterized by higher levels of mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), compared to other segments of the population (Lei et al. 2016: 2). A meta-analysis of 39 epidemiological studies, including more than 30,000 university students in China, has found that the prevalence of depression is 23.8% (ibid. 2016: 7-8). Other studies show that 21.4% of students have symptoms of anxiety and 16.6% have symptoms of PTSD (Yang et al. 2017 in Chi et al. 2020: 2). Moreover, student mental health decreases significantly compared to their community peers prior to major transitions in their student career (Cvetkovki et al. 2017).

Research also shows that female students are more affected by male. The IPSOS survey (IPSOS, 2020) revealed that women are more likely than men to have concerns about isolation, social distancing and mental health and illness. Studies also show that female students experience higher levels of mental health problems and disruptions in emotional life than male students (Cvetkovski et al. 2017: 11, Sundarasen et al. 2020: 7, Aristovik et al. 2020). In addition to having a lower uncertainty tolerance threshold and lower resilience (Ristovska-Dimitrovska 2020), female students may also have less coping strategies in times of uncertainty (Sundarasen et al. 2020: 8). Mental health also varies across disciplines with students in the arts and humanities (A&H) experiencing higher levels of anxiety, depression and frustration than students in engineering and architecture (E&A) (Lipsn et al. 2016: 34, Aristovik et al. 2020: 12, Odriozola-González et al. 2020: 3). Odriozola-González et al. (2020: 3) find that academic staff in A&H show significantly higher depression than that in E&A. As the translation profession is predominantly female (Common Sense Advisory, 2017) and the study of translation falls under the humanities, the issue of mental health and psychosocial support seems the more relevant in our context.

3.2 Effects of COVID-19 on mental health

Research on the effects of COVID-19 on students' mental health have, indeed, demonstrated detrimental effects in cognitive function (rigid thinking patterns, memory issues, lack of concentration, lack of motivation, lower job/class engagement and performance), behavior (eating and sleeping patterns), social function (social withdrawal, cyberbullying, alcohol misuse and addiction, absenteeism), and mental health (suicidal ideation or attempt, anxiety, stress and depression) (Chaturvedi et al. 2021: 6, El-Monshed et al. 2021: 2, Sundarasen et al. 2020: 3, Rajkumar 2020: 3, ILO 2020: 6-7, Oncevska-Ager & Ivanovska-Naskova 2020). Chi et al. (2020) find high prevalence rates of clinically-relevant symptoms of PTSD (30.8%), depression (23.3%) and anxiety (15.5%) among Chinese university students. Similarly, Cao et al. (2020: 3) find that 24.9% of a sample of around 7000 Chinese students experience anxiety, whereas Sundarasen et al. (2020: 8) find that 29.8% of a sample of 983 Malaysian students experience anxiety. A study in Egypt involving 612 university students, shows that 74.5%, 47.1% and 40.5% experienced different degrees of depression, anxiety and stress, respectively (El-Monshed et al. 2021: 7). A study in Spain involving around 2500 university members (students, teachers and administrative staff) finds that extremely severe scores of depression,

stress and anxiety were reported by 34.19%, 28.14% and 21.34% of the respondents, respectively (Odriozola-González et al. 2020: 5-6). A study in North Macedonia among UKLO students shows that 49.4%, 42.5%, 28.2% and 19.6% students experience PTSD symptoms, depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts (Ristevska-Dimitrovska 2020).

4. Well-being in higher education

4.1 Well-being in higher education during COVID-19

There is abundant evidence that mediation, mindfulness, emotional intelligence activities and other contemplative techniques can increase the wellbeing of those who practice them. Lately many research studies have been conducted on the relationship between these activities and study results as well as anxiety and depression decrease in students during the COVID-19 pandemic (Shapiro, Brawn, Astin, 2008, Benham, Enam and Ivaturi, 2022). Weyandt et al. (2020) analysed the relationships between symptoms of anxiety and depression, impulsivity, and mindfulness among university faculty members during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study focused on whether these symptoms and practices of mindfulness differed within certain variables like age, gender, ethnicity, and location. The results from the survey show, among other findings, that there is a correlation between lower mindfulness and greater impulsivity on one hand and higher rates of depression and anxiety on the other. While participants who have experienced COVID-19 (both personally or through family members) did not show significantly different levels of anxiety, depression, mindfulness or impulsivity, those who reported having at least one mental health diagnosis showed significantly higher levels of anxiety, depression, impulsivity, and marijuana use and lower levels of mindfulness and worsened eating habits. This study accentuates the relationship between higher education mental health and the importance of lifestyle habits in challenging times, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Reilly (2020) draws on psychological and educational research indicating that developing and practicing mindfulness lessen emotional pain and improve one's sense of well-being. He suggests that university professors take a proactive role in improving their students' coping strategies in challenging times by adopting a brief daily mindful practice during classes. According to his study, this activity may relieve emotional pain in students caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Educators may also discover that mindfulness practice enhances academic achievement by activating executive and cognitive functions. Barr (2014) shows that satisfactory student performance can be obtained in an online class accompanied by psychosocial support tools such as: enrichment and remediation tutorials, academic advising, guidance and counseling programs, fitness and wellness resources, spiritual formation activities and faculty-student consultation.

4.2 Well-being in higher education in general

It has become clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has proved the need for people to develop strategies for ensuring healthy survival throughout prolonged trauma. However, transformative learning (including its second scholars wave), integral studies, contemplative studies, to mention but a few, are concepts introduced and developed long before the COVID-19

pandemic. They are recommended for higher education students to help them cope with stress, anxiety, and depression by developing positive attitudes like hope, optimism, resilience and positive emotions including self-confidence and compassion that will build a strong foundation for their life-long well-being (Avey at all. 2011). Thus, since 1970's higher education experts have been developing curricula for university students that incorporate activities for contemplative, extra-rational experiences that include meditation, visualization, mindfulness and other supportive methods[1]. These may lead to an insight into the individual's inner resources to be used in order to develop personal and professional competencies to get to a healthy track of life in search for personal self-actualization (according to Maslow's taxonomy). This is relevant to any profession, but it is ever more so for the translation profession.

4.3 Well-being in translation

Implementing resilience building activities in the translation classroom is not justified as a means of emergency education during the COVID-19 pandemic only. Translation studies and translation as a profession are of such a nature that includes numerous stressful situations. Translators need competencies from the intra- and interpersonal dimension such as: knowing how to plan and manage one's time, stress, work, budget and ongoing training; negotiations with the client; compliance with instructions, deadlines, commitments, interpersonal competencies, team organization; working under pressure, team work, self-evaluation, being open to innovations, being concerned with quality, being ready to adapt to new situations/conditions and taking responsibility (DGT in EU, Competences for professional translators, experts in multilingual and multimedia communication, pp. 4-5; UK National Occupational Standards in Translation, pp.11). This means that managing one's own emotions and understanding other peoples' behavior are as important competencies for translators as mastering the relevant specific competencies such as knowledge of the source and target languages, translation and interpreting methods or translation tools. This is where our study comes in to investigate the application of well-being in the translation classes.

5. PERMA theory of well-being

The current study is underpinned by the PERMA theory of well-being (Seligman 2011) developed to promote "flourishing" and build conditions that allow people to live a meaningful life. In this model, well-being is an active process of making informed decisions that help one live a more fulfilling life by combining five building blocks: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. Positive emotion refers to the capacity for positive affectivity in life, which can be increased by cultivating gratitude, forgiveness, physical pleasures, mindfulness, hope or optimism. Engagement is "an experience in which someone

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[1] Some examples of faculties that combine subject courses and contemplative activities in their programs are as follows: Loyola Marymount University (LMU), and the Satyananda Yoga School, Los Angeles. East-West Psychology, California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS), Educational Leadership in the School of Education at Saint Mary's College of California, San Francisco (Morgan. F.P. 2012, pp.4))

fully deploys their skills, strengths, and attention for a challenging task" and experiences "flow", a condition of full concentration, absorption in the moment, a feeling as if time stopped (PPC 2022). It can be experienced in a range of different activities from riding a bike, gardening, to reading a book, writing or a work task. Relationships include connections to others, giving and receiving support, contributing to the welfare of others by cultivating love, compassion, kindness, empathy, teamwork, cooperation, self-sacrifice. Meaning is developed through belonging and serving something bigger than the self, developing a belief system and living by it. It can be derived from religion, family, science, politics, work organizations, justice, the community or social causes. Accomplishment involves achievement, competence, success, and mastery for its own sake in its momentary form in various domains like sports, hobby or the workplace. Making people aware of the interconnectedness of each building block and their contribution to a healthy life, this model can be useful in every human endeavour. As educational institutions are ideal places for wellness promotion (Miller et al. 2008: 6), this model is applicable to our context as well. The PERMA model seems more relevant in the context of the pandemic as it gives equal weight to the different aspects of well-being and, if applied, may contribute to a healthy university community and better academic and personal outcomes.

6. The intervention

This intervention is based on the findings of Kitanovska-Kimovska et al. (in press). They report on a pilot project conducted among language and translation teachers and students during the pandemic aimed at providing psychosocial support to cope with the stress of online teaching and learning. Throughout the project, the teachers were involved in a small support group where they practiced various self-care activities. In addition, they worked on involving students more actively in classes by introducing a number of engagement activities. Their findings suggest that the self-care component makes a positive contribution to the teachers' well-being, whereas the interactive and autonomy-building activities conducted with the students are valued more by both teachers and students than the traditional, frontal teaching methods (ibid.). With this knowledge in mind, the purpose of this intervention was to test a selection of well-being and participative techniques in the translation curriculum with a more systematic student focus.

The intervention was conducted in the period March-May 2022 and involved 4 teachers and their translation and interpreting students from all years of study in their II, IV, VI and VIII semester, respectively, at the Department of Translation and Interpreting at Blaze Koneski Faculty of Philology in Skopje. 9 techniques were tested: 6 informal, well-being activities, not related to the curriculum and 3 formal, participative activities, related to the curriculum (for a brief description of each activity, see Appendix 1). The well-being activities took between 5-15 minutes of class time and the participative activities comprised the core of class time. Each teacher implemented each of these techniques at least once during the test period. Table 1 below shows the techniques tested.

Table 1: Well-being techniques and participative techniques tested

Well-being techniques	Participative techniques
Visualization	Peer feedback/review
Exercise (chair yoga)	Presentations
Deep breathing	Students lead the class themselves
Kindness discussion	
Relaxing music	
Gratitude	

These techniques were selected to match the five building blocks of well-being on the PERMA theory of well-being. Thus, there were activities that address all five elements: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment (see Figure 1 below).

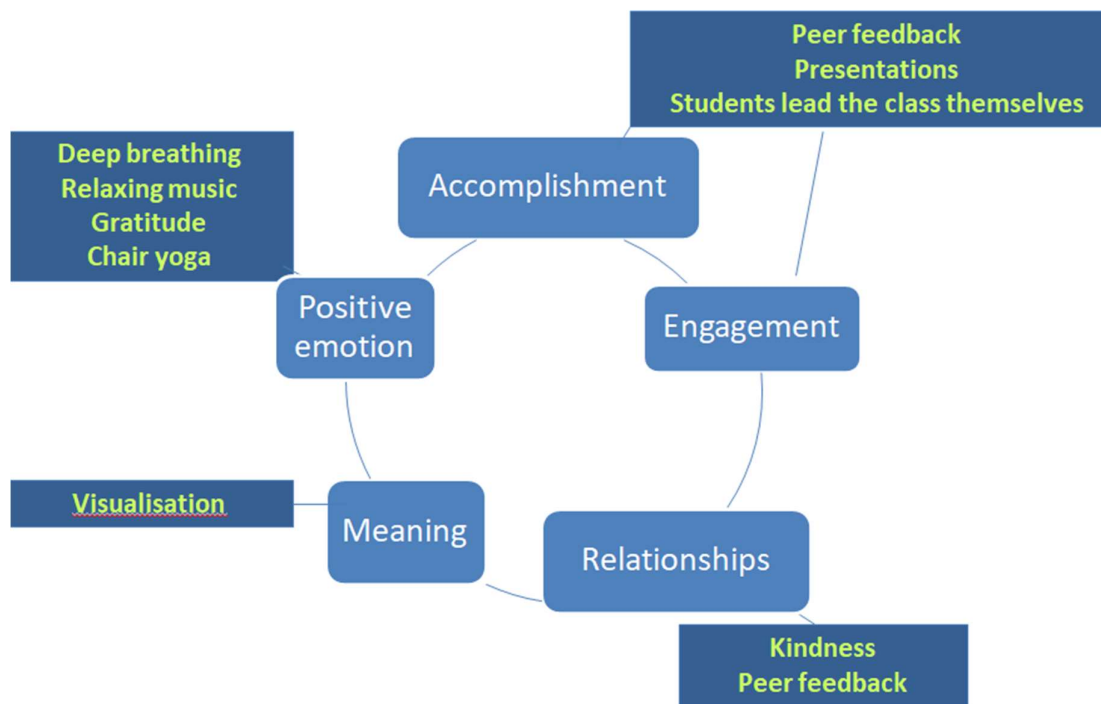

Figure 1: The techniques mapped onto the PERMA model

This paper explores the following research questions:

1. Can well-being and participative techniques in the translation curriculum help increase students' overall well-being? If so, to what extent?
2. What are students' perceptions of the well-being techniques?
3. What are students' perceptions of the participative teaching methodologies?

7. Methodology

This paper has a double purpose: first, to examine the impact of well-being and participative techniques in the translation curriculum on students' overall well-being, and second, to investigate their acceptance by gathering students' attitudes on the experience. To meet this double purpose, 4 questionnaires were used. All questionnaires were anonymous. To allow for comparisons of results before and after the intervention, students were asked to use a code. Participation was voluntary and it was made clear to the participants that they could withdraw from the study at any time. All participants signed a consent form to allow for their data to be used for the purposes of this research only.

To measure the impact of the intervention on students' overall well-being, the PERMA Profiler was used, which is based on Seligman's 5 pillars of well-being combined with negative emotion and health (Butler & Kern 2016). This questionnaire was conducted before and after the intervention and the scores were compared using IBM SPSS v. 20.

To measure students' perceptions, two questionnaires were compiled that were conducted before and after the intervention. In addition to 3 questions on demographics (age, gender and year of study), both questionnaires contained 5 questions of interest to the study as follows: how welcoming the class atmosphere was, to what extent the teaching methods (both well-being and participative) contribute to their learning, to what extent they felt that well-being topics should be incorporated in class, how satisfied they were with their current relationship with their teacher and with their peers. Students used a 10-point Likert scale to provide their answers and had an option to elaborate on each answer in an open-ended comment. The post-intervention questionnaire contained 4 additional questions: to what extent the well-being activities have contributed to students' overall well-being, to what extent the participative teaching methods have contributed to their self-image and self-confidence, if students practiced any well-being technique(s) before they were introduced in the curriculum and how often they practice any of the well-being techniques outside their class environment. The results for the questions repeated in both questionnaires were compared using IBM SPSS v. 20

In addition, to measure students' experience right after each activity, a fourth questionnaire was compiled, where students were asked to describe a 1-word emotion they felt during the exercise and provide an optional comment. This survey was conducted after each activity. The analysis focused on identifying the most frequent emotions students felt during each activity.

All surveys were carried out in English because all respondents had English either as their first or second foreign language and this felt to be the most appropriate approach. The surveys were conducted using Google Forms and were distributed to the students who were present on the first class of the intervention, a total of 51 students. However, only 42 of these completed both the pre- and the post-intervention questionnaires (a response rate of 82.5 %). When it comes to the short 1-word emotion questionnaire, it is not possible to provide a precise figure for the sample size because this questionnaire was conducted after each activity on a range of different classes throughout the semester where the number of attendees varied. Therefore, the responses for all 9 techniques range from 10 to 50 answers.

8. Results

A total of 42 students filled in all the questionnaires, mostly female (76.2%) with an average age of 21, coming from all 4 years of study (21.4% in year 1, 40.5% in year 2, 28.6% in year 3 and 9.5% in year 4), more than half of whom practiced well-being techniques occasionally (48%) or regularly (9%) on their own even before the intervention.

The main purpose of the survey based on the PERMA Profiler was to measure if the intervention would have an impact on students' well-being. To this end, the mean marks on all PERMA elements of well-being were compared before and after the intervention. Table 1 below shows the mean marks and the standard deviations of the pre- and post-intervention student well-being profiles.

Table 1. Comparison of means and standard deviation for all PERMA Profiler elements

PERMA elements	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Positive emotion PRE	42	6.7	1.80
Positive emotion POST	42	6.9	1.95
Engagement PRE	42	7.6	1.54
Engagement POST	42	7.6	1.66
Relationships PRE	42	7.2	2.2
Relationships POST	42	7.6	1.8
Meaning PRE	42	6.5	2.3
Meaning POST	42	6.9	2.1
Accomplishment PRE	42	6.9	2.1
Accomplishment POST	42	7.1	1.6
Overall well-being PRE	42	7.0	1.65
Overall well-being POST	42	7.2	1.55
Negative emotion PRE	42	5.8	1.95
Negative emotion POST	42	5.4	1.77
Health PRE	42	7.1	2.32
Health POST	42	7.3	2.1
Loneliness PRE	42	3.9	3.22
Loneliness POST	42	4.2	3.1

The comparison of the mean marks shows a slight increase in all well-being dimensions except for engagement, which remained the same, and a slight decrease in negative emotion, which is to be expected. These results indicate that overall the intervention has had a positive influence on students' well-being. They also show that students felt slightly more loneliness after the intervention. The fact that this research was carried out online during the pandemic while the students were still mainly at home for prolonged periods of time may partly explain this finding. The SPSS analysis, however, shows that all these differences are not statistically significant. Table 2 shows the results of the t-test performed.

Table 2. Test of significance for PERMA elements before and after the intervention

PERMA elements	PRE	POST	T-test
Positive emotion	6.7	6.9	t= - 0.948, p=0.349
Engagement	7.6	7.6	t= - 0.042, p=0.967
Relationships	7.2	7.6	t= - 1.422, p=0.163
Meaning	6.5	6.9	t= - 1.456, p=0.153
Accomplishment	6.9	7.1	t= - 0.720, p=0.476
Overall well-being	7.0	7.2	t= - 1.322, p=0.193
Negative emotion	5.8	5.4	t= 1.880, p=0.067
Health	7.1	7.3	t= - 0.624, p=0.536
Loneliness	3.9	4.2	t= - 0.538, p=0.593

The results of the other three questionnaires show the students' opinions on the process of being involved in well-being and participative activities and shed light on the possible uses of such activities in the future. Table 3 shows the mean marks and the standard deviations of the students' perceptions of the key elements of intervention before and after the intervention.

Table 3. Comparison of means and standard deviation for all elements of students' perception

Students' perceptions	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Welcoming class atmosphere PRE	42	8.4	1.46
Welcoming class atmosphere POST	42	8.5	1.56
Relationship with teacher PRE	41	8.8	1,44
Relationship with teacher POST	41	8.9	1.5
Relationship with peers PRE	42	8.2	2.3
Relationship with peers POST	42	8.4	1.91
Teaching methods (both well-being and participative) contribute to learning PRE	42	7.7	1.6
Teaching methods (both well-being and participative) contribute to learning POST	42	7.9	1.4
Well-being topics in the curriculum PRE	41	7.8	2.1
Well-being topics in the curriculum POST	41	8.2	1.3

Students' perceptions of the process are generally positive. They believe there is a welcoming class atmosphere where they have a good relationship with both their teacher and their peers. Regarding class activities, they think both well-being and participative techniques contribute to learning, and they think well-being topics should be incorporated in the curriculum. After the intervention the marks are slightly higher than before. However, based on the SPSS analysis, these differences are not statistically significant. Table 4 shows the results of the t-test performed.

Table 4. Test of significance for students' perceptions before and after the intervention

Students' perceptions	PRE	POST	T-test
Welcoming class atmosphere	8.4	8.5	t= - 0.984, p=0.331
Relationship with teacher	8.8	8.9	t= - 1.096, p=0.280
Relationship with peers	8.2	8.4	t= - 0.537, p=0.594
Teaching methods (both well-being and participative) contribute to learning	7.7	7.9	t= - 0.874, p=0.387
Well-being topics in the curriculum	7.8	8.2	t= - 1.172, p=0.248

The qualitative sections of the post-intervention questionnaire illustrate some of these perceptions. Students think that well-being techniques contribute to their well-being. Several quotes are provided for illustration: "The activities make me aware that I should take care of myself more" (S1), "They made me more mindful of myself and of my well-being" (S2); "They make me strive for improving my well-being" (S3); "They improved my mood by shifting focus from just learning" (S4); "They help me concentrate or reduce my stress" (S5). Generally, students highlight that these activities helped them raise awareness about the need to care about themselves rather than just about learning and that they helped them concentrate better and reduce stress. They also think that participative activities contribute to their self-image and confidence as these two quotes illustrate: "They were the best way we can gain confidence and courage" (S1); "They made me feel more confident and comfortable" (S2). Still, there are some who question this statement saying that they fail to notice any changes in their confidence since these methods were added. Nevertheless, they recognise that "this teaching method can contribute to other students' self-image/confidence completely" (S4).

The analysis of the 1-word survey after each activity demonstrates the students' perceptions of individual activities. More specifically, the analysis focused on identifying the most frequent words they used to describe how they felt during each activity (word clouds for each activity can be found in Appendix 2). Thus, visualization was relaxing, motivating, inspiring and insightful. Chair yoga was relaxing, interesting and helpful. Deep breathing and relaxing music were also relaxing and made them feel calm. Gratitude made them feel grateful, introspective and fulfilled. They also describe it as inspirational and eye-opening, whereas kindness was viewed as excellent, interesting, emotional, genuine and inspirational. Peer review was seen as interesting and productive but also uncomfortable and difficult, whereas presentations were viewed as informative, although some students also felt confused. Finally, the activity of students leading the class themselves was viewed as interesting, enjoyable and fun, but some also felt stressed (presumably those who were in charge of the class).

9. Discussion and conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a number of precedents in human communication and life. In education it brought exclusive online teaching, learning and assessment for a prolonged

period of time. Teachers and students had to adapt quickly and learn to live and work in a constantly changing environment with a high degree of uncertainty. There were many lessons to be learnt during the pandemic, but perhaps the most important one was to cherish what it means to be a human not only in daily life, but also in the classroom (be it virtual or physical). The purpose of this paper was to present a project that focused on the human aspects in education and to illustrate how they contribute to students' well-being. More specifically, the paper tested the application and perception of well-being and participative activities in the translation classroom.

With regard to the first research question, the results show that students' overall well-being has not improved significantly due to our intervention. There is a slight increase in almost all parameters, but these improvements are not significant. Having said that, it is reasonable to say that in the current global and academic context under the long-term pressure of the pandemic, the fact that students' well-being has not deteriorated further may be considered sufficient success. Also, students' well-being was relatively high to start with. It can partly be explained by the fact many of them practiced well-being on their own even before our intervention or due to their experience with teachers' experimenting with them before (Kitanovska-Kimovska et al. in press).

Regarding the second and third research questions, our results demonstrate that students provide positive feedback on well-being topics and participative methods in the classroom. Their positive perception is revealed both in the quantitative and qualitative data. The analysis of the words they used to describe how they felt during each activity is perhaps the most revealing. Positive emotions, like relaxation, motivation, inspiration, calm, interest, engagement, were the most dominant ones and serve as the best evidence of the positive experience students have had.

Our project has demonstrated that it is possible and manageable to incorporate resilience building activities (RBA) in the translation curriculum in normal class time without compromising curricular material and that students welcome them. The qualitative results are highly positive and show that these RBA can: be incorporated in any subject-based course without affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the teaching/learning of the main content; positively affect the atmosphere and the students' emotions in the classroom; and raise the awareness of both the teachers and the students of the possible long-term benefits for the individual if these activities are practiced more frequently.

Our study has some limitations. One limitation of the study is the small sample size. It would certainly be better to do this in a larger group. The fact that students' practiced similar activities before and had relatively high results to start with may have affected our results too. The self-reporting methodology has intrinsic weaknesses as self-reports tend to be subjective. Finally, the timeframe of our intervention of 2.5 months is too short to expect any dramatic changes in well-being.

Nevertheless, the fact there was a slight improvement in students' well-being is encouraging and may be tested in the future. One possible way forward is to conduct a longitudinal study where 1 generation of students would go through a process of systematic exposure to well-being and participative activities in their studies and possibly follow their career and social development further on. This can also be replicated in onsite classes to see what students' feedback would be in such circumstances. Based on our experience, we expect it to be positive.

Resilience skills are needed not only to meet the immediate needs arising of the COVID-19 emergency, but also to help teachers and students develop and use their potential as autonomous human beings. If applied in building education policies, lessons learnt now will be of tremendous help in both any future periods of emergency and in peaceful times.

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Appendix 1

Well-being techniques (informal activities)

1.   **Visualization**

Exercise

The teacher reads to the students these instructions slowly and follows them precisely:

1. Think of something that you find difficult to cope with lately!

2. Now relax and allow yourself to put that challenge or problem to the back of your mind for the time being!

3. Read the following instructions slowly, pausing after each instruction and then go into an interpersonal mode and follow the instructions:

 -Remember one of the most beautiful landscapes you have ever seen. Imagine that you are in that landscape now. See, hear, feel and smell it as vividly as possible

-Focus on the colors and shapes you can see. Is there a blue sky? Are there any clouds? Can you see any plant or trees? How many shades of green are there? What's the distant line of the horizon like? Enjoy the beauty of the scenery!

- Imagine that some of the people who you like a lot are with you in this landscape. Enjoy the feeling of being with them. Become aware of what these people mean to you.

-Listen to the natural sounds of the beautiful scenery.

-Allow yourself to fully enjoy the scenery and become aware of the feelings in your heart!

4. Now visualize the problem you were thinking about before in the following way:

- Put the problem in the landscape. Pay attention to your feelings for the beauty of the landscape. If any of your feelings – or the sounds, or the color, or the smells – lose their quality, put the problem aside. Focus again on the beauty of the landscape you are in. As soon as you can recapture the beauty of the scenery, put your problem back in again. If you are able to keep your positive inner state, leave the problem there.

Now allow yourself to become aware how your perception of the problem changes in the scenario of beauty and positive feelings. Pay attention to any spontaneous solution or solutions you might find to the problem.

5. Now come back in the reality, but stay with yourself for a few minutes (meaning keep your attention inwards). Notice how your perception about the problem has changed during this activity and make notes on these observations.

6. Decide on any action plan that you may want to develop, based on what you have observed.

 (Puhta, H. and Rinvolucri, M. *Multiple Intelligences in EFL,* pp.143-144)

2.   Deep breathing
1. The teacher plays a video explaining the importance of deep breathing
e.g. *Breathwork* – Max Strom - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Lb5L-VEm34 (18 min.)
2. Students practice deep breathing while a video with 3 minutes deep breathing is played

e.g.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNXKjGFUlMs&list=RDLVuxayUBd6T7M&index=3
3. There is a short discussion about the individual experience of this activity

3. Kindness

1. Students discuss why kindness matters
2. Give examples of kindness in everyday life. Optionally, the teacher can also play a short video
e.g. https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=the+power+of+kindness+ted+talk
3. Talk about individual experience with kindness

An optional activity: students can do a quick research on the scientific proof of the effects of kindness

4. Relaxing music
Students listen to a piece of relaxing music while completing an activity
e.g. the Best of Yiruma (the Greatest Piano Collection)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYPbDFY1BgE
Morcheeba: "The Sea"

5. Exercise
Students do a short chair yoga practice. The following short video can be used
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4t9nCW3630 (10 min.)

6. Gratitude
1. Students write down 3-5 things they are grateful for that day
2. Students discuss how they feel doing it. Optionally, the teacher can also play a short video on the topic e.g. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_lU2T8NsMM (17 min.)

Participative techniques (formal activities):

7. Students lead the class themselves without the teacher's presence

e.g. Five students give presentations on how to use the APA style citation for every type of publication and in-text citation, do exercises in the classroom and give homework

8. Students give presentations on topics relevant to the course

e.g. As part of the curriculum for the course entitled Cultural Studies, which treats comparative issues between the Anglophonic and the Macedonian culture, students give presentations on topics such as

- Mythological pagan remains in the Christian tradition of the Macedonians and the British
- Heretic movements in Britain, USA and in Macedonia (historical outline, reasons, effects on society and culture)
- The place of the woman during the Middle Ages in Britain and in Macedonia in folklore and literature
- Medieval literature: comparison of King Arthur's and Krale Marko's legendary cycles

- The American Romanticism and the Beat generation principles and their impact on the western society
- Comparison of the British and Macedonian modernism in literature

9. Peer feedback/review

This activity can be done after any activity where students' performance can be assessed: translations, students' class presentations or writing.

Appendix 2

Visualisation (44 responses)	Chair yoga (38 responses)
outstanding new calm motivation excellent hard introspective uninteresting inspiration motivating insightful motivated useful helpful surprising relaxing magical calmness motivational yes interesting confident irritation relaxed effective courageous calming challenging nostalgic hopeful chilling great inspiring interested good	interesting relaxed energizing productive good positive necessary hard informative relaxing stress-free stretch lighten relieved amazing stretched refreshed relaxation routine helpful stress-relieving
Deep breathing (38 responses)	**Relaxing music (50 responses)**
calm meditative balanced calming carefree stressed informative relaxing good relaxes relax effectively funny beneficial sleepy comforting relaxed	comforting soothing peaceful cozy rest weird new different distracting homely relevant nice happiness tranquility calm relaxing vulnerable calming helpful hopeful emotional joyful pleasant peace absolute uplifting interesting relaxed
Gratitude (28 responses)	**Kindness (10 responses)**

great inspirational eye-opening relaxed appreciative lovely amazing good fulfilled uplifting grateful joy perfect introspective vulnerability calm delighted insightful motivational useful freedom informative familiar	interesting positive inspirational excellent genuine support warm emotional relaxed peace
Peer review (28 responses) educative informative useful intriguing good productive fun pleasant great super excellent interesting educational unpractical uncomfortable practical different okay amazingly difficult	**Presentations (47 responses)** engaging positive interesting decent informative confused great interested entertaining
Students lead the class themselves (33 responses) relaxing enjoyable delighted educational amusing great spectacular excellent exhausting interesting engaging informative fun stressed characterful useful exciting amazing	